*'In dry3 dred and daunger':* The Tradition and Rhetoric of Fear in *Cleanness* and *Patience* 

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## Abstract

This dissertation is a study of medieval theological interpretations of fear and their influence on the rhetorical and didactic discourses of two late-fourteenth century Middle English homiletic poems, *Cleanness* and *Patience*.

In Chapter 1 I analyze the various medieval conceptualizations of dread (morally valueless *timor naturalis*, morally culpable *timor libidinosus*, and morally laudable *timor gratuitus*) as discussed by scholars such as Peter Lombard, St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventure and in works such as biblical exegesis and theological encyclopaedias.

In the second chapter, I examine ways in which these formal, learned Latin interpretations of fear were disseminated to a wider, vernacular Middle English audience. I do so by discussing how medieval preaching theory and practice and vernacular didactic and devotional treatises actively employed rhetorical and exhortative discourses of fear in an effort to encourage their audiences to forsake sin and pursue virtue.

In Chapters 3 and 4 I show how *Cleanness* and *Patience* incorporate and employ the various theological conceptualizations of dread discussed in Chapter 1 and the rhetorical and didactic discourses of fear analyzed in chapter 2. I examine fear's presence within the larger narrative, thematic, rhetorical, and didactic structures of each poem, discussing the poet's precise use of scholastic interpretations of fear in his representations of characters, his vivid descriptions of death and destruction, and the ways in which he both implicitly and explicitly confronts his audiences with a variety of fearful discourses. I argue that the poet utilizes fear to promote a specific rhetorical strategy, one based upon a well-developed understanding of dread which should inspire in his audience the desire to flee from sin and damnation and approach fear-inspired, reverent perfection. *Cleanness* and *Patience* illustrate the power of God and the threat of sin, exhorting their readers to embrace and learn from the senses of dread they utilize and promote. Both poems provide remarkable examples of how particular elements of learned Latin thought were adopted and developed by Middle English vernacular traditions.

# Abbreviations

1BR	American Benedictine Review
<b>ETS</b>	Early English Text Society
OS	Original Series
ES	Extra Series
ELN	English Language Notes
Z <b>S</b>	English Studies
n sententias	Aquinas's Commentum in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri
	Lombardi and Bonaventure's Commentaria in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum
	Magistri Petri Lombardi
MED	Middle English Dictionary
<i>ALR</i>	Modern Language Review
ЛS	Medieval Studies
<b>Drbis Litterarum</b>	Orbis Litterarum: International Review of Literary Studies
?L	Patrologia Latina
₹ES	Review of English Studies
Sententiae	Peter Lombard's Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae
Text and Matter	Text and Matter: New Critical Perspectives of the Pearl-Poet.
<b>Fraditio</b>	Traditio: Studies in Ancient and Medieval History, Thought, and Religion
<b>TRHS</b>	Transactions of the Royal Historical Society
<sup>7</sup> iator	Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies

#### Introduction

One twentieth-century biblical commentator describes the story of Jonah as 'the worst treated book in the Bible,' and laments the fact that it 'remains unread, its contents unknown [and] the preciousness of its revelation undiscovered and unsuspected.<sup>1</sup> These words could also be used to summarize the critical atmosphere which has for so long surrounded the Middle English poems Cleanness and Patience, the latter of which is a retelling of the Book of Jonah. Both of these poems are included in the same manuscript containing Pearl and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, but in comparison to their companions, Cleanness and Patience have received a minuscule amount of critical interpretation. In spite of this neglect, however, both poems deserve more scholarly attention. Cleanness has begun to get its share of criticism due to the recent publication of two full-length studies of it,<sup>2</sup> and although Patience has yet to be the subject of its own monograph, articles on it, along with shorter works on Cleanness, continue to appear with some regularity, if not frequency.<sup>3</sup> The two poems also receive treatment in general works which take into account all four of Cotton Nero A.X's poems; but even in these works one can get the impression that Cleanness and Patience are only riding upon the critical coattails of *Pearl* and *Sir Gawain*.<sup>4</sup> This does not mean that there is nothing to say about these texts; on the contrary, critical opinion of the two poems is, I believe, improving. However, considering their interest and importance as representatives of vernacular rhetorical, didactic and theological tradition, these poems continue to be insufficiently read, their stories and themes barely known and their use, beauty, and lessons 'undiscovered and unsuspected.' In this dissertation I shall try to fill some of the critical holes which exist

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> D. E. Hart Davies, *Jonah: Prophet and Patriot* (London, 1931), p. 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> J. K. Lecklider, Cleanness: *Structure and Meaning* (Cambridge, 1997); E. B. Keiser, *Courtly Desire* and Medieval Homophobia: The Legitimation of Sexual Pleasure in Cleanness and Its Contexts (New Haven and London, 1997). Also see C. Morse, *The Pattern of Judgment in the* Queste and Cleanness (Columbia, MO and London, 1978).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> For the most recent article on *Patience*, see A. C. Spearing, 'The Subtext of *Patience*: God as Mother and the Whale's Belly', *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 29 (1999): 293-323.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> H. L. Savage, *The* Gawain-*Poet* (Chapel Hill, 1956); A. C. Spearing, *The* Gawain-*Poet: A Critical Study* (Cambridge, 1970); E. Wilson, *The* Gawain-*Poet* (Leiden, 1976); W. A. Davenport, *The Art of the* Gawain-Poet (London, 1978); L. Staley Johnson, *The Voice of the* Gawain-Poet (Madison, 1984); S. Stanbury, *Seeing the* Gawain-*Poet: Description and the Act of Perception* (Philadelphia, 1991); R. J. Blanch and J. N. Wasserman, *From* Pearl to Gawain: *Forme to Fynisment* (Gainesville, 1995); S. P. Prior, *The Fayre Formez of the* Pearl *Poet* (East Lansing, 1996); and A. Putter, *An Introduction to the* Gawain-*Poet* (London and New York, 1996). In addition to these full-length studies, two recent volumes of essays on the four poems of the manuscript have appeared: *Text and Matter: New Critical Perspectives of the* Pearl-*Poet*, ed. R. J. Blanch, M. Youngerman Miller and J. N. Wasserman (Troy, NY, 1991), and *A Companion to the* Gawain-*Poet*, ed. D. Brewer (Cambridge, 1997).

in our understanding of these two poems by analyzing medieval traditions and interpretations of fear and their influence on and presence within *Cleanness* and *Patience*. By doing so I hope to reveal some of the value I have long suspected these two poems to possess.

What can we say about fear and the Middle Ages, or, more specifically, fear and medieval literature? In his article, 'Modern Psychology and the Interpretation of Medieval Texts,' Jean Le Clercq asks whether it is possible to 'psychoanalyze a mass movement' as large as the corpus of medieval literature.<sup>5</sup> Clearly, when examining medieval texts we must be careful not to assume that they all share the same sources, themes or meanings. Different texts served different purposes, and it is a very tricky business for modern critics to say with certainty what a medieval text would have meant to its intended audience. However, by examining the context in which a poem, sermon, didactic treatise, or devotional piece was written, we can begin to approach an understanding of what interpretative possibilities do exist. In answer to Le Clerq's question, in terms of fear and its use in medieval texts I do believe that one can examine psychological aspects of medieval literature.

Medieval interpretations of fear share some fundamental similarities with modern understandings of dread, including the meticulous division of dread into a variety of different categories and the acknowledgment that fear is essentially a phenomenon whose purpose is to preserve the physical well-being of the person who experiences it.<sup>6</sup> Modern psychological interpretations of fear do have their parallels in medieval thought, but if we truly want to understand how dread is represented in and inspired by medieval texts we must look beyond modern psychology and take into account the myriad forms of thought

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Speculum 48 (1973): 476-90 (p. 478).

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, B. W. Overstreet, who says that no other emotion 'wears so many disguises [as fear],' in Understanding Fear in Ourselves and Others (London, 1955), p. 13. I. M. Marks also notes fear's complex nature, explaining that the 'rich vocabulary' of fear 'reflects its importance in everyday life,' and that the large number of terms denoting fear 'convey subtle nuances of intensity, duration, surprise, pain, tremor, and diffuseness of [a dreaded] danger as well as past, present, and future loss,' in Fears, Phobias, and Rituals: Panic, Anxiety, and Their Disorders (New York and Oxford, 1987), p. 5. All of these different varieties, however, are bound together by the fact that they have the same fundamental motivation and effect. Marks explains that no matter what its object, fear is, in short, 'a normal response to active or imagined threat... and comprises an outer behavioural expression, an inner feeling, and accompanying physiological changes' (p. 1), while Overstreet essentially agrees, describing fear as an emotion which someone 'feels in the presence of real or assumed danger [which] makes [a person] concentrate upon self-defence or the defence of that which is valued as the self' (p. 27). S. J. Rachman also reveals the absolute importance of fear to continued physical well-being by explaining that a 'moderate amount of anticipatory fear is necessary for the development of effective inner defenses for coping with subsequent danger and deprivation,' in Fear and Courage (San Francisco, 1978), p. 226.

which exerted a heavy influence on the literature of the Middle Ages. As we will see, the entire medieval conceptualization of dread also depended upon a system of divisions and subdivisions and relied upon the idea that fear was often beneficial to the person who felt it. But it differed from modern understandings in that instead of focussing on bodily and temporal concerns, medieval interpretations of fear ideally were concerned with spiritual matters. When defining dread, medieval scholars did acknowledge fear's psychological and physical traits, but they did so under the influence of spiritual and moral criteria. Emotions such as fear were not limited to the sensible world and its physical significance, but were instead related to, and often dependent upon, theological and philosophical terms. These interpretations of dread and their later rhetorical and didactic use coloured the understanding of fear in the Middle Ages and helped determine the way in which writers such as the poet of Cleanness and Patience would have conceived of and written their texts. By examining the influence medieval constructions of fear had on these poems we may only be looking at two lesser-known representatives of the entire corpus of medieval literature, but in doing so we do begin to approach an answer to Le Clerg's guestion of whether it is possible to 'psychoanalyze' the mass movement of medieval literary practice.

In his examination of fear in the late Medieval and Early Modern periods, Jean Delumeau explains how the fourteenth century 'witnessed the birth of... [a] global anxiety, [one] broken up into "labeled" fears.<sup>7</sup> According to Delumeau and others, the Black Death of 1348 and its later outbreaks, the Hundred Years War, bouts of famine, the Great Schism, heresy, and various natural disasters were all calamities which contributed to the mounting sense of terror that began to pervade the lives of late-medieval people.<sup>8</sup> In order to dispel the romantic prejudices of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century medievalism which painted

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture 13<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Centuries, tr. E. Nicholson (New York, 1990), p. 1.

J. Delumeau, La Peur en Occident XIVe-XVIIIe siècles: Une cité assiegée (Paris, 1978). In this monumental study of societal fear, Delumeau examines the nature of fear and late-medieval and early-modern society's collective sensation of it. He addresses a variety of subjects which inspired fear, such as ghosts, the night, visitations of plague, popular - and unpopular - societal revolts, eschatological fears, and the perceived threats posed by different social groups such as Jews, sorcery, witchcraft and women. Delumeau's later article, 'Une enquête historiographique sur la Peur', Cahiers du Tunisie 33 (1984): 85-96, summarizes much of what he says in La Peur and Sin and Fear. S. Menache, Vox Dei: Communication in the Middle Ages (New York and Oxford, 1990), chapter 4, 'The Catechism of Fear and the Cult of Death', pp. 78-97. Menache discusses the difference between early- and late-medieval perceptions of fear, arguing that in the early Middle Ages fear was a phenomenon felt collectively by society. As the Middle Ages progressed, however, society began to emphasize individual responsibility. Growing economic development made people view the world as a more 'dear and familiar' place (p. 81), and the prospect of having to leave such a place at death promoted more individualized perceptions of fear. War, plague, famine, and social upheaval all represented threats to the world which late-medieval people had come to love, Menache argues. Also see Y. Tuan, Landscapes of Fear (Oxford, 1979), chapter 7, 'Fear in the Medieval World', pp. 73-86.

the Middle Ages in bright and cheerful colours, one scholar says, the dark lifestyle of medieval people should be highlighted:

Europeans in the Middle Ages were insecure to a degree that it is hard for us now to envisage... if the people of the Middle Ages feasted on color and beauty in their churches and festivities, they saw also utter drabness and filth in their daily surroundings; if they knew ecstasy and caught glimpses of heaven, they were far more familiar with toil and danger, acedia and fear... Premature deaths, epidemics, and violence gave life a special quality of excitement and stress... Poor health, bad food, and bad eating habits no doubt played tricks on the imagination, making it easier for a person to hallucinate, have nightmares, and see visions. Overeating among the rich and undernourishment among the poor surely militated against a balanced view of life.<sup>9</sup>

These statements may, in part, be true; but they are just as naive as the romantic view which they are trying to combat. They do argue against an idealized picture of the medieval period, but they only succeed in creating a further set of presuppositions which inhibit us from seeing a balanced view of fear in the Middle Ages. Viewpoints such as this are misleading, for they project our own 'enlightened' prejudices backwards through time. Famine and overeating are rife in the modern world, and the overwhelming number of people currently undergoing therapy for various insecurities indicates that medieval Europeans do not monopolize the range of human insecurities.

It is true that plague, famine, wars and other forms of social upheaval were undoubtedly causes for deep-seated fears and anxieties in the Middle Ages; but the medieval understanding of dread and its constituent objects, origins and responses was much more well-developed than statements such as those cited above would have us believe. The 'global anxiety' of which Delumeau speaks did incorporate 'labelled fears' such as the various fears he, Menache and Tuan mention in their studies. However, as real as these everyday fears may have been, underlying them was the belief that a person needed to organize and prioritize his or her anxieties not just in relation to their physical perception of danger or discomfort, but also according to fear's relative moral value. Plague, starvation, war, religious schism and other such threats were all considered valid objects of dread, but in terms of traditional medieval discourses of fear they were only very general examples of different types of dread. Medieval thinkers had categorized and labelled fear much more systematically and specifically long before the various fourteenth-century calamities referred to above began to effect medieval society. Medieval theologians and natural philosophers understood fear not just as an emotional response to physical harm or danger, they also recognized and classified different forms of dread according to their perceived spiritual and moral values. By analyzing how medieval authors understood and

9

Tuan, pp. 73-4.

wrote about fear as both a physical, emotional construct and a spiritual, moral concept we can begin to see how the fourteenth-century poet and audience of *Cleanness* and *Patience* might have interpreted and reacted to varying medieval interpretations of dread.

This dissertation's first chapter considers the development of medieval Latin philosophical and theological conceptualizations of dread. Although in the Middle Ages fear could be considered psychologically, underlying its emotional characteristics was the fact that understandings of dread were regulated fundamentally by religious discourse. The Bible, the text at the heart of so much of medieval life and thought, was full of verses concerning fear, many of which seemed to contradict each other explicitly. Some of the passages most frequently cited in medieval exegetical and theological works concerning fear reveal dread's inherently paradoxical nature. The notion of fear as a spiritual construct was firmly established by Isaiah 11:2-3 which listed fear as one of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit: 'And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, the spirit of counsel, and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge, and of godliness. And he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.' As virtuous qualities specifically infused by God into a person's soul, together these seven separate gifts formed a hierarchy, or ladder, which according to St. Thomas Aquinas 'disposed man to become readily mobile to divine inspiration.<sup>10</sup> Wisdom occupied the highest place in the hierarchy of the spiritual gifts, but without fear, the first rung on the ladder to perfection, a person could not hope to receive the subsequent gifts and thereby progress to perfection.<sup>11</sup>

In line with this interpretation of dread as the foundation for spiritual development and perfection was Psalm 110:10's definition of fear as 'the beginning of wisdom.' Proverbs 28:14 offered further support for the spiritual efficacy of dread, unequivocally stating, 'Blessed is the man that is always fearful,' while Proverbs 14:27 described the fear of God as 'a fountain of life [by which a person can] decline from the ruin of death.' In apparent contrast to all of these testimonies to dread's virtuous nature, however, was I John 4:18, one of the most popularly cited of all biblical references to fear. This verse plainly argued against dread's licitness by explaining that fear cannot exist in charity, and that,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Summa Theologiae, Blackfriars edition and translation, 60 vols. (London, 1964-81), 1a2ae 68, 1 (xxiv, 9). For a discussion of the historical background of medieval interpretations of and expositions on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit from the twelfth century to the time of Aquinas and his contemporaries, see O. Lottin, *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, 6 vols. in 2 pts. (Louvain, 1942-60), iii, pp. 329-456.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> See St. Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*, II, vii, 9-11, in *On Christian Doctrine*, tr. D. W. Robertson (Indianapolis, 1958), pp. 40-2. E. R. Hintz discusses Augustine's text and the steps to spiritual perfection in his book *Learning and Persuasion in the German Middle Ages* (New York and London, 1997), pp. 9-11.

'perfect charity casteth out fear, because fear hath pain.' There was no way that a person who experienced fear, the verse continued, could be 'perfected in charity.' Without the possibility of perfection, the spiritual wisdom necessary for salvation could not be acquired. Despite the seemingly insurmountable differences in emphasis and interpretation provided by the above passages, however, the Bible did supply the means by which these contradicting views could be reconciled. The doctrine promulgated by Matthew 10:28 mediated between the positive and negative views of fear by taking into account both the spiritual sub-text of the passages in support of fear's spiritual virtue and the negative connotations of fear underlying I John 4:18's condemnation of dread: 'And fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell.<sup>12</sup> This passage at one and the same time recognizes a variety of fears. First of all it acknowledges that physical danger can be feared, a type of dread which will come to be known in theological discourse as timor naturalis. In direct contrast to this form of dread, the verse calls upon the faithful to turn away from 'natural fear' and instead embrace the spiritual fear of God: the Gift of Fear (donum timoris) introduced in Isaiah 11:2-3. Should a person fail to subjugate physical concerns to spiritual dangers, the passage implies, he or she will transgress the proper order of spiritual life and will thus be committing a grievous sin. This voluntary choice to fear physically rather than spiritually was classified explicitly by medieval scholars as sinful dread (timor mundanus or timor humanus).<sup>13</sup> So, as we can see, Matthew 10:28 incorporated a number of different interpretations of dread. It harmonized the contrasting biblical interpretations of fear by differentiating between the strictly physical and temporal fear incompatible with charity, and the eternal, spiritual dread of God which leads a person to wisdom and blessedness.

The contradictory ways in which the Bible defined and discussed fear represented a body of thought which had to be clarified, and beginning with St. Augustine and continuing on through the patristic period, theologians began trying to make sense of dread. Like Matthew 10:28, they did so by classifying fear in terms of its relation to physical or spiritual concerns and motivations. The number of references to fear to be found in patristic writings, and used throughout all the theological texts, biblical commentaries and sermons contained in Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, is astounding. As R. W. Southern says

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> All references to the Bible have been taken from the Douai/Rheims translation of the Vulgate.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> All three types of fear, including their subdivision into further categories, will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 1.

in his brief examination of fear, dread had 'a place in all religious experience.<sup>14</sup> It would be impossible to analyze the development of theological opinions of fear across the entire range of patristic and medieval writings in a project of this size. I have chosen, therefore, to begin my investigation into the types of fear with which the poet of *Cleanness* and *Patience* may have been familiar by using the treatment of dread found in the text which set the stage for thirteenth- and fourteenth-century understandings of dread: Peter Lombard's well known and influential *Sententiae* (c. 1159). According to Southern, between the years 1100 and 1160 a number of theologians had thoroughly treated the subject of fear in relation to its various biblical interpretations.<sup>15</sup> Their collective work culminated in the Lombard's definitive treatment of fear in the third book of his *Sententiae*, an analysis which synthesized the various biblical and patristic *fontes* and their often discrepant understandings of fear.<sup>16</sup>

The Lombard begins his analysis of fear by briefly discussing the framework of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and noting fear's place in this system. After this he then divides fear into four specific categories - *timor mundanus sive humanus, timor servilis, timor initialis* and *timor castus sive filialis vel amicalis*, each of which represents a different step on the path toward spiritual perfection.<sup>17</sup> Later, he quickly introduces a final type, *timor naturalis* - a physical, or temporal, fear of death and pain inherently possessed by everyone.<sup>18</sup> The Lombard justifies his divisions by drawing upon biblical interpretations

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe (Oxford, 1995), p. 126. Southern briefly examines the development of a medieval discourse of fear as an example of how the scholastic process works (pp. 126-31). The 'problem of fear,' he says, represents 'scholastic debate at its most individual and its most general,' and the means by which theologians set about clarifying apparent biblical contradictions - 'verbal analysis' - reflected 'the most basic of all scholastic procedures' (p. 127).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Southern, p. 129. For a treatment of fear as it was conceived before the Lombard wrote his *Sentences*, see F. F. Seeburger, 'Humility, Maturity, and the Fear of God: Reflections on RB 7', *ABR* 46 (1995), 149-68. Seeburger discusses the Rule of St. Benedict's treatment of fear. Also see Hintz's book, *Learning and Persuasion*, for a discussion of fear in early medieval moral education. Professor A. Bernstein of the University of Arizona has also been doing valuable research on fear in the early Middle Ages. For example, at the 1999 International Medieval Congress, Kalamazoo, he presented a paper entitled 'Fear of Hell in Monastic Reflection from Cassian to Hildemar of Corbie'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae, ed. I. Brady, 2 vols. in 3 parts, Spicilegium Bonaventurianum 4-5 (Rome, 1971-1981), III, xxxiv (ii, 190-98). J. Bougerol states that the origins of the Sententiae are 'to be found in Scripture commentaries,' but they also included 'long extracts from the Glossae, not only to quote from the Fathers, but also to expound theological problems and their solution.' See 'The Church Fathers and the Sentences of Peter Lombard', in The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists, ed. I. Backus, 2 vols. (Leiden, New York and Koln, 1997), i, pp.113-64 (p. 160).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Peter Lombard, *Sententiae*, III, xxxiv, 4 (ii, 192-3). We will examine these different types of fear at greater length in Chapter 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Peter Lombard, *Sententiae*, III, xxxiv, 9 (ii, 198). *Timor naturalis* will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 1.

of dread such as those mentioned previously as well as upon patristic texts by authors such as Bede, Cassiodorus and, above all, St. Augustine. By analyzing a large number of contrasting statements concerning fear through structured dialectical argument, he attempted to come to a coherent understanding and ordering of fear's different qualities. The reconciliation and synthesis of biblical and patristic conceptualizations of dread which was the result of his efforts represented the last major step in the general development of a framework of fear. *Timor naturalis* became the generic label for everyday, reflexive forms of fear, while *timor mundanus sive humanus, timor servilis, timor initialis* and *timor castus sive filialis vel amicalis* became the standard names for the different levels of spiritual dread. This division of fear into 'natural' and 'spiritual' categories formed the conceptual foundation upon which all later medieval scholastic interpretations and adaptations of dread were to be built. But this does not mean that there was nothing left to say about fear. With the rise of the universities, the development of scholastic discourse and the influx of eastern learning in the thirteenth century, fear began to be interpreted in new and different ways.

An important part of this intellectual development was the influence which began to be exerted by newly-recovered Aristotelian thought and other works of natural philosophy. The process of this recovery was in its earliest stages shortly before the composition of the *Sententiae*; however, it did not affect the Lombard's treatment of dread which, as was noted above, only treated fear's natural qualities in passing and instead primarily focussed upon dread's existence as a spiritual construct. Thirteenth-century scholastic theologians accepted and followed the spiritual divisions of fear popularized by the Lombard, but the newly-translated Arabic and Greek scientific works added further detail to Latin perceptions of fear by promoting a more active and developed interest in its physical and emotional characteristics. *Timor naturalis* began to be seen as something more than simply the dread of physical death and pain, and soon, like its spiritual counterpart, 'natural fear' became a term which encompassed a number of constituent fears: *segnities, erubescentia, verecundia, admiratio, stupor* and *agonia.*<sup>19</sup> Coupled with the already well-established categorization of fear into spiritual divisions, this newly-elaborated physical framework helped expand the range of medieval understandings of dread.

Considering the fact that the main aim of this dissertation is to analyze fear's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> The Greek Father St. John Damascene's book *De fide orthodoxa* provided the specific titles for these new divisions, Bk. II, ch. 15. These types of fear will be discussed in detail in Chapter 1.

influence on and presence within the Middle English poems *Cleanness* and *Patience*, focussing upon Aristotle's *Poetics* might seem to be a good text with which to begin our look at the effect Aristotelian thought had on medieval conceptualizations of fear. Unfortunately, however, we must abandon this mode of inquiry almost before we begin, for, in fact, the *Poetics* was virtually unknown in the Middle Ages.<sup>20</sup> Only a small number of medieval Latin versions of the text survive. William of Moerbeke's translation comes down to us in two manuscripts, while the only other known edition, a text contained in the twenty-four extant copies of Hermann the German's version of the treatise, is not a translation of the *Poetics* at all, but a translation of the *Middle Commentary* on the *Poetics* by the Arabic scholar Averroes.<sup>21</sup> Despite the fact that Moerbeke's translation was, as A. J. Minnis describes it, 'impressively accurate,' for the most part it was ignored. When they did consider the *Poetics*, medieval thinkers tended to do so through the filter of Hermann's translation of Averroes's interpretation of the text. This, Minnis explains, allowed them to locate the *Poetics* 'within their hierarchies of the sciences and to relate it to long-established notions concerning the rhetorical methods and ethical aims of poetry.<sup>22</sup>

The treatment of fear found in the Averroistic *Poetics* centres upon its power to inspire people to imitate virtue and incite them to perform acts deserving of praise. Fear is promoted, the text explains, when stories of misery and misfortune are recounted. The tales must be convincing, and those listening to them are supposed to realize that they are less worthy than the suffering people in the story, a fact which inspires them to imagine themselves in similar unfortunate circumstances. This then gives birth to a fear which should drive them to avoid misfortune by performing virtuous actions.<sup>23</sup> Such a notion of fear sounds perfectly suited for moral and didactic purposes. However, because of their ignorance of the *Poetics* in both its Aristotelian and Averroistic forms, medieval theologians and preachers were not able to draw upon this interpretation. What little was

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> E. N. Tigerstedt notes that even in Classical Antiquity the *Poetics* was relatively unknown, 'Observations on the Reception of the Aristotelian *Poetics* in the Latin West', *Studies in the Renaissance* 15 (1968): 7-24 (p. 7). Also see, M. T. Herrick, *The* Poetics of Aristotle in England (New York, 1930, reprinted 1976). In his book, *Ideas and Forms of Tragedy from Aristotle to the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1993), H. A. Kelly discusses the medieval reception of the *Poetics*, arguing convincingly for the lack of the *Poetics*'s effect on the medieval understanding of tragedy.

For the number of surviving Latin manuscripts of the *Poetics*, as well as of the *Rhetoric* and the *Nicomachean Ethics* which will be discussed below, see B. G. Dod, 'Aristoteles Latinus', in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. N. Kretzmann, A. Kenny and J. Pinborg (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 45-79 (pp. 75-8).

Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c. 1100-1375: The Commentary Tradition, ed. A. J. Minnis and A. B. Scott, with the assistance of D. Wallace, revised edn. (Oxford, 1991), p. 279. See pp. 277-13.
 Minnis and Scott, ch. 11-14, pp. 302-5.

known of the *Poetics* was filtered through existing medieval modes of thought. Any influence it did have, according to Minnis, was exercised 'in extracts,' and when scholars quoted from it, they did so 'quite out of context.'<sup>24</sup>

A few extracts from the Averroistic Poetics which are relevant to a discussion of fear can be found in *florilegia* of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. For example, the Parvi flores, a collection of authoritative statements drawn from Aristotelian texts and compiled sometime between 1267 and 1325, includes one comment which explains that a person will not be moved to feel either fear or pity unless he or she believes what is being told.<sup>25</sup> Another *florilegium*, John de Fayt's mid-fourteenth century preacher's aid, the Tabula Moralium, contains an extract from Hermann's translation of Averroes's Middle Commentary on the Poetics that testifies to the important role fear plays in moral education: 'Therefore it is necessary for him who wishes to incite virtue that he place part of his 'representation' in things leading to sadness, dread and mercy.'<sup>26</sup> Related to this statement was another extract, specifically included under the entry for 'Timor,' which presents the interpretation of fear outlined in the previous paragraph.<sup>27</sup> Although these extracts do represent a certain degree of dissemination for a few of the ideas which are presented in the *Poetics*, the extent to which they can truly be called 'Aristotelian' is debatable. As we observed above, when the Poetics was quoted, its statements were often removed from their original context. Jacqueline Hamesse notes that *florilegia* such as the Parvi flores and the Tabula Moralium have one great fault: they place a limit on knowledge and deform the

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Minnis and Scott, p. 278. Minnis notes that insofar as it was influential, it was 'for the most part... used to the extent that it reinforced trends which were already well established and in which other sources, notably the pseudo-Dionysian discussions of imagery and symbolic language, figured far more largely' (p. 3).
 <sup>25</sup> Ed. L. Homoson, Lee Austoritates Aristotolic: Un floribae módiánal, átuda historigua at ádition.

Ed. J. Hamesse, Les Auctoritates Aristotelis: Un florilège médiéval, étude historique et édition critique (Louvain and Paris, 1974), p. 269. 'Quod quis non credit non movet ipsum, nec ad timendum, nec ad miserandum,' The popularity of this florilegium is witnessed by the fact that it survives in approximately 153 manuscripts (p. 12). Also see Hamesse's article, 'Les florilèges philosophiques du XIIIe au XVe siècle', in Les genres littéraires dans les sources théologiques et philosophiques médiévales: définition, critique et exploitation, Publications de l'Institut d'Études Médiévales, ser. 2, vol. 5 (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1982), pp. 181-91. For further background into florilegia, see the article by M. A. Rouse and R. H. Rouse in the same volume, 'Florilegia of Patristic Texts', pp. 165-80, and their book, Preachers, Florilegia and Sermons: Studies on the Manipulus florum of Thomas of Ireland (Toronto, 1979).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> W. F. Boggess, 'Aristotle's *Poetics* in the Fourteenth Century', *Studies in Philology* 67 (1970): 278-94 (p. 290). 'Necesse est ergo ei qui uult instigare ad uirtutes ut ponat partem representacionis in rebus inducentibus tristitiam formidinem et misericordiam.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> H. A. Kelly, 'Aristotle-Averroes-Alemannus on Tragedy', *Viator* 10 (1979): 161-209 (p. 177). 'Accidit quidem miseratio et compassio cum narratur miseria et calamitas incidens ei qui eam non meruit et indebita. Et formido quidem [et pavor] accidit ex horum narratione propter imaginationem nocumenti potius cadere debentis super eos qui indigniores ipsis sunt, scilicet auditores verbi qui se recognuscunt indigniores illis.' The *Tabula Moralium*, Kelly says, was composed between 1342 and 1346 and is extant in thirteen manuscripts. For Kelly's brief discussion of de Fayt, see pp. 176-78.

original authority's thought by concentrating their teaching on short phrases and rejecting certain passages deemed to be less important.<sup>28</sup> As we will see, in their effort to make their audiences face the idea of final judgment and the potential pains of hell, medieval preachers - as well as the poet of *Cleanness* and *Patience* - did use conceptualizations of fear similar to those forwarded by the above extracts. But they need not have drawn specifically upon the Averroistic *Poetics* which, aside from its limited use in *florilegia*, played no part in the development of medieval interpretations of fear. If we are to see any sure signs of Aristotle's direct influence upon medieval formulations of dread, then, we must instead look at texts such as the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Rhetoric* rather than the *Poetics*.

Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, which has much to say about fear, first appeared in the Latin west in an anonymous mid-thirteenth century translation of which only five copies survive. Three copies of Hermann the German's translation (*c*. 1256) are extant, while approximately 100 copies of the translation executed by William of Moerbeke, a Dominican colleague and contemporary of Aquinas, survive.<sup>29</sup> In spite of the relatively large number of surviving manuscripts containing it, medieval scholars never really used Aristotle's *Rhetoric* as a rhetorical textbook. As James J. Murphy has told us, it had very little influence on 'medieval derivatives of ancient rhetorical theory' such as the *ars praedicandi*,<sup>30</sup> but was instead studied and applied in terms of ethical and moral philosophy.<sup>31</sup> Of all the manuscripts Murphy recognizes as containing the *Rhetoric*, none include any other rhetorical treatises amongst their contents. In contrast, the *Ethics* can be found alongside the *Rhetoric* in sixty-nine separate copies, while in a further thirty-three editions it is accompanied by the pseudo-Aristotelian *Magna moralia* translated by Bartholomew of Messina (ca. 1258-66).<sup>32</sup> Such manuscript groupings clearly reveal the predominantly ethical interpretation of the *Rhetoric* by medieval scholars.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Les Auctoritates Aristotelis, p. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> See Dod, 'Aristoteles Latinus', pp. 75-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> We will be examining the rhetorical use of fear in the *ars praedicandi* in Chapter 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from St. Augustine to the Renaissance (Berkeley, 1974), p. 97.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 100. As a note of interest, Murphy also mentions that two manuscripts also contain the *Poetics*, while a further eight include Averroes's *Middle Commentary* on that text (p. 100, n. 41). For his discussion on the reception of the *Rhetoric*, see pp. 89-101. For a similar interpretation, see H. Caplan, 'Classical Rhetoric and the Mediaeval Theory of Preaching', in *Of Eloquence: Studies in Ancient and Medieval Rhetoric*, ed. A. King and H. North (Ithaca, NY and London, 1970), pp. 105-34 (p. 134).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> The first Latin commentary of the *Rhetoric*, written by Giles of Rome (*ca.* 1280), stresses rhetoric's connection to ethical behaviour and the pursuit of the common good. See Minnis and Scott, pp. 249, n. 145 and 281, n. 18. R. McKeon notes that Giles 'locates rhetoric midway between the moral and the rational

At least in part because of this relation of the *Rhetoric* to ethics, numerous aspects of its treatment of fear found their way into medieval scholastic discussions of dread. Foremost among them is its definition of fear as 'a pain or disturbance due to a mental picture of some destructive or painful evil in the future. . . [which] is caused by whatever we feel has great power of destroying us, or of harming us in ways that tend to cause us great pain.<sup>34</sup> The origin of this definition was not based in Christian tradition; but this did not stop theologians from appropriating it for their own interpretations of dread. As we will see, scholars such as St. Thomas Aquinas used this description as the basis of their definition of *timor naturalis*,<sup>35</sup> but within its terms they also found much which was of use for their explanation of more spiritual forms of dread. At their hands, the unspecified 'painful future evil' of which the passage speaks became the more specific threats of judgment, damnation and the pain they promised, while the powerful agent capable of creating such fear could be understood as God himself.

Of the Aristotelian treatises which specifically dealt with fear, the *Nicomachean Ethics* was by far the most widely-disseminated. Forty-eight copies of an anonymous twelfth-century translation of books two and three survive, while an additional forty manuscripts of an anonymous early-thirteenth century translation of books two through ten exist. A recension executed by Robert Grosseteste comes down to us in thirty-three copies, and an anonymous revision of his work - perhaps by William of Moerbeke - can be found in 246 manuscripts. Finally, nine copies of Hermann the German's translation of Averroes's *Middle Commentary* on the *Ethics* survive.<sup>36</sup> In its earliest medieval Latin versions, the *Ethics* was not very influential and it was not until the second half of the fourteenth century that scholars included it amongst the syllabus of standard textbooks in the Arts faculties.<sup>37</sup> However, this is not to say that it was unknown and unused in the thirteenth century, for it did enjoy an increase in popularity after Grosseteste had completed

sciences' and sees it as being 'concerned with knowledge of certain common notions which bear on moral questions'. See 'Rhetoric in the Middle Ages', in *Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern*, ed. R. J. Crane (Chicago, 1952), pp. 260-96 (pp. 292-93).

Book II, 5, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. and trans., R. McKeon (New York, 1941), p. 1389.
 Aquinas will use this definition to define fear in his *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae 41, 2; 41, 3; 41, 4 (xxi).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Dod, 'Aristoteles Latinus,' pp. 75-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> G. Wieland, 'The Reception and Interpretation of Aristotle's *Ethics*', in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 657-72 (p.657). D. Luscombe, however, argues that Aristotle's moral philosophy was taught by the end of the thirteenth century, and that *quaestiones* on the *Ethics* were being discussed at Oxford before 1300. See, 'The *Ethics* and the *Politics* in Britain in the Middle Ages', in *Aristotle in Britain During the Middle Ages*, ed. J. Marenbon, Société Internationale pour l'Étude de la Philosophie Médiévale, Recontres de Philosophie Médiévale 5 (Turnhout, 1996) pp. 337-49 (p. 341).

his translation of it in the mid-thirteenth century.<sup>38</sup>

The *Nicomachean Ethics* contributed largely to the interpretation of fear in the Middle Ages. For example, what the *Ethics* had to say about cowardice and the difference between laudable and culpable forms of fear greatly influenced medieval discussions of fear's moral value. As we will see in Chapter 1, fear could be divided into three general categories. It could be morally neutral, culpable or laudable; its different varieties assumed varying degrees of moral worth depending upon whether a person felt fear according to or against the dictates of reason. Fear, Aristotle said, could be either voluntary or involuntary. It was involuntary if its cause was due solely to circumstances outside and beyond a person's control and provided that a person did nothing to contribute to the frightening situation.<sup>39</sup> Dread became voluntary when it began to affect a person's freedom of action. The example the philosopher uses to illustrate this thought corresponds exactly to a situation that occurs in *Patience*:

Something of the sort happens also with regard to the throwing of goods overboard in a storm; for in the abstract no one throws goods away voluntarily, but on condition of its securing the safety of himself and his crew any sensible man does so. Such actions, then, are mixed, but are more like voluntary actions; for they are worthy of choice at the time when they are done, and the end of an action is relative to the occasion.<sup>40</sup>

Related to this explanation of voluntary and involuntary fearful actions is the *Ethic*'s later discussion of the implicit role of reason in assigning moral value to fear. It is 'right and noble' to fear some things, while failing to fear them is 'base.'<sup>41</sup> Particular moral faults occur, Aristotle wrote, when someone fears 'what one should not, another in fearing as one

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Dod, 'Aristoteles Latinus', p. 52. On the significance of this translation for confessors, see A. Murray, 'Confession as an Historical Source in the Thirteenth Century', in *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Richard William Southern*, ed. R. H. C. Davis and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (Oxford, 1981), pp. 275-322 (pp. 312-22). In addition to his version of the *Ethics* which eventually became the standard edition used in the Middle Ages, Grosseteste also translated and published a number of Greek commentaries on the text. See Wieland, p. 659. Charles Lohr's list of medieval Latin Aristotle commentaries bears witness to the large number of *Ethics* commentaries composed during the Middle Ages. See his catalogue, 'Medieval Latin Aristotle Commentaries', serialized in *Traditio* 23-4 and 26-30 (1967-68 and 1970-74). As. D. Luscombe states, Lohr's list 'seems to suggest a fairly continuous tradition of commentary upon the *Ethics* from at least the late-thirteenth century onwards,' see 'The *Ethics* and the *Politics* in Britain in the Middle Ages', p. 341.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Book III, 1, in McKeon, pp. 964-67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> *Ethics*, pp. 964-65. As we will see in our discussion of *Patience* in Chapter 4, the relative fears inspired by the storm's supernatural fury and the impending loss of life, personal goods and wealth faced by the sailors form a bipolar relationship illustrative of the divergent discourses of morally valueless physical fear and morally culpable or laudable spiritual forms of dread. The choice *Patience*'s sailors make has repercussions which are felt far beyond the mere temporal world. The deliberate, voluntary nature of their actions does not comment just upon the role of free will in the process of fear, it also reveals the importance of reason in determining how one should go about experiencing dread.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Book III, 6, pp. 974-75, 1115a.

should not, another in fearing when one should not.<sup>42</sup> Although such views of fear as presented in the *Poetics*, the *Rhetoric* and the *Nicomachean Ethics* stemmed from a different tradition than that which the Lombard drew upon to formulate his own discussion of dread in his *Sententiae*, medieval theologians nevertheless were able to use Aristotelian interpretations of dread for specifically Christian moral purposes.

Scholars such as Aquinas and Bonaventure based their exploration into the natural and supernatural qualities of dread upon the investigative framework set out by the Lombard's division of fear. However, in their efforts to further elaborate and categorize fear's different forms they were also explicitly influenced by the Aristotelian notion of classification found in the *Topics*:

The means whereby we are to become well supplied with reasonings are four: (1) the securing of propositions; (2) the power to distinguish in how many senses a particular expression is used; (3) the discovery of the differences of things; (4) the investigation of likeness.<sup>43</sup>

Medieval thinkers fulfilled each of these requirements by defining dread in its generality, determining the different ways in which the term 'fear' could be used, distinguishing between dread's various degrees and types by dividing fear into morally neutral, culpable and laudable hierarchies and the further subdivisions within each group, and, finally, by investigating the similarities between these various forms of dread.

Because overwhelming numbers of texts dealing with fear were written during this fertile period of scholastic thought, I have had to limit my enquiries to only a few representative texts. Two examples in particular, the commentaries on Peter Lombard's *Sententiae* composed by St. Thomas Aquinas (1253) and St. Bonaventure (1251), help bridge the gap between the Lombard's treatment of fear and later scholastic re-workings of the subject.<sup>44</sup> The writing of such commentaries was one of the major requirements of theological study in the later Middle Ages, and by choosing to look at these two texts not only are we able to see examples of how later theologians reacted to and interpreted the Lombard's authoritative text, we also can see how fear developed within the dialectical structures of two separate intellectual traditions: Aquinas's Christian Aristotelianism, and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Book III, 7, p. 976, 1115b.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> See McKeon, p. 198. For Aquinas's and Bonaventure's references to this text see, St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentum in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi*, *Opera Omnia* 25 vols. (Parma, 1852-73), III, xxxiv, 2, 2, 1, 2 (vii, 391a); and St. Bonaventure, *Commentaria in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi*, *Opera Omnia* 11 vols. (Quaracchi, 1882-1902), III, xxxiv, 2, 2, 1, (iii, 763a). Aquinas's and Bonaventure's commentaries on Peter Lombard's Sententiae hereafter will be referred to as 'In sententias'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> See the previous note for bibliographical information.

Bonaventure's more traditional Augustianism. Both scholars fundamentally say the same thing about fear, but the difference between their respective treatments of the subject can be illustrated by looking at how each addresses St. John Damascene's division of timor naturalis. Aquinas makes the Damascene's division of dread the central object of the first article of his commentary on Libri Sententiarum III, dist. 34. There are three articles in total: Aquinas essentially dedicates one third of his treatment of fear to reconciling the Lombard's spiritual understanding of dread with the Damascene's natural and physical In contrast, Bonaventure focusses almost entirely upon spiritual interpretation. conceptualizations of dread. He treats the subject of the Damascene's division of timor naturalis only briefly, addressing it not in an entire article as Aquinas does, but instead in a single dubium at the end of his analysis. Thus we can see clearly that he considers physical forms of fear to be of less importance than its spiritual counterparts. Each scholar, then, acknowledges both traditional Augustinian and natural philosophical interpretations of dread, but whereas Aquinas recognizes fear's physical characteristics as an important part of the overall concept of dread, Bonaventure concedes that they exist but only insofar as they are imperfect in comparison to spiritual dread.

These commentaries were written in the earlier stages of each scholar's intellectual career, so in addition to them I have also chosen to examine examples of their later, more mature thoughts on fear. In his Summa Theologiae (c. 1265-72), Aquinas continues to examine both fear's physical and spiritual characteristics. He discusses fear at various points throughout his work, but he treats it in greatest detail in four separate sections. In the first, 1a2ae 41-44, he deals with fear as a natural passion, or emotion. In the second, 1a2ae 68, he details and discusses fear's general place in the framework of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. He elaborates upon this general introduction of fear's place amongst the Gifts in 2a2ae 19, where he discusses the Gift of Fear and its spiritual qualities in exhaustive detail. Finally, in 2a2ae 125, he explains how and when fear can be considered a sin. He also refers to fear in his discussions on specific emotions such as shame and embarrassment, in terms of the Old and New Laws and in relation to the Beatitudes, Deadly Sins and virtues. The second Bonaventurian text which I have included in my survey, the Collationes de septem donis Spiritus sancti (1268),<sup>45</sup> may not be as academically wideranging, systematic, monumental or influential as Aquinas's Summa; but it does, nevertheless, help clarify certain theological and contextual points. In this text Bonaventure

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specifically discusses the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, but he ignores natural and physical varieties of dread, treating fear only in terms of its spiritual characteristics and never straying far from the biblical and patristic authorities he relied upon so heavily in his commentary on the Lombard's *Sententiae*. While Aquinas's popular *Summa* examines fear exhaustively and Bonaventure's less well-known *Collationes* look at it only one-dimensionally, both texts give us a chance to see how different preoccupations and interpretative traditions affected the thirteenth-century discussion and definition of fear.

We must be careful not to assume that the poet or audience of Cleanness and Patience possessed an intimate knowledge of scholastic texts such as these for, as Thomas Tentler says, there is 'a danger in mistaking the opinions of intellectuals for the understanding of ordinary curates and laymen.<sup>46</sup> In the second chapter of this dissertation I explore the way in which late-medieval teachers and preachers utilized formal theological interpretations of fear for their own pastoral purposes in their effort to inspire in their audiences a distinct sense of salutary, spiritual dread. Described by Sophia Menache as the 'Catechism of Fear' and by John Delumeau as the 'evangelism of fear' or 'shepherding of fear,' the medieval Church's attempt to promote dread in the hearts and minds of faithful Christians was a rhetorical exercise implicitly concerned with the competing discourses of worldly and spiritual fears and anxieties. As Menache and Delumeau explain, the Church formulated this rhetoric of fear, or 'modus timendi' as I like to call it, in order to combat society's increasing love for worldly life and all that came with it by making its members conscious of the guilt, pain and sorrow which were direct results of illicit and inordinate love of worldly health and wealth.<sup>47</sup> The effectiveness of this rhetorical tool depended upon a preacher's ability to redirect his audience's misplaced physical anxieties to a more laudable spiritual end. To do so he had to emphasize the transitoriness of temporal life and its dangers in contrast to the threat of eternal damnation. Scholastic texts did help provide the theoretical foundation for such a practice, but there were more intellectually-accessible sources which played a greater part in promoting the rhetorical use of dread.

Although they had much to say about fear, the specialized nature of scholastic texts

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation (Princeton, 1977), p. 51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Menache, *Vox Dei*, pp. 80-2. Delumeau, *Sin and Fear*, pp. 112-13 and 482 for the 'evangelism of fear,' and p. 321 for the 'shepherding of fear.' The rhetorical use of fear, Menache notes, became a fundamental part of medieval didactic discourse, and the Church sought to encourage feelings of dread not just by means of exhortatory sermons, but also through representations of the terrors and torments of judgment, death, hell and purgatory in media as wide-ranging as stained glass, embroidery, tapestry, engravings, woodcuts, sculpture, painting and, most importantly for our purposes, literature (p. 83).

such as those described above restricted their readership to an intellectual audience trained in the art of scientific discourse. Ordinary priests and preachers and the people to whom they ministered, in contrast, probably would not have been directly familiar with the treatments of fear to be found in works such as Aquinas's Summa or the Lombard's Sentences. But this does not mean that the ideas such texts presented were completely unknown outside formal scholastic circles. Other more general and less theoretical works such as encyclopaedias and biblical commentaries would have helped disseminate more abstract, scholastic interpretations of fear to a wider audience. According to Paul Olson, as works of spiritual exegesis both commentaries and encyclopaedias 'were as well known as books got.<sup>48</sup> John Fleming expresses a similar view, describing such encyclopaedic texts as 'books written for use in the world' outside strictly monastic, ascetic, or intellectual spheres.<sup>49</sup> Among the texts which I have used to examine the diffusion of the discourse of fear are biblical commentaries such as the twelfth-century Glossa ordinaria and the postillae of Hugh of St. Cher (1230's)<sup>50</sup> and Nicholas of Lyre (1322-39),<sup>51</sup> as well as standard medieval encyclopedic works and preacher's aids like William Peraldus's Summae virtutum ac vitiorum (before 1249/50),52 Vincent of Beauvais's Speculum Maius (midthirteenth century), the pseudo-Vincentian Speculum Morale (1310-25),<sup>53</sup> Rainier Jordan of Pisa's Pantheologia (c. 1333),<sup>54</sup> Stephen of Bourbon's Tractatus de diversis materiis praedicabilibus (c. 1261),<sup>55</sup> and John Bromyard's Summa Praedicantium (1330-48).<sup>56</sup>

Biblical commentary ranging from the *Glossa ordinaria*'s collection of patristic teaching to Hugh's and Nicholas's later exegesis helped present a clear synthesis of the different interpretations of fear to be found in the Bible, while theological encyclopaedias collected scholastic learning and summarized it for audiences which were educated but had less-specialized interests. In contrast to the speculative, disputative nature of scholastic texts, such exegetical and encyclopaedic works and preaching handbooks often dealt with

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> 'A Note on John Bromyard and Augustine's *Christian Doctrine'*, *English Language Notes* 3 (1966): 165-68, (p. 168).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> 'The friars and medieval English literature', in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. D. Wallace (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 349-75 (p. 357). See pp. 355-65 for an overview of the sermons and related literature which influenced the late-medieval English literary scene.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Opera Omnium in Universum Vetus, et Novum Testamentum, 8 vols. (Venice, 1732).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Biblia sacra cum glossis et postillis Nicoli Lyrani, 6 vols. (Lyon, 1545).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Summae virtutum ac vitiorum, 2 vols. (Antwerp, 1571).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Speculum quadruplex sive speculum maius, 4 vols. (Douai, 1624; reprinted Graz, 1964-65).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Pantheologiae summa universae theologicae veritatis, 2 vols. (Brescia, 1580).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Ed. A. Lecoy de la Marche, in Anecdotes Historiques Légendes et Apologues Tirés du Recueil Inédit d'Étienne de Bourbon (Paris, 1877), pp. 15-71.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Summa Praedicantium, 2 vols., (Venice, 1586).

the problem of fear on a more 'down-to-earth,' narrative level. Biblical commentary offered specific explanatory points in order to elucidate the words of Scripture, while authors like Stephen of Bourbon, Vincent of Beauvais, and John Bromyard provided straightforward explanations of technical theological opinions by presenting them in conjunction with entertaining and illustrative *exempla*. Such works were important mediators between the intellectual discourse of the scholastics and the more mundane, pastorally-orientated concerns of preachers and priests. By transmitting the authoritative conclusions of theological argument to a wider audience of clerics, biblical commentaries, encyclopaedias and preaching manuals also facilitated the dissemination of formal religious teaching to the laypeople in their care. Although it is impossible to say whether or not any of these texts were direct sources of *Cleanness* and *Patience*, they do - at the very least represent a system of thought and body of knowledge which was extremely common in late-medieval religious and didactic discourse.

The onset of the fourteenth century saw an increase in the dissemination of learned Latin theological ideas through the vernacular to a wider audience; hence, it seems reasonable to assume that a poet as well-versed in biblical and theological learning as the poet of *Cleanness* and *Patience* would have been familiar with traditional interpretations of fear.<sup>57</sup> In fact the poet explicitly tells his readers that he has 'herkned and herde of mony hy3e clerkez,' and that he himself has read 'resounez of ry3t' (*Cleanness*, ll. 193-94), a phrase Andrew and Waldron gloss as 'expositions of morality.<sup>58</sup> In his study of the *Gawain*-poet, H. L. Savage suggests that the poet had read widely in the subject of traditional theology and that he 'almost certainly' was familiar with at least some of Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* as well as a number of patristic writers.<sup>59</sup> It is also clear that he possessed a profound knowledge of Scripture and biblical commentaries. In order for us to understand and appreciate *Cleanness* and *Patience* fully, then, it is crucial that we examine them alongside the Latin theological writings which provided so much of their

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Standard theological understandings of dread were translated into Middle English in texts such as the Ayenbite of Inwyt, ed. P. Gradon, EETS OS 23 (London, 1965); The Book of Vices and Virtues, ed. W. N. Francis, EETS OS 217 (London, 1942); and Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God, ed. M. Connolly, EETS OS 303 (London, 1993). Traditional understandings of dread were also found outside the customary sphere of religious discourse in new modes of expression such as mysticism and visionary literature. See, for example, chapter 74 of Julian of Norwich's A Revelation of Love, ed. M. Glasscoe (Exeter, 1976).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> All citations from *Cleanness* and *Patience* are taken from *The Poems of the* Pearl *Manuscript*, ed. M. Andrew and R. A. Waldron (Exeter, 1987).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> The Gawain-Poet, p. 13.

conceptual, thematic and rhetorical discourses.<sup>60</sup> In the final two chapters of this dissertation we shall see exactly how the poet adapted and utilized theological interpretations of dread in order to fulfil specific rhetorical and didactic purposes.

Fear, as both an emotional construct and a theological discourse, can be found in all four poems of Cotton Nero A.X. For example, in *Pearl*, a poem largely about confronting and coping with loss, fear represents primarily the dreamer's grief at the passing of his daughter and his dread of continuing privation. After catching sight of the Pearl Maiden, the dreamer describes how his 'drede aros' in his fear that she might elude him before he has a chance to speak with her (181-88). The dreamer remains uncertain and frightened throughout the poem, trapped between his hope for an eternal reunion with his lost pearl and his fear that she is lost to him forever. Explicitly, the poet uses fear to characterize the dreamer's emotions. But implicit throughout the text is the notion that in order for the dreamer to regain his pearl he first must forsake this dread of privation and redirect his fear toward a less selfish, more spiritual end.<sup>61</sup>

Fear plays a much larger part in the thematic and narrative structure of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Indeed, according to the Green Knight himself, fear is the primary motivating force behind Gawain's adventure, for Morgan le Fay gave the Green Knight his form and sent him to Camelot for two specific reasons: to test the Round Table's pride (*surquidre*, 2457) and to 'haf greued Gaynour and gart hir to dy3e / With glopnyng of pat ilke gome pat gostlych speked' (2460-61). The poet does not elaborate upon Morgan's desire to frighten Guenevere to death, but the fact that he explicitly states that this was the purpose behind the Green Knight's challenge to Arthur gives fear an important place within the poem. On a more subtle level, fear, as we shall see later, was believed to be the root of humility and as such was considered the antidote to pride. By the end of the poem Gawain's own fear for his life has caused him to betray his *troth*. The Green Knight's discovery of this uncourteous act shames Gawain and, thus, effectively humbles the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Indeed, as A. J. Minnis argues, 'How can one possibly begin to ascertain what a major writer like Dante or Chaucer is doing to his source-text unless one is aware of how that text had been expounded and elaborated in medieval scholarship of a kind readily available to (and often demonstrably consulted by) the writer concerned?' *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Aldershot, 1988), p. x.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> A full treatment of how fear functions in *Pearl* has not yet been undertaken. Some discussion of related themes may be found in G. Roper, '*Pearl*, Penitence and the Recovery of the Self', *Chaucer Review* 28 (1993): 164-86; R. G. Arthur, 'The Day of Judgment Is Now: A Johannine Pattern in the Middle English *Pearl'*, *ABR* 38 (1987): 227-42; N. Stiller, 'The Transformation of the Physical in the Middle English *Pearl'*, *ES* 63 (1982): 402-9 and E. D. Kirk, 'The Anatomy of A Mourning: Reflections on the *Pearl* Dreamer', in *The Endless Knot: Essays on Old and Middle English in Honour of Marie Borroff*, ed. M. T. Tavormina and R. F. Yeager (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 215-225.

collective pride of Arthur's court.<sup>62</sup> But the way in which the poet uses dread is more complicated than this. Competing discourses of psychological, chivalric and religious codes of fear run throughout the poem. Although Gawain views his acceptance of the green girdle and his failure to present it to Bertilak according to the terms of their bargain as a breach of courtesy, the Green Knight sees the same events in an entirely different light. He chooses to interpret Gawain's actions psychologically, telling the shamed knight that his 'love of life' - implicitly his fear of death - makes any sin he may have committed less blameworthy ('Bot for 3e lufed your lyf - þe lasse I yow blame', 2368).<sup>63</sup>

Although he does employ particular discourses of fear in *Pearl* and *Sir Gawain and* the Green Knight, I have chosen to concentrate on their manuscript companions - Cleanness and Patience - because in them the poet utilizes dread in a much fuller way. In both of these poems fear becomes the conceptual foundation upon which are built the rhetorical exhortations to live cleanly and patiently which the poet aims at his audience. The poet creates a discourse of fear in each text which is at one and the same time both subtle and overt. Although ostensibly his purpose is to focus on and promote the virtues of cleanness and patience, he does so largely by emphasizing the part fear plays in the acquisition of each. The Speculum Christiani, a fourteenth-century Middle English didactic handbook, reveals how fundamental the display of a proper perception of fear was to the existence of cleanness and patience. In its discussion of the things which keep a man in cleanness, the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> For a recent discussion of the theme of pride in the poem, see M. Puhvel, 'Pride and Fall in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight', Neuphilologische Mitteilungen 97 (1996): 57-70.

The question of fear in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight has already been addressed to some extent, but much room for further exploration remains. For a discussion of fear as the motivation behind Gawain's 'untrawbe,' see J. Burrow, A Reading of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (London, 1965), pp. 133-36. Burrow explains Gawain's fear as an emotion which 'gives valid occasion both for extenuation ('love of life') and for blame ('cowardice')' (p. 135). Also see D. F. Hills, 'Gawain's Fault in SGGK', Review of English Studies 14 (1963): 124-31 and J. Burrow's response to this article, 'Cupiditas in SGGK: A Reply to D. F. Hills', Review of English Studies 15 (1964): p. 56. G. M. Shedd describes how the green girdle becomes an emblem of Gawain's fear: 'Notoriously inefficient as a protective device, the lace is actually the instrument of Gawain's fear; and it is not until adopted by him as a symbol of human vulnerability and weakness that it achieves a real worth, as a reminder of the truth about the nature of man,' in 'Knight in Tarnished Armour: The Meaning of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight', MLR 62 (1967): 3-13 (p. 13). Fear is also implicitly at work in the poem as an obfuscating agent which blurs the boundaries between seriousness and jest, T. McAlindon, 'Comedy and Terror in Middle English Literature: The Diabolical Game', MLR 60:3 (1963): 321-32. McAlindon notices in the poem 'a sardonic intermingling of grimness and jest,' and argues that the 'diabolical parodies the religious, and horror is ritualized in sportive forms' (p. 329). Other articles which take into account the presence of fear and emotions within the poem include L. Blenkner, 'Sin, Psychology, and the Structure of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight', Studies in Philology 74 (1977): pp. 354-87; J. S. Neaman, 'Sir Gawain's Covenant: Troth and Timor Mortis', Philological Quarterly 55 (1976): pp. 30-42; S. Manning, 'A Psychological Interpretation of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight', Criticism 6 (1964): 165-77; J. F. Kiteley, 'The Knight Who Cared for his Life', Anglia 79 (1962): 131-37; and R. L. Kindrick, 'Gawain's Ethics: Shame and Guilt in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight', Annuale Mediaevale 20 (1980): 5-32.

Speculum Christiani recommends that a person 'Haue in mynde the laste thynges, that es to sey deth and rewarde of synne and suche other dredful thinges.' If a person keeps these things in mind, it concludes, he or she will never sin.<sup>64</sup> As we shall see in our analysis of Cleanness, the poet bases his rhetorical strategy upon this very idea.<sup>65</sup> The poet's ultimate aim is to make his readers live clean lives, but in order to get them to do so he tries to inspire them to amend their sinful behaviour by instilling in them an intense fear of the consequences of sin: judgment and punishment. The Speculum Christiani also notes a link between fear and patience. Commenting upon the fourth commandment, it says, 'He that dredes god worschipes fadyr and moder and serues hem that begatte hym as lordes in werk and in word and in al pacience.<sup>66</sup> Although the passage speaks specifically about the relationship between a child and his or her earthly parents, it can also be understood metaphorically as signifying the ideal patient obedience every person owes to God. In our analysis of Patience we shall notice how Jonah refuses to endure hardship either in deed (he fears the physical hardship of the journey to Nineveh and the preaching he will have to perform once there) or in word (he fears to be called a false prophet by the penitent Ninevites). Only those characters who embrace the fear of God are truly patient. In the two poems, then, each scene which includes and incorporates theological and rhetorical discourses of dread becomes a potential site for spiritual transformation in which each individual reader is given the opportunity to turn away from impurity and impatience and instead embrace their opposites: cleanness and patience.

*Cleanness* and *Patience* can be read as complementary texts. They are biblical paraphrases which amplify their source material in order to fulfil similar rhetorical and didactic purposes. *Cleanness*, I argue, is a poem of demonstration which relies upon graphic imagery to shock its audience into an active fear of judgment and damnation. Throughout its various narratives, the poem provides its readers with specific examples of natural, sinful, and spiritual forms of dread, thereby illustrating which types of fear must be avoided and which should be pursued if cleanness is to be obtained. In this poem fear is static and unchanging. God's servants possess laudable spiritual dread while sinners

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Ed. G. Holmstedt, Speculum Christiani: A Middle English Religious Treatise of the Fourteenth Century, EETS OS 182 (London, 1933), p. 106.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> John Anderson notes that *Cleanness*'s rhetoric is 'characterised by explicitness, emphasis, reiteration, and opposition,' 'Rhetorical Strategies in *Cleanness* and *Patience'*, *Leeds Studies in English* NS 29 (1998): 9-17 (p. 11). Throughout the poem the poet will portray fear in explicit terms, emphasize and reiterate his evocation of it, and promote it by opposing descriptions of the punishment of those who do not fear God and the rewards of those who do.

<sup>66</sup> Speculum Christiani, p. 22.

display only natural and culpable forms of fear. The poem's audience must accept *Cleanness*'s portrayal of these immutable forms of fear and must choose between them. The choice is simple: fear sinfully and be damned or actively dread God and be saved. There can be no compromise between the two extremes.

Fear is equally important in Patience, but whereas Cleanness encourages its readers to fear punishment and dread God, Patience actually teaches the members of its audience how they can leave behind their natural and sinful anxieties and progress toward the full perfection of the fear of God. In this poem fear is not an unchanging emotion, but a dynamic process fundamental to the proper acquisition of patience and the virtues which rely upon it. Jonah, the character who should be God's obedient servant, actually fears sinfully. In contrast, the poem's pagans and sinners learn how to overcome their physical and sinful anxieties and instead begin to fear spiritually, thus usurping Jonah's role as God's faithful servant. Sinful and spiritual forms of dread are mutually exclusive, but by confusing the boundary between them - as established in Cleanness - Patience teaches its readers not only how to understand fear's different qualities but, more importantly, how to control them. Together Cleanness and Patience reflect the traditional, dialectical notions of dread held by the scholastic theologians as well as the exhortative and rhetorical interpretations of fear used in the didactic discourse of the later Middle Ages. As I hope to demonstrate in this dissertation, by acknowledging fear's fundamental thematic, narrative, rhetorical and structural importance in each poem, we can gain a greater understanding of how Cleanness and Patience may have been read by their fourteenthcentury audience.

#### Chapter 1:

# Competing discourses of dread: defining natural, sinful and spiritual forms of fear

The explicit and implicit discourses of fear which are apparent in Cleanness and Patience stemmed from a well-known medieval tradition of intellectual thought concerning dread, a tradition which developed continuously between the time of the early Church Fathers and the period in which these two Middle English poems were written. As we have noted already, apparently contradictory biblical passages concerning the qualities of fear made dread a frequently discussed topic. By the end of the thirteenth century, fear's basic definitions in the Latin west had been established. Theologians and scholastic thinkers agreed that fear could be seen as an affective act of either the sensitive or intellective order or as an act or a habit (habitus) which could be either morally good or evil. It was also recognized as one of the grace-given gifts of the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup> Because of the wide range of ways in which fear was understood, the concept of dread was subdivided into numerous categories. For example, in his 'bestselling' Summae virtutum ac vitiorum, William Peraldus explained that fear could be broken up into six different species: *timor naturalis*. timor humanus, timor mundanus, timor seruilis, timor initialis and timor filialis (also called castus or amicabilis). Often, a seventh type of dread, timor reverentialis, was added to the list.<sup>2</sup> My purpose here is not to offer an exhaustive analysis of these understandings of fear, for a complete analysis of the development of the different medieval discourses and interpretations of dread is beyond the scope of this chapter.<sup>3</sup> Rather, I am concerned with providing an introduction to the main streams of later medieval conceptualizations of fear. In this chapter I shall examine three main classifications of dread, namely natural fear, sinful fear and spiritually laudable dread. These categories each have their own specific qualities but they nevertheless remain bound together conceptually by a number of common

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> M. F. Manzanedo, 'El Temor Según Santo Tomás', *Studium: Revista de Filosofía y Teología* 34 (1994): 85-130, p. 88.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> VI, 1, 3 (i, 287v-89v). For the addition of *timor reverentialis* to this list see, for example, the *Speculum Morale*, I, 1, 26 (col. 78).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> In addition to Manzanedo's article, other recent studies which address the development of medieval interpretations of fear include, R. Quinto's articles, '*Timor* e *Timiditas*, Note di Lessicografia Tomista', *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica* 77 (1985): 387-410, and '*Timor Reverentialis* nella Lingua della Scolastica', *Bulletin du Cange: Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 48-9, for 1988-89 (1990): 103-45. Also see Seeburger, 'Humility, Maturity, and the Fear of God: Reflections on RB7'; and M. I. George, 'Philosophical Wonder as a Species of Fear: the Position of Thomas Aquinas', *Angelicum: Periodicum Trimestre Pontificae Studiorum* 72 (1995): 195-216.

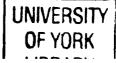
characteristics. Through discussion of these different varieties of dread we shall be better able to understand how and why the poet of *Cleanness* and *Patience* drew upon and utilized traditional interpretations of dread in the structural, rhetorical and thematic frameworks of his two poems.

In the Introduction we noted the influence which traditional Augustinian and newlyrecovered Aristotelian modes of interpretation had upon later medieval understandings of fear. Whereas Augustinianism denied the physical body any practical, beneficial or meaningful role in the process of salvation and spiritual elevation, Aristotelianism emphasized the useful contribution of a person's sensory faculties to spiritual development and the acquisition of grace. Both of these traditions of thought had much to do in determining what kinds of fear were natural, sinful or spiritually laudable. The fear with which the Augustinians were primarily concerned could be broken down into two predominant varieties: servile (timor servilis) and filial (timor filialis). The latter was a fear of God based on unselfish love and a whole-hearted acknowledgment of one's own inferiority in the face of God's overwhelming superiority. Servile fear, on the other hand, was a dread of God which arose not from any love for divine goodness or the benefits God could bestow, but from a fear of judgment, punishment and eternal damnation. Whereas filial fear was fear in its most spiritual, blameless and perfect sense, servile dread, although also spiritual, was closely linked to the physical realm and was good only insofar as it prepared the soul for perfection. Each of them relied to a greater or lesser extent on the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Scholars who drew upon newer Aristotelian notions of interpretation followed this Augustinian treatment of fear in that they recognized its spiritual value, but they also built upon it by emphasizing natural fear, its physical origins and characteristics and its links to these spiritual forms of dread. According to Aristotelian thought, the sensible knowledge timor naturalis drew upon directly influenced how a person employed his or her rational faculties, faculties which, in turn, could help a person understand spiritual revelation. Hence, Aristotelian interpretations of fear and its physical characteristics combined with Augustinianism's primarily spiritual view of dread, and together they offered a more coherent and complete interpretation of fear.

Between these notions of morally valueless, natural fear and morally laudable, spiritual dread was a third variety of dread: sinful fear. Included under this heading were *timor mundanus* and *timor humanus*. These worldly and human fears directly opposed *timor servilis* and *timor filialis*. Whereas the latter two represented properly-ordered perceptions of dread based upon a person's own recognition of his or her inherent inferiority in relation to God's superiority, *mundanus* and *humanus* represented fears which were disordered and ignored the requirements necessary in maintaining a faithful, obedient and beneficial relationship with God. In addition to their spiritual value (or lack thereof), they also could be considered in terms of *timor naturalis* because each was anchored firmly in the physical world. *Timor humanus* signified the inordinate fear of death and bodily harm to the exclusion of all other concerns, while *timor mundanus* involved excessive anxiety for the loss of material possessions. Both incorporated at one and the same time aspects of natural and spiritual forms of dread, although the nature and spirituality they typified was disordered and corrupt.

Natural, sinful and spiritual types of fear each represent unique medieval conceptualizations of dread, but within them fear can be subdivided still further. As we shall see throughout the remainder of this chapter, the division of these three categories into subsidiary types of dread modifies them in both subtle and obvious ways. It is important to remember that fear was not a static concept during the Middle Ages. Rather, it was flexible and existed in many forms; any single type of fear could interact with and influence any number of other expressions of dread. In my examinations of Cleanness and Patience, I shall show that the poet was, indeed, familiar with fear's natural, sinful and spiritual varieties and the fluidity which existed in the relationships between each. In the two poems he draws upon all three competing discourses of fear in order to help define his characters and their actions, as well as his texts' overall thematic contents and rhetorical modes of proceeding. In an effort to inspire in his readers a salutary understanding of dread which will help them realize what should and should not be feared, he depicts the natural fear felt by those facing imminent death, the culpable fear of sinners, and the laudable, spiritual dread of those who are faithful and obedient to God. Although, the different varieties of fear which the poet describes may have their own specific inspirations and motivations, they also share common features, features which facilitate his own use of fear as a single, coherent rhetorical discourse. Before examining the various forms and subdivisions of fear, then, it is important that we examine these shared aspects, revealing how, despite the multitude of interpretations available to medieval thinkers, different types of fear essentially relied upon similar origins and conditions.

At its most basic level, medieval thinkers understood fear as a particular passion, or emotion (*passio*). Broadly speaking, a passion, or emotion, was understood as an



affective reaction to an object perceived either sensibly or by the imagination. A passion's action began with a subject's perception of an object, continued with a determination of whether the object was pleasurable and desirable or painful and to be avoided, and culminated in the subject's active movement toward or away from the perceived object. There were two types of passion. The first, concupiscible passion, consisted of the perception of a sensory good or evil which could be either pleasurable or painful and simply gained or avoided. It included such emotions as sorrow, love and hatred. The second type, irascible passion, also arose from the perception of a sensory good or evil, but in its case the perceived objects could be obtained or avoided only with great difficulty. Fear fell under this category.<sup>4</sup> In his introduction to fear as a particular emotion, Aquinas defines dread as

an act of appetite which is properly concerned with the agreeable and disagreeable. It is, further, the act of a sense appetite, since it entails a physical reaction, namely contraction... Finally, fear has for its object what is disagreeable and overwhelmingly threatening.<sup>5</sup>

Inherent in this reaction is the fearful object's superiority in relation to the frightened subject's inferiority. Both the magnitude of a given threat (*magnitudo mali*) and the subject's own weakness (*ex debilitate timentis*) in the face of it played a role in promoting the feeling of fear.<sup>6</sup> Fear could arise either through an individual's lack of the necessary strength to resist a threat, or from the overwhelming power of the threat itself.<sup>7</sup> In either case, a person who fears assumes an inferior role in relation to whatever is acting as the object of dread. Whether it be death, bodily pain, inordinate concern for the loss of material goods, divine punishment, or separation from God, any frightening object, it was understood, assumes a position superior to the subject and causes an action common to every type of dread: flight from a threatening danger.

What characteristics, exactly, went into making an object fearful or creating a fearful situation? There were three main concepts related to every kind of fear: love, privation and evil. As Aquinas says in his commentary on the Lombard's *Sentences*, love

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> A complete listing of medieval discussions of the passions is impossible to include here. For an indepth and standard account of them see Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae 22-48 (xix-xxi). Questions 22-25 treat the passions generally, while questions 26-48 look at specific types of passion such as love (26-28), hatred (27), pleasure (31-34), pain and sorrow (35-39), hope and despair (40), fear (41-44), daring (45) and anger (46-48).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, 1a2ae 41, 1 (xxi, 27). The idea of contraction, or withdrawal, comes from Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics III, 7 and St. John Damascene's De fide orthodoxa, Bk. 2, Ch. 14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Speculum Morale I, 1, 27 (col. 87): 'Dicendum quod... obiectum timoris est malum imminens, quod non de facili repelli potest. Hoc autem ex duobus contingit, scilicet ex magnitudine mali, & ex debilitate timentis...'.

Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, 1a2ae 43, 2 (xxi, 59).

was the fundamental cause for all forms of fear. 'Every act of fear,' he says, 'proceeds from some type of love.'<sup>8</sup> Directly contingent upon the sensation or possession of love or a loved object were the notions of privation and evil. Everyone loves something, whether it be a love of life and physical health, a love of worldly goods or a love of God; and any threat of loss or privation to a person's possession of his or her loved objects constitutes an evil that had to be feared. Drawing upon Augustine, the anonymous *Speculum Morale* describes the connection between these three critical concepts and reveals their overall relevance to fear:

... indeed, fear looks to the evil object from which it flees and which is opposed to some loved good, and so, fear is born from love, whence Augustine says: 'there is no doubt that there is to be no other cause of the act of fearing (*metuendi*) than lest we lose that which we love, or what we have obtained, or that we do not obtain what is hoped for.'<sup>9</sup>

Love constitutes that which is good or pleasurable, evil represents that which is disagreeable or painful, and privation signifies the action and effect of a threatening danger which a frightened person attempts to avoid. In their interactions with fear - no matter what the type - the three concepts become entangled and inseparable, working together to determine the physical and intellectual actions a person will take in his or her effort to avoid a perceived threat.

As we have seen, Aquinas broadly defines fear as a product of love. St. Bonaventure, in his commentary on the *Sentences*, also acknowledges love's fundamental part in the inspiration of fear, but treats the idea in more depth. Love, he says, could be classified according to three different values: it could be natural, libidinous or gratuitous.<sup>10</sup> Later in his commentary, he employs these same classifications to describe three distinct varieties of fear, noting that 'fear either arises from nature, or from libidinousness - or concupiscence - or from grace.'<sup>11</sup> Each type of love is responsible for a particular type of fear. Bonaventure's more detailed explanation amplifies Aquinas's general statement about dread and love by differentiating between types of love and the fear arising from them. Natural, sinful and spiritual fears arise from analogous loves: natural love, understood as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Aquinas, *In sententias* III, xxxiv, 2, 2, 2, (vii, 392b): '... omnis actus timoris ex aliquo amore procedit.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Speculum Morale I, 1, 28 (col. 103): '... timor enim per se & primo, respicit ad malum quod refugit, quod opponitur alicui bono amato, & sic per se timor nascitur ex amore, vnde dicit August. in lib. 83. quaestio: nullum dubium est, non aliam esse metuendi causam, quam ne illud quod amamus, aut amittamus adeptum, aut non adipiscamur, speratum.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Bonaventure, III, xxxiv, 2, 2 (iii, 757b): '... sed omnis amor aut est *naturalis*, aut *libidinosus*, aut *gratuitus*...'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Bonaventure, III, xxxiv, 2 (iii, 768b): 'Timor enim aut est ex natura, aut ex libidine sive concupiscentia, aut ex gratia.'

the love of life, inspires *timor naturalis* and its fear of death; libidinous love provides the foundation for illicit and inordinate sinful dread; and gratuitous love is responsible for a person's recognition of divine superiority and his or her consequent fearful obedience, reverence and faithfulness. The three types of love are the seeds from which each of the major types of fear and their sub-divisions grow.

All of these characteristics common to fear are apparent in both *Cleanness* and *Patience*. In the general terms outlined above, dread plays a large part in each of these texts as their poet utilizes a well-defined general understanding of fear to amplify their narratives, themes and lessons. It is easy to recognize that Jonah, Belshazzar, Lot and other characters within the poems experience dread, but it is also possible to determine exactly what specific types of dread they feel and how their reactions to them affect each poem's overall rhetorical and discursive contents and structures. We shall also be able to ascertain how the poet designs his active utilization of dread to inspire his audience to experience particular forms of fear itself. Before we do this however, we must first examine fear's more specific traits. In the following discussion I shall examine in detail the three main classifications of dread - natural, sinful and spiritual - and their peculiarities, as well as their mutual affinities. I will begin my exploration by looking at the type understood to be most common to everyone's experience: *timor naturalis*.

## I. Timor naturalis: the foundation of fear

A detailed understanding of natural fear, its various types and their effects will help us appreciate the poet's careful use of fear in *Cleanness* and *Patience*. The entire narrative, moralistic and didactic flow of *Patience* is set in motion by Jonah's physically-based fears, while the emotional and fearful reactions of the antediluvians, Sodomites and King Belshazzar in *Cleanness* become more didactically powerful and significant if we can see the traditions of fear that underlie the poet's characterization of each figure. Drawing upon Aristotle's definition of fear in his *Rhetoric*, *timor naturalis* was considered to be any dread of things which were 'disagreeable and corruptive, repulsive to one's natural desire for one's own existence.'<sup>12</sup> Peter Lombard defines it as that type of fear 'which is in everyone, in which death is feared and punishment dreaded.'<sup>13</sup> Unlike sinful and spiritual forms of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Aquinas, Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 41, 3 (xxi, 31). For Aristotle's definition, see Rhetoric, ed. McKeon, II, 5, p. 1389. See the Introduction above.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Sententiae III, xxxiv, 9 (ii, 198).

dread, proper natural fear had no moral value because it was understood as being reflexive. Natural fear, the Speculum Morale says, is 'neither meritorious nor demeritorious; it is indifferent because it is not subject to free will.'<sup>14</sup> However, as the Morale later reveals, this sense of dread, despite being morally neutral, not only provided the foundation for a large number of more specific physical fears, but also created the conceptual background by which fear could be understood in its sinful and spiritually laudable guises. Timor naturalis, it explains, 'is neither good nor evil in terms of morals, but is presupposed by both.'15 Both sinful and spiritually laudable senses of dread, it is clear, relied upon natural fear's general characteristics. Timor naturalis was antecedent to its morally valued counterparts and thus acted as the basis for many of the ways in which sinful and spiritual fear were later expressed and comprehended. Just as a person who fears naturally is concerned with death, so does a person who fears laudably dread death as well, the only difference being that when a person dreads spiritual and eternal death the fear of physical and temporal death is supplanted. Notions of sinful fear, as we shall see below, also relied on the objects of natural fear. But rather than being a reflexive fear of death and pain, culpable forms of dread consisted instead of voluntary choices to fear physical objects inordinately at the expense of more legitimate and frightening threats and dangers. But natural fear does not represent just the simple fear of death, or the common point of origin for sinful and spiritual fear; it also comprises a number of subsidiary types of dread and results in a variety of physical and intellectual effects.

### I.i. *Timor naturalis* and its effect on the body

Perhaps the greatest factor defining natural fear is its somatic effect on the body. According to medieval scientific thought, the body's adverse reaction to dread exemplifies the action fear was supposed to promote: the weaker subject's contraction, or flight, away from a stronger imminent and dangerous threat. This contraction originates in the subject's perception of a threatening evil and an accompanying 'consciousness of [his or her] own

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Speculum Morale, I, 1, 26 (col. 78): 'Timor naturalis, est quo naturaliter horret homo quicquid est naturae contrarium vel nociuum: iste non est meritorius, vel demeritorius, sed indifferens: quia non subjicitur libero arbitrio.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Speculum Morale I, 4, 2 (col. 589): '... timor naturalis non est bonus nec malus bonitate vel malitia morali, sed praesupponitur utrique.' Also see Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, xxxiii, 2a2ae 19, 2 (xxxiii, 49); xlii, 2a2ae 125, 1 (xlii, 63).

failing strength.<sup>16</sup> This perception of impending danger then results in the rapid withdrawal of bodily heat from one's corporeal members and its movement away from the heart and toward the 'lower regions' of the body,<sup>17</sup> a reaction which is signalled by a series of signs. First of all, the loss of heat causes the frightened person to grow pale, a loss of colour which denotes the cooling of the exterior portions of the body. John Trevisa's late fourteenth-century Middle English translation of Bartholomeus Anglicus's *De proprietatibus rerum* explains this phenomenon:

... pale colour is happiliche ygendred and comeb of drede, of swibe grete busynesse and of grete trauaile, and of obre causes by the whiche blood is ydrawe inward. And be body is pale and discoloured wiboute for skarsete of blood... And so by wibdrawynge of hoot blood, be skyn is discoloured wiboute...<sup>18</sup>

Following this retraction of heat, the next noticeable effect is the loss of the faculty of speech due to the proximity of the vocal chords to the heart and their consequent frigidity. The threatening dread creates a coldness so great that heat recedes even from the heart, ultimately promoting headlong flight away from the danger and resulting in the complete loss of physical strength.<sup>19</sup> All of this finally results in bodily trembling:

be cause of be bigynnynge of quakynge is defaute of be vertue bat meueb be brawnes ... bis vertu failleb bycause of yuel complexioun and for accidentis of be soule, as fro drede for be spiritis gedreb to be herte; berfore be membres drawib donwarde by hiere o[wen] wei3t and heuynes. And so for kynde hab not suffisaunte spiritis comynge togedres to reule be membres hit may not at be fulle holde be membris stedefastlich in hire owne place, and berfore folewib quakynge anon.<sup>20</sup>

Essentially, fear causes the body to shut itself down; uncontrollable shaking occurs as the loss of heat and spirit (*spiritum et calorem*) destroys the strength necessary to regulate movement. Aquinas's description of fear's physical effects offers more detail. After heat withdraws from the members and contracts toward the heart, he says, it continues to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 1a2ae 44, 1 (xxi, 63).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 1a2ae 44, 1 (xxi, 63).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa's translation of Bartholomeus Anglicus De Proprietatibus Rerum, ed. M. C. Seymour and colleagues, 2 vols (Oxford, 1975), XI, xiii (ii, p. 1286, ll. 17-20 and 24-25).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Rainier Jordan of Pisa, *Pantheologia, De timore*, Ch. 11, (ii, 1112b-1113a): 'Ubi etiam nota: quod timor facit pallentes, tacentes, fugientes. Cuius ratio est: quia spiritus, vel calor in timentibus ab exterioribus ad interiora retrahitur, quo subtracto removetur calor: et sic palledo relinquitur...Secundo timor facit tacentes: cuius ratio est: quia in timentibus sit motus interioris caloris et spiritum a corde ad inferior, et ideo timor contrariritur formationi vocis quae sit per emissionem spiritum ad superiora per os: propter quod timor non sinit formare vocem, et per consequens tacentes facit... Tertio timor facit fugientes. Cuius ratio est: quia in timentibus propter frigiditatem ingresantem (*sic*) spiritum et calorem; spiritus et calor a superioribus ad inferiora moventur: nec congregantur circa cor: sed magis recedunt a corde ex imaginatione defectus virtutis: et propter hoc timentes non prompte invadunt, sed magis refugiunt...'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> De proprietatibus rerum, VII, xii (i, p. 356, ll. 25-33). Trevisa amplifies his discussion of tremor in succeeding chapters. Chapter 13 (De spasmo) treats tremor's stronger counterpart, spasmus, while Chapter 14 (De paralisis vel remediis contra paralisim) concerns the opposite of tremor and spasmus: paralysis. For a discussion of literature and the 'accidents of the soul,' see G. Olson, Literature as Recreation in the Later Middle Ages (Ithaca, NY, 1982), especially pp. 40-55 and 57-64.

descend, moving toward the inferior portions of the subject's body. As this happens the body and heart become chilled. The voice begins to tremble due to the proximity of the vocal chords to the heart. Following this, the jaw shakes and the teeth start chattering. Next, the arms and hands begin to shake because of their connection to the chest, or seat of the heart. Finally, the quaking overcomes the body completely with the shaking of the legs and the knocking together of the knees.<sup>21</sup> When we come to our examinations of *Cleanness* and *Patience* we shall see that their poet was indebted to such descriptions of fear's effects, particularly in his portrayal of the terror Belshazzar feels upon seeing the disembodied hand and the Writing on the Wall.

## I.ii. Timor naturalis and its range of emotions

A number of distinct types of fear were included under the term *timor naturalis* or, as Bonaventure also calls it, *timor-passio*.<sup>22</sup> In interpreting natural fear, medieval scholars attributed to it a wide variety of inspirations and emotional characteristics which consisted of a combination of both physical reactions, such as those discussed above, and intellective responses to a variety of perceived threats. Included in St. John Damascene's *De fide orthodoxa*, and disseminated throughout later medieval scholastic thought by works such as Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*, the emotion of fear could be broken down into six individual classes: *segnities*, *erubescentia*, *verecundia*, *admiratio*, *stupor* and *agonia*.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 1a2ae 44, 3 (xxi, 69).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> See In sententias III, xxxiv, 2, 3 (iii, 769b).

<sup>23</sup> St. John Damascene, De fide orthodoxa, Bk. 2, ch. 15. Peter Lombard is silent on this topic, although both Aquinas and Bonaventure include these divisions of passion-fear in their commentaries on his Sentences. Aquinas analyzes the divisions in his Summa, 1a2ae 41, art. 4. Discussions on passion-fear also appear in the Speculum Morale I, 1, 26 (col. 77-8); in Rainier Jordan of Pisa's fourteenth-century encyclopedia, Pantheologia, De timore, ch. 11; and in William Peraldus's Summae virtutum ac vitiorum VI, 3, 3 (i, fol. 289r-289v). Although the Damascene is commonly acknowledged in medieval sources as being the creator of these divisions, a similar list of fears can be found in Cicero's Tusculan Disputations: 'Quae autem subiecta sunt sub metum, ea sic definiunt: pigritiam metum consequentis laboris pudorem metum sanguinem diffundentem ... terrorem metum concutientem, ex quo fit ut pudorem rubor, terrorem pallor et tremor et dentium crepitus consequatur, timorem metum mali appropinquantis; pavorem metum mentem loco moventem... exanimationem metum subsequentem et quasi comitem pavoris, conturbationem metum excutientem cogitata, formidinem metum permanentem', ed. and tr. J. E. King (Cambridge, MA and London, 1945), IV, viii, 19, pp. 346-49. Cicero's list also draws upon an older tradition (see n. 2, p. 346), and although his divisions do not correspond exactly to the Damascene's there are a number of similarities, notably between Cicero's pigritia, pudor, pavor, conturbatio and formido and the Damascene's segnities, verecundia, admiratio, stupor and agonia. The divisions in Cicero's work are, largely, all considered to be general synonyms for fear, whereas the Damascene's labels denote more specific and differentiated emotions and concepts.

*verecundia* both concerned the fear of disgrace; and *admiratio*, *stupor* and *agonia* all arose from the intellectual or imaginative perception of an object of great or unusual magnitude. Each of these six types differed from its companions in its own peculiar and specific way, but they all shared one common factor: they each impeded physical and intellectual activity.

Following the conditions set out concerning the relationship between a superior fearful object and its inferior fearing subject, these six varieties could be distinguished from each other due to the fact that while some were aroused by the magnitude of a threatening evil itself, others arose in part from a fearful person's own imperfections and weaknesses.<sup>24</sup> *Verecundia* and *erubescentia* arose from the threatening object, while *segnities, admiratio, stupor* and *agonia*, which were also reactions to external danger, stemmed in part from the subject's own inability to comprehend an impending evil.<sup>25</sup> As we already know, traditional definitions of dread maintained that an object of fear could be anything considered to be disagreeable and difficult to avoid. Its disagreeability could take two forms: first, it could rely on the magnitude of a fearful object and the amount of effort and work necessary for one to avoid it; second, it could depend upon a certain amount of disgrace felt as the result of one's actions.<sup>26</sup> In its first form, disagreeability inspired *segnities, admiratio, stupor* and *agonia*; in its second it promoted *erubescentia* and *verecundia*.

Segnities, admiratio, stupor and agonia were specifically related to each other in that all of them arose from a frightened person's own inability to deal with an impending threat. They all relied upon a person's perception of an external, threatening agent of great power, one which exceeded his or her capability to resist it and represented the means by which 'a disagreeable situation may become intractable.'<sup>27</sup> Segnities arose out of the fear of embarking upon a difficult task because of its overwhelming size or difficulty. Admiratio was born from the perception of an object of extraordinary magnitude, an object which was considered to be so great that the fearful subject would be unable to predict what its outcome or effect would be. Like admiratio, stupor took into account a frightening object's unpredictability, but it predominantly stemmed from the threatening danger's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Bonaventure, *In sententias* III, xxxiv, 2, 3 (iii, 770a): '... timore-passione aut timetur quod est vere timendum, aut... propter defectum a parte *timentis*.' Also see Aquinas, *In sententiam* III, xxvi, 1, 3 (vii, 281a): 'Similiter etiam timor distinguitur: quia malo difficili superanti facultatem timentis accidit aliquid dupliciter: vel ex parte ipsius mali, vel ex parte timentis.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Aquinas, *In sententias* III, xxvi, 1, 3 (iii, 281a-281b).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Aquinas, Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 41, 4 (xxi, 35).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Aquinas, Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 41, 4 (xxi, 35).

unprecedented strangeness. *Agonia*, finally arose because of the great misfortune, confusion and uncertainty promised by unexpected and unprecedented evils. In each of these cases, upon recognition of the fearsome object, a person lost the ability to function, or operate, either physically or mentally.<sup>28</sup>

According to traditional scholastic thought, proper physical and intellectual functioning or operation (*operatio*) depended upon two things: the principal agent, or soul, and the instrumental agent, or the physical members of the body.<sup>29</sup> If a defect was present in either it would be sufficient to impede any type of work. The body's physical functions could be disrupted directly by fear. The perception of a terrifying object, as we have seen, could result in the physical withdrawal of heat from the body's external limbs toward its internal regions and its heart. This loss of vital warmth then prevented the bodily members from working properly, thereby impeding their effective operation and the proper functioning of the instrumental agent.<sup>30</sup> However, the fearful apprehension of impending evil could also affect the principal agent. If a fear was thought to be particularly vehement it could disturb the proper function of reason and the will and thus impede the mind's operation.<sup>31</sup> Admiratio and stupor were understood particularly in their relation to their effect on intellectual action:

Fearing a defect, one who is amazed avoids giving judgment in the present about what he is marveling at, but he inquires about it in the future. One who is stupefied, however, fears both to judge the object of his fear in the present as well as to inquire after it in the future. Hence, *admiratio* is a beginning of philosophizing, but *stupor* is an impediment to philosophical consideration.<sup>32</sup>

Aquinas, *In sententias* III, xxxiv, 26, 1, 3 (vii, 281a-281b): 'Ex parte autem timentis sumuntur accidentales differentiae timoris hoc modo: quia terribile vel excedit facultatem timentis in agendo, et sic est *segnities*, vel *ignavia*, quae est timor futurae operationis, ut dicit Damascenus; vel in cognoscendo, et hoc tripliciter: vel propter cognoscibilis altitudinem, et sic est *admiratio* quae est timor ex magna imaginatione; vel propter ejus inconsuetudinem, et sic est *stupor*, qui est timor ex inassueta imaginatione; vel propter incertitudinem, et sic est *stupor*, qui est timor ex inassueta imaginatione; vel propter incertitudinem, et sic est *stupor*, qui est timor ex inassueta imaginatione; vel propter incertitudinem, et sic est *agonia*, quae est timor infortunii...'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Rainier Jordan of Pisa, *Pantheologia*, *De timore*, Ch. 13, (ii, 1113b): '... quod operatio exterior a duabus causatur scilicet ab agente principali, scilicet ab anima, et ab agente instrumentali, scilicet a membris corporis.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Aquinas, Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 44, 4 (xxi, 71).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Rainier Jordan of Pisa, *Pantheologia*, *De timore*, Ch. 13, (ii, 1113b): '... si est timor nimis vehemens, et excessivus, intantum quod rationem perturbat, tunc talis timor sic vehemens, et rationem perturbans impedit operationem ex parte mentis.' Also see Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 1a2ae 44, 4 (xxi, 71): '... if fear should develop to the point where it upsets reason, then even mental functioning will be disturbed.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Speculum Morale I, 1, 26 (col. 78): 'Admirans enim refugit in praesenti dare iudicium de eo quod miratur, timens defectum, sed in futurum inquirit. Stupens autem timet et in praesenti iudicare, et in futuro inquirere. Unde admiratio est principium philosophandi, sed stupor est philosophicae considerationis impedimentum.' The Speculum Morale's source is Aquinas's Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 41, 4, (xxi, 37). For further discussion of admiratio and stupor and Aquinas's discussion of them as specific types of fear, see George, 'Philosophical Wonder as a Species of Fear: the Position of Thomas Aquinas'.

*Admiratio* may ultimately be a spur toward cognitive action, but in its initial stages it was characterized by intellectual immobility. *Stupor*, on the other hand, resulted in the complete breakdown and paralysis of rational functioning. By crippling the principal agent and its cognitive powers, excessive fear also destroyed the instrumental agent's ability to function. *Segnities* primarily interfered with the body's external operation, Aquinas explained, by 'paralysing the very will to act,'<sup>33</sup> while *admiratio* and *stupor* disturbed the proper functioning of the intellect.<sup>34</sup> Because of its particular affinity with these types of dread, *agonia* could be understood as having similar disruptive effects on physical and intellectual operation. In this regard, mental and physical impediment are synonymous as, between them, *segnities*, *admiratio*, *stupor* and *agonia* all succeed in obfuscating a person's ability to function rationally or properly. As we shall see, the poet of *Cleanness* and *Patience* employs these understandings of fear - whether it be in Jonah's submission to *segnities*, his initial experience of *admiratio* in the whale's belly or the Sodomites' and Belshazzar's display of *stupor* and *agonia* - in his discursive and rhetorical uses of dread.

The final two fears included in the Damascene's six-fold division of natural fear, *erubescentia* and *verecundia*, arose primarily from an evil, threatening object and were thought to be disagreeable in that they were inspired by a feeling of disgrace contingent upon a person's self-perception of his or her own embarrassing or shameful actions. Specifically, *erubescentia* was a dread of embarrassment emanating from an act a person performs in the present and fears will be deemed disgraceful. *Verecundia* was also a fear of disgrace, but in this case it arose from the shame a person felt for a shameful act which had already been completed. While the four varieties of dread discussed in the previous paragraphs impeded intellectual and physical operation in a direct way by disrupting the principal and instrumental agents, *erubescentia* and *verecundia* also hindered action, but they did so by forcing a frightened person to consider his or her own actions. In his treatment of the Damascene's division of *timor-passio*, William Peraldus recognizes the influence and effect these two forms of fear can have on one's actions. Quoting the Damascene and Cicero respectively, Peraldus notes that *erubescentia*, 'is the best passion,'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 44, 4 (xxi, 71).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Speculum Morale I, 1, 26 (col. 78): 'Vnde potest dici quod sicut segnicies refugit laborem exterioris operationis; ita admiratio & stupor refugiunt difficultatem considerationis rei magnae & insolitae, siue sint bona siue mala; vt hoc modo se habeant stupor & admiratio ad actum intellectus, sicut segnicies ad exteriorem actum.' See Aquinas's Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 41, 4 (xxi, 37).

and that 'without *verecundia* nothing is able to be upright or honest.'<sup>35</sup> He refers to embarrassment and shame as separate emotions, as well as distinct parts of *timor naturalis*. Both are unpleasant to experience, and the fear of feeling them can influence a person's behaviour.

Analysis of these two fears, particularly *timor verecundiae*, might seem appropriate in a discussion of spiritually and morally laudable fear. It is worth noting Aquinas on this point, who wrote that although a fear of shame 'is a virtue in the broad sense' and is a praiseworthy emotion, it nevertheless 'is not consistent with perfection, since it is an anxiety about possible disgrace... [thus it] is not properly speaking a virtue, but falls short of its perfection.' It fails to be completely virtuous because it is an emotion rather than an ingrained habit, and 'is an impulse of feeling rather than an act of freedom, and therefore falls short of the true quality of virtue.'<sup>36</sup> The expectation of disgrace, then, can cause a person to 'avoid wicked courses [of action] from fear of vituperation.'.<sup>37</sup> If a person foresees that a particular action is likely to cause embarrassment or shame, he or she is more likely to avoid pursuing it. In this way, then, natural fear, in its relation to *erubescentia* and *verecundia*, affects a person's operative agency.

The main characteristic, then, of *timor naturalis* and its divisions is to be found in their relation to natural life and their effects on a person's physical and intellectual abilities. Each type is a reflexive response to any perceived danger to one's corporeal and temporal well-being. Because of its connection to the body and the temporal world, passion-fear - complete with its causes and effects - is predominantly related to a person's current physical life. But in spite of its overwhelming links to the world, it also provides the foundation for an understanding of spiritual notions of dread, be they culpable or laudable. As I have mentioned above, and will elaborate upon below, the fear of shame has definite links to spiritual and morally laudable dread, while some of natural fear's other aspects also interact specifically with sinful and spiritual fears. As we will see, sinful dread adopts passion-fear's natural framework and stresses its physical concerns to the irrational exclusion of all else, thereby corrupting it. At the same time, however, *timor-passio* is also inherently involved in the the Holy Spirit's gift of dread, a gift which acknowledges, builds upon and eventually transcends natural fear's temporal limits. In his commentary on the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Summae virtutum ac vitiorum, VI, 3, 3 (i, fol. 289r): 'De erubescentia, dicit Ioannes Damascenus, quod est optima passio... Sine verecundia nihil rectum esse potest, nihil honestum.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 144, 1 (xliii, 57-59).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 144, 2 (xliii, 61).

Lombard's *Sentences*, Aquinas adroitly sums up natural fear's central position within the wider context of dread: '... the given definition of [*timor naturalis*], according to the Damascene, unites all fears... since the names of the emotions are transferred from the affections of the sensitive part to the workings of the superior part...'.<sup>38</sup> In its widest and most encompassing aspects, *timor naturalis* functioned solely upon a temporal level but, as the above statement reveals and as we shall see below, the characteristics defining it were also implicit in the higher questions which determined fear's morality.

## II. Timor libidinosus: the culpability of fear

As we have seen above, at its most fundamental level fear was a natural passion common to everyone whose various forms constituted dread in its reflexive and morally valueless state. In discussing timor naturalis, Aquinas tells us that 'the object of fear is an evil which escapes us,' one which 'always originates from an outside source.'39 What he appears to be saying here is that, despite the fact that human weakness can contribute to the existence of fear, there is no active human agency in the inspiration of natural dread; a person can feel it only as a result of some external impetus. While this is largely true in the specific case of *timor naturalis* and its subsidiary types of dread, there did exist other varieties of fear which were not reflexive reactions to danger and which arose instead from a person's voluntary and habitual choice to fear some threats more than others. Shortly after making the above statement, Aquinas adds to it, noting that fear 'originates partly from an outside source and partly comes within the scope of free will.<sup>40</sup> Although he appears to be contradicting himself here, what he is doing is recognizing that although fear will always arise in connection with some exterior object, free will and human cognition can play a part in determining how a particular fear is to be interpreted. Once an impending exterior evil has been sensed, a person can sometimes perform an act of will that defines or values the fear which arises in response to it, thus determining the moral motivation lying behind it. This use of the will can be classified as a 'habit' (habitus), 'a disposition inculcated by repeated acts under persistent or similar conditions.<sup>41</sup> It was understood that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> III, xxxiv, 2, 2, 1, 3 (vii, 391a-391b): 'Respondeo dicendum, quod definitio data, secundum Damascenum, convenit omni timori... quia nomina passionum a passionibus sensitivae partis ad operationes superioris partis transferuntur...'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 42, 3 (xxi, 47).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 42, 4 (xxi, 47).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Summa Theologiae (xxi, p. 187).

fear becomes a habit when recurring threatening conditions or situations provoke in someone the same - or similar - reactions to fearful objects each time they are encountered. This, then, resulted in the creation of a specific pattern of voluntary fearfulness, a pattern which could be either virtuous or vicious. This action of free will which Aquinas mentions, then, combined with the reflexive sensation of dread and determined whether a person's fear becomes either morally culpable or laudable.<sup>42</sup> I turn now to the habit of sinful fear and what differentiates it from both *timor naturalis* and spiritually laudable fears such as *timor filialis*.

A discussion of sinful fear ideally should consider every variety and form of moral transgression, for as a result of Original Sin physical and culpable varieties of fear were first introduced to the world. The primary result of Original Sin was the institution of the penalty of death, but concomitant to this was also the creation of fear. In his Sentences Peter Lombard implies that fear first arose from Adam's and Eve's sin, that it subsequently lay within everyone by being directly related to death, and that it could therefore be called either natural or human fear. It became humanity's common lot to dread the punishment handed down by God in response to this first sin. While this type of fear was understood to be a central characteristic of mankind's postlapsarian existence, timor naturalis had nothing to do with humanity's prelapsarian condition, the Lombard explains. Rather, it originated from an act which corrupted created nature, an act willfully perpetrated by man alone.<sup>43</sup> It was this active misuse of human reason and will in direct contrast to the dictates of God and created nature that made original sin such a heinous crime. So, then, from the time of this first transgression, fear had insinuated itself into the human condition. It existed within each person as a central part of his or her postlapsarian relationship with corrupted creation. But Original Sin had not only given birth to death and the natural fear which accompanied it. Through its improper use of reason and its disordered act of will it had also set out the conditions by which fear could become culpable.

According to medieval theology, a hierarchy of fears did exist, and each of its separate aspects were related to each other. *Timor naturalis*, with all its subdivisions,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> As we shall see in our discussion of *Patience* in Chapter 4, Jonah's voluntary and willful choice to dread physical pain at the expense of fearing God illustrates how a reflexive, natural fear of pain and death could be transformed into morally culpable dread.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Sententiae III, xxxiv, 9 (ii, 198): 'Potest timor ille dici naturalis sive humanus, qui omnibus hominibus inest, quo horretur mors ac formidatur poena. Et dicitur timor iste naturalis non quia accesserit homini ex natura secundum quod prius fuit instituta, quia non fuit iste timor concretus homini nec de bonis naturalibus; sed qui ex corrupta natura per peccatum omnibus advenit, cui corruptio inolevit tamquam esset naturalis. Et est iste timor effectus peccati, ut praedictum est.'

provided the foundation for morally laudable and culpable types of dread. Like *timor naturalis*, sinful fear relied upon love. However, whereas natural forms of fear were based upon properly ordered love and concern for physical life, sinful varieties of dread relied upon unregulated or disordered (*inordinata*) love and the improper use of reason it inspired. Inordinate love, Aquinas tells us, is a love 'rooted in this world for its [own] fulfillment; a love, then, which is always evil.' From this love, he continues, is born a particular type of sinful fear which 'issues from worldly love as from its evil source,' a fear which is 'always evil.'<sup>44</sup> Through this type of dread, a person 'wishes more to drive away justice or offend God than to lose temporal goods.'<sup>45</sup> At the heart of these statements is the understanding that a definite element of choice is involved in the creation of sinful dread. The disordered use of reason causes a person to disregard the proper limits of fear, a process of will that, by emphasizing inordinate love over its ordered, natural opposite, determines the relative moral value of culpable dread. Simply put, a combination of perverted love and reason was understood to be inherent in every sinful action.<sup>46</sup>

Considering that the rise of sinful fear depended upon the corruption of natural love, it is only reasonable to surmise that culpable dread signified a fundamental subversion of the dictates of *timor naturalis*. St. Bonaventure traced the rise of disordered love and fear to an emotion specifically related to *timor-passio*, arguing that inordinate fear arose from a type of moral laziness or idleness.<sup>47</sup> *Timor segnities*, as we have seen above, was one of the six types of *timor-passio* and, hence, could be considered to be without moral value. In Bonaventure's statement, however, we begin to see how certain aspects of natural fear which are usually considered to be morally neutral can, through the improper use of reason, be debased and held responsible for the rise of culpable dread. On the most basic of levels, sinful fear stemmed from laziness and idleness because a fear of losing immediately discernable and enjoyable temporal objects was thought to be easier than dreading the loss of intangible and uncertain spiritual benefits and blessings. To fear for one's spiritual wellbeing required a certain amount of effort not needed in sinful fear as well as the denial of physical luxuries and pleasures. It was far simpler to enjoy a comfortable physical life and to dread its loss than to fear the spiritual threat of temporally distant judgment and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 19, 3 (xxxiii, 53).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Speculum Morale I, 4, 2, (col. 591): '... quod homo plus vult iustitiam deferre, vel Deum offendere, quam temporalia bona perdere.'

Aquinas, Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 125, 1 (xlii, 63).
 In contentias III, xxxiv, 2, 1, 1 (iii, 755b); f, sie inc.

In sententias III, xxxiv, 2, 1, 1 (iii, 755b): '... sic inordinate timere est segnitiei et ignaviae...'.

damnation.<sup>48</sup> Consequently, *segnities*, in so far as it supplanted spiritual anxieties with physical concerns, came to epitomize the failure to regulate fear.

In Bonaventure's description of sinful fear's origins, then, the notion of segnities is removed from its customary physical and morally neutral sphere and transferred to the realm of guilt and merit. As we saw earlier, segnities had much in common with another form of timor-passio, stupor. Both had the power to disturb physical and intellectual action, and in terms of sinful fear, they could create an inordinate feeling of dread by arresting the function of the principal agent (the use of reason) and impeding the operation of the instrumental agent (physical action) which relied upon it. In his translation of De proprietatibus rerum, John Trevisa explains how, like segnities, stupor could be related to potential disordered fear and its accompanying spiritual problems. In it he cites the Damascene's traditional definition of stupor as the 'wondringe of a newe thinge,' but he elaborates upon this, explaining the passion in different ways as well: '... stupor is iclepid a disese of be soule ... stupor is blindenes of resoun, and ... comeb in tweye maners: for it comeb of perturbacioun of resoun bat takeb nou3t hede; oubir it comeb of superfluyte of humour bat stoppib and lettib be weyes of be spiritis...'.49 This double-barrelled explanation describes stupor's effects in terms of both the principal and instrumental agents. He mentions the obfuscation of reason and the clogging of the paths by which the vital spirits essential to proper functioning of both mind and body travel. All of this exactly corresponds with stupor's natural, morally valueless qualities and effects, but in these lines Trevisa also assigns *stupor* particular moral value by calling it 'a disease of the soul.' Although stupor retains its physical characteristics, this statement emphasizes that the 'blindness of reason' which it promotes can contribute to the supplanting of spiritual concerns by inferior, physical anxieties. This subversion is exactly that which forms the foundation of sinful fear.

So, then, although the impediment of reason which followed the perception of *segnities* and *stupor* often resulted in nothing more than passive, natural inactivity, it also could give rise to sinful acts. This, in turn, resulted in the exact opposite of *timor-passio*, or what Aquinas called disordered fear, or the emphasis of a lesser fear over a greater one. Disordered fear, he says, exists 'when appetite avoids particular things which reason

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> In Chapter 2 we shall see how medieval preachers and moralists attempted to displace and eradicate sinful fear by making the threat of Final Judgment and the pains of eternal damnation more immediately apparent to their audiences.

VII, vii (i, p. 350, ll. 24-32 and p. 351, ll. 6-7).

commands us to endure, so that we may not abandon other objectives which we should pursue.' This fear, he continues, 'is disordered and becomes sinful.'<sup>50</sup> Simply put, morally culpable dread considered objects of lesser worth to be more important than those of superior value. As long as a person was subject to this mistaken belief, he or she would be committing a sin. However, as Aquinas tells us, the degree of sinfulness could vary:

Now sometimes the disorder of fear lies only in the sense-appetite without the concurrence of the rational appetite. In this sense it cannot be mortal sin, but only venial. But sometimes this disorder of fear extends to the rational appetite, called the will, which avoids by free choice anything which is not according to reason. Such a disorder of fear is sometimes a mortal sin, sometimes venial. For if a man, fleeing from fear of danger of death or any other evil of this world, is ready to commit some forbidden act or to leave undone something which the divine law prescribes, such a fear is a mortal sin. Otherwise it will be a venial sin.<sup>51</sup>

Essentially, for a fear to be acutely sinful it had to go against the dictates of reason. After describing the difference between fear's mortal and venial sinfulness, Aquinas supplies a useful guide on how to prioritize one's fears, stating that 'reason judges that we ought to avoid some evils more than others.' 'Evils of the soul,' he says, 'are to be feared more than those of the body, and those of the body more than external ills.'<sup>52</sup> His statement represents the ideal hierarchy of fearful objects: external physical goods, such as property and wealth, should be feared the least, while the fear of death and physical harm was more commendable. Both, however, were surpassed by the need to fear spiritual dangers. As long as a person fled from a more fearful object ahead of its weaker counterparts, he or she could effectively avoid sin. Sinful fear sacrificed the spiritual for the physical, reducing God and the concerns of the soul to an inferior position while elevating imperfect, lesser physical concerns and their objects to a superior state.

We shall see this improper use of reason in our discussion of *Cleanness* and *Patience*, when we examine the obstinacy of the antediluvians, Sodomites and Belshazzar and discuss the motivation lying behind Jonah's flight from God. However, for the moment I would like to direct my attention elsewhere. Following the above hierarchical presentation of fearful objects, sinful fear could be divided into two separate, yet related, categories of dread, and it is to a discussion of these that I now turn.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 125, 1 (xlii, 63).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 125, 3 (xlii, 67-9).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 125, 4 (xlii, 71).

## II.i. Timor libidinosus: its divisions and defects

The disordered love which lay at the heart of sinful fear and its culpability caused a subversion of the proper hierarchy of fear. This subversion could be divided into two constituent types. The first, worldly fear (timor mundanus), was classified as an excessive fear of the deprivation of worldly possessions and wealth, and was thought to arise when a person either feared to lose temporal possessions which he or she already possessed or which were desired but not yet owned.<sup>53</sup> Because it focused explicitly upon physical wealth and possessions to the exclusion of all other concerns, worldly fear ran contrary to morally laudable spiritual behaviour, and thus led the fearer into a blatantly dishonourable relationship with God. A person who feared in this manner, as the Speculum Morale reveals, was just like a corrupt administrator who defrauds his own lord.<sup>54</sup> The second type of sinful dread, human fear (timor humanus), operated in a similar way, but instead of concentrating on material possessions and wealth it arose when a person feared excessively for his or her own life and bodily well-being. It was considered to be sinful because through it one effectively chose to sin rather than face the threat of death or physical pain.<sup>55</sup> Both of these subdivisions of sinful fear were perversions of timor naturalis and its own reflexive and morally valueless reactions to threatening temporal dangers.

While the particular objects and concerns of *timor mundanus* and *timor humanus* may differ from each other, as far as standard medieval interpretations of fear are concerned they both essentially represented the same thing: the morally culpable opposite of laudable spiritual dread. This is most easily illustrated by the fact that standard treatises ranging from the Lombard's *Sentences* and its subsequent commentaries to later *summae* and encyclopaedias commonly discuss these two types of dread, despite their sinfulness, as a single unit within the framework of the Gift of fear and its laudable constituents. The most likely explanation for this is simply that they did so in order to contrast them directly with the laudable fears which oppose them, thereby clarifying and amplifying spiritual fear's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Speculum Morale I, 1, 26 (col. 79): 'Timor mundanus est quo timet homo amittere temporalia quae habet, vel non consequi quae desiderat, et non habet...'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> I, 1, 26, (col. 79): 'Item timor mundanus est, quando aliquis propter timorem quem habet, ne deficiant ei temporalia Deum non timet amittere, ea vel iniuste acquirendo, vel retinendo; vt villicus iniquitatis, qui timens defectum horum, defraudabat Dominum suum.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Speculum Morale I, 1, 26 (col. 80): 'Timor humanus est, quando nimis timet homo pelli suae, et nascitur ex nimio amore corporis proprii, et vitae praesentis; iste est culpabilis, quia potius vellet homo peccare, quam vitam perdere, vel quam grauem dolorem corporis sustinere.'

value.<sup>56</sup> Worldly and human dread denied the spiritual focus and laudability of the Gift of fear. However, the essentially synonymous nature of *timor mundanus* and *timor humanus* was witnessed by more than just this. Although their respective objects technically did differ, the disparity between them was remedied by the familiar medieval understanding that exterior physical goods ultimately were believed to be an implicit part of a person's body:

Whether one turn[s] aside from God out of fear of losing worldly possessions or fear for one's own bodily integrity, the motivation is the same, since possessions are, in the final analysis, goods of the body. For this reason, both fears are here reckoned as the same, even though the evils which are feared in each case, as also the goods which are threatened, are really diverse. This diversity does account, however, for the specific differentiation of sins, though they all have in common the fact of turning one from God.<sup>57</sup>

Both *timor mundanus* and *timor humanus* were explicitly concerned with the physical world and, thus, were united in their corruption of *timor naturalis* and their opposition to morally laudable types of fear such as *timor servilis* and *timor filialis*. Further to this statement, in his earlier commentary on the Lombard's *Sentences*, Aquinas notes that, although *mundanus* and *humanus* differ from each other according to their 'species of nature,' they can nevertheless be 'placed in the same grade according to their relationship with merit and demerit.'<sup>58</sup> St. Bonaventure tells us much the same thing in his own commentary on the Lombard, stating that *mundanus* and *humanus* are identical in that they are 'plainly opposed' (*simpliciter oppositum*) to their spiritual counterparts.<sup>59</sup>

In addition to *timor mundanus* and *timor humanus* there were also three specific 'defects of fear:' 'There is within man a threefold condition, or variety, [of the defect of fear]: for certain men overflow with daring, others with fearing, and still others with not fearing at all.'<sup>60</sup> The first defect was called audacity and caused a person 'not to fear as right reason dictates,' thus impelling one who was subject to it to miscalculate the degree

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> For some definitions of *timor mundanus* and *timor humanus*, all of which echo the definitions supplied by the *Speculum Morale*, and their formulaic location alongside more morally perfect types of dread, see Peter Lombard's *Sententiarum* III, xxxiv, 4 (ii, 192-93); Bonaventure, *In sententias* III, xxxiv, 2, 2 (iii, 768b-769a); Aquinas, *In sententias* III, xxxiv, 2, 2, 1, 2 (vii, 391a-392a); Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 2a2ae 19, 2 (xxxiii, 47) and 19, 3 (xxxiii, 51-3); *Speculum Morale* I, 4, 2 (cols. 589-90); and Peraldus, *Summae virtutum ac vitiorum* VI, 3, 3 (i, fol. 287v).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 19, 2 (xxxiii, 51). For a later statement detailing the relationship between external physical goods and the physical body see Speculum Morale I, 4, 2 (col. 590).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> III, xxxiv, 2, 1, 3 (vii, 392a): '... timor mundanus secundum speciem naturae ab humano distinguitur; sed in eodem gradu ponuntur secundum propinquitatem ad meritum et demeritum...'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> III, xxxiv, 2, 2 (iii, 769a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Rainier Jordan of Pisa, *Pantheologia*, *De timore*, Ch. 10 (ii, 1111b): '... principaliter considere debemus timoris defectum. Est autem inter homines triplex conditio, vel varietas: nam quidam superabundant in audiendo, quidam in timendo: quidam in non timendo.'

of danger he or she faced.<sup>61</sup> It subverted the correct functioning of both natural and spiritual types of dread by mis-classifying threatening objects and preventing the arousal of properly ordered dread. The second defect, timidity, was an unrestricted fear that considered anything - or everything - as its cause. Because it represented unrestrained fear, it could be culpable because it placed too much emphasis on inferior objects which, although fearful in their own right, should be feared to a lesser degree. Timidity also encompassed things that should not be feared at all. By fearing things 'which are not licit,'62 the timid exposed themselves to greater threats which were more deserving of dread. The third defect, unfearfulness, completely denied the power or influence of any type of dread, be it natural, sinful or laudable. This failure to fear at all, while potentially positive in its denial of inordinate forms of dread, nevertheless was a repudiation of the proper function of reason and, thus, was a sin in and of itself. Unfearfulness could arise from three separate sources: excessive pride or passion, defective love or clouded reason.<sup>63</sup> Like the two branches of sinful fear, each of the above defects depended upon an inordinate degree of love and lack of reason. By sharing this common origin, these defects interacted with and modified both worldly and human fears, and in doing so contradicted the proper functions of natural and laudable senses of dread.

*Timor mundanus, timor humanus* and their related defects were equally sinful in that they emphasized the transitory nature of temporal and physical life at the expense of concern for eternal and spiritual existence. They were understood as a suspension, or overturning, of reason, a gross error of both judgment and action that displaced laudable fear and turned a person away from God. The *Glossa ordinaria*'s commentary on Exodus 15:12-16 reveals the consequences of caring too much for the physical world:

Indeed, the earth today devours those impious people who always think about, make, speak about, argue over and desire earthly things. They place their hope in the earth; they do not look to heaven and they do not think about the future. Neither do they fear the judgment

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> *Pantheologia, De timore,* Ch. 10 (ii, 1111b): 'Audax qui non metuit ut recta ratio dictat. Temerarius vero qui non aestimat periculum...'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Pantheologia, De timore, Ch. 10 (ii, 1111b): '... et tales vocantur timidi qui timent quae non oportet timere'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> Pantheologia, De timore, Ch. 10 (ii, 1112a): 'Quod autem aliquis nihil timeat, provenit ex triplici ratione, scilicet ex excessu elationis, ex defectu dilectionis, ex nubilo rationis.' Rainier goes on to describe each of these origins in further detail: 'Primo provenit ex excessu elationis, seu ex cordis elatione. Nam ex superbia cordis contingit, quod aliquis aestimat mala opposita bonis quae amat sibi euenire non posse: et ex hoc in se praesumit, et alios contemnit... Qui factus est ut neminem timeret... Secundo quod aliquis nihil timeat: procedit ex defectu amoris. Ex hoc enim quod aliquis bona temporalia, vel non diligit vel minus diligit prouenit ex hoc quod ea non timet amittere... Tertio defectus timoris prouenit ex nubilo rationis, scilicet ex rationis hebetatione, seu priuatione.'

of God nor do they desire his promises.<sup>64</sup>

Here worldly concerns pre-empt any proper contemplation of the spiritual. The imagery presented by this passage illustrates the sinners' preoccupation with the world and its physical concerns and the resultant failure to fear properly. But it also reveals that the objects of their disordered love and fear will be the very things by which they will be judged and destroyed. This imagery will resurface in Cleanness when the poet describes the subversion of Sodom and Gomorrah and its literal swallowing by hell, and in Patience when Jonah is swallowed by the whale and as he warns the Ninevites of their own impending destruction. As shall be argued below, the poet implicitly relies upon these notions of worldly and human fear and their related defects in his descriptions of sinners in order to accentuate the fearful virtue of his exemplary characters, thus encouraging his audience to reject their influence. However, he does not exhort his readers to abandon fear altogether or to embrace it unreservedly. Rather he urges the proper use of reason in choosing how one should fear. Audacity and unfearfulness, while good to the extent that they preclude sinful forms of fear, can become sinful in themselves in that they also displace any feeling of spiritually laudable dread. Timidity, while good from the standpoint that it induces a sense of humility and self-awareness of personal weakness, is also evil in that it exposes one to a multitude of improper fearful objects. In *Cleanness* and *Patience* the poet treads a fine educational and rhetorical line as he tries to mould his readers' perception and sensation of fear, ensuring that they are neither completely without fear nor in possession of too much dread. His purposeful and clear uses of different types of fear, then, are an attempt to make certain that his audience does not succumb to any of these defects.

## II.ii. The fight against timor mundanus and timor humanus: injunctions against fearing death and physical harm

As we have seen, the fear of death and those things which threaten human existence was natural and reflexive, if not morally laudable, forms of dread. But we have also seen how *timor naturalis* and its constituent parts could be perverted by an act of disordered will and thus have their inherent acceptability transformed into sinful culpability. Inordinate

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> *Biblia sacra*, marginal commentary, Exodus 15:12-16 (i, fol. 154va): 'Impios etiam hodie terra deuorat, qui semper de terra cogitant, terrena faciunt, de terra loquuntur, litigant, terram desiderant, in ea spem suam ponunt, ad caelum non respiciunt, futura non cogitant, iudicium dei non metuunt, nec promissa eius desiderant.'

love and the improper use of reason were to be avoided, but medieval discussions of fear did not rely only upon simple statements of this fact to express their point. They also provided detailed reasons why physical things should not be feared. Death, in so far as it was contrary to temporal, human life, could be an object of natural fear; but, more importantly, in moral and spiritual terms it also marked the passage from physical and temporal existence to eternal spiritual existence. As such, death was not to be feared beyond its physical associations. Thomas Aquinas notes that it is natural for a person to fear death and the loss of temporal goods, but he also clearly states that it is not always imperative that such a fear be felt.<sup>65</sup> This thought operates on a number of levels. First, the threat of death at times could be ignored, because when it was not imminent a person need not be concerned about dying. Even when death is immediately imminent, however, it was not always a cause of fear, for as Aquinas says, quoting Aristotle, 'those who are under sentence of death are not afraid, seeing that for them death is inescapably at hand. For a man to be afraid there must be some hope of rescue. Under these circumstances death becomes an object of present perception and, hence, a cause of sadness rather than fear.<sup>66</sup> Second, death need not be an object of intense fear because physical life and all that it comprises is, by its very nature, transient. Finally, although death is the common fate of everyone, it does not always loom, and therefore it need not be inordinately present in a person's immediate thoughts.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, disordered fears such as *timor humanus* were common.

In order to ensure people did not fear death excessively, lists of reasons why it should not be dreaded were drawn up. The *Speculum Morale* contains just such a list, one which contains seven specific reasons why death should not be feared accompanied by biblical citations and selected *exempla*. First of all, divine will dictates that death should not be feared, a precept supported by Matthew 10:28, 'fear ye not them that can kill the body.' Second, one should not fear death because of God's fidelity and liberality. The Lord gives people their bodies and all their possessions and promises to reward whomever

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 41, 2 (xxi, 43).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 41, 2 (xxi, 43).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Here we must differentiate between the fear of death in regard to explicitly physical concerns and the fear of death engendered by the *ars moriendi*, a penance-inspiring genre of writing and preaching which emphasized the necessity of contemplating one's own death. This rhetorical device became very popular in the later medieval period. Included in both vernacular and Latin devotional handbooks and sermons, the 'art of dying' promoted a fear of death only in that the end of physical existence represented the beginning of one's direct relationship with God. It stressed the need to die with a clean soul, and urged people to meditate upon the spiritual and eternal pains to be found in purgatory and hell. I will discuss the *ars moriendi* and fear's rhetorical place within it in the next chapter.

loses their physical goods on his account. Third, physical death is not to be dreaded because each person is faced with a choice: one can choose either to endure voluntarily and patiently the pains which accompany temporal life, or, if not, he or she will instead experience greater hardships and pains. As we shall see in our discussion of *Patience*, Jonah learns this lesson with difficulty. The fourth and fifth injunctions against fearing death excessively focus on the contrary natures of body and spirit. The body is merely an inherently worthless shell which houses the superior, precious spirit. The sixth reason concentrates on the limited duration and measured nature of physical pain. Contrary to the eternal pain of damnation, physical suffering is only momentary, and it can effect a person only if God allows it to. Finally, the seventh reason why mankind should not dread death is simply the immense reward which awaits the good soul after the termination of temporal life.<sup>68</sup>

This list of injunctions is significant in that it addresses the very things which lie behind *timor mundanus* and *timor humanus* and sinful fear at large. By placing more importance on the dictates of God and spiritual matters than on physical and bodily concerns, these seven injunctions counter inordinate worldly and human dread. These admonitions emphasize the fact that each person must make an individual choice between physical and spiritual faith and dread, and they reveal that it is better to forsake temporal goods and suffer their loss willingly than to forfeit eternal reward. As one of the *exempla* which accompanies this list teaches, the body is weak and vicious, while the soul is precious and cultivated:

There was a certain provost, to whom (it is said in parable) a certain king commended his daughter so that he might delicately guard her from dangers to her life. The provost placed his dog, which was restrained by a leash lest it rise up against her, as a guard over her to serve her in life in whatever way possible. Contrary to what was proper, the provost fattened his dog with every delight. As a result, the dog broke its chains and because of his hunger and misery struck down the girl, who was not strong enough to resist it, and killed her. The dog signifies the body, the daughter the soul, the king God, the provost man, and the chain represents obedience....<sup>69</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Speculum Morale I, 1, 26 (cols. 80-82): 'Et nota, quod septem rationibus, non sunt timendae poenae, vel mors corporis propter Deum illata. Prima ratio propter diuinam voluntatem quae hoc dicit, Nolite timere... Secvndo propter Dei fidelitatem & largitatem, a quo corpus & membra habemus, & qui debet & promisit ista cum multo praemio restituere, si propter eum amiserimus... Tertio propter eiusdem Domini seueritatem, quia aut trademus ei carnem puniendam propter ea quae fecit temporaliter; aut ipse puniet eam aeternaliter... Qvarto propter carnis contrarietatem quam habet cum spiritu... Qvinto propter animae pretiositatem, & corporis vilitatem... Sexto propter poenae aduersariae modicitatem & durationem, quia momentanea est virtute, qui nihil potest nisi permissa... Septimo propter praemij immensitatem.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Speculum Morale I, 1, 26 (col. 81): 'Item fuit quidam praepositus, cui (ut dicitur parabolice) quidam Rex commendavit filiam suam, ut eam delicate nutriret sub periculo vitae suae, et canem suum, qualitercunque in via servaret, et ligatum tenere, ne in filiam insurgeret. Qui econtrario ita canem omnibus delitiis impinguavit, et filiam ita fame et miseria afflixit, quod canis rupto vinculo, puellam non valentem

This *exemplum* depicts the body as nothing more than corrupt and bestial, while the spirit, in contrast, is noble, delicate, pure and closely related to God. Because of its inferior nature, the body should serve the soul, but its fundamental flaws necessitate the disciplined use of reason and its power to inspire obedient and proper behaviour. The body, by willfully feeding on sin and its attendant loves and fears, savages and kills the spirit.

Lists and *exempla* such as those discussed above employed a rhetorical discourse built upon competing discourses of dread. By comparing the inherent weakness, corruption and transitoriness of the physical body to the beautiful, delicate and eternal qualities of the soul, these exhortations to fear properly encouraged people to recognize and maintain the proper order and relationship between the flesh and the spirit. They combined the language of reward with the vocabulary of pain and punishment, thereby promoting both an active love and faithful dread of God. The seven injunctions against possessing an inordinate fear of death and the exemplary tale of what will happen should the desires of the body be fulfilled before the necessities of the soul provide concrete examples of how fear should be ordered. They acknowledge the propriety of *timor naturalis*, condemn the viciousness of *timor mundanus* and *timor humanus*, and thus prepare the way for more laudable forms of spiritual dread. They portray God and spiritual health as the highest objects of fear, and their description of divine generosity and severity hints at the different types of laudable fear to which my discussion now turns.

## III. Timor gratuitus: the necessity and laudability of spiritual fear

*Timor naturalis* was the morally valueless, reflexive perception of fear in response to death and physical pain. Like natural fear, sinful dread also stemmed from threats to temporal life, but it was morally culpable because it corrupted the proper order of fear by placing threats which reason dictated ought to be of little concern above and before objects which should be feared more. *Timor gratuitus*, in contrast, comprised a number of morally laudable forms of dread, all of which were inspired by a love and respect for God and denoted the subjugation of physical and temporal anxieties to spiritual and eternal concerns. Similar to *timor naturalis*, spiritual fear - the fear of God - also affected the heart and was accompanied by a certain coldness, a chill which displaced all other forms of fright, and thus superseded natural fear and eradicated the burning culpability of worldly and human

resistere interfecit. Canis iste est corpus, filia anima, Rex Deus, praepositus homo, vinculus est obedientia...'.

dread. William Peraldus commends it, adding that 'where fear exists, it is cold - cooling the flames of carnal and temporal desires.'<sup>70</sup> However, unlike natural fear, spiritual dread was not merely 'a momentary response to a passing situation.' Rather, it was a divinely infused spiritual gift which acted as the primary source which revealed God, in all his holiness, to mankind.<sup>71</sup> Consequently, the fear of God expressed through the perception of *timor gratuitus*, as numerous biblical passages attest, acted as the foundation of proper Christian life,<sup>72</sup> wisdom and knowledge.<sup>73</sup>

If spiritual dread did not focus upon the loss of physical well-being or worldly possessions, then how did it arise? Upon what was it based? At the beginning of his discussion of spiritually laudable fear, Thomas Aquinas attempts to answer these questions by asking whether or not God himself can be an object of fear. There is, he says, a 'double objective for fear' which is characterized by both 'the evil a person flees and the source whence such evil came.'<sup>74</sup> God could not be the cause of fear in the first instance because he is not in the least bit evil; he is 'goodness itself.' However, he could be an object of dread in the second instance because of the punishment he meted out to sinners. In his *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus Sancti*, St. Bonaventure enumerates the three major qualities lying behind God's fearsomeness: 'The fear of God first arises in us from a consideration of the loftiness of divine power; second, from a consideration of the acuteness of divine wisdom, and third, from the consideration of the severity of divine vengeance.'<sup>75</sup> His superior nature is inherent in the very names by which he is known, all of which reveal particular aspects of his majesty and fearsomeness:

Among the Hebrewes God is inempned by ten names. De firste is *El* obir *Skyros*, bat is 'strong', for none infirmite bereb hym down but he is suffision to make al bing perpetuel. De seconde name is *Eloe*... and is to menynge *timor* 'drede', for al bat worschippeth God schal drede. De bridde name is *Sabaoth*, bat is to menynge 'prince of ostes' *princeps* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Summae virtutum ac vitiorum VI, 3, 2 (i, 286r and 287r): 'Cor est vbi timor Domini est... Vbi timor est, frigus est, ardores desideriorum carnalium & secularium temperans.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Seeburger, 'Humility, Maturity, and the Fear of God', pp. 156-57.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Proverbs 14:27: 'The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to decline from the ruin of death'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Ecclesiasticus 1:16-20: 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and was created with the faithful in the womb, it walketh with chosen women, and is known with the just and faithful. The fear of the Lord is the religiousness of knowledge. Religiousness shall keep and justify the heart, it shall give joy and gladness. It shall go well with him that feareth the Lord, and in the days of his end he shall be blessed. To fear God is the fulness of wisdom, and fulness is from the fruits thereof', and 1:25: 'The root of wisdom is to fear the Lord: and the branches thereof are long-lived'. Also see Proverbs 1:7: 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom'; Psalms 110:10: 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom'; and Job 28:28: 'And he said to man: Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom: and to depart from evil, is understanding'.

Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 19, 1 (xxxiii, 43-45).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Collatio 2, 7 (v, 464a): 'Oritur autem timor Dei in nobis primo ex consideratione sublimitatis divinae potentiae, secundo, ex consideratione perspicacitatis divinae sapientiae, tertio, ex consideratione severitatis divinae vindictae.'

*exercituum*, for all þe oostis of heuen be subject to his lordschipe. Þe fourþe name is *Ielion* oþir *Ramachel*, þat is 'hi3e God', for he is hi3e lord... Þe fifte name is *Eyel*, þat is for 'God is wiþoute ende and passiþ not by, was and schal be'. The sixte name is *Adonay*, þat is 'lord', for al þe world is his lordshcipe. Þe seuenthe name is *Ya*, þat is 'þe hi3e spirit'... Þe ei3tþe name is *Tetragramaton*... and þey clepiþ hit *ineffabile*, for it tokeneþ God þat may not be nempned and preysid at þe fulle; nou3t þat name may nou3t be iseide, but þe þing þat þat name bitokeneth may nou3t be comprehendid at þe ful in mannes herte. Þe nynthe name is *Saday*, þat is 'almy3ti'... Þe tenthe name is *Eloym* and is þe name of þe trinite...<sup>76</sup>

God is here named in both physical and temporal, as well as in spiritual and eternal, terms. His appellations express his superiority on multiple levels; he is described as a powerful ruler, almighty, ineffable and eternal. Significantly, one of his names is dedicated solely to dread - he is fear itself. With all of these characteristics firmly delineated, thinking about divine power and wisdom make any defrauding of God - including that perpetrated by *timor mundanus* and *timor humanus* - pointless, thus directing one's thoughts to, and amplifying one's fear of, his power and rigorous sense of justice.

Although the fear of God arose in direct response to the apprehension of divine ineffability, a complete perception of morally laudable dread could only exist if a person also acknowledged his or her own inherent inferiority. Bonaventure writes that there are two uses or experiences (*usus*) of spiritual fear: one which arises when a person begins to worry out of an awareness of his or her own fragility, and another which came about as a result of the humiliation one felt upon consideration of this weakness in direct comparison to God's magnitude.<sup>77</sup> In order to reinforce God's superiority and amplify humanity's own inferiority, spiritual threats were often compared to temporal dangers. In his *summa* of vices and virtues, William Peraldus defines the extent of God's power by comparing it to that of an earthly prince. If an earthly king is to march against someone, he enjoins the obedience of his people and raises an army to serve him. How much more so, then, should mankind fear and respect God who moves the angelic powers to attend upon him as he judges the living and the dead?<sup>78</sup> Elsewhere in Peraldus's *summa* the intensity of the fires

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Trevisa, *De proprietatibus rerum*, I, xix (i, p. 53, l. 32 - p. 54, l. 19).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> In sententias III, xxxiv, 2, 2, 2 (iii, 765a): 'Et propterea potest adhuc aliter dici, quod duplex est usus ipsius timoris gratuiti: unus, inquam, quo cor hominis sollicitatur ex consideratione suae fragilitatis; alius, quo humiliatur ex consideratione suae parvitatis et divinae magnitudinis.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Summae virtutum ac vitiorum VI, 3, 4 (i, fol. 293v): 'Si rex terrenus processurus contra aliquem, expeditionem mandat in populo, dignitates omnes mouentur, exercitus excitatur, tota ciuitas seruet: quanto magis rege caelestis exigente iudicare viuos & mortuos, angelicae virtutes commouentur, terribiles ministri terribiliorem Dominum praecedentes?' In his *Pantheologia*, Rainier Jordan of Pisa includes a similar rhetorical argument, comparing God to both an earthly prince and a judge, ii, *De timore*, Ch. 3, fols. 1105.2-1106.1: 'Plus non timetur princeps, et eius praecepta melius obseruantur... sed princeps mundi non habet potestatem, nisi super exteriora, et super corpus. Deus autem super omnia habet potestatem non delegatam, non comissam, sed ordinariam. Ergo super omnia est timendus... Iudex non ille plus timetur de quo scitur quod nihil potest eum latere. Talis autem est Christus... Omnia nuda et aperta sunt oculis eius...'.

of hell is contrasted with those of earth: 'When someone cannot endure fire on the smallest part of a finger for one hour, how much greater will be the pain when the entire man shall be in eternal fire?'<sup>79</sup> In each case, the inferiority of the physical world - be it in relation to its powers or pains - is downplayed, and divine omnipotence and spiritual superiority are asserted strongly.

Humanity's impotence in the face of divine power made the fear of God mandatory, a fact exhorted by the *Glossa ordinaria*'s decree, 'Let all the world fear him.'<sup>80</sup> Everyone, whether young or old, was required to embrace the spirit of fear,<sup>81</sup> for by dreading God, a greater love for him could grow. Fear, Aquinas says, could accidentally lead to love by striking a spark of hope which might encourage a person to seek the benefits of the very power which earlier had been so terrifying.<sup>82</sup> Although this statement is found in Aquinas's discussion of *timor naturalis*, its teaching is equally applicable in terms of spiritual fear. In order to truly accept God - or, for that matter, be accepted by him - a person had to be contrite, or, in other words, he or she had to withdraw from sin and be repentant out of a love for God. Certain forms of *timor gratuitus* were instrumental in promoting the growth of contrition. Attrition (*attritio*), contrition's precursor, constituted the act of repentance out of a fear of judgment, punishment and eternal damnation. It was deemed to be imperfect in comparison to contrition,<sup>83</sup> but as we can see in the *Summa Theologiae*, the fear which lay at its heart ultimately led to the love necessary if a person was to be truly repentant. The *Summa* explains that there are numerous sources of penitence, of which two

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Summae virtutum ac vitiorum VI, 3, 4 (i, fol. 294v): 'Cum aliquis non posset sustinere ignem in minima parte digiti per vnam horam, quantus erit dolor quando totus homo erit in igne aeternaliter?'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> Biblia sacra, interlinear gloss, Esther 8:17, (iii, fol. 312v): 'Unde: Timeat eum omnis terra.' This comment carries extra weight here because of the context of the verse. In this chapter, King Assuerus sends decrees to all the peoples of his kingdom, exhorting the Jews to rise up against their enemies and take back what was theirs. Wherever his messages are received there is rejoicing and veneration and, 'great dread of the name of the Jews' falls upon everyone. The gloss specifically comments upon the word 'dread' in the verse, transferring its significance from King Assuerus's and the Jew's earthly agency to God's spiritual power.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> Deuteronomy 31:12-13 discusses the importance of spiritual fear: 'And the people being all assembled together, both men and women, children and strangers, that are within thy gates: that hearing they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and keep, and fulfil all the words of this law: That their children also, who now are ignorant, may hear, and fear the Lord their God...'. Nicholas of Lyre's literal gloss on the passage calls this fear an obligation, one which stretches itself from the present into the future. *Biblia sacra* (i, fol. 368va): 'Ista enim obligatio se extendebat ad futuros sicut ad praesentes.' In his *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus Sancti*, St. Bonaventure also mentions this obligation and stresses the notion that the fear of God is an offer to everyone. Coll. 2, 6 (v, 463b): '*Venite, filii, etc.* (Ps. 33:12). Verba ista sunt Prophetae David, in quibus invitat filios gratiae Dei et filios adoptionis ad addiscendam istam lectionem; et non solum invitat parvulos, sed etiam provectos et senes et decrepitos.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 43, 1 (xxi, 57).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> See Tentler's discussion of the attrition / contrition distinction in *Sin and Confession*, pp. 250-73.

are specifically related to fear. *Timor servilis*, a fear of punishment, is one, the other being *timor filialis*, a 'whereby a person freely offers amendment to God out of reverence for him.' The act of penitence, Aquinas's continuators conclude, 'comes from servile fear as from the initiating affective response pointing one to repentance; but from filial fear as from an immediate and proper principle.'<sup>84</sup> The fear of punishment causes a rejection of sin and eventually leads to a dread of God founded not upon a selfish fear of pain, but on a selfless love of divinity itself. According to Bonaventure, this growing love lessens the first *usus* of *timor gratuitus* by eradicating any anxieties stemming from personal weakness. At the same time it continuously strengthens the effect of dread's second *usus* by transforming fear into a morally virtuous habit that matches love's growth step for step.<sup>85</sup> The *Glossa ordinaria*'s exhortation to fear God - along with the love this dread should inspire - forms one of the fundamental rhetorical and didactic themes of *Cleanness* and *Patience*.

#### III.i. Timor gratuitus and its divisions

Whether because of his power to punish or his overwhelming majesty, God was understood to be the ultimate superior agent. Humanity was obliged to fear him, for both natural and supernatural laws demanded it. We have seen how fear could be considered as a reflexive, natural, morally valueless emotional response to impending physical danger, and we have also discussed how fear could typify particular forms of sin. In addition to these interpretations, fear was also deemed to be a concept of great spiritual power and merit. While *timor naturalis, timor mundanus* and *timor humanus* concentrated upon the physical self and its temporal concerns, *timor gratuitus* was a divinely-inspired spiritual fear which focussed upon fulfilling the obligation of obedience and submission owed by humanity to God. Spiritual fear was an integral part of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Isaiah 11:2-3 enumerates the Gifts, one of the most influential lists of spiritual treasures in the Christian tradition.<sup>86</sup> They consisted of wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> Summa Theologiae 3a 85, 5 (lx, 65). Timor servilis and timor filialis shall be discussed in more detail below.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> In sententias III, xxxiv, 2, 2, 2 (iii, 765a): 'Et primus usus minuitur, cum caritas perficitur... Alius vero usus crescit, caritate crescente, sicut et timoris habitus; unde quanto aliquis plus habet de spiritu amoris, tanto plus habet de spiritu timoris...'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> The Gifts of the Holy Spirit were frequent topics of discussion in a variety of both Latin and vernacular medieval treatises. They were discussed in works of scholastic theology, such as the Lombard's *Sentences*, its commentaries, and encyclopedic collections and *summae*. They were also treated in preaching handbooks; in fact Stephen of Bourbon's thirteenth-century *Tractatus de septem donis Spiritus Sancti* was organized according to the order of the seven gifts. Middle English instructional and devotional handbooks

knowledge, piety and, most importantly for this discussion, fear. Each supported the other and assisted in the perfection of virtuous life. According to Aquinas, the Gifts perfected 'the power of free choice in so far as it was a faculty of reason.' They were 'infused by God' and they 'disposed man to become readily mobile to divine inspiration.'<sup>87</sup> In the framework of the Gifts, fear became a spiritual construct and displaced both its natural and sinful analogues. Nicholas of Lyre's commentary on Isaiah 11:2-3 notes how the Gift of dread superseded *timor naturalis* and its reflexive reaction to danger and how it opposed the willful culpability of sinful dread:

Truly, [a person] is perfected against the inordinate desire for delightful things by the gift of fear. According to Proverbs 16, 'In the fear of the Lord one is removed from evil,' and so it is revealed that the gifts extend themselves to everything to which intellectual and moral virtues extend themselves.<sup>88</sup>

In this context, *timor gratuitus* is placed in direct opposition to *timor libidinosus* and its inordinate love and fear for physical things. As we have seen, the use of reason and the will is of the utmost importance in determining the relative merit of any action and is of particular importance in the moral and ethical evaluation of dread. The Gift of fear perfects the function of the will and the execution of free-choice, and as such, it was considered to be the beginning of wisdom.<sup>89</sup> In its position as the first of the seven Gifts, fear acts as the foundation of spiritual perfection and one of the primary means by which a virtuous person could resist the temptation of sin and thence come to a true and full knowledge of God. As Proverbs 14:27 says, 'The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to [withdraw] from the ruin of death.'

In spite of its positive attributes, spiritual dread was characterized by a certain duality, one which Aquinas, drawing upon Augustine, clearly delineates when he notes that as a spiritual construct dread 'comes first in sequence of need, [but] last in sequence of nobility.<sup>90</sup> Because fear concentrated almost exclusively upon evil, it was considered to

directed to both clergy and laity alike, such as *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, ed. W. N. Francis, EETS OS 217 (London, 1942), *The Ayenbite of Inwyt*, ed. P. Gradon, EETS OS 23 (London, 1965), and John Mirk's *Instructions for Parish Priests*, ed. E. Peacock, EETS OS 31 (London, 1868), all dealt with them at length. <sup>87</sup> Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 68, 1 (xxi, 9).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> Biblia Sacra, literal commentary, Isaiah 11:2-3 (iv, fol. 28va): 'Contra concupiscentiam vero inordinatam delectabilium perficitur per donum timoris. Secundum illud Pro. xvj: In timore domini declinatur a malo, et sic patet quod dona se extendunt ad omnia ad que se extendunt virtutes intellectuales et morales.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> For a number of biblical passages testifying to this relationship, see n. 73 above.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 19, 9 (xxxiii, 71). See Augustine, De Sermone Domini in Monte, I, 4, PL 34, col. 1234.

be 'less than a theological virtue.'<sup>91</sup> Medieval interpretations of the gift of fear explained this duality by attributing to it three distinct types of dread: *timor servilis, timor initialis* and *timor filialis.*<sup>92</sup> These different varieties existed because of the two-fold nature of the Holy Spirit's Gift. As Peter Lombard explained in his *Sentences*, two types of fear could be introduced by the Holy Spirit, one which exists only in perfect love, and another which does not. *Timor filialis* (also known as *timor castus* or *timor amicabilis*) arose from the former, and *timor servilis* from the latter.<sup>93</sup> Providing the intermediary step between the two was *timor initialis*, a type of fear inspired by both imperfect and perfect love. Each type represented a different level of acquired goodness and perfection based upon the working of the Holy Spirit in a person's soul. The Holy Spirit, Romans 8:15 says, functions by instilling either the spirit of servitude, based upon the wisdom of the flesh, or the spirit of adoption, based upon the wisdom of the spirit. Each distinct working of the spirit signified a different degree of fearful perfection, as the *Glossa ordinaria* states:

Therefore, there is one spirit which makes two fears. Indeed, it must be known that beyond natural fear, which is in everyone, there are four types of dread: *mundanus*, which is evil and does not come from God; *servilis*, which is good and from God, but is not sufficient; *initialis* which is good and sufficient; and *castus* [or *filialis*] which is good and perfecting.<sup>94</sup>

Together *servilis*, *initialis* and *castus* (or *filialis*) were opposed to sinful fear and created a unified conceptualization of spiritual dread. This conceptualization revealed the progression by which one could avoid *timor mundanus* and *timor humanus*, transcend the physicality of *timor naturalis* and obtain the blessings of complete wisdom which followed the acquisition of perfect spiritual dread. *Timor gratuitus* was, indeed, related to imperfect, physical varieties of fear. However, it transcended these imperfect forms of dread because it represented the perfection of the will and safeguarded reason from further defect. In the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> Speculum Morale I, 4, 2 (col. 594): '... timor autem principaliter respicit malum, cuius fugam importat: vnde aliquid minus est virtute Theologica.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup>Bonaventure, *In sententias* III, xxxiv, 2, 2, 3 (iii, 766b): '... timoris est intueri tria, videlicet *poenam*, ut fugiat; *offensam*, ut illam caveat; *Maiestatem summam*, ut illi subiaceat exhibendo reverentiam. Et secundum hoc triplex est doni timoris differentia: unus, qui principaliter aspicit *poenam*, et iste est *servilis*; alius vero, qui unum oculum habet ad poenam, sed tamen principaliorem habet ad offensam vitandam, et hic est *initialis*; tertius autem, qui unum oculum habet respectu *offensae vitandae*, alium vero respectu *reverentiae exhibendae*, et hic est *filialis*...'. I will be examining each of these varieties of dread in more detail below.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>93</sup> Sententiae III, xxxiv, 4, (ii, 193-94): 'Duo timores hic insinuatur: unus qui est in perfecta caritate, scilicet timor castus; alter qui non est in caritate, id est servilis...'. Bonaventure and Aquinas each address the two different 'spirits' in their commentaries on the Sentences. For Bonaventure see In sententias III, xxxiv, 2, 1, 1 (iii, 754a). For Aquinas's treatment of the topic see In sententias III, xxxiv, 2, 2, 2 (vii, 392b).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup> Biblia Sacra, Glossa ordinaria, marginal gloss, Romans 8:15 (vi, fol. 18va): 'Vnus ergo spiritus qui duos timore facit... Sciendum etiam praeter naturalem timorem, qui omnibus inest, quatuor esse timores, scilicet mundanus qui malus est, nec a deo. Et seruilis qui bonus est, et a deo, sed non sufficiens. Initialis qui bonus est et sufficiens. Et castus qui bonus est perficiens.'

following pages I shall examine the specific types of spiritual fear, note how they interacted with and built upon each other, and discuss how they superseded *timor naturalis* and opposed *timor libidinosus* through the very terms which defined these imperfect forms of dread.

## III.ii. Timor servilis: the bridge between natural and spiritual fear

Medieval sources traditionally defined *timor servilis* as a fear which converted one to God because of the extreme terror of hell and judgment: 'Through the fear of hell, a person keeps himself from sin... [in it] one does not fear losing eternal good, but rather fears to suffer evil.'<sup>95</sup> It was based upon a person's acknowledgment of God's power, but though it may have fulfilled the obligation to fear God, it did so imperfectly. Its underlying flaw lay in its understanding of judgment and spiritual punishment primarily in physical terms. Rather than fearing the privation of spiritual blessings and the separation from God that sin involved, a person who feared servilely only dreaded God's ability to punish and his power to inflict pain. Consequently, although *timor servilis* did comprise one part of the laudable gift of fear, it was spiritually defective and 'insufficient.'<sup>96</sup> William Peraldus even went so far as to call a person who feared servilely 'an enemy of justice.'<sup>97</sup>

A significant component of this imperfection was its focus on self-love: 'Servile fear is caused by a love of self, since it is fear of punishment as detrimental to one's own well-being.'<sup>98</sup> This love of self supplanted a properly ordered love of God and prevented a person from grasping the true, ideal loving nature of the spiritual relationship between divinity and humanity. Perfect spiritual fear required that one recognize the filial ties which bound humanity to God. Unfortunately it was mankind's lot to be blind to it:

De more he fadir loueh his child, he more busiliche he techih and chastiseh him and holdih him he more streit vndir chastisinge and lore. And hey he fadir loue hym most hit semeh hat he loueh him not, for he runtih and betih him ofte lest a drawe to euel maners and tacchis.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>95</sup> Peter Lombard, *Sententiae* III, xxxiv, 4 (ii, 193): '... cum per timorem gehennae continet se homo a peccato... non timore amittendi aeternum bonum quod non amat, sed timore patiendi malum quod formidat.' The Lombard takes his definition directly from Augustine's *Ennarratio in Psalmis* 127 (see *PL* 37, 1680). This becomes the standard definition of servile fear in the Middle Ages.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> Biblia Sacra, Glossa ordinaria, marginal gloss, Romans 8:15, (vi, fol. 18va): '... seruilis qui bonus est, et a deo, sed non sufficiens.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Summae virtutum ac vitiorum VI, 3, 3 (i, fol. 288r): 'Inimicus ergo iustitiae est, qui prae timore non peccat.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> Aquinas, Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 19, 6 (xxxiii, 61).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> Trevisa, De proprietatibus rerum, VI, xiv (i, p. 311, ll. 4-8).

According to this statement, the more a father loved his children, the more he had to punish them in order to educate them. A person who experienced servile fear noticed only God's severity, when in actuality divine stringency denoted the profound love God feels for humanity. *Servilis* blinded one to the true, charitable nature of that divinely judicious discipline and punishment which acted not only as a response to past transgressions, but also as an object lesson of spiritual edification. The threat of judgment and eternal punishment was a spur to goad sinners to behave well and actively love God. But people who feared servilely failed to perceive the love which lay behind the threat of punishment and, thus, the degree and merit of their fear of God were insufficient.

Related, and contributing, to this fear of punishment and pain was servile dread's strong connection to the material world and the terms of natural fear. In his commentary on the Lombard's discussion of servile dread, Bonaventure clearly notes the link between *timor servilis* and *timor naturalis*. However, by ascribing servile fear to a particular type of love, he also reveals that it was morally laudable in spite of its connection to natural forms of dread:

It is apparent that servile fear originates from love; but it must be said that it does not arise from libidinous love. Rather it comes from natural love. Indeed, natural love can be described in two ways: in one way, it is implanted by nature itself; in another way it comes from natural disposition and willful exercise acquired without the gift of grace. From such a love a sinner is able to love himself without sin and flee his evils, in either the present or the future. Out of such a love proceeds servile fear. If a man loves himself solely so that he may acquire health, as a result of this he shall fear to run into eternal torment; and such is an affection of love, although it is not from charity; it is able to be contrary to libidinous love... thus servile fear, when someone fears to rush into eternal torments, comes from love of eternal health and blessedness; and that love, in so much as it is from itself, is not culpable but is either natural or gratuitous from grace freely given, or gratuitous from grace making grace.<sup>100</sup>

Servile dread was by no means culpable, but neither was it perfect because it could arise from natural love and could share the same objects as natural fear. Peraldus's *Summae virtutum ac vitiorum* also notes the fundamental similarity between the two: '... not only is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>100</sup> In sententias III, xxxiv, 2, 1, 2 (iii, 758b): 'Ad illud quod obiicitur, quod timor servilis habet ortum ex amore; dicendum, quod non habet ortum ex amore*libidinoso*, sed potest habere ortum ex amore *naturali*. Amor enim *naturalis* dupliciter dicitur: uno modo, qui est cum ipsa *natura plantatus*; alio modo, qui est ex naturali affectu et voluntario exercitio *acquisitus* sine gratiae dono; et ex tali amore potest homo peccator etiam se ipsum sine peccato amare et mala sua fugere, sive praesentia sive futura; et ex tali amore timor servilis habet procedere. Si enim homo amat se ipsum ad hoc, ut acquirat salutem, et ex hoc timeat aeterna tormenta incurrere; talis affectio amoris, quamvis non sit ex caritate, potest esse absque libidine... sic timor servilis, cum quis timet incurrere aeterna tormenta, est ex amore aeternae salutis et beatitudinis; et iste amor, quantum est de se, non est culpabilis, sed est vel *naturalis*, vel *gratuitus* a gratia *gratis data*, vel *gratuitus* a gratia *gratum faciente*...'. Also see Aquinas, *In sententiam* III, xxxiv, 2, 2, 3 (vii, 393b): 'Ad secundum dicendum, quod actus timoris servilis quando bonus est, non est ex amore gratuito, neque ex amore libidinoso, sed ex amore naturali, quo quis vult consistentiam et bene esse sui subjecti; et ideo horret omnem poenam, sive quam experientia docet, sicut in naturali timore, sive quam fides demonstrat, sicut in servili.'

it called servile fear when someone abandons sin because of the fear of future punishment, but also when someone deserts sin because of a fear of temporal penalty.<sup>101</sup> At their most basic level, both types of fear were simply a flight from death and pain; but while *timor naturalis* fled physical threat, *timor servilis* avoided the spiritual death brought about by sin and its effects. In spite of this shared background, however, natural fear was still only reflexive and morally valueless, whereas servile fear involved an active choice to avoid transgression and pursue blessedness, a decision which was morally laudable. In Bonaventure's statement as quoted above, the very same self-love which devalues servile fear's spiritual status is acknowledged as being fundamental to what moral efficacy it does possess. *Timor servilis* may have owed much to natural love, but it also arose from the gift of grace. Thus it was worth more than *timor naturalis* because, by compelling a person to fear damnation, it indicated an awareness of the consequences of sin, was directly opposed to libidinous types of dread, and exemplified the voluntary choice to avoid things which might be detrimental to spiritual well-being.

According to the gloss on Proverbs 1:7, servile dread arose only after a person had come to recognize his or her sins.<sup>102</sup> Its primary contribution to the perfection of wisdom lay in its subsequent ability to promote guilt, the feelings of embarrassment and shame which accompanied it, and the desire for penitence. As we saw earlier in this chapter, *erubescentia* and *verecundia* were types of fear themselves, and though they were classified as parts of *timor-passio* they nevertheless had strong moral value. *Erubescentia* was called 'the best emotion,' and 'without *verecundia* nothing could be right or honest.'<sup>103</sup> The fact that *timor servilis* was so closely connected to these two natural forms of fear comes as no surprise in view of its other similarities with *timor naturalis*; and although this link further reveals servile dread's deficiency, it nevertheless represented an important step on the path toward salvation and spiritual perfection: fearful conversion. Shame, Aquinas wrote,

was not consistent with perfection, since it is an anxiety about possible disgrace... The fear [of it], then, is not properly speaking a virtue, but falls short of its perfection. Nevertheless generally speaking it is good, and since what is good in human acts and feelings is counted virtuous and praiseworthy, to be sensitive to shame is a virtue in the broad sense, and is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> VI, 3, 3, (i, fol. 288r): '... non solum vocatur timor seruilis quando aliquis dimittit peccare timore poenae futurae, sed quando dimitit peccare timore poenae temporalis...'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> Biblia Sacra, Glossa ordinaria, marginal gloss, Proverbs 1:7 (iii, fol. 309va): 'Seruilis, principium sapientiae, qui post errata sapere incipit, primo timore diuino corripitur ne puniatur.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> Peraldus, *Summae virtutum ac vitiorum* VI, 3, 3 (i, fol. 289r): 'De erubescentia, dicit Ioannes Damascenus, quod est optima passio... Sine verecundia nihil rectum esse potest, nihil honestum.' See above, note 33.

sometimes called a virtue, since it is a praiseworthy emotion... Sensibility to shame denotes an emotion rather than such a habit; it is an impulse of feeling rather than an act of freedom, and therefore falls short of the true quality of virtue.<sup>104</sup>

*Verecundia*, properly speaking, was a subdivision of *timor naturalis*, and was a reaction in the present to a shameful deed which had been committed in the past. Although the fear of disgrace was a natural passion, the feeling of guilt it promoted could help elicit an active dread of further disgrace and punishment and, hence, inspire the feeling of penitence.<sup>105</sup> A fear of shame, then, promoted the proper use of reason by inspiring a sinner to turn away from vice voluntarily and thus avoid the ignominy and punishment which resulted from disgraceful acts.

The poet of *Cleanness* and *Patience*, I shall argue below, attempts to inspire in his audience the sensation of servile dread. To do so he employs an explicitly frightening rhetorical discourse by using graphic images of violence and terror in order to illustrate the horrors of divine vengeance and the pains which accompany them. The prevalence of vivid descriptions of judgment and punishment in both poems testifies to the importance of servile dread in medieval exhortative and didactic discourse. *Timor servilis* may have been the gift of fear's 'lesser principle,'<sup>106</sup> and even though one who fears servilely may not yet love virtue and God and may only avoid evil things without desiring goodness, by fearing punishment and fleeing from sinful things a person implicitly corrects his or her own actions and begins to pursue spiritual perfection.<sup>107</sup> Although the existence of *timor servilis* would be 'impossible in the life of glory since [in it] there will no longer be the possibility of being punished,'<sup>108</sup> its close relationship with both the natural and spiritual worlds made it the instrument by which charity and more perfect types of spiritual dread were introduced into a person's soul.<sup>109</sup> *Timor servilis* was the 'door to conversion and the way to wisdom,'<sup>110</sup> but it remained for another variety of fear already inside the door, *timor* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 144, 1 (xliii, 57).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> Aquinas, Summa Theologiae 3a 85, 1 (lx, 51) and 3a 85, 5 (lx, 65).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>106</sup>Bonaventure, *In sententias* III, xxxiv, 2, 2, (iii, 769a): 'Aut per comparationem ad obiectum minus principale, et hoc quidem est malum poenae; et sic est timor servilis... aut est donum, tamen cum opposito doni, et sic est timor servilis...'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>107</sup> Peter Lombard, *Sententiae* III, xxxiv, 5 (ii, 195): '... si enim propter poenas times Deum, nondum amas quem sic times; non bona desideras, sed mala caves. Sed ex eo quia mala caves, corrigis te, et incipis bona desiderare.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> Aquinas, Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 67, 4 (xxiii, 235).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>109</sup> Sententiae III, xxxiv, 5 (ii, 194): 'Sicut videmus per setam introduci linum quando aliquid suitur: seta prius intrat; nisi exeat, non succedit linum; sic timor primo occupat mentem, non autem ibi remanet timor, quia ideo intravit, ut introduceret caritatem.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>110</sup> Biblia Sacra, Gloss ordinaria, interlinear gloss, Psalms 110:10 (iii, fol. 253v): 'Metus iudicii, ianua est conversionis et via ad sapientiam.'

initialis, to carry on the transformation of fear into a perfect spiritual construct.

## III.iii. Timor initialis: synthesizing servile and filial fear

How were the two different kinds of fear represented by the opposing spirits of servitude and adoption to be considered as part of the grace-given gift of fear? In the last section we saw that *timor servilis* was a dread with close connections to the natural world and its physical concerns. As we shall see later, *timor filialis*, on the other hand, denied all these things and concentrated upon the love of God and all things spiritual. In order to transcend a servile fear of punishment and approach the more perfect variety of filial, or chaste, dread, a person needed to pass through an intermediary classification of spiritual fear: *timor initialis*. Unlike the different types of *timor-passio*, the two main varieties of sinful dread, and the other types of spiritual fear, *timor initialis* did not comprise its own individual form of fear. It did constitute a specific category of fear, but it did not denote a separate type of dread with its own, unique object. Whereas all the other types of dread represented specific and formed fearful states, initial fear was characterized by fluidity and transformation. It marked a transitional phase in the development of spiritual dread, one in which elements of both *timor servilis* and *timor filialis* were present. *Timor initialis*, as Peter Lombard defined it, signified

that which is neither fully servile nor fully pure, but somewhere in between. It possesses something of servile dread as well as something of chaste fear. Indeed, it makes one serve [God] partly out of the fear of penalty, and partly from the love of justice. Through it, we both fear to be punished, and we fear to offend God... truly, initial fear is called the beginning of wisdom because it is at wisdom's very commencement, for when someone begins to have it, he begins to possess wisdom and charity.<sup>111</sup>

Conceptually, it immediately picked up where *timor servilis* ended. Even though it was related to the spirit of servility and resembled servile dread in its action, initial fear differed from it in essence.<sup>112</sup> *Timor initialis* was 'added over servile fear' and not only completed it but also expelled the servile aspects from the gift of dread.<sup>113</sup> Servile and initial fear both

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>111</sup> Sententiae III, xxxiv, 6 (ii, 196) and III, xxxiv, 7 (ii, 197): '... initialem timorem significavit, qui nec ex toto est servilis, nec ex toto castus, sed tamquam medius. Aliquid de servili, et aliquid de casto timore habet. Facit enim servire partim timore poenae, partim amore iustitiae; per quem timemus puniri, et timemus offendere... Initialis vero dicitur initium sapientiae, quia est in inchoata sapientia: quem cum quis habere incipit, sapientiam et caritatem habere incipit.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>112</sup> Aquinas, *In sententias* III, xxxiv, 2, 3, (vii, 395a): '... igitur dicendum, quod initialis non includit servilem secundum essentiam, sed inquantum concurrunt ad unum actum imperandum.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup>Bonaventure, *In sententias* III, xxxiv, 2, 1, 3 (iii, 761a-761b): 'Timor initialis addit supra servilem, et hoc quidem non solum *complendo*, verum etiam *distrahendo*... Et ideo sic supra ipsum addit, quod aliquid de ipso diminuit et expellit.'

looked back toward penalty and punishment as their common objects, but whereas these were the primary concerns of *timor servilis*, *timor initialis* principally considered the feeling of guilt which arose from sin and the separation from God that was its result. Thus, initial fear had more in common with chaste fear than with servile dread. *Timor initialis* differed from *timor filialis* not in its habit or essence, but only in its circumstances. It anchored itself in both categories by taking into account the possibility of punishment and the fear of offending and losing God. But it was one step higher than *timor servilis* in the moral hierarchy of fear because it dedicated most of its attention to the latter object, rather than the former.<sup>114</sup>

By its very nature *timor initialis* was an ambiguous conceptualization of dread; but it is this very ambiguity which made it such an important part of the Gift of Fear. Its absolute necessity is made clear by Peter Lombard's comparison of two of the most influential biblical references to fear. I John 4:18 states that the fear of God is something which will continue to exist eternally, while, counter to this, Psalms 110:10 maintains that true charity and the love of God destroy every element of dread. Where did the Gift of Fear stand in relation to these statements, and how could one rectify its inherent duality as the gift of servitude and the gift of adoption? In his *Sentences*, the Lombard metaphorically describes how this could be done:

If one breath can blows two pipes, cannot one spirit fill two hearts and inspire two tongues? ... Certainly there is a certain consonance, there is a certain concordance; but this requires a studious, not a lazy, listener. For behold, the Spirit of God moves two tongues, and we hear from one, *Fear is not in charity*; and from the other, *Chaste fear of the lord remains forever*. What is this? Do they disagree? No, they do not. Arouse your hearing! Listen to the melody! Not without cause is *chaste* added in this case and not in that. For there is a certain type of fear which is called chaste, and another type, however, which is not chaste. We must discern between these two fears, and we must perceive the harmony of the flutes.<sup>115</sup>

The distinction the Lombard is talking about, of course, is the difference between servile

Aquinas, In sententias III, xxxiv, 2, 2, 1 (vii, 392a): 'Servilis vero et initialis eamdem poenam respiciunt; sed servilis tamquam principale objectum, initialis autem non, sed magis malum culpae; unde magis se tenet cum casto timore quam cum servili.' Also see Rainier Jordan of Pisa's *Pantheologia, De timore*, Ch. 4 (ii, 1106a): 'Est autem timor initialis principaliter respectu separationis a deo; secundarius vero respectu punitionis; ita quod dexter oculus huius timoris est separari a deo sinister vero est timere poenas.' Peraldus's *Summae virtutum ac vitiorum* says much the same thing : 'Qui habet hunc timorem, timet puniri, & timet a Deo separari quem iam amat: sed timor separationis principalior est,' VI, 3, 3 (i, fol. 288v).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>115</sup> Sententiae III, xxxiv, 5 (ii, 195): 'Si unus flatus inflat duas tibias, non potest unus Spiritus implere duo corda et agitare duas linguas?... Immo, est ibi quaedam consonantia, est quaedam concordia; sed auditorem desiderat studiosum, non otiosum. Ecce movit duas linguas Spiritus Dei, et audivimus ex una: *Timor non est in charitate*; audivimus ex alia: *Timor Domini castus permanet in saeculum saeculi*. Quid est hoc? Dissonant? Non. Excute aures, intende melodiam. Non sine causa hic addidit *castus*, illic non addidit; qui est timor aliquis qui dicitur castus, est autem alius timor qui non dicitur castus. Discernamus istos duos timores, et intelligamus consonantiam tibiarum.'

and filial forms of dread. Although in this passage he never explicitly mentions *timor initialis* by name, he nonetheless captures its essence and action perfectly. With increasing charity, *timor servilis* will decrease and make room for the pure love which arouses filial fear. Initial fear facilitated the transition from one to the other. It was, as Aquinas wrote, 'characteristic of the state of beginners [in whom] the first signs of filial fear have begun to emerge as a result of the movements of charity, without there as yet being perfect filial fear, which comes with complete charity.'<sup>116</sup>

The concept of *timor initialis*, identified by Bonaventure as the Gift of Fear's 'object of greater principle,'<sup>117</sup> illuminated the process by which one could pass from one form of dread to another and facilitated an understanding of how two such apparently contradictory terms as *timor servilis* and *timor filialis* could both be considered Gifts of the Holy Spirit. *Timor initialis* - the melodious combination of imperfect and perfect forms of spiritual dread - was characterized by process and motion. It acknowledged and drew upon insufficient forms of fear and began to perfect them spiritually. Through it, physical love and anxiety disappeared and grace-given charity became the driving force behind dread. The completion of this transformation, however, was reached only once a person was fully subject to the conditions of filial dread.

### III.iv. Timor filialis: the spiritual perfection of fear

*Timor servilis* and *timor initialis*, though imperfect, were recognized as being distinct parts of the gift of fear, but *timor filialis* was the only type of dread which was completely the gift of grace. Filial dread had two specific objects. Like initial fear, it considered separation from God, but while this was its immediate precursor's primary concern, its own principal consideration was the reverence humanity owed to God.<sup>118</sup> Whereas *timor servilis* was considered the external beginning of wisdom and *timor initialis* its inward beginning, <sup>119</sup> *timor filialis* was the first actual manifestation of wisdom itself.<sup>120</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>116</sup> Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 19, 8 (xxxiii, 67).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup> In sententias III, xxxiv, 2, 2 (iii, 769a): 'Aut per comparationem ad obiectum magis principale, quod quidem est malum culpae, sive offensae; et sic est timor initialis.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>118</sup> Bonaventure, Sen. Com., Bk. 3, Dist. 34, Pt. 2, Art. 2, Q. 1, conc., p. 762b and 766b: '... timor vero filialis, etsi unum oculum habeat ad offensam, principaliorem tamen habet oculum ad Dei reverentiam... et hic est filialis; cuius etsi unus usus sit in refugiendo, ne separetur a Deo, alter excellentior et magis praecipuus est in reverendo Deum, resiliendo a summa Maiestate in propriam parvitatem.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>119</sup>Bonaventure, *In sententias* III, xxxiv, 2, 5 (iii, p. 770b): 'Dicendum, quod cum duplex sit initium [sapientiae], videlicet *intra*, vel *extra*; *initialis* denominatur a principio *intra*, quod est naturae principium intrinsecum; *servilis* autem habet rationem principii *extra*...'. Also see Hugh of St. Cher, *Postillae*,

Perfect spiritual dread was the ultimate submission of a person to God, a complete fulfillment of the obligation to fear him. It transcended the self-love and consequent fear of punishment represented by servile fear, and although it acknowledged initial fear's dread of separation from God, it surpassed it by immersing itself in the love of God and an awe-filled reverence of his divine nature. This alteration of fear's causes and objects transformed the inherent action of dread from flight to one of active pursuit and adherence. *Timor filialis* was the final, perfected culmination of the Holy Spirit's Gift of fear, an exhibition of veneration which marked a person's possession of spiritual wisdom and fully 'formed faith.'<sup>121</sup>

The fearful love which a person felt toward God enabled perfect spiritual dread to be classified in a number of specific ways, each of which reflected the different ways in which a person could adhere to God:

Indeed, just as there is one grace which makes one a son of God through adoption, so does it also make one a friend of God and pledges one's soul to him in marriage. Thus, indeed, it must be understood in this proposition that because of these reasons they are all one and the same fear in which someone fears to lose God or become separated from him.<sup>122</sup>

So, not only could perfect spiritual fear be considered in filial terms, it also could be understood as representing the loving relationships between friends and spouses. The type of love each form of perfect spiritual fear expressed differed. *Timor filialis* was a type of dread based upon the love and dutiful obedience a child owes to his or her father. The loving, fear-inspired friendship existing between God and his faithful followers known as *timor amicabilis*<sup>123</sup> was characterized by freely-given loyalty and respect, as well as a friend's steadfast and confident desire to please rather than disappoint or fail his or her companion. A love analogous to that shared by husbands and wives aroused the third type of spiritually perfect fear, *timor castus*. Drawing upon Augustine, Peter Lombard described the proper function of chaste fear by comparing the respective actions of good and bad wives. A bad wife who wishes to commit adultery, he says, will avoid doing so solely

Ecclesiasticus 1:25 (iii, fol. 173va-173vb): 'Timor Domini initium sapientiae. Timor servilis initium extra sumptum. Timor initialis intra sumptum.' For the verse, see note 73 above. 120 The desired and 120 The des

Aquinas, Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 19, 7 (xxxiii, 65).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>121</sup> Aquinas, *In sententias* III, xxxiv, 2, 2, 3, 1 (vii, 394a): 'Sicut enim se habet timor servilis ad fidem informem, ita timor castus se habet ad fidem formatam.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>122</sup>Bonaventure, *In sententias* III, xxxiv, 2, 4 (iii, 770a-770b): 'Sicut enim una est gratia, quae facit esse *filium* Dei per adoptionem, facit etiam *amicum* et *desponsat* animam in coniugium; sic etiam in proposito est intelligendum, quoniam unus et idem timor est, quo quis timet amittere Deum sive separari a Deo sub hac triplici ratione.' Aquinas also mentions these three varieties, but he includes *filialis* and *amicabilis* under the same definition - as representing adoption by God. See *In sententias* III, xxxiv, 2, 3, 1, 3 (vii, 395a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>123</sup> Quoting the Venerable Bede, Peter Lombard mentions this type of fear in his *Sententiae* III, xxxiv, 3 (ii, 191).

because she fears its discovery by her husband and the punishment consequent upon it. A good wife, in contrast, avoids adultery not because of the threat of pain, but because of its inherent impurity. She fears to be forsaken and deserted by her husband on account of her sin.<sup>124</sup> These different formulations of perfected spiritual fear may have differed in their emphases, but they nevertheless were the same in essence. All three existed concurrently, expressed a fear based upon voluntarily love and obedience, and signified a person's complete reverence for God.

Unlike timor servilis which ceased to exist with the beginning of timor initialis, a fear which itself ended with the onset of perfect spiritual dread, timor filialis, timor amicabilis and timor castus never ended. Rather, they existed perpetually, representing a perfect Gift of grace which continuously generated further blessings.<sup>125</sup> The Gift of Fear, the Speculum Morale says, introduces those who have received it into God's very presence in both the present, through grace, and the future through glory.<sup>126</sup> Natural, sinful and spiritually insufficient types of dread could not exist after death because their objects were themselves imperfect and the growth of charity excised them from a person's soul (1 John 4:18). However, as Aquinas wrote, because God is eternal and his majesty so great, a reverential fear of him will continue to exist eternally: 'the defect implied in fear is rooted in the very nature of the creature, its infinite remoteness from God, and so is one that will continue in heaven.' Fear, he concludes, 'will not entirely pass away, then.'<sup>127</sup> A person who experienced truly perfect spiritual fear acknowledged the gulf between God and humanity but did not think of it as being entirely unbridgeable. As Peter Lombard advised, if a person feared to lose God, all he or she need do is reach out and embrace him.<sup>128</sup> Only by actively pursuing and clinging to him could a person hope to avoid losing God. As we shall see in our discussions of Cleanness and Patience, the figures of Noah, Abraham, Lot, the sailors and the Ninevites illustrate this process.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>124</sup> Sententiae III, xxxiv, 6 (ii, 195-96): 'Non potes melius explanare quid intersit inter istos duos timores, quam si ponas duas mulieres maritatas, quarum unam constituas volentem facere adulterium, sed timet ne damnetur a marito. Timent maritum quia adhuc amat nequitiam. Huic non est grata, sed onerosa mariti praesentia; et si vivit nequiter, timet maritum ne veniat. Tales sunt qui timent diem iudicii. Fac alteram amare virum, debere illi castos amplexus, nulla se adulterina immunditia maculare velle: ista optat praesentiam viri. Illa timet, et illa timet. Iam ergo interrogentur quare timeant. Illa dicet: timeo virum ne veniat; illa dicet: timeo virum ne discedat. Illa dicet timeo virum ne damner; illa dicet timeo virum ne deserar.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup> Bonventure, *Collationes*, Coll. 2, 1 (v, 462a): '... ergo gratia gratum faciens est *donum perfectum*...'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>126</sup> I, 1, 27 (col. 92): '... dat autem se timentibus se, in praesenti per gratiam, in futuro per gloriam.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>127</sup> Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 19, 11 (xxxiii, 81).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>128</sup> Sententiae III, xxxiv, 5 (ii, 195): 'Timere ne amittas ipsa bona, timere Deum ne recedat a te. Cum autem times Deum ne te deserat praesentia eius, amplecteris eum, ipso frui desideras.'

The fear of God, then, 'reletavizes all natural fears [and] shows them up for the ultimately groundless concerns that they are relative to the awe and terror engendered by the experience of God in God's holiness.<sup>129</sup> Because its primary object was God's majesty and because it inspired one to pursue God and embrace him, *timor filialis* was fear's 'greatest principle' and the 'perfect gift.<sup>130</sup> It taught one not only what should be avoided, but also to what one should adhere.<sup>131</sup> Peter Lombard explained that it did so by perfecting a fearful person in three specific ways. First, it cleansed and sanctified the conscience; a person's desires were reconciled with those of God. Second, it compelled the perfect activity of obedience; a person who feared filially was fully prepared to satisfy the fearful obligation owed to God. Third, it stabilized a person's resolve and perfected the strength of fidelity and trust.<sup>132</sup> By trusting both God and one's own motivations and actions, a person had no reason to fear naturally, sinfully or servilely. In fact, perfect spiritual fear rendered a person 'secure from all other forms of fear, '<sup>133</sup> and taught one the essential truth behind life, justice and learning.<sup>134</sup>

All of these interpretations reveal how important medieval writers felt fear was to the process of spiritual salvation. In his *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas called dread the 'Old Law,' or 'the law of fear' which 'was given to the imperfect, those who have not yet obtained spiritual grace.' Even in modern times which are supposedly ruled by the 'New Law' of love, he continued, there are people who do not possess its perfection and need 'to be induced to perform the works of virtue by fear of penalties.'<sup>135</sup> As we will see in the next chapter, this was a sentiment widely shared by the preachers and teachers of the later Middle Ages. They recognized society's persistent sinfulness and in response to it developed what turned out to be a much-used rhetoric of fear, one which employed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>129</sup> Seeburger, 'Humility, Maturity, and the Fear of God', p. 167.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>130</sup>Bonaventure, *In sententias* III, xxxiv, 2, 2 (iii, 769a): '... per comparationem ad *obiectum maxime principale*, quod quidem est excellentia Maiestatis divinae; et quantum ad hoc est timor *filialis*... aut est *perfectum donum*, et sic est timor *filialis*.'

Biblia Sacra, Nicholas of Lyre, literal commentary, Proverbs 1:7 (iii, fol. 309vb): 'Prima in duas: quia primo, docet a quibus sit abstinendum. Secundo, quibus sit adhaerendum...'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>132</sup>Bonaventure, *Collationes*, Coll. 2.19, p. 467a: 'Perfectio autem timoris Dei in tribus consistit, scilicet in perfecta *conscientiae sanctificatione* et emundatione, in perfecta *obedientiae promptitudine* et in perfecta *fiduciae firmitate*.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>133</sup>Bonaventure, *Collationes*, Coll. 2, 21 (v, 467b): '... timor Domini est firmitatis et fiduciae turris, quia reddit hominem securum ab omni alio timore.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>134</sup> *Biblia Sacra*, Nicholas of Lyre, literal commentary, Exodus 18:21 (i, fol. 160vb): 'In quibus sit veritas scilicet vitae, iustitiae, et doctrinae.' The verse reads as follows: 'And provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, in whom there is truth, and that hate avarice...'. In his commentary, Nicholas is describing the people who fear God.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>135</sup> la2ae 107, l (xxx, 25-7).

elements of natural, sinful and spiritual forms of dread in order to convey the necessity of penance and repentance. The poet of *Cleanness* and *Patience* also drew upon this rhetorical and didactic tradition by using natural, sinful and spiritual types of fear to create competing discourses of dread in his poems, discourses which at one and the same time depend on and contribute to our understanding of the wider importance of fear in the Middle Ages.

#### Chapter 2

# Modus timendi: The rhetorical discourse of fear and its context in vernacular and lay culture

According to Aristotle, 'rhetoric is the counterpart of dialectic.'<sup>1</sup> Whereas dialectic explores questions through logical discussion, testing individual points through continuous argument, rhetoric conveys the conclusions of these arguments to a wider audience by means of persuasive, explicative, exhortative and admonitory addresses. In the previous chapter we traced the development of fear through dialectical discourse and argument, thereby following in practice the words of a thirteenth-century *summa* of virtues which states that 'division is the way toward definition.'<sup>2</sup> By noting the different categories into which the dialectical process divided - and subdivided - fear, we discovered how medieval understandings of dread were methodically categorized and parcelled out so as to be more definitively understood. In this chapter we will be looking at the 'counterpart' of this theoretical, dialectical discourse: namely, how medieval moralists utilized a practical, rhetorical discourse of fear in an effort to persuade their audiences to forsake sin and pursue virtue.

The writings of Peter Lombard, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas and other scholastic thinkers influenced how dread was to be viewed in the later Middle Ages. However, stemming from the rhetorical tradition found in such works as Cicero's *De inventione*,<sup>3</sup> the pseudo-Ciceronian *Rhetorica ad Herennium*<sup>4</sup> and St. Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*,<sup>5</sup> the use of fear as an exhortative tool existed long before the era of scholastic theology. The *De inventione*, for instance, stressed the importance of making an audience attentive and receptive to a given argument. To do so, Cicero wrote, a speaker had to show his listeners that the subject of his discourse was 'important, novel, or incredible,' and directly influenced their lives.<sup>6</sup> By using 'appalling' and 'terrible' imagery, he continued, an orator could win over his audience and make it sympathetic to his argument.<sup>7</sup> The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* listed a number of useful tools which could help speakers perform the above

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> II, 1, 1354a, ed. McKeon, p. 1389, l. 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Summa virtutum de remediis anime, ed. and tr. S. Wenzel (Athens, GA, 1984), I, p. 52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Tr. H. M. Hubbell, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 1949), pp. 1-165.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Tr. H. Caplan, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 1954).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Tr. D. W. Robertson, Jr., The Library of Liberal Arts 80 (Indianapolis, 1954).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> *De inventione*, I, xvi, 23, p. 47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> I, xvii, 25, p. 51.

tasks, including 'amplification' (amplificatio), 'vivid description' (descriptio), 'dwelling on the point' (commoratio), 'arousal' (exsuscitatio), and the use of examples (exempla) or 'exemplification.' Amplification was a technique in which an orator emphasized either fault or misfortune in order to engender indignation or pity.8 'Vivid description' was a 'clear, lucid, and impressive exposition of the consequences of an act,' and was also used to arouse indignation for wrongdoers or pity for the unfortunate.9 'Dwelling on the point' was described as a 'particularly advantageous' rhetorical technique in which a speaker would treat a subject at length and often return to it, thereby never letting his audience forget the point of his lesson.<sup>10</sup> 'Arousal' was defined as occurring when an orator spoke 'under emotion' and succeeded, in turn, in stirring the emotions of his audience.<sup>11</sup> Finally, 'exemplification' illuminated and clarified the speaker's lesson through 'the citing of something done or said in the past, along with the definite naming of the doer or author.'12 The techniques included in this list are only a few of the many rhetorical tools discussed in the De inventione and Rhetorica ad Herennium, but they are ones which lent themselves particularly well to the modus timendi. As we shall see, medieval preachers - and the poet of Cleanness and Patience - used emotionally evocative exempla in order to provide their audiences with vivid, amplified descriptions of sin and its punishment as well as frequent repetitions of warnings to dread and avoid sin and damnation. The tools of Ciceronian rhetoric, then, lay at the foundation of the medieval rhetorical discourse of fear.

The *De inventione* and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, known respectively in the Middle Ages as the *rhetorica prima* or *rhetorica vetus* and the *rhetorica secunda* or *rhetorica nova* were both important influences on the development of medieval rhetorical thought.<sup>13</sup> But more influential still, especially in terms of preaching theory and Christian education, was Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*.<sup>14</sup> Augustine's textbook drew heavily from the tradition of Ciceronian rhetoric, but it differed fundamentally from its classical,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> III, xiii, 24, pp. 197-99.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, IV, xxxix, 51, p. 357.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> IV, xlv, 58, p. 375.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> IV, xliii, 55-6, p. 369.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> IV, xlix, 62, pp. 383-85. Also see the *De inventione*, I, xxx, 49, pp. 88-91: 'An example supports or weakens a case by appeal to precedent or experience.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> For a discussion of the background of Ciceronian rhetoric and its influence on medieval rhetorical theory, see J. J. Murphy's *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, especially chapters 1-3. Also see J. O. Ward, *Ciceronian Rhetoric in Treatise, Scholion and Commentary*, Typologie des Sources du Moyen Âge Occidental (Turnhout, 1995).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> See Murphy, pp. 43-88 and E. R. Hintz, *Learning and Persuasion in the German Middle Ages*, pp. 3-42.

pagan precursors. Whereas the teaching of Cicero and his contemporaries sought to use rhetoric in order to 'seek to move men's minds, merely for the sake of power,' as J. J. Murphy explains, the *De doctrina christiana* argued instead that 'the power to move (*flectere*) is to be used to lead men to Truth (*verum*).<sup>15</sup> In Augustine's theory of rhetoric, the inspiration of fear took a very important part in the process of leading men to this 'Truth.' The key to Christian rhetoric was persuasion; a person had to be persuaded that living a virtuous life and forsaking all sin was the only true way in which to live.<sup>16</sup> If someone was slow to realize this, Augustine recommended that he or she be frightened into obedience. A person can be persuaded, he informed preachers, if 'he fears what you threaten' and 'flees those whom you, moving fear, warn are to be avoided.' This inspiration of dread, part of what Augustine called 'grand eloquence,' helped move 'the minds of listeners, not that they may know what is to be done, but that they may do what they already know should be done.'<sup>17</sup> Eliciting fear in an audience was extremely important for, as Augustine wrote in Book II of his treatise, a healthy dread of God was necessary if a person was to recognize, accept and understand fully the notion of divine truth:

Before all it is necessary that we be turned by the fear of God toward a recognition of His will, so that we may know what he commands that we desire and what He commands that we avoid. Of necessity this fear will lead us to thought of our mortality and our future death and will affix all our proud motions, as if they were fleshly members fastened with nails, to the wood of the cross.<sup>18</sup>

This dread, or 'salutary fear,' was, as E. R. Hintz has noted, 'an important motivating agent' in the rhetoric of Christian education and was 'to be used and cultivated by the teacher for the spiritual benefit of those in his charge.'<sup>19</sup>

This view of fear's didactic importance flourished throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, p. 62.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Hintz notes that this emphasis on persuasion differentiates Christian rhetoric from Ciceronian rhetoric: 'Persuasion in Christian rhetoric is not the rhetoric of Cicero where the orator seeks victory chiefly in the political or legal arena by shaping opinion according to the dictates of an arbitrary case, using arguments of probability if need be. The Christian rhetorician in Augustine's program addresses an already converted audience and seeks to move the listener to keep the tenets of faith in accord with established doctrine. Yet the need for conversion as ongoing process of spiritual reform - a turning back of the Christian from error toward salvation - would remain. To meet this need, Augustine recommends persuasion as a means to victory in the arena of faith, should the listener doubt, lack zeal or become too lethargic to apply what has been learned,' *Learning and Persuasion*, p. 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> On Christian Doctrine, IV, xii, 27, pp. 136-37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> II, vii, 9, p. 38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> *Learning and Persuasion*, pp. 7 and 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> In the first chapter of his book, Hintz discusses the general content of Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*, Gregory the Great's *Regula pastoralis* and Hrabanus Maurus's *De institutione clericorum* and their specific influence on three examples of German didactic literature of the High Middle Ages. Although he focusses upon the German Middle Ages, many of his conclusions are just as relevant and important to an understanding of the discussion of spiritual education and persuasion in late-medieval English sermons and

In early-medieval England, for instance, Anglo-Saxon homilies and poems concerning death, doomsday, descriptions of hell and the transitoriness of the temporal world, in line with Augustine's theories of persuasion, actively used the rhetorical inspiration of dread in order to put across their didactic messages.<sup>21</sup> By the late-fourteenth century, the period in which Cleanness and Patience were written, the modus timendi continued to be prescribed as an effective tool for preachers to use in their efforts to educate their listeners and help guide them to proper spiritual understanding. This is attested by John Bromyard's expression of the fundamental importance of dread to a person's spiritual life in his extremely popular preacher's handbook, the Summa Praedicantium (1330-48). Speaking about the nature of fear in those who are of perfect faith, he argues that dread is equivalent to a tree's root or the foundation of a house, without which neither is stable. Without a proper sense of fear, Bromyard explains, a person cannot possess a solid, loving relationship with God or lead a truly virtuous life.<sup>22</sup> This message was spelled out by Thomas Brinton, the noted late fourteenth-century preacher and bishop of Rochester, who dedicated an entire sermon to the theme 'Deum timete' in which he writes that 'children must be taught to fear God from their infancy,' and that 'nothing is more efficacious for the promoting, conserving and recovering of grace than to always feel fear.'23 Fear's rhetorical

<sup>23</sup> The Sermons of Thomas Brinton, Bishop of Rochester (1373-1389), 2 vols., ed., Sister Mary Aquinas Devlin, O. P., Camden 3<sup>rd</sup> ser., vols. 85-86 (London, 1954), i, Sermon 41, pp. 180-85 (pp. 180-81): '... pueri timere Deum ab infancia sunt docendi.'; '... nichil efficacius esse potest ad graciam promerendam,

didactic literature. J. J. Murphy notes the influence of Augustine's treatise on Gregory the Great and Hrabanus Maurus as well, but he also lists a number of later medieval preaching texts which were deeply indebted to the *De doctrina christiana*, such as Alain of Lille's *Summa de arte praedicatoria*, Humbert of Romans's *Treatise on Preaching* and Robert of Basevorn's *Forma praedicandi*, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, p. 47.

One brief poem editorially entitled Lar, Old English for 'lore', 'preaching,' 'doctrine,' 'teaching,' or 'exhortation,' uses fear in a manner which which would continue to be used throughout the Middle Ages. The poem contains various references to dread, the first of which recommends fear because it is the beginning of wisdom and prevents the loss of everlasting light: 'hafa metodes ege on gemang symle / b[at] is witedlice wisdomes ord / b[at] bu b[at] ece leoht eal ne forleose'. Later, the poem explains that it is sinful for a person to place his or her own desires before the fear of God: 'hit bið swiðe yfel / manna gehwilcum b[at] he micel age / gif he him god ne ondræt / swiðor micle bonne his sylfes gewil'. The poem's final explicit use of dread exhorts people to fear sinful thoughts and their results: 'and ondræd þu ðe dihle wisan / nearwe gebancas be on niht becumað / syn lustas for-oft swiðe fremman / earfoðlice by bu earhlice scealt / gyltas bine swide bemurnan'. Be Domes Daege, De Die Judicii, An Old English Version of the Latin Poem Ascribed to Bede, ed. J. Rawson Lumby, EETS OS 65 (London, 1876), p. 28, ll. 16-8 and p. 30, ll. 36-9 and 51-4. Fear is also used rhetorically in a number of Anglo-Saxon homilies, including Homilies II, IV, VIII, IX and XV in the collection known as The Vercelli Homilies, ed. D. G. Scragg, EETS OS 300 (London, 1992), as well as in a homily entitled 'The Transience of Earthly Delights', in Old English Homilies From MS Bodley 343, ed. S. Irvine EETS OS 302 (London, 1993), pp. 179-204. Each of these treatises uses frightening descriptions of the torments and terrors of hell in order to promote virtuous behaviour. For a recent discussion of fear in Old English literature, see F. Gameson's unpublished PhD dissertation, Anxiety, Fear and Misery in Old English Verse (Oxford, 1993).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> John Bromyard, ii, fol. 396va: '[Timor est vtilis] in perfectis, quia timor in eis est sicut radix in arbore, vel fundamentum in domo, sine quibus non sunt stabiles, nec isti sine timore.'

importance is also frequently affirmed in Middle English. For example, the *Ayenbite of Inwyt* (c. 1340) describes the dread of God to its mixed clerical and lay audience as the 'beginnynge of guod lif and of alle guode.'<sup>24</sup> All of these statements - only a few of a large number of examples - reveal the importance medieval preachers and moralists placed on the rhetorical discourse of fear. In his fundamental study of preaching in medieval England, G. R. Owst notes fear's popularity and usefulness:

there were plenty to hand of ghoulish devil-stories, terrifying death-bed scenes, the graves of 'wormes mete and rotye,' the tortures of an enduring hell, all calculated to freeze the blood and raise the hair of the simple. Long before black-gowned Calvinists started to gnash teeth in the pulpit, or Protestant parents and nursemaids held up an awful fiendish finger at their charges... the same threatening of sinners was almost a commonplace of religious instruction.<sup>25</sup>

Fear and its frequent use in the guise of threats, warnings and admonishments became a commonly accepted and encouraged tool by which preachers and moralists could amplify their didactic messages and guide their audiences to a specific, spiritually laudable condition. In short, as we will see below, the methodical and frequent use of dread became a recognized mode of rhetorical proceeding.

The modus timendi, then, owed much to Ciceronian and Augustinian rhetoric. However, by the time *Cleanness* and *Patience* had been written, the development of the rhetoric of fear had also been influenced by the dialectical, scholastic interpretations of dread examined in the previous chapter. Pseudo-scholastic works such as the *Speculum Morale*, an anonymous fourteenth-century encylopaedia attributed to Vincent of Beauvais and included in his hugely influential work, the *Speculum Maius* (c. 1250), adopted and adapted scholastic thought. For instance, the treatment of fear found in the *Speculum Morale* was largely drawn from Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*. However, the *Speculum* did more than just restate the dialectical conclusions of thirteenth-century theologians. It also complemented the teaching of its formal theological sources with popular, lay-orientated *exempla* which helped mediate and translate scholastic interpretations of fear for a wider audience. Examples of this can be found throughout the *Speculum*'s treatment of fear, as it defines different varieties of dread in typically scholastic terms and then elaborates upon

conservandam, et recuperandam, quam semper timere...'. The editor of this sermon assumes the intended audience to be one of clerics because Brinton addresses his listeners as 'Vos filii mei spirituales.' However, because of the nature of Brinton's lesson, whether or not this sermon was only heard by other clerics makes no difference to the question of fear's wider dissemination. His theme encourages his fellow clerics not only to feel fear themselves, but also to inspire it in their audiences.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Ed. P. Gradon, p. 74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Preaching in Medieval England: An Introduction to Sermon Manuscripts of the Period c. 1350-1450 (Cambridge, 1926), p. 321. For a more recent treatment of medieval English preaching, see H. Leith Spencer, English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages (Oxford, 1993).

these definitions with *exempla* which illustrate the qualities and consequences of each specific form of dread.<sup>26</sup> Although intended for learned clerics, the *Speculum Morale* and other encyclopaedic texts and *summae* like it were not directed only to the university theologian; they also possessed much that would have been of use to the common preacher or priest who had to be in regular contact with the laity.<sup>27</sup> But texts like this were only one link in the chain that connected scholastic interpretations of fear to a wider understanding and apprehension of dread in the vernacular, lay world.

Other links in this chain included the rhetorical use of fear in late-medieval religious literature such as death lyrics, Latin instructional handbooks and their Middle English translations, and the composition of new religious tracts in the vernacular. This large body of writing represents, as W. A. Pantin says, 'the logical outcome of forces at work in the thirteenth century and earlier.'<sup>28</sup> Much has been written on these subjects already, so in this chapter I will avoid an in-depth discussion of each particular genre. Instead, because of the debts *Cleanness* and *Patience* owe to homiletic tradition, what I plan to do is take these modes of transmission into account within a brief treatment of the dissemination of scholastic understandings of dread in the literature and art of preaching.<sup>29</sup> As Siegfried Wenzel has more than adequately revealed in many studies of preachers and poets, Middle English lyrics played an integral part in the sermon literature of the day. In effect, he says, 'the subject matter and ultimate purpose of both [lyrics and sermons] are entirely the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> See I, 1, 26 (cols. 78-86) in which can be found formal definitions of and illustrative exempla concerning *timor naturalis*, *timor mundanus*, *timor humanus*, *timor servilis*, *timor initialis*, *timor filialis* and *timor reverentialis*.

As L. E. Boyle argues, such texts could be labelled as 'Pastoralia' because the pertained to the '*Cura* animarum.' The term 'Pastoralia,' he says, 'embraces any literary aid or manual which can be of help to the priest in the *Cura animarum*, whether with respect to his own education as pastor or to the education of the people in his charge.' See Boyle's article, '*Summae Confessorum*', in *Les genres littéraires dans les sources* théologiques et philosophiques médiévales, pp. 227-37 (p.230). Boyle supplies a useful 'family tree' of 'Pastoralia', dividing the term according to works directed toward priests and toward the laity (p. 231).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> The English Church in the Fourteenth Century (Cambridge, 1955), p. 189.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> For preaching tradition and its influence on the composition of *Cleanness* see, D. E. Kittendorf, '*Cleanness* and the Fourteenth Century Artes Praedicandi', Michigan Academician: Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters 11:3 (1979): 319-30 and E. G. Schreiber, 'The Structures of Clannesse', in The Alliterative Tradition in the Fourteenth Century, ed. B. S. Levy and P. E. Szarmach (Kent, OH, 1981), pp. 131-52. For Patience's debt to the homiletical tradition see W. Vantuono, 'The Structure and Sources of Patience', MS 34 (1972): 401-21; J. J. Anderson, 'The Prologue of Patience', Modern Philology 63 (1966): 283-87; and A. C. Spearing, 'Patience and the Gawain-Poet', Anglia 84 (1966): 305-29. A. Putter argues against the view of Patience as a traditional homily, stating that the poem's message is directed inward, to the narrator himself, rather than outward to the homily's audience, as is normally the case when a sermon is delivered; An Introduction to the Gawain-Poet, pp. 103-5.

same.<sup>30</sup> Instructional handbooks such as the *Ayenbite of Inwyt, The Book of Vices and Virtues* and the *Speculum Christiani* were also symbiotically related to late-medieval sermon literature. Texts like these, as G. R. Owst notes, 'might well have been read from the pulpit in sections of suitable length.<sup>31</sup> Religious manuals and sermon material - to which we can append the religious lyric - were essentially 'aids to contrition' concerned with the conversion of sinful souls.<sup>32</sup> As we will see, visions of hell and purgatory, meditations on death, and the profound sense of dread each ideally was supposed to inspire, were common themes in these genres. By looking at the discursive use of fear in sources ranging from semi-scholastic Latin encyclopaedias, Middle English devotional handbooks and the sermons related to them we can see how vernacular audiences of the type which may have read or listened to *Cleanness* and *Patience* would have been exposed to a widely-used and well-developed rhetorical discourse of fear based upon traditional Ciceronian and Augustinian rhetoric as well as the dialectical thought of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

### I. Fearful exhortation and education: the modus timendi and instructional tradition

The beginning of the thirteenth century witnessed a 'pastoral revolution'<sup>33</sup> and the establishment of a specific religious syllabus. The revolution was carried forward by an elite of pastoral specialists, the Dominican and Franciscan friars, while the syllabus was instituted in the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), whose canon 21 stressed the importance of confession, stipulating that every layperson should confess to his or her priest and receive the Eucharist at least once a year. This decree promoted an increase in the number of didactic writings, for if confession was to be sufficient and complete, both the laity and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Poets, Preachers and the Early English Lyric (Princeton, 1986), p. 8. For further discussion of the relationship between Middle English lyrics and sermons see Wenzel's other studies, Verses in Sermons: Fasciculus Morum and its Middle English Poems (Cambridge, MA, 1978); 'Medieval Sermons and the Study of Literature', in The J. A. W. Bennett Memorial Lectures, Perugia 1982-83, ed. P. Boitani and A. Torti (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 19-32; 'Poets, Preachers, and the Plight of Literary Critics,' Speculum 60 (1985): 343-63; and Macaronic Sermons: Bilingualism and Preaching in Late-Medieval England (Ann Arbor, 1994). R. Woolf has also noted the connection in her study, The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages (Oxford, 1968), p. 68. Also see G. R. Owst's seminal study, Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England: A Neglected Chapter in the History of English Letters and of the English People (Oxford, 1961).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Preaching in Medieval England, p. 277.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> L. E. Boyle, 'The Fourth Lateran Council and Manuals of Popular Theology', in *The Popular Literature of Medieval England*, ed. T. J. Heffernan (Knoxville, TN, 1985), pp. 30-43 (p. 32).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> The phrase is Colin Morris's, in his *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 489-96.

priests had to know what exactly constituted sin as well as how to rid oneself of its illeffects. By the end of the century, concern over both the clergy's and the laity's knowledge of the central tenets of the Church had not been eased. The Council of Lambeth, held in 1281, addressed the particular lack of doctrinal knowledge in England when John Pecham, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in a canon known as the Ignorantia Sacerdotum, enumerated the six spiritual things every Christian should know: the Ten Commandments, the Seven Deadly Sins and the Virtues which redeemed them, the Articles of the Faith, the Works of Mercy and the Sacraments. Each of these things was to be taught to the laity, in English, no less than four times each year.<sup>34</sup> Following up on this decree, later texts might add items to Pecham's list. For example, in his early fourteenth-century Summa brevis, Richard of Leicester included the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer and the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit - both of which incorporated specific interpretations of dread - in a revised list of things the laity needed to know.<sup>35</sup> The call for more detailed instruction of the laity necessitated an increase in preaching, and there was a concomitant need for more instructional handbooks. Some of the best-known works written by and for friars and parish priests are Stephen of Bourbon's Tractatus de diversis materiis praedicabilibus, William Peraldus's Summae virtutum ac vitiorum, William of Pagula's Oculus sacerdotis (written c. 1320), and its later fourteenth-century derivatives the Cilium oculi and Pupilla oculi, and John Bromyard's Summa Praedicantium.<sup>36</sup> Because of their pastoral purpose. books like these mediated between theoretical Latin learning and the practical dissemination of this theological knowledge in the vernacular.<sup>37</sup> Middle English

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> For a recent discussion of the effects the Fourth Lateran Council and the Council of Lambeth had on Middle English literary traditions and developments, see M. Curry Woods and R. Copeland, 'Classroom and Confession', in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. D. Wallace (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 376-406. In the second part of the article, Copeland discusses a number of texts composed as a direct response to these councils' decrees. For a translation of the Fourth Lateran Council's Canon 21 see p. 392. Mention is made of John Pecham and the *Ignorantia Sacerdotum* on p. 396. Also see T. Tentler, 'The *Summa* for Confessors as an Instrument of Social Control', in *The Pursuit of Holiness in late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, ed. C. Trinkaus with H. A. Oberman (Leiden, 1974), pp. 103-37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> S. Wenzel, 'Vices, Virtues, and Popular Preaching', *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 6 (1976): 28-54 (p. 30).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> See W. A. Pantin's discussion of didactic literature in *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century*, pp. 189-243. With the *Oculus sacerdotis* we have a work which combines several traditions of pastoral literature, incorporating as it does much of Thomas of Chobham's *Summa confessorum* as well as Peraldus's *Summa*, and it is this blending which has encouraged me not to distinguish these traditions when dealing with the climate of pastoral thought in the fourteenth century. See L. E. Boyle, 'The *Oculus Sacerdotis* and Some Other Works of William of Pagula', *TRHS* Ser. 5 (1955): 81-110.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> J. Fleming describes such works as being 'characterized by a kind of cultural fungibility,' and that they 'move[d] easily between the Latin and vernacular realms', 'The Friars and Medieval English Literature', p. 357. For a brief overview of mendicant educational texts and their influence on later sermon literature, see pp. 355-65. Also see M. G. Briscoe's discussion of preaching aids in *Artes Praedicandi*, Typologie des

translations or adaptations of such works were common: Robert Mannyng of Brunne's *Handlyng Synne, The Lay Folk's Catechism*, and the previously mentioned *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, the *Book of Vices and Virtues*, and the *Speculum Christiani* are only a few of many possible texts which could be mentioned.<sup>38</sup> Through texts like these, scholastic definitions of fear were disseminated to a wider audience. Ignorance of the religious doctrine expounded by these treatises and the sermons they helped construct was dangerous; without this knowledge a person would not be able to understand what the necessary conditions were by which one could live a proper Christian life. In response to this danger, medieval preachers employed a distinct rhetoric of fear.

Examples of this fearful mode of proceeding are almost limitless.<sup>39</sup> The chief aim of such a rhetorical tool was to inspire in its audience a feeling of dread in order to provoke fundamental spiritual change. As we saw earlier in our discussion of Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*, the exhortation to fear was an established part of medieval didactic tradition. Nicholas of Lyre's commentary on Proverbs 1:7 ('the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom') reveals how fear could be a didactic tool by explaining that dread can be divided into two educational parts. The first fixes holy learning (*doctrina*) in the individual through a 'familiar or domestic mode;' the second fixes doctrine, in a higher degree, through a 'political or legal manner.' The first method is 'familiar' and instructs one in the manner a father teaches his son, while the second mode acts on a public, or 'communal,' level in the same way that a judge or teacher instructs the people.<sup>40</sup> The 'familiar mode' of fear's teaching emphasizes the role of love in the action of fearing and immediately calls to mind the concept of *timor filialis*. It encourages a person to reach a state in which he or she voluntarily and lovingly adheres to God's commands. In contrast,

Sources Du Moyen Âge Occidental 61 (Turnhout, 1982), pp. 11-76.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> For a recent discussion of manuals on the vices and virtues see R. Newhauser, *The Treatise of Vices* and Virtues in Latin and the Vernacular, Typologie des Sources Du Moyen Âge Occidental (Turnhout, 1993).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> For example, in a fifteenth-century collection of sermon stories known as *Jacob's Well*, over a third of its *exempla* deal with frightening subjects or 'tales of caution, in which supernatural agents, devilish tempters, unearthly apparitions, and visions of hell serve to the audience as warnings of the punishments awaiting sinners,' J. Young Gregg, 'The *Exempla* of *Jacob's Well*: A Study in the Transmission of Medieval Sermon Stories', *Traditio* 33 (1977): 359-80 (p. 373). *Jacob's Well, An English Treatise on the Cleansing* of Man's Conscience, ed. A. Brandeis, EETS OS 115 (London, 1900).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Biblia Sacra, literal commentary, Proverbs 1:7 (iii, fol. 309vb): 'Et dividitur in duas partes: Quia primo ponitur doctrina per modum familiarem seu domesticum. Secundo, per modum magis legalem et politicum... Prima in duas: quia primo, docet a quibus sit abstinendum. Secundo, quibus sit adhaerendum... Prima adhuc in duas, quia primo, docet vitare rapinam et avaritiam. Secundo, idolatriam... Prima adhuc in duas: quia primo docet propositum, modo familiari sicut pater docet filium. Secundo magis communi, sicut iudex vel doctor docet populum.'

the 'communal mode' concentrates upon the 'legal' obligation to fear God owed by each individual soul. These two methods at one and the same time delineate those things a good person should avoid, such as theft and avarice,<sup>41</sup> as well as those which a virtuous person should pursue and adhere to, namely virtue and God.

In order to facilitate the efficacy and durability of fear's teaching, then, preachers had to seize and hold their audience's attention. A large number of works attest to the importance and prevalence of fear in medieval theories of moral education. For example, in his Forma praedicandi, Robert of Basevorn cites the authority of Christ, who, Robert says, 'preached by threats' of terrible punishments which were particularly useful for compelling stubborn sinners to mend their ways.<sup>42</sup> Later in the same treatise, Robert reinforces this message by recommending the use of fear as one of the ways through which a preacher can 'win over' his audience by frightening its members with 'terrifying tales or examples.<sup>43</sup> Henry of Hesse also promoted the rhetorical use of fear, stating that '[s]inners are to be frightened by the setting before them of future punishments.'44 Similarly, in the prologue to his Breviloquium, Bonaventure lists the 'mode of threatening' as a subdivision in the authoritative procedure of Holy Scripture.<sup>45</sup> 'Holy Scripture,' he says, 'had to be handed down to us in whatever way would dispose us best [to goodness].' If one was not impelled to obey the laws of Scripture by positive and encouraging means, the bitterness of 'wise warnings, promises which ring true' and 'terrifying threats' might succeed where sweeter exhortations failed. Threats and graphic descriptions of punishment and pain could move a person 'to devotion and praise of God,' and thus enable one to 'receive [the] grace which will guide him to the practice of virtuous works.<sup>46</sup>

To ensure that their fearful message was understood, preachers were expected to expand, amplify and embellish their sermons with the regular use of illustrative, exemplary stories. The use of *exempla*, or exemplification, as we saw above, was prescribed by

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Nicholas's specific use of the term 'avaritia' here could be intended to make the reader think of *timor mundanus*. This type of fear was at times considered to be the root of avarice, and Nicholas might be making an explicit comparison between this culpable form of dread and its more laudable counterparts presupposed by Proverbs 1:7. Also see the discussion of avarice in the *Fasciculus Morum*, Fasciculus Morum: *A Fourteenth-Century Preacher's Handbook*, ed. and tr. S. Wenzel (University Park and London, 1989), IV, iii, 'Timor in possidendo', pp. 323-27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Tr. L. Krul, in *Three Medieval Rhetorical Arts*, ed. J. J. Murphy (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1971), Ch. 8, p. 129.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Forma Praedicandi, Ch. 24, pp. 146-47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> H. Caplan, "Henry of Hesse" on the Art of Preaching', in *Of Eloquence: Studies in Ancient and Medieval Rhetoric*, ed. A. King and A. North (Ithaca, NY and London, 1970), pp. 135-59 (p. 156).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Minnis, *Medieval Literary Theory*, p. 235.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Minnis, p. 236. For the Latin text see Opera Omnia V, p. 207a.

Ciceronian rhetoric. The authority and efficacy of the *exemplum*, as Larry Scanlon suggests, lay in the fact that it 'assumes a process of identification on the part of its audience [and] expects [the members of the audience] to put themselves in the position of its protagonists... [and] persuades by conveying a sense of communal identity with its moral lesson.'<sup>47</sup> The *exemplum* was, according to Bremond, Le Goff and Schmitt, an 'instrument of persuasion,'<sup>48</sup> and as such it was perfectly suited to the traditional Augustinian ideal of moral, religious education and the *modus timendi* it recommended. In his *Tractatus de diversis materiis praedicabilibus*, Stephen of Bourbon testifies to the importance of *exempla*, as well as their relationship to the rhetoric of fear, by telling his reader that they 'instruct, warn, stir and advance men so that they might fear and avoid future evils, and by these actions flee from sin, approach goodness, truthfully repent of the evil they have committed, vigorously repel temptation and persevere in goodness.'<sup>49</sup>

The use of *exempla* became the predominant means by which preachers taught their listeners a wide range of Christian truths. One of the most widely used tools for ensuring the effectiveness of these instructional tales was the use of terrifying and often horrifyingly violent or graphic descriptions of hell, purgatory, death, sin and the pains accompanying them. Accounts of such subjects helped ensure that the *modus timendi* worked efficiently by appealing to that which was closest to their audience's attention and concern: worldly life and the physical body. Medieval bodies, as Miri Rubin describes them, were 'sites of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Narrative, Authority, and Power: The Medieval Exemplum and the Chaucerian Tradition (Cambridge, 1994), p. 35. For further discussion of *exempla* in the 'Chaucerian tradition', see S. Volk-Birke, Chaucer and Medieval Preaching: Rhetoric for Listeners in Sermons and Poetry (Tübingen, 1991).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> L'Exemplum, Typologie des Sources du Moyen Âge Occidental 40 (Turnhout, 1982), p. 83. They define the *exemplum* as 'un récit bref donné comme véridique et destiné à être inséré dans un discours (en général un sermon) pour convaincre un auditoire par un leçon salutaire' (pp. 37-8). According to Bremond, Le Goff and Schmitt, medieval *exempla* could derive from biblical, patristic, historical or contemporary sources, and might relate stories about everyday men, supernatural things or beasts, pp. 41-2. For other lists and descriptions of *exemplum* types, including historical overviews of its development, see the following works: A. Lecoy de la Marche, *La chaire française au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1886); T. F. Crane, *The* exempla *or illustrative stories from the* sermones vulgares *of Jacques de Vitry* (London, 1890, reprinted 1967), pp. xv-cxvi; J. Th. Welter, *L*'Exemplum *dans la littérature religieuse et didactique du Moyen Age* (Paris and Toulouse, 1927, reprinted 1973), pp. 83-109; and J. C.. Schmitt's introductory essay, 'Présentation', in *Prêcher d'exemples: Récits de prédicateurs du Moyen Âge*, ed. J. C. Schmitt (Paris, 1985), pp. 9-24. For a recent discussion of *exempla* in the light of medieval theories of preaching and education in the fourteenth century, see M. Polo de Beaulieu, *Éducation, prédication et cultures au Moyen Age: Essai sur Jean Gobi le Jeune*, Collection d'histoire et d'archéologie médiévales 4 (Lyon, 1999).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Ed. A. Lecoy de la Marche, *Prologus*, p. 3: '... ut homines instruerent, monerent, moverent et promoverent ut mala futura metuerent et caverent, et per hoc a peccatis recederent et bonum appeterent et de malis commissis veraciter peniterent, tentaciones viriliter repellerent, et ut in bonum perseverarent...'.

fear' which 'lived in the knowledge of their vulnerability, within an awareness of their composed nature, of their inherent disorder, which called for practical efforts at control in the pursuit of safety and respect.<sup>50</sup> The fear which these physical bodies commonly felt had to be transformed into a purer form of spiritual dread, and this is what preachers attempted to do by utilizing frightening sermon *exempla*. In order for proper spiritual fear to develop, physical nature, along with its corruptibility and impurity, had to be subordinated to the purity of faith and holy desire. By threatening people with terrifying descriptions of sin and drawing attention to the pain and punishment that a person will experience if vice is not avoided, the fear these stories were supposed to evoke and promote revealed what is and is not proper and taught the *exemplum*'s listeners to know not only what, but also how, they should fear.

A lesson's usefulness remained long after it had been taught, provided its message could be remembered clearly and in detail. As the Rhetorica ad Herennium said, 'ordinary things easily slip from the memory while the striking and novel stay longer in the mind."51 It was necessary, therefore, that preachers appeal to their listeners' imaginations and emotions - including fear - in order to make their message more easily memorable and understandable. According to Stephen of Bourbon, the use of illustrative stories was the perfect way for preachers to ensure that their audiences remember a sermon's lesson. *Exempla*, he explains, 'are especially influential due to what they arouse, inflict and impress on the human heart [because they] especially educate the ignorance of the simple man, and introduce steadfastness and impress it on the memory more easily and for a longer time.<sup>32</sup> Fear and discomfort, Mary Carruthers has noted, were important in promoting memory because they '[tagged] material emotionally as well as schematically,' thereby turning 'each memory as much as possible into a personal occasion.<sup>53</sup> By including some frightening story in his sermon and appealing to his listeners' physical sensibilities, it was thought, a preacher was better able to appeal to their imaginations and thus make his lesson more personally relevant and memorable. Frightening stories could be remembered at a later

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> 'Bodies, Whole and Vulnerable, in Fifteenth-Century England', in *Bodies and Disciplines*, ed. B. A. Hanawalt and D. Wallace (Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1996), pp. 18-29 (p. 26). Although here Rubin talks specifically about the fifteenth century, the ideas which she presents are equally applicable to the fourteenth century.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> III, xxii, 35, p. 219.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Tractatus, Prologus, p. 4: '... quia autem ad hec suggerenda [MS: surgenda] et ingerenda et imprimenda in humanis cordibus maxime valent exempla, que maxime erudiunt simplicium hominum ruditatem, et faciliorem et longiorem ingerunt et imprimunt in memoria tenacitatem...'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 60 and 149.

time and once again arouse an emotional response. This, then, was ideally supposed to ensure that the listeners would apply the sermon's teaching to themselves.

The horrible images inspired by these stories were affective in nature. Derived from physical understandings of pain and charged with natural emotion, the fear they were supposed to promote was to inspire their audience to forsake sin and pursue virtue. It was a preacher's implicit duty to make sure that his audience experienced this dread, as Jacques de Vitry reveals in one of his sermon stories. Preachers who fail to fulfil their obligation to frighten their listeners into behaving properly may be men of God in appearance, he says, but they lack the true essence or substance of faithful prelates. He describes negligent priests as being similar to the statue of an archer that has been placed in a field in order to frighten birds away. Seeing the statue, the birds at first fear it, but apprehending that the 'archer' never shoots his arrows they begin to grow less afraid. Eventually, realizing that the statue is powerless to hurt them, the birds fly over and defecate on it.<sup>54</sup> The statue (or preacher) is supposed to frighten the birds (his audience) but it is powerless to do so. Consequently, it fails in its task and the birds which should be its targets grow bold and begin to commit all manner of unclean acts. If the statue were to come to life and shoots its arrows, however, it would fulfil its duty and keep the birds away from where they should not be. The statue's arrows symbolize the rhetoric of fear. If a preacher is to carry out his duty faithfully, the exemplum tacitly states, he must employ frightening stories and constantly remind his audience of the dread which is necessary for salvation.

The *Speculum Christiani* states this in no uncertain terms, explaining that the 'dede of charge of curates es not oonly in mynistracion of sacramentes and in seynges of houres and syngynge of masses, bot also... in ferful dampnacion of vices and in herde correpcion ov viciouse men and scharpe and streyte chastysmente when it es nede.'<sup>55</sup> Fear served as a rhetorical tool which did not just amplify the sermon's context at the moment it was preached. Ideally it was intended to make its message continuously immediate and apparent by imprinting its terrifying images on the listener's memory, thus ensuring that its

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Ed. T. F. Crane, *Sermones vulgares*, V, p. 2: 'Prelati, apparentia sine existentia, similes cuidam statue, quam quidam in agro suo posuit, tenentem arcum ad terrendas aves. Videntes autem volucres statuam primo timuerunt, sed videntes quod nunquam traheret vel sagittas emitteret, ceperunt minus timere et propius accedere. Tandem vero attendentes quod nullam ex avibus lederet, volaverunt super eam et ipsam stercoribus fedaverunt.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Ed. G. Holmstedt, pp. 172-74. The Latin original reads as follows: 'Opus cure pastoralis non solum consistit in sacramentorum administracione et in horarum canonicarum dictione et missarum celebracione, sed eciam in... viciorum terrifica dampnacione, in viciosorum, cum necesse est, dura imperiosa correpcione et rigida castigacione' (pp. 173-75).

message would be remembered long after the sermon itself was over. As an anonymous thirteenth-century English preacher wrote, if an audience is presented with a well-crafted *exemplum*, it 'will fear beneficially' (*populus audiens salubriter formidabit*).<sup>56</sup> We shall see that the poet of *Cleanness* and *Patience* employs this traditional *modus timendi* in his poems in an effort to make his texts memorably affective and hence rhetorically and didactically effective.

## II. Spiritualizing physical fear: transforming timor naturalis to timor servilis

The rhetoric of fear employed by preachers relied initially upon inspiring in their listeners a reflexive, natural fear of death and pain. The modus timendi could take on either physical or spiritual significance with equal ease. Exempla characterized by graphic imagery of physical pain were employed in order to alter sinful behaviour and promote a moral conversion from the state of sin to one of fearful virtue and obedience. On a physical level the rhetoric of fear relied upon timor naturalis - a person's natural fear of death and bodily pain. Descriptions or threats of death emphasized the physical body's fragility and the temporal world's impermanence, but at the same time they also represented the spiritual dread of damnation. By concentrating on images of death and pain, the modus timendi became an affective discourse. But in order for it to be truly effective it had to ensure that people moved beyond the constraints of a physical, temporal understanding of dread and prepared their souls for morally laudable, spiritual forms of fear. Alan J. Fletcher has noted that the subject of death was a popular motif in medieval sermons, a motif which was supposed to inspire a specific feeling of fear: timor servilis. This dread, he writes, was 'to the medieval preacher the most effective means of promoting good.'57 However, the promotion of fear, although a fundamental part of so much medieval preaching, was not a sermon's ultimate end. Rather, it was only an intermediary step on the way to inspiring in a person the voluntary, free exercise of virtue. As Takami Matsuda has argued, timor servilis was only 'a means to an end, an instrument of recognition which should lead the sinner to contrition and trust in divine mercy.'58 The rhetoric of fear, in order to fulfil its

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Ed. A. G. Little, *Liber Exemplorum ad Usum Praedicantium*, British Society of Franciscan Studies 1 (Aberdeen, 1908, reprinted 1966), no. 198, p. 116. Although this particular *exemplum* specifically concerns the sin of *luxuria*, the author's statement nevertheless can be applied to the use of fear in sermon-stories in general.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Preaching and Politics in Late-Medieval England (Dublin, 1998), p. 179.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Death and Purgatory in Middle English Didactic Poetry (Cambridge, 1997), p. 142.

true function, had to lead to, and give way before, a growing love of God.

Preaching handbooks and instructional manuals made clear the fact that servile fear, although helpful, was insufficient for salvation. An exemplum from the well-known Speculum Laicorum illustrates this. The story tells of two clerics who agree that the first one of them to die will come back from the dead and tell the other what his state in the afterlife is like. One of them dies and, according to their agreement, reappears, only to tell his former companion that he is damned. The living cleric, surprised to hear this, asks his friend whether the confession he underwent and the masses he attended had not helped him. The condemned cleric responds: 'No, because I did all of these things not out of love for God, but because of my fear of death and hell.'59 Christian tradition maintained that fear was a useful rhetorical tool, but it was not sufficient to merit salvation on its own. Fear lay at the heart of what was known as attrition (attritio), an 'imperfect sorrow' that did away with the intent to sin, but which was founded upon the dread of punishment rather than a love of God. Attrition's counterpart, contrition (contritio), was a 'perfect sorrow' based upon a love of God.<sup>60</sup> As Gregory the Great wrote, goodness should be loved for itself. Adherence to virtue should not be compelled because of the threat of punishment.<sup>61</sup> But fear nevertheless was a necessary part of a sinner's progress to contrition and salvation. In his Treatise on Preaching, Humbert of Romans reveals the relationship between fear and contrition, stating that 'men become contrite because of fear.'<sup>62</sup> An exemplum included in An Alphabet of Tales, a Middle English translation of a thirteenth-century collection of sermon stories, shows how fear helped lead a person to the perfect love inherent in contrition. In the story a wise man explains how he gained his wisdom from 'iii spirituall maisters,' namely 'drede,' 'shame' and 'luff.' Each one, he says, held a stick in its hand,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Ed. J. Th. Welter, *Le* Speculum Laicorum. Édition d'une collection d'exempla composée en Angleterre à la fin du XIIIe siècle (Paris, 1914), Ch. 84, No. 562, p. 108: 'Duo clerici erant multum se mutuo diligentes, qui dixerunt inter se ut qui eorum prius moreretur, alteri statum suum nunciaret. Moriturque eorum alter et post modicum apparens socio suo dixit se fore dampnatum. Cui socius dixit: "Nonne profuit tibi confessio et eucharistie sumpcio, quibus munitus eras in extremis?" Qui respondit: "Non, qui hec omnia feci non amore Dei, sed timore mortis et inferni."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 28. For a fuller discussion of the attirition / contrition distinction, see Tentler's *Sin and Confession*, pp. 250-73.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> In his *Liber regulae pastoralis*, Gregory the Great clearly states that fear can be used to inspire people to avoid evil, but that if a person truly wants to be saved he or she will have to forsake fear and pursue charity and the grace of love: 'Admonendi sunt, ut si malis veraciter carere desiderant, aeterna supplicia perhorrescant, neque in hoc suppliciorum timore remaneant, sed ad amoris gratiam nutrimento caritatis excrescant... Bona enim pro semetipsis amanda sunt, et non poenis compellentibus exsequenda.' III, 13, *PL* 77, col. 70.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Ed. W. M. Conlon, tr. The Dominican Students, Province of St. Joseph (London, 1905), Ch. 6, xxvi, p. 101.

and under the threat of being beaten he decided to learn:

And becauce I was euer ferde to be bett, I sesid neuer to lern. And also me þoght þat my felows þat was yonger þan I passid me, and euer I vmthoght me at I wold not be lawer þan þai. And so doctryne ffell somwhatt vnto me, & keste me in a grete luff þerto, so þat I lernyd not alonlie for drede nor yitt for shame, bod rather for perfite luff & curage þat I had vnto lernyng.<sup>63</sup>

By the end of this progression the wise man has embraced learning not because of fear, but as a result of his love for it. However, without the dread which he first felt at the beginning of his education, he never would have acquired his love of knowledge or obtained the benefits it bestows.

The *artes praedicandi* and collections of *exempla* helped clarify the part fear played in the progression from sin to salvation in ways other than just exhorting preachers to frighten their audiences and providing them with stories with which they could do so. Some also explained the doctrine behind fear by schematically enumerating and describing the different varieties of dread in an effort to make clear to the preacher - and through him his audience - how to advance from one fearful state to another. For example, Stephen of Bourbon's *Tractatus de diversis materiis praedicabilibus*,<sup>64</sup> one of the most influential preaching handbooks of the Middle Ages,<sup>65</sup> elaborates upon the different types of fear as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> Ed. M. Macleod Banks, An Alphabet of Tales: An English Fifteenth-Century Translation of the Alphabetum Narrationum of Etienne de Besançon, EETS OS 126-27 (London, 1904-5), i, cclxxiii, p. 189.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Stephen's *Tractatus* is only one example from an extremely large corpus of similar texts that were written, compiled and utilized throughout medieval Europe. The ideas it presents are typical of the genre and would probably have been familiar to English preachers in similar form. Indeed, C. von Nolcken says that an English preacher would be 'by no means restricted to compilations from his own country,' 'Some Alphabetic Compendia and How Preachers Used them in Fourteenth-Century England', *Viator* 12 (1981): 271-88 (p. 273). In supporting the theory of widespread dissemination and identical use of sermon stories, H. G. Pfander says that because of the rarity, extremely laborious production and subsequent high cost of books, hardly any sermon matter used in the late Middle Ages would have come from original sources. Rather, stories and authoritative statements would have been obtained and 'used at second, third, or even fourth hand,' 'The Medieval Friars and Some Alphabetical Reference-Books for Sermons', *Medium Aevum* 3 (1934): 19-29 (p. 22). J. Young Gregg also supports this statement in her essay 'The *Exempla* of *Jacob's Well*', p. 361.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> Not long after his death, Stephen's treatise was abridged and adapted by Humbert of Romans, whose text became known as the *De dono timoris*, the *Tractatus de habundancia exemplorum* or *De septemplici timore*. Humbert's derivative work included a prologue containing a short treatise on the art of preaching, while the main body of the text was organized according to the first part of Stephen's text, entitled *De timore*. Humbert essentially followed Stephen in the organization and content of his composition, but at times he found his source text to be deficient. As a result, he occasionally made changes which, he thought, would make the *exempla* more effective: 'Quelquefois même, non satisfait de la narration d'Etienne, il en change la forme et les détails de fond pour la rendre plus dramatique et obtenir l'effet visé, qui est l'émotion de l'auditoire.' Welter, *L'Exemplum dans la littérature*, p. 226. For Welter's discussion of Humbert's text see pp. 224-28. It is interesting to note Humbert's deliberate attempt to influence the emotions of his prospective audience. The fact that Humbert's treatise became associated explicitly with dread surely can be explained by the simple fact that it was specifically modelled after Stephen's section on fear; but it is intriguing, nevertheless, that this collections of sermon stories - so bound up with influencing emotions - should be commonly know as a book of fear.

well as their objects and effects. Had it been finished, the Tractatus would have been divided into seven main sections, each one corresponding to one of the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, Stephen's death in 1261 meant that it was never completed. However, Stephen did manage to finish the first five sections of his manual, including the section on fear. Within each division are numerous illustrative exempla which illuminate the respective gifts and provide suitable stories which preachers could use to edify their audiences. The Tractatus also provides an intellectual and theological framework for these tales by describing in varying degrees of detail the definitions, divisions and effects of the different gifts discussed in more formal theological texts. Stephen begins his discussion of fear by acknowledging its place as the first of the Gifts and by describing it as the foundation of every good spiritual thing,<sup>66</sup> after which he then proceeds with his formal treatment of dread. His discussion of fear is subdivided into ten main sections composed of descriptions of the seven species of fear, the effects of fear, why God must be feared, hell, purgatory, Final Judgment, death, why sin is to be feared, what material and spiritual dangers should be dreaded and, finally, a description of the enemies of humankind. Many of these sections, in turn, are subdivided by further distinctions.<sup>67</sup> Here we should recall Mary Carruthers's comment on classification as a mnemonic device. The detailed hierarchies and lists of fear presented by the Tractatus were supposed to clarify the doctrine of fear for preachers and help them remember its uses and the different ways they could inspire in their audience various forms of dread.

The first section of the *Tractatus*'s treatment of fear deals explicitly with the different varieties of dread. In this division, Stephen lists seven species of fear: *mundanus*, *humanus*, *naturalis*, *servilis*, *inicialis*, *filialis sive castus*, and *reverencie*,<sup>68</sup> each of which illustrates for the preacher the traditional interpretations of fear prevalent in thirteenth-century theological writings. Sinful worldly and human fear lie at its lowest point, the different types of spiritual fear occupy the other end of the scale and natural fear, acting as a boundary between vicious and virtuous dread, sits between them. The order of this list

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> *Tractatus*, p. 15: 'Quoniam autem inicium sapiencie est timor Domini, ut dicitur Prov. 1b, Eccli. 1 c, immo radix et fundamentum, fons et inicium omnium bonorum,.... et primum Spiritus sancti donorum in via recedendi a malo et procedendi et proficiendi in bonum, a timore incipiemus, tanquam ab inicio et fonte et radice et fundamento omnium bonorum spiritualium...'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Although not nearly as methodical as Stephen, John Bromyard, in his *Summa Praedicantium*, also formally discusses fear. Bromyard enumerates the different types of dread, including its worldly, natural, servile and filial forms. He also discusses the absolute necessity of fear in the process of salvation, noting how God inspires a cleansing dread which purifies those who are faithful.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> *Tractatus*, pp. 16-21.

follows, to a certain extent, the same narrative sequence that prevails in many *exempla*. Sermon stories concerning the rehabilitation of sinners often begin by focussing upon sin or the depiction of a person wallowing in sin. In order to compel the sinner to quit committing crimes, a specific appeal to his or her perception of *timor naturalis* is made through horrible descriptions of the sin itself or its penalties. An example of this can be seen in the *Tractatus* in a story allegedly based on an actual event in the life of Jordan of Saxony, third Master General of the Dominicans (*ob.* 1237). The tale tells how Jordan attempts to convert a nobleman from his sinful life; but seeing that his words have no effect, and noticing the nobleman's physical beauty and the pride he feels for it, Jordan asks him to meditate on damnation and imagine how painful it will be when his limbs become fuel for hell's fires. Taking Jordan's message, and consequently enters the Dominican order.<sup>69</sup>

Jordan's tacit appeal to fear physical pain and bodily deterioration works upon the nobleman's natural sensiblities and his desire to avoid suffering and natural corruption. The nobleman converts not because of any profound or powerful faith, but specifically out of a fear of pain and the loss of physical beauty. *Timor naturalis* is the active element which spurs the nobleman to repent. It plays upon the worldly and human fears which lie at the heart of his sin. If properly and efficiently inspired, this physically orientated dread 'stirs' the listener and leads him or her away from strictly natural concerns toward the fear of impending spiritual punishment. In short, the *timor naturalis* which overcame the nobleman's worldly and human love and fear ultimately inspires in him *timor servilis*. Once this occurred, his progression up the ladder of spiritual fear could begin. By utilizing the *modus timendi* in this way, a preacher could wake his listener from his sinful sleep and encourage him to 'knaub his folye and playneb of his harm.'<sup>70</sup> *Timor naturalis* acts as the sinner's first step toward the self-awareness of sin. Lying at the centre of Stephen's list of fears, natural dread represents a liminal state, serving as the transitional point between culpable and laudable senses of fear by actively transforming a sinner's imperfect anxieties

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Stephen of Bourbon, pp. 29-30: 'Item, cum magister Jordanus, bone memorie, dixisset multa ad convertendum quemdam nobilem, comitis filium, et videret quod non posset eum movere ad contemptum mundi et introitum ordinis per verba sua, cum ille cui loquebatur esset juvenis speciosissimus, rogavit illum quod, cum respiceret membra sua, semper cogitaret quod magnum dampnum esset si tam pulcra membra essent pabulum incendii eterni. Qui cum hoc idem sepe faceret, ad illa verba creditur fuisse ad ordinis introitum inductus.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> The Avenbite of Inwyt, p. 128.

into a voluntary exhibition of more spiritual forms of dread. The catalogue of dread in the *Tractatus*'s first section, then, provides for the preacher a memorable, step-by-step guide on how to recognize sinful love and fear, overcome it and, finally, promote salutary dread.

Exhortations to meditate on death, such as the one in the exemplum discussed above, were frequent in later-medieval religious writing. Indeed, a whole genre of devotional lyrics on the subject exists,<sup>71</sup> and calls to think about death were frequent in medieval sermons and instructional handbooks as well. In her study of the ars moriendi, Mary O'Connor traces the origins of the rise of the literature of death to the repeated plagues suffered during the later Middle Ages. Interestingly (and mistakenly, I believe), she denies that the rhetoric of fear had any place in the 'art of dying,' suggesting that the 'ars moriendi is no more intended to frighten and depress than is any medieval book on hunting and hawking or on table manners for children.<sup>72</sup> It hardly concentrates on hell, she says, and instead focusses on the hope for heaven. On one level, learning how to die involved learning how to live virtuously. A person who lived virtuously would have nothing to fear from death and could die unashamed and sure of salvation. The surviving number of religious works ranging from sermons to lyrics and devotional treatises which contain examples of the ars moriendi explicitly employing rhetorical discourses of fear, however, suggest that more than a few medieval people were unsure of their spiritual standing and, thus, had much to dread from death and that which came after it. The modus timendi, as employed in the ars moriendi, represents much more than just a fear of death and bodily pain. It transcends this concern in order to highlight that which might occur after death, namely, damnation and purgation, and also inspire a hope for heaven.

The fourteenth-century Middle English instructional manual, The Book of Vices and

<sup>71</sup> The subject of the medieval death lyric has received much attention, but the best overall treatment of the role of fear within it can be found in R. Woolf's book, The English Religious Lyric, pp. 67-77. Also see D. Gray, Themes and Images in the Medieval English Religious Lyric (London, 1972), pp. 190-91 and T. Matsuda, Death and Purgatory in Middle English Didactic Poetry. R. Newhauser analyses the fear of death in his article, "Strong it is to flitte" - A Middle English Poem on Death and its Pastoral Context', Literature and Religion in the Later Middle Ages: Philological Studies in Honor of Siegfried Wenzel, ed. R. G. Newhauser and J. A. Alford (Binghamton, New York, 1995), pp. 319-36. Newhauser examines the Franciscan tradition behind this lyrical memoria mortis found in a late thirteenth or early fourteenth-century manuscript (Oxford Bodleian MS Bodley 29) and provides an edition of the lyric and an analysis of its surrounding Latin context. The Latin text discusses the proper vestments of a Christian and includes fear in the description by equating it to the first prong of the individual's staff: 'so that against the incitement to sin he can be opposed by the prong of fear.' Newhauser notes that this lyric survives in two versions (the second is found in British Library MS Harley 7322), and that each 'depends for their effect on the audience's fear of dying.' But the type of fear which each version uses, he says, varies, for while the Harleian lyric employs servile fear, the Bodley lyric, he asserts, uses filial fear.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> The Art of Dying Well: The Development of the Ars Moriendi (New York, 1942), p. 5.

*Virtues*, reflects this in its lesson on 'learning how to die.'<sup>73</sup> This example of the *ars moriendi* emphasizes the physical side of fear, but at the same time it leads its reader towards a complete spiritual understanding of dread. The section begins by stating the power of the *ars moriendi*, employing the *ubi sunt* tradition to show that death spares no-one and that this method of meditation is equally valuable to all, no matter what his or her position in society. Soon after this, the text explains how its readers can discover the nature of good and evil and learn how to fear properly by encouraging them to 'go fro home, go out of þiself, þat is go out of þis world, and lerne to dye; departe þi soule fro þi body bi þinkynge; send þin herte in-to þat oþer world, þat is in-to heuene or in-to helle or in-to purgatory, and þer þou schalt see what is good and what is yuele.'<sup>74</sup> The vision of each potential destination comprises a progression which raises the individual from the perfidious iniquity of mortal sin to the wonderful joy of salvation. As the text passes from place to place the nature and function of fear change drastically. The first vision, hell, reveals

al þat herte hateþ and fleeþ: defaute of al goodnesse, and gret plente of al wikkednesse, brennynge fier, stynkynge brymston, foule stormes & tempestes, routynge ydouse deueles, hunger, þryst þat may neuere be staunched, many manere of turmentrye, wepynges, sorwes more þan any herte may þenke or any tunge may deuyse, and euere-more wiþ-outen ende lastynge. And þerfore wiþ good ri3t is þat penaunce cleped deeþ wiþ-outen ende, for euere-more a man or a womman lyueþ [þere] dyenge, and dyeþ euermore lyuynge (p. 71, ll. 18-28).

This detailed enumeration of hell's pains provides the vision's structure and reveals the extreme importance of the physical concepts lying behind the initially natural but ultimately servile dread this meditation is supposed to inspire. It accentuates physical corruption and the overturning of the natural order by appealing to the reader's physical senses. As a vision, of course, the primary sense the scene invokes is sight; but the other four senses are also specifically, and affectively, addressed. Hell's burning fire ravages the sense of touch; stinking brimstone assaults scent; the roaring of devils assails hearing and never-ending hunger and thirst completely deprive the visionary of taste. These torments are the pinnacle

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Ed. W. N. Francis, pp. 68-74. Also see the *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, pp. 73-6. Both of these treatises are English translations of the same French text, the *Somme des Vices et des Virtues*, written by a thirteenthcentury Dominican friar named Lorens d'Orléans, hence these texts can be considered direct descendants of the more formal Latin tradition. Friar Lorens's text was frequently translated into English. Francis lists no less than nine translations of the *Somme* between 1340 and 1486. Despite the survival of only three manuscripts of *The Book of Vices and Virtues* and a single copy of the *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, the apparent popularity of English adaptations of the *Somme* makes it reasonable to assume that the poet of *Cleanness* and *Patience* could have been familiar with some version of one or the other, with other texts much like them or, indeed, with Friar Lorens's French text itself.

The Book of Vices and Virtues, p. 70, 1. 32 - p. 71, 1. 2. The remainder of the citations in this section can all be found in pp. 70-74. The Ayenbite's analogous passage can be found on pp. 73-6.

of suffering. They reflect the complete subjugation of the senses and leave nothing for the reader to fall back upon. Hell's terrors offer no hope for rest or refuge, nature and comprehension are obfuscated and the reader has nothing left to do but fear the tortures just described, for as the *Speculum Christiani* argues, if 'these thynges be dredful to here, hou myche more ferdful es it to suffre these!'<sup>75</sup>

After witnessing the pains of hell, the reader is told to think about purgatory and visualize its punishments. The description of purgatory offered by *The Book* supplements the previous account of hell: 'After go in-to purgatorye, and bere schalt bou see be pyne of soules bat repent hem here in bis world, but bei were not al fully purched and clensed' (p. 71, ll. 31-4). If for some reason the fearful message conveyed by the vision of hell is not sufficient to make the reader repent, an explanation of the robust punishments to be found in purgatory should go some way toward augmenting it. Purgatory reminds the reader that sin's filth - no matter its degree - is tenacious and that the pains of purgation are no less harsh simply because they are not meted out in hell:

And þat penaunce is wel hidous and wel hard, for al þat þe holy martires suffrede euere alþermost, ne womman þat trauaileþ, is no more to a-counte a3ens here peyne þan to baþe a man in cold water... And þere is punysched and venged al manere of venyal synne, þat is to seye smale synnes þat we doþ alday ofte and many tymes, in iapes, in trefles, and in suche oþere vanytees of þis world, so þat þer be no þing in þe soule of no manere filþe of synne, and þat sche be worþy to go in-to heuene, for þere may no þing entre but it be ri3t fyn and bri3t (p. 72, ll. 3-7 and 14-21).

The text clearly states purgation's positive effect, but the clear threat at the heart of this vision does not dissipate completely. The pains of purgatory, like those of hell, will be beyond the experience of earthly life; therefore they must be dreaded. But the fear inspired here is of a slightly different kind than the dread which hell should arouse. Fear of purgatory is mitigated by the presence of hope and marked by the certainty of eventual salvation. By likening purgatorial suffering to martyrdom and childbirth, though surpassing each, the text represents its painful cleansing as an overtly positive event. Both birth and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Speculum Christiani, p. 56. In his Dialogus miraculorum (c. 1219-23), Caesarius of Heisterbach lists the 'nine specially noted' pains of hell: 'pitch, snow, darkness, the worm, scourging, chains, festering, shame, and terror.' It is interesting that Caesarius includes terror, or extreme fear, itself as one of hell's most 'noted' pains. This terror, along with the other eight torments, Caesarius explains, 'have no end or limit.' A lack of proper respect for and dread of God results in an altogether less pleasant, yet equally eternal and all-encopassing experience of fear for the sinner. See *The Dialogue of Miracles*, tr. H. von E. Scott and C. C. Swinton Bland (London, 1929), XII, i (ii, p. 290). The exact date of the composition of the *Dialogus* miraculorum is unknown. I have taken my citation of the years 1219-23 from A Duby, 'Césaire de Heisterbach: le dialogue des cisterciens,' in *Prêcher d'exemples*, pp. 71-81 (p. 71). In a more recent article, P. Biller assigns the date of the Dialogus to 'some time around 1223,' 'Confession in the Middle Ages: Introduction', in *Handling Sin: Confession in the Middle Ages*, ed. P. Biller and A. J. Minnis (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 3-33 (p. 3).

martyrdom signify the beginning of new life: the life of innocence, devotion and glory in the kingdom of God. The punishments found in purgatory are instruments of destruction, but they destroy sin rather than the sinner; and although the fear they induce does look back to sin's corruption it also looks forward to salvation and loving, pure and reverential fear. Just as *timor servilis* superseded natural fear in the previous vision, so now is it replaced by something very much like *timor initialis*. These two visions of the suffering and pain to be found in hell and purgatory conclude with an explicit reference to fear's role in avoiding sin and its consequences: 'And pus schal a man lerne to hate synne and flee schrewdnesse, and pus knoweb a man or a womman be holy drede of God pat is bigynnynge of good and holy lif and of al goodnesse' (p. 72, 1. 33 - p. 73, 1. 1). Acquisition of this 'holy dread' is the pivotal moment in the progression from sin to salvation. By being mindful of death and the places of punishment which await one in the hereafter, a person not only feels fear but also learns *how* to fear. Without this dread a sinner would not flee from evil and, consequently, sin would then become a perpetual state. With it, however, a person could see the difference between good and evil and thus amend his or her life accordingly.

The rhetorical use of fear does not end here. *Jacob's Well* makes it clear that the fear of punishment is imperfect: 'Pis drede allone schal neuere brynge be to heuene.'<sup>76</sup> Servile fear, which should grow out of the description of the pains of hell and purgatory, ought to be transformed into perfect, love-based fear. The art of dying presented by the *Book of Vices and Virtues* marks the final step in the progression from *timor naturalis* to *timor castus* when it invites its reader to experience a vision of heaven. By means of meditation on the joys of blessedness the transition from fear to love is finally supposed to take place: 'Nou3t for drede to be dampned, but for desir to haue heuene, and for loue of God, and for be grete clennesse bat vertue hab and good lif; for he bat hab loue to his ledere renneb fastere and wib lesse trauaile ban he bat serueb God for drede.'<sup>77</sup> Sin is transformed into virtue, flight into pursuit, and fear into love. Once a person has fully submitted to this type of fear, he or she is prepared to receive its benefits. The *Speculum Laicorum* lists four interrelated ways in which fear beneficially affects the soul: 'first it gratifies man, then it enriches him who has been gratified, next it excites the enriched to performing good works

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Ed. A. Brandeis, pp. 231-32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Book of Vices and Virtues, pp. 73-4.

and finally fear blesses those who have been excited.<sup>78</sup> With each step fear becomes increasingly active, rehabilitating the soul while drawing it further away from sin and closer to salvation.

In the second section of his treatment of fear, Stephen of Bourbon supplies his own list of the effects of this gratifying, enriching, exciting and blessed fear, a list that succinctly reveals and clearly explains the rhetoric of fear's fundamental purpose:

Fear liberates, inclines, changes and provides Virtue, light, tears, life and divinity. It conquers, disturbs, dries up, purges and avoids evil; Procures, edifies, serves, enriches and restores goodness; Justifying and rejoicing, glorifying and magnifying, It grants one permanent justice and an abode in heaven.

(Liberat, inclinat, mutat timor, atque propinat Virtutem, lumen, fletum, vitam quoque numen; Vincit, sollicitat, siccat, purgat, mala vitat; Impetrat, edificat, servat, reddit bona, ditat; Justificans et letificans dat justa tenere, Glorificans et magnificans celoque manere.)<sup>79</sup>

Like the Speculum Laicorum's description of fear's spiritual effects, this verse clearly shows that if properly employed and received the modus timendi did not simply focus upon negative images of death and damnation. Its main emphasis is the beneficial effect fear has on the soul and its power to reconcile sinners with God. In this short verse there is no explicit mention of physical decay or corruption, the sordidness of sin or the pains of hell; the closest it comes to treating negative subjects is in its statement that fear 'purges and avoids evil.' The particular way in which fear's effects are here presented make this list extremely interesting. Poetry and preaching had long been didactic companions, as Siegfried Wenzel has recognized, and the use of verse complemented religious teaching.<sup>80</sup> Stephen's poem reflects this relationship well, packing twenty-four distinct results of fear into its lines, thus making its message both mnemonically and rhetorically effective. Despite recording a wide range of dread's various effects without going into exhaustive detail, it nevertheless successfully reveals fear's overwhelming spiritual importance. In the space of a mere six lines this verse tells the preacher all he needs to know about the positive qualities of dread, offering concrete evidence why he should actively use the modus timendi. Each of the effects of dread takes an active part in spiritual development: while

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Ch. 84, p. 108: 'Circa quartum vero notandum [est] quod timor operatur multa [primo] hominem gratificat... [secundo] gratificatum ditificat... [tertio] ditatum ad operandum excitat... [quarto] excitatum beatificat...'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> *Tractatus*, pp. 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> Verses in Sermons, p. 66. See note 29, above.

some work directly upon the sinner, liberating and changing him or her, others destroy sin itself and enrich virtue and goodness. The poem's active verbs and present participles ensure that every aspect of fear plays an instrumental part in guiding and propelling the sinner to the state of blessedness mentioned in the *Speculum Laicorum*. In addition to this, its concise and coherent presentation contributes to its mnemonic value. The simplicity of the poem's mode of presentation, the straightforward nature of its message and its overall completeness make its lesson easy to comprehend and remember.

The Book of Vices and Virtues' vision of heaven and the positive effects of spiritual dread listed by the Speculum Laicorum and the Tractatus offset and supersede the rhetoric of fear's initial reliance upon the exhortation to fear naturally or servilely. Rather than making a person face up to the terrifying pains of death and damnation, the listing of fear's salutary effects was intended not to shock but to coax and encourage sinners to give up their culpable way of life. Supplementing its calls to fear death and hell, the modus timendi also employed positive imagery. Together, descriptions of hellish pains, purgatorial punishment and fear's helpful effects provoked vigorous flight from sin and its consequences as well as an active pursuit of virtue and its rewards. Consequently, in many regards rhetorical discourses of fear lay at the centre of spiritual development and proper Christian living.

The rhetoric of fear, then, follows the progression laid out by traditional scholastic interpretations of dread. Dialectical works like the Lombard's *Sentences* and Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* treated fear in an analytically formulaic way; they listed the types of fear and what differentiated them from each other, but aside from a few statements as to its efficacy - usually culled from the Bible - they never really exhorted a person to feel fear. Texts such as Stephen of Bourbon's *Tractatus*, like their dialectical counterparts, also may have treated fear formulaically, but they did so with the overriding intent to inspire an elementary understanding of dread not through analytical questioning, but through direct emotional experience. One did not need to be a trained scholar to understand how dread worked. Fear was an emotion common to everyone, so even relatively uneducated priests could affect their audiences by appealing to them through fearful stories. Sermon stories, Ruth Mazo Karras explains, 'helped shape the way in which laymen and women thought about their world' and were 'the form in which [the Church's] teaching was expressed most vividly.'<sup>81</sup> Frightening *exempla* were amongst the most vivid of these stories. They played

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> 'Gendered Sin and Misogyny in John of Bromyard's *Summa Praedicantium*', *Traditio* 47 (1992): 233-58 (pp. 233-34).

a large part in moral education and conversion, and thus were intended to exert a longlasting influence on their audience by stressing human fragility, death's uncertainty, personal culpability and the certainty of punishment should one fail to live virtuously. As the Middle English *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God* explained, frequent meditation on these things was intended to draw one away from sin, lessen one's former fear of punishment and pain, and lead toward virtue, redemption and a fearful, reverent love of God:

Also yif þou drede God þou art agast to do anyþing þat scholde be displesing to him, and for as muche as pou dredest pou dost it not. So þat bi þat drede pou leuist pat ping undo wiche scholde turne to þe into gret peril of soule yif it hadde be performed in dede.<sup>82</sup>

Having submitted oneself to this fear, reverence and love for God will increase, while dread of punishment and hardship will diminish: 'The drede þat þou hast to God schal bringe þe into euerlasting sikernes, wher þou schalt neuer drede.'<sup>83</sup> Beginning with fear's emotional, physical aspects and culminating in its overtly spiritual transformation, the *modus timendi* was a systematic process whose ends were spiritual but whose means were almost exclusively physical: by appealing to a person's fear of death and bodily pain, the rhetoric of fear was employed to save souls.

Alan Fletcher suggests that by the later Middle Ages the rhetorical use of fear in preachers' exhortations to meditate on the pains of death and hell had become 'overworked and outworn.'<sup>84</sup> I believe Fletcher overstates his case. If the *modus timendi* was so outmoded, why did it continue to be used and prescribed throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and even throughout post-Reformation Europe?<sup>85</sup> In the following two chapters I hope to show that the *modus timendi* was still considered to be a worthwhile mode of rhetorical proceeding in the late-fourteenth century by examining how the poet (or 'preacher-poet', as N. P. Robinson identifies him)<sup>86</sup> of *Cleanness* and *Patience* employed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> Ed. Connolly, Ch. O, p. 19, ll. 4-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> Ed. Connolly, Ch. C, p. 9, ll. 48-50. All of the surviving manuscripts of this text date from the fifteenth century, the earliest coply dating from the first quarter of the century. Connolly lists Richard Rolle and St. Bridget of Sweden's *Revelations* as being certain influences on the text and thus concludes that the most likely date of composition for the *Contemplations* to be in the period ca. 1375-1425. See pp. xlii-xliii.

Preachers and Politics, p. 186.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> For discussions of the rhetorical use of fear in both Catholic and Protestant religious treatises and sermons see, Tentler, *Sin and Confession*; Delumeau, *Sin and Fear* and *La Peur en Occident*; *Les Malheurs des temps: histoire des fléaux et des calamités en France*, ed. J. Delumeau and Y. Lequin (Ligugé, Poitiers, 1987); L. Duggan, 'Fear and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation', *Archiv fur Reformationsgeschichte* 75 (1984): 153-75; and P. Marshall, 'Fear, purgatory and polemic in Reformation England', in *Fear in Early Modern Society*, ed. Willaim G. Naphy and Penny Roberts (Manchester, 1997), pp. 150-66.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> 'The Middle English *Patience*: The Preacher-Poet, Jonah, and Their Common Mission', *ABR* 37 (1986): 130-42. Robinson identifies the poet as a 'preacher-poet', explaining that the term 'indicates that the preacher's didactic function was integral to his [the poet of *Cleanness* and *Patience*] work; however, it

different discourses of fear in order to reinforce his own exhortative message and didactic lesson. Death, judgment and punishment are all significant parts of the thematic, narrative and rhetorical structures of the two poems. The poet follows standard preaching practice, using threats and warnings to help create a terrifying mood that exploits natural and human fears of physical suffering in order to stimulate a profound feeling of servile dread and the spiritual conversion it helps promote. He also provides his readers with examples of more positive types of fear in an effort to encourage them to actively pursue virtue as well as flee from sin. Terrifying images of death, destruction and overt threat abound in the two poems, and, as I shall argue, the poet purposefully uses them to inspire in his readers a rhetorical and salutary fear that will lead them from the unclean state of sinfulness represented by the antediluvians' and Sodomites' filth and guide them toward the blessed reconciliation experienced by the Ninevites.

does not imply that the poems were written to be delivered as sermons' (p. 130, n. 1).

#### Chapter 3

# Defining the discourse of fear: rhetorical uses of dread in Cleanness

Fear, as we have seen, was an important rhetorical tool frequently used by medieval preachers and writers to gain their audiences' attention, affect their emotions and influence their behaviour. This rhetorical approach commonly focussed (at least initially) on inspiring physical notions of fear; but underlying it there existed a strong spiritual intent. The alliterative poem Cleanness, recently described by Nicholas Watson as 'the most frightening poem in Middle English,' shows exactly how this rhetoric of fear could be used to great effect in late fourteenth-century literature. Ostensibly one of the main aims of Cleanness is to lead its audience, or at least point out the way, to heavenly joy by promoting penance and purity. Cleanness and its concomitant rewards may be the poem's overt theme, but its opposite, uncleanness - defined by Anderson as 'the sin of ultimate contempt for God and his order'<sup>2</sup> - underlines and conveys the poem's entire message. In an effort to inspire penitential emotion and behaviour, the poet concentrates on illustrations of natural disorder, humanity's susceptibility to and commission of sin, the excruciating pain and distress resulting from sinful actions, and the need for a controlling force to help people overcome temptation and avoid the bitter consequences of immorality. In doing so, he makes uncleanness a specific cause for fear.

Latin theology, as we can see in William Peraldus's discussion of cleanness (*munditia cordis*), provided the precedent for this relationship. Peraldus explains that there are five things which make it clear that uncleanness should be feared. The first is a comparison of the inherent dignity of the thing and the sin which pollutes it. Second, a person should fear uncleanness because of the difficulty of withdrawing from it. Third, impurity is worthy of dread because of its essential vileness. Fourth, uncleanness must be feared because 'God has no friend, however, good, whom he would not hate even unto eternal death on occasion of mortal sin.' Finally, impurity befouls a person to such an extent that it is better to be nothing than to exist in filth.<sup>3</sup> In *Cleanness* the poet will follow

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> 'The Gawain-Poet as a Vernacular Theologian', in A Companion to the Gawain-Poet, pp. 293-313 (p. 306).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Cleanness (Manchester, 1977), p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Summae virtutum ac vitiorum VI, 10 (i, fol. 346r): 'Et notandum quod quinque sunt ex quibus intelligi potest quam timenda sit immunditia peccati. Primum est, dignitas rei quam peccatum inquinat... Secundum est, difficultas recedende, quae patet in Lucifero a quo immunditia peccati separari non potuit ex

Peraldus's reasoning, using amplified descriptions of transgressive acts and God's vehement - and often brutal - punishment of sinners to create a discourse of fear in which sin and its uncleanness become explicit objects of dread. Ideally the poet's rhetorical evocation of fear should move each of his readers to feel a growing sense of apprehension and dread and thereby force them to choose between acting sinfully or living purely. This fear-motivated choice, then, will help determine whether they suffer the penalty of eternal punishment or enjoy the reward of perpetual joy.

The role of fear in Cleanness is a topic which for the most part has escaped detailed critical notice. Elizabeth Keiser recognizes fear as lying at the heart of Cleanness's thematic and didactic structures when she posits that the poet's purpose in writing Cleanness may have been because he feared that the punishment merited by sexual impurity - specifically homosexual practices - threatened not just those guilty of committing unclean acts but the whole of society as well. The poet, Keiser maintains, characterizes homosexuality and related acts of sexual impurity as 'specific dangers which good Christians needed to fear.'4 In his article, 'Cleanness and the Terms of Terror,' David Wallace addresses the part played by another type of fear, the terror of judgment. Here it is claimed that the central question of the poem, 'what must I do to be clean?', is synonymous with 'what must I do to be saved?'.<sup>5</sup> In addressing these questions the Cleanness-poet 'takes pains to complicate and intensify our experience of terror," and makes the terrorization of his readers a matter of deliberate rhetorical strategy.<sup>7</sup> Rather than pursuing the poet's rhetorical use of traditional scholastic interpretations of fear, however, Wallace instead explores the links between the poem and supposedly nominalist thought, regarding fear solely in its relationship to God's two potentiae - absoluta and ordinata - and their respective roles in the process of final judgment.<sup>8</sup> By analyzing the interplay between

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quo ei adhaesit... Tertium est huius immunditiae vilitas... Quartum est hoc, quod Deus non habet adeo bonum amicum quem non odiret ad mortem etiam aeternam propter maculam unius mortalis peccati... Quintum est quod macula haec adeo deturpat rem in quam cadit et deteriorat, quod nisi virtute divina removeatur, perdita est, et melius esset ei nihil esse quam sic esse...'.

Courtly Desire and Medieval Homophobia, p. 50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> 'Cleanness and the Terms of Terror', in Text and Matter: New Critical Perspectives of the Pearl-Poet, pp. 93-104 (p. 104).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Wallace, p. 93.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Wallace, p. 102, n. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> In addition to the notions of God's absolute and ordained power addressed by Wallace, other 'Nominalist' questions included the relationship between grace and justification, God's covenant with humanity, and the interrelation between free will and destiny. See R. A. Peck, 'Chaucer and the Nominalist Questions', *Speculum* 53 (1978): 745-60. Along with Wallace's article there are numerous studies which discuss the alleged influence of Nominalist thought on Middle English literature. See, for example, J.

God's powers and man, Wallace concludes that 'the ultimate terror of *Cleanness...* is the prospect of being caught in that seat of Judgment before our time.'<sup>9</sup>

Although Wallace proposes that the poet's terms of terror fit into a wider framework of supposedly nominalist thought about God's two *potentiae*, we do not have to look to the opinions of the *moderni* in order to recognize the significance of fear within *Cleanness*'s rhetorical discourse. One did not have to understand God's power in absolute or ordained terms to fear judgment, death, destruction and damnation. Hardly the sole preserve of nominalist thinkers, such anxieties exerted an influence throughout the traditional religious thought and literature of the late Middle Ages. The *Cleanness*-poet's use of fear actually depended upon the terms for dread set out and elucidated by mainstream scholastic theology, biblical commentary, encyclopaedic literature and standard preaching theory and practice.<sup>10</sup> The poet himself refers to his own personal familiarity with higher learning -

Bot I have herkned and herde of mony hy3e clerkez, And als in resounez of ry3t red hit myseluen (193-94),

- and it is reasonable to assume he would have encountered references to fear in his reading. Wallace's view of dread and its place in the poem is useful, and he is correct in stating that the fear of judgment is one of the poem's main themes. But, as will be argued below, within *Cleanness* the dread of judgment and its subsequent punishments is not the only type

<sup>9</sup> Wallace, p. 100.

Coleman, Piers Plowman and the Moderni (Rome, 1981), in which Coleman provides an overview of the moderni and their thought (pp. 17-35); R. K. Delasanta, 'Nominalism and Typology in Chaucer', in Typology and Middle English Literature, ed. H. T. Keenan, Georgia State Literary Studies 7 (New York, 1992), pp. 121-39; and W. Watts and R. J. Utz, 'Nominalist Perspectives on Chaucer's Poetry: A Biliographical Essay', Medievalia et Humanistica ns 20 (1994): 147-73. W. J. Courtenay has argued convincingly against the widespread influence of Nominalist thought on Middle English literature, Schools and Scholars in Fourteenth-Century England (Princeton, 1987). Courtenay also has addressed the problem of God's two potentiae in particular in his recent article 'The Dialectic of Divine Omnipotence in the Age of Chaucer: A Reconsideration', in Nominalism and Literary Discourse, New Perspectives, ed. H. Keiper, C. Bode and R. J. Utz, Critical Studies 10 (Amsterdam, 1997): pp. 111-21. And in a recent article, A. J. Minnis, dealing particularly with Chaucer and Langland, offers a conclusion that can apply to Ricardian poets in general (including the poet of Cleanness and Patience). Agreeing with Courtenay's argument, Minnis asserts that the Nominalist questions as posed by Peck 'accentuated and elaborated upon issues which had been the currency of speculative theology for generations, but their minutiae did not trouble very deeply the hearts and minds of a wider audience.' When treating the subject of Nominalist influence on Middle English texts, he concludes, 'it would seem that the best attitude is one of scepticism,' 'Looking for a Sign: The Quest for Nominalism in Chaucer and Langland', in Essays on Ricardian Literature in Honour of J. A. Burrow, ed. A. J. Minnis, C. C. Morse and T. Turville-Petre (Oxford, 1997), pp. 142-78 (178).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Indeed, J. K. Lecklider concludes that 'the poet drew upon the homilies and scriptural glosses of traditional, mainstream theologians: from the Fathers, such as Augustine, Jerome, and Chrysostom, to those later writers - Andrew and Hugh of St. Victor, and Nicholas of Lyre - whose works can be found, *in originali*, among the manuscript collections of West Midlands cathedral and monastic libraries,' *Cleanness: Structure and* Meaning, p. 233. She supports her statement by examining manuscript evidence and source availability, as well as by providing a very helpful table which lists the locations of various West Midlands libraries and their relevant holdings, pp. 239-50.

of fear which the poet uses to qualify his rhetorical and didactic message, nor is it the only kind of dread he attempts to evoke. Among these different varieties of fear are the *timor mundanus* and *timor humanus* possessed by sinners, others which denote *timor naturalis* and the fear of death and pain, and still others which signify spiritually perfect *timor filialis*. The poet utilizes all of these different kinds of dread to show his audience not only what should be feared, but how one should fear.

Cleanness is a poem of many parts; its theme remains constant, but its narrative shifts from one story to another and from one character to the next. The poem consists of several narrative units but it can be roughly divided into three main biblical stories sharply reminiscent of sermon exempla in tone, style and purpose. The question of Cleanness's structure - that is, how each individual exemplum within the poem is linked to the others has received much attention in the past. For example, Doris E. Kittendorf has examined Cleanness's debt to late-medieval sermon structure, showing how each individual narrative within the poem elaborates upon and strengthens the messages of the others.<sup>11</sup> More recently, Jane K. Lecklider has studied the poem's structural framework and content in terms of their possible relationship to the liturgical calendar.<sup>12</sup> However, despite these apparent thematic and didactic links between Cleanness's exempla, some critics, such as W. A. Davenport, maintain that the exempla constitute the poem's main weakness in that the poet fails 'to satisfactorily integrate [them] with one another and with the poem's framework...'.<sup>13</sup> I believe this view is mistaken. There is no structural, thematic or didactic 'failure.' Rather, through each exemplum the poet sets out to promote purity by repeating his exhortation to fear uncleanness. Each individual story interacts with and builds upon the others, and their common theme and discourse come together to create a powerful rhetorical statement about the evils of impurity and the terrifying nature of its resultant punishment.

All three of the poem's main *exempla* actively promote fear by bringing into sharp focus the results of uncleanness and the question of God's judgment of those who are impure, and through their horrifying descriptions of divine wrath. The Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the murder of Belshazzar were all commonly

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Cleanness: The Unity of Structure and Theme, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, 1975). See also her article, 'Cleanness and the Fourteenth-Century Artes Praedicandi.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Cleanness: Structure and Meaning.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> The Art of the Gawain-Poet, p. 55.

interpreted in the Middle Ages as types of Final Judgment.<sup>14</sup> The fact that Cleanness combines all three examples - and a visceral description of the fall of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonians - in a single work speaks volumes for the significance it attributes not only to judgment but also to the accompanying questions of guilt, punishment and, crucially, the fear contingent upon them.<sup>15</sup> In the poem, Old Testament law - an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth - is the driving force behind God's vengeful actions, and the graphic pictures the poet paints of the suffering sinners are a clear and powerful use of the rhetoric of fear. In his De Veteri et Novo Testamento Quaestiones, Isidore of Seville discusses the purpose of punishment and its rhetorical value as a cause for fear. His commentary takes the form of a dialogue between a master and his student, a mode of discourse which in itself tacitly reveals fear's fundamental part in spiritual education: 'Tell me, why is the following said: "An eye for an eye, a tooth for tooth, and the rest which pertains to vengeance and satisfaction?" The answer follows: So that there might be fear in the populace.'16 Logically, Isidore supposes, if a person knows that sin will be paid back in kind he or she will refrain from committing any crime. The action and theme of Cleanness revolve around this very idea of reciprocal punishment.

In contrast to the rhetorical discourse he employs in *Patience*, which we shall examine in the next chapter, in *Cleanness* the poet makes Isidore's message that much stronger by emphasizing the absolute finality of God's judgment. The poem's sinners have no chance to save themselves once God has passed judgment on them. The antediluvians, the Sodomites and Belshazzar are all judged and punished according to this law, and by describing the destruction scenes so vividly the poet not only shows the fear felt by the poem's internal textual populace but also seeks to ensure that a heavy sense of dread will fall over the poem's external populace: the audience itself. As John Gardner notes, if the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Morse, *Pattern of Judgment*, p. 131; Wallace, p. 94.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> In her unpublished PhD dissertation, E. B. Keiser argues against the view that *Cleanness* is predominantly a warning against sin: 'To reduce the poem to a warning against sin, supported by cautionary stories of the suffering of sinners in the hands of an angry God, is to miss the essentially celebrative impulse pervading *Cleanness* as a whole.' *Perfection and Experience: the Celebration of Divine Order and Human Sensibility in* Cleanness *and* Patience, Yale University (New Haven, 1972), p. 7. I take Keiser's point but I think she is overlooking the fundamental nature of the poem. Yes, the poet's ultimate end is to inspire his audience to pursue divine perfection and purity, but the main way in which he does this is by focussing upon negative images of pain and punishment and the heavy threat of final Judgment. The final lines of the poem look forward to the Beatific Vision, but the only way one can make spiritual advancement toward the achievement of this blessing is by recalling the *prynne wyses* (1805) the poet uses to show how uncleanness harms the soul and is punished by God.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> *PL* 83, q. 30, col. 204: 'Dic mihi, cur dictum est: Oculum pro oculo, dentem pro dente, et reliqua quae ad vindictam pertinent? Respondit: Ut esset timor in populo...'.

reader recognizes the poem's 'testament of wrath,' a concept which runs through the entire text, he or she will be 'likely to find [Cleanness] a successful poem.'<sup>17</sup> By focussing on God's wrath and divine vengeance, as we shall see, the poet keeps fear at the forefront of his poem's rhetorical discourse throughout. The different types of fear which are implicit in the actions of sinners and saved alike ideally should inspire explicit feelings of dread within the audience. Robert Blanch and Julian Wasserman argue that the poet's use of terror 'distances' the audience from his poem by 'creat[ing] a theological separation of reader and character.'<sup>18</sup> I disagree with their analysis. The poet's rhetorical use of traditional theological discussions of dread does the exact opposite of 'distancing' his readers from the text. Rather, the rhetoric of fear draws the readers into the poem itself. firmly placing them at the centre of each narrative as it prepares them to receive the benefit of the poem's moral message. Allowing the audience to witness the destruction of Cleanness's sinners without making it identify with their fate would only lessen the poem's emotional affectiveness and, hence, its didactic effectiveness. In Cleanness, then, dread acts as a unifying, integrating motif that is supposed to appeal to the audience both psychologically and spiritually and motivate each reader to flee from impurity and its punishments and instead pursue cleanness and its rewards. The poet's active attempt to instill fear in his readers and make them dread uncleanness and its effects overcomes any possible structural 'failure' and contributes to Cleanness's rhetorical and thematic strength and unity.

#### I. Setting the fearful tone: the Parable of the Wedding Feast

Although the poem's most obvious theme is God's love of purity and his hatred of perversion, it does not take the poet long to thrust fear to the forefront. From the poem's very outset the poet makes it clear that he will rely heavily upon negative examples. He begins by espousing the virtue of cleanness, but then underlines his message by expressing the extraordinary hatred and anger God has for those who persist in impurity. As Edward Wilson has noted, the poet organizes his text 'on the principle of definitions by contraries,' and *Cleanness*'s first 32 lines reflect this as they define purity not only with positive statements of its qualities and rewards but also with descriptions of its opposite, impurity,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> The Complete Works of the Gawain-Poet (Chicago and London, 1965), p. 61.

<sup>18</sup> From Pearl to Gawain, p. 113, n. 5.

and filth's negative results. After establishing the basic opposition between cleanness and uncleanness, a rhetorical act which will play a crucial part throughout the poem's later narratives, the poet begins his prologue. However, before presenting its main subject, the retelling of the Parable of the Wedding Feast (Matthew 22:1-14; Luke 14:16-24), he prefaces it with another brief *exemplum*, one which for all intents and purposes tells the same story and teaches the same lesson as the parable to follow. Lines 33-50 introduce a hypothetical situation in which an earthly prince's banquet table is approached by an unclean *harlot* wearing torn leggings and rags (39-41). Naturally, the proper action for the prince to take in response to this uncourteous act would be to expel the interloper. The *harlot*, the poem says,

... schulde be halden vtter, With mony blame ful bygge, a boffet peraunter, Hurled to þe halle dore and harde þeroute schowued, And be forboden þat bor3e to bowe þider neuer, On payne of enprysonment and puttyng in stokkez (42-6).

These lines represent the poem's first description of judgment, one which the poet will amplify in his later narratives. The *harlot*, the poem explains, should be beaten, bodily thrown out of the banquet hall and forbidden on pain of imprisonment from ever again entering the prince's presence. This depiction of judgment and punishment does not only foreshadow the various penalties experienced by sinners later in the poem. It also specifically mirrors the punishment received by the unclean guest in the succeeding paraphrase of the parable of the wedding feast. In the paraphrase, the poet gives a much fuller account of the message conveyed by lines 33-50: why, then, does he place this seemingly redundant prefatory passage so close to the poem's introduction? If we consider *Cleanness* to be a homiletic poem whose structure owes much to medieval theories of sermon construction,<sup>19</sup> the obvious answer to this question is that this brief prefatory *exemplum* fulfils the traditional function of the sermon's, or in this case the poem's, protheme - i. e. the initial exordium to the text's theme. This short preface to the prologue clearly and succinctly introduces the rhetorical discourses of fear and punishment which the parable, as well as the rest of the poem, will develop more fully.

Lines 33-50 establish the foundation for the poem's rhetoric by clearly confirming that God and judgment must be feared. The final two lines of this passage form the link between it and the parable which follows. The poet asks his audience to think about the prince's expected response to the *harlot*'s insulting impurity. He then presents his readers

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with a rhetorical question, encouraging them to consider what God's likely response to such an insult would be:

And if vnwelcum he were to a wordlych prynce, zet hym is þe hyze Kyng harder in heuen (49-50).

The classification of the prince as 'worldly' in line 49 corresponds with and emphasizes his earlier description as an earthly knight or lord (vrply hapel, 35). The poet wants to ensure that his readers understand the temporal nature of the relationship between the lord and his unclean guest before describing the more important - and more serious - relationship between God and humanity. These two lines and the rhetorical comparison they promote introduce what is to be one of the poem's predominant images: the vengeful God and his hatred of uncleanness. The conditional and comparative qualities of these lines stress God's severity and unpredictability, and they prepare the reader for the vivid exhibitions of judgment and punishment which the poet will describe in the poem's main instructional exempla. The explicitly earthly wrath, physical pain and temporal punishment described in lines 33-50, as the reader will soon discover, are as nothing when compared to their divine counterparts. The poet's lesson here is reminiscent of the message conveyed by Matthew 10:28, a verse often quoted in medieval treatises on fear. Its teaching is straightforward: 'Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell.' Traditional medieval discourse based on this passage stressed the difference between divine and earthly power and revealed that God, not an earthly prince, should be the highest object of fear:

A prince is to be feared, and his precepts readily observed... but a worldly prince does not have any power except over external things and the body. God's power, however, is not delegated or assigned to him by others, but is his according to order. Therefore he must be feared above all else.<sup>20</sup>

By introducing this precept in lines 49-50, the poet sets the tone for his entire poem. He immediately draws the members of his audience into *Cleanness*'s moral and conceptual framework by asking them to weigh the difference between temporal and spiritual power, thus forcing them to contemplate not only the notion of physical pain but also the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Rainier of Pisa, *Pantheologia, De Timore*, Ch. 3 (ii, 1105b): '... timetur princeps, et eius praecepta melius observantur... sed princeps mundi non habet potestatem, nisi super exteriora, et super corpus. Deus autem super omnia habet potestatem non delegatam, non comissam, sed ordinariam. Ergo super omnia est timendus.' In his *Summae virtutum ac vitiorum* William Peraldus includes a number of these rhetorical statements as he discusses fear. In describing hell, Peraldus says the following: 'Vadent, & venient super eum horribiles. Si tantum horrorem habet homo quando videt in praesenti vnum daemonem, quantus horror erit vbi tot horribiles apparebunt & magis horribiles, vt videtur, quam appareant in praesenti? Si vnus de ministris carceris infernalis tantum habet horrorem, quid habebit horroris ipse carcer?' VI, 3, 4 (i, fol. 294r). These statements in many respects are similar to the arguments Professor Wallace puts forward in his article. The fear which the poet uses as a 'rhetorical tool' is inextricably linked to God's intrinsic power.

inevitability of divine judgment and the possibility of an altogether more serious form of punishment: damnation. Through this brief prefatory narrative, then, the poet begins to reveal how fully uncleanness displeases God by giving his audience an initial example of why divine power must be feared.

Following this rhetorical comparison between earthly and divine power, the poet begins his retelling of the Parable of the Wedding Feast. By shifting his focus from a hypothetical earthly lord's reactions to uncleanness to the Gospels' allegorical treatment of the same theme, the poet sets the stage for *Cleanness*'s continuing treatment of the relationship between a God who demands purity and a world which is all too often unwilling to give it to him. After relating how the Lord has planned an elaborate feast only to learn that his invited guests have refused to attend, the poet describes the host's displeasure, offering the poem's reader a quick glimpse of divine anger and foreshadowing the pain and punishment which accompanies it:

Thenne þe ludych lorde lyked ful ille, And hade dedayn of þat dede; ful dry3ly he carpez. He saytz: 'Now for her owne sor3e þay forsaken habbez; More to wyte is her wrange þen any wylle gentyl' (73-6).

God speaks severely, stressing his intended guests' personal culpability by implying that by refusing to attend the banquet, not only have they forsaken his hospitality but they have condemned themselves as well. Both the cause and effect of their blatant rejection are signified by three words in line 75: 'her owne sorʒe.' First, these words can be interpreted as meaning 'their own filth,' a term which exemplifies the source of their refusal and its concomitant guilt. Second, the phrase conveys a sense of the personal sorrow and pain they will experience as a result of their impurity. These lines vividly underscore the notion of personal culpability and the threat of divine wrath which are such integral parts of the poem's thematic and rhetorical content. However, it is not until the wedding feast is in full swing that the poet truly begins to employ the fearful rhetoric which will characterize so much of *Cleanness*'s later narratives.

After expressing his anger, the Lord sends his servants to collect more guests. Soon, the banquet hall is filled and the host finally decides to introduce himself to his visitors. The poet's description of the host's elegance, manners and purity as he wanders amongst his guests glosses over the earlier portrayal of his anger (129-32). However, this portrayal of courtesy also serves to heighten the intensity of the Lord's wrath and the dread it will soon inspire. As the Lord makes his way through the hall, he greets his guests courteously, encouraging them to enjoy themselves. His actions emphasize the merits of cleanness and provide for the reader a happy metaphor of heavenly blessedness and bliss. But the poet soon shatters this image of harmony as he tears the reader's gaze away from those guests who are properly and cleanly attired to a single guest who is *unpryuandely cloped* in a garment filthy *with werkkez* (133-37). It is at this point that the narrative's discourse becomes distinctly admonitory and negative in tone. The sharp contrast between the description of the unclean guest and the happy spectacle described in the preceding lines underscores the scene's threatening fearfulness. By stressing the joy experienced by the properly attired guests and the pleasure the Lord takes in greeting them, the poet states the value of purity. But as a result of his sudden shift of focus he succeeds in redefining his subject, turning away from illustrations of purity and instead focussing on descriptions of impurity, the punishment it merits, and the fear this promotes.

From this point on the parable is concerned solely with the host's harsh - but just - reaction to his unclean guest. He makes his way to the filthily dressed visitor and berates him for the state of his garment, calling the guest's clothes *fowle* (140), *ratted* (144) and *febele* (145) and accusing him of insolently doing his house dishonour (141-47). Whereas the biblical account simply states that the guest did not wear a wedding garment (Matthew 22:11), the poet emphasizes the poor condition of his clothes. According to Hugh of St. Cher, the wedding garment could be understood as exemplifying 'true faith and justice.'<sup>21</sup> By describing the filthiness and raggedness of his clothing so meticulously, the poet clearly states that the guest possesses neither of these virtues. William Peraldus equates the symbol of a precious garment to the human soul and warns that by staining the garment of one's soul through acts of impurity, a person in effect befouls the image of God.<sup>22</sup> The poet hopes to invoke a similar warning in his paraphrase of the parable, so he chooses to focus not on the purity of the properly attired guests, but rather on the unclean guest's disrespect, impurity and their accompanying culpability.

Having made this shift, the poet once again presents his audience with a rhetorical question. The host asks the unclean guest whether he thinks his filthy garment is worthy of praise: 'Hopez þou I be a harlot þi erigaut to prayse?' (148). Although the question is directed to the guest, we can also understand the poet as asking the same thing of his readers. The query forces them to evaluate the state of their own symbolic clothing, and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Postillae, Matthew 22:11 (vi, fol. 70rb): 'Vestimentum nuptiale est fides vera, et justitia.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Summae virtutum ac vitiorum VI, 10, (i, fol. 346r): 'Panno pretiosiori magis timemus inquinationem, etiam anima quae per peccatum inquinatur imago Dei est, et unita divinae naturae in persona Christi.'

it allows them figuratively to experience the guest's own reaction to the host's troubling question. This query merges with the lines immediately preceding the retelling of the parable by forcing the reader to recall the rhetorical question presented in lines 49-50. A temporal prince, these lines suggest, should be swift and severe in his punishment of those who offend him. The hypothetical punishment of the *harlot* in lines 42-6 is described in terse and unembellished terms, and the poet chooses not to clarify what the sinner's reaction to his penalty might be. In the parable, however, the poet paints a rhetorically effective picture of the unclean guest, describing his fearful reaction to the host's elaborate and fierce rebuke and the pain it promises:

Pat oper burne watz abayst of his brope wordez, And hurkelez doun with his hede, be vrbe he biholdez; He watz so scoumfit of his scylle, lest he skabe hent, Pat he ne wyst on worde what he warp schulde (149-52).

Simply put, the unclean guest dissolves in fear. The terminology the poet uses to characterize him is emotionally evocative and recalls the language traditionally used to describe the physical effects of natural fear. As Aquinas wrote, the threat of bodily pain produces both a psychological and a physical contraction. One who perceives danger reflexively seeks to avoid it by fleeing, he says.<sup>23</sup> Held by the Lord's porters, the guest cannot run away, but he attempts to flee nonetheless. The physical and psychological contractions of which Aquinas writes are readily apparent in the guest's reaction to his pronounced penalty. The host's ferocity humiliates and confuses the guest, the heavy threat of punishment causes him to shrink away from his accuser physically, and his fear of pain makes him lose his reason (*scylle*), thus preventing him from uttering a single word in self-defense. He is completely stupefied, a reaction which, as one typical fourteenth-century encyclopaedia explains, is directly related to the fear he feels: 'if fear is particularly vehement or excessive to such a degree that it confuses reason, then such an ardent and reason disturbing dread impedes the operation of the intellect.'<sup>24</sup> Both the guest's body and mind reflexively shrivel in the face of the Lord's verbal assault.

It is clear that the Lord's works have terrified his guest, but what exactly is it that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 44, 1 (xxi, 61-5).

Rainier Jordan of Pisa, *Pantheologia, De Timore*, Ch. 13 (ii, 1113b): '... si est timor nimis vehemens, et excessivus, intantum quod rationem perturbat, tunc talis timor sic vehemens, et rationem perturbans impedit operationem ex parte mentis.' For descriptions of stupor (*timor stupor*) and its effects on reason and cognitive ability see also, to name only a few sources, Bonaventure's commentary on the *Sentences*, Bk.3, Dist.34, *Dubium* 3; the *Speculum Morale*, col.77-8; and Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 1a2ae 41. This particular effect, as we shall see, is mirrored in the poet's description of Belshazzar's reaction to the writing on the wall.

makes his fear so 'vehement' and 'excessive?' Unlike the strictly temporal punishment which can be handed down by earthly lords, the penalty the parable's unclean guest must pay allegorically transcends physical and temporal limits. The Lord does not simply exclude the guest from the banquet and warn him not to return; he actively consigns the sinner to never-ending pain and suffering:

Byndez byhynde, at his bak, bobe two his handez, And felle fetterez to his fete festenez bylyue; Stik hym stifly in stokez, and stekez hym berafter Depe in my doungoun ber doel euer dwellez, Greuing and gretyng and gryspyng harde Of tebe tenfully togeder, to teche hym be quoynt (155-60).

In conjunction with the description of the guest's reaction to God's words (149-52), this enumeration of punishments stresses his absolute immobility and impotence and God's overwhelming power and rigidity. The guest is physically bound by shackles and rope, his reason is constrained by divine wrath, and now he is to be imprisoned in hell itself. By combining an intricately detailed description of physical punishment with an abject display of dread, something which he will continue to do throughout the poem, the poet explicitly links the two concepts, thereby establishing the defining terms of the discourse of fear which functions within *Cleanness*'s three main *exempla*.

As the parable draws to a close the poet attempts to ensure that his lesson is taken seriously by including an explicit warning - the first of many in the poem - to the audience to keep itself clean:

Bot war þe wel, if þou wylt, þy wedez ben clene And honest for þe halyday, lest þou harme lache, For aproch þou to þat Prynce of parage noble He hates helle no more þen hem þat ar sowlé (165-68).

These lines follow the teaching of Gregory the Great who, in his *Liber regulae pastoralis*, explains how those who have committed, or are in danger of committing, sins of the flesh - the *Cleanness*-poet's particular concern - are to be addressed. Likening committed sin to a shipwreck, an image with much significance for *Patience* (as we shall see), Gregory tells preachers to instill in their audiences fear lest they commit sin or persist in it.<sup>25</sup> Fearful admonishments should be used, he continues, in order to ensure that sinners, having already

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> *PL* 77, III, Ch. 28, col. 104 and 105: 'Admonendi namque sunt peccata carnis experti, ut mare saltem post naufragium metuant, et perditionis suae discrimina vel cognita perhorrescant; ne qui pie post perpetrata mala servati sunt, haec improbe repetendo moriantur... At contra admonendi sunt peccatum carnis ignorantes, ut tanto sollicitus praecipitem ruinam metuant...'.

sullied the good things of nature, might restore them to their former whole, pure state.<sup>26</sup> The guest's wedding garment may be torn and dirty, but as Gregory's words imply, it is possible for it to be mended and once again made clean and whole. In the retelling of the parable, the depiction of judgment and the two-pronged penalty of physical pain and spiritual loss intensify the scene's fearfulness and represent the beginning of a rhetorical process intended to promote the growth of servile dread. For as Peter Lombard says, quoting Augustine: 'If one begins to believe [in the day of judgment], he begins to fear.'<sup>27</sup>

That the poet intended his audience to feel this type of dread is, I believe, unquestionable. As we saw in the previous chapter, it was common rhetorical practice for a preacher to exhort his audience to fear God and damnation. Indeed, we can see an actual example of this in specific relation to the Parable of the Wedding Feast in one late fourteenth-century sermon which, while treating the theme of '*Amice, quomodo huc intrasti?*', uses the parable to illustrate its own message by concentrating on the unclean guest's filthy clothes. Early in the sermon the preacher encourages his audience to fear: 'And þer-fore drede þou lest he do commaunde to bynde þe honde and fote and putt þe in-to þe innere derkenesse.'<sup>28</sup> Soon after saying this, the preacher launches into a retelling and interpretation of the parable, closing his treatment thereof with a statement remarkably similar to the words the poet uses at the end of his paraphrase of the story:

But be-ware, I counsell be, bat bou come not to be feste, bat is, to be Dome dredefull, but bou haue oon be leveree of clennes of bat weddynge, leste bat oure Lorde Ihesu when bat he commeb to behold be, repreue be, and ordeyne be to be putt in-to euery lastynge peyne for bin evill lyvynge...<sup>29</sup>.

The wariness and fear the parable should promote is supposed to keep one from committing sin and thus soiling the garment of the soul. Such fearful and exhortative rhetoric of the type employed in these adaptations of the parable was encouraged by texts such as John Bromyard's *Summa Praedicantium*, which states that 'it is appropriate for God to incite in the souls of the faithful a fear of himself which expels the sinner's every uncleanness.'<sup>30</sup> This is what Gregory the Great and the anonymous Middle English preacher sanction, and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Gregory the Great, col. 104: 'Admonendi sunt, ut praeterita commissa considerent, et imminentia devitent... Admonendi itaque sunt, ut studeant, quatenus si accepta naturae bona integra servare noluerunt, saltem scissa resarciant.'

<sup>27</sup> Sententiae III, xxxiv, 5 (ii, 194): 'Coepit aliquis credere diem iudicii. Si coepit credere, coepit et timere.' The Lombard is here quoting from St. Augustine's In I Ioannis, tr. 9, n. 2 (PL 35, 2046).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Ed. W. O. Ross, *Middle English Sermons* EETS OS 209 (London, 1940), IV, p. 16, ll. 26-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Ross, p. 18, ll. 18-23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Summa Praedicantium, De Timore (ii, fol. 396ra): '.. ita congruum est, quod Deus timorem suum in animas immittat fidelium, qui omnes sordes expellat peccatorum.'

it is the exact lesson the poet hopes to teach in Cleanness.

The poet's preface to and paraphrase of the Parable of the Wedding Feast stand apart from Cleanness's main narrative and can be interpreted as introductory exempla which at one and the same time establish the poem's theme, discursive method and rhetorical purpose. The progression from offence through rebuke and the threat of punishment, finally leading to fear itself, clarifies for the reader the result of appearing unclean before God. Physical and temporal sentencing prefigure spiritual and eternal judgment, while the meticulous description of the punishment awaiting the wedding guest exemplifies for the audience the anxiety and anguish resulting from sin, and also foreshadows the scenes of destruction yet to come. The tears and grinding of teeth which await the sinner in hell, as Hugh of St. Cher's commentary on the Parable says, denote hell's extreme heat and frigidity.<sup>31</sup> These contrasting, but equally painful, conditions, ones which Peraldus's Summa virtutum ac vitiorum also says will be experienced by the damned,<sup>32</sup> will be reflected in Cleanness through the icy waters of Noah's Flood and the burning sulphur which rains down on Sodom and Gomorrah. The exempla which follow, in true homiletic fashion, amplify the discourse of fear in order to urge the audience to abandon sin and impurity. For although it is too late for the unclean guest to amend his own behaviour, Cleanness's readers still have a chance to purify themselves.

## II. Destruction, death and the rhetorical discourse of fear

How exactly does the poet set out to purify his readers? His first step, as W. A. Davenport remarks, is to arouse 'in the [audience] a common feeling with the damned,' an act which then 'involves [it] in moral conflict, rather than offering [it] a simple illustration of a moral point.'<sup>33</sup> The poet tries to create a sense of this 'common feeling' by attempting to make his audience identify with the poem's sinners through his graphic descriptions of the Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the fall of Jerusalem, the brutal murder of Belshazzar and the acute perception of natural, physical dread they are supposed to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Postillae, Matthew 22:13 (vi, fol. 701va): '*Ibi erit fletus, & stridor dentium*. In fletu calor, in stridore frigus notatur. Job. c.24.c. Transibunt ab aquis nivium ad calorem nimium.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> VI, 3, 4 (i, fol. 294r) for words identical to Hugh's as well as for a discussion of the contrary pains to be found in hell.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Davenport, p. 57.

inspire.<sup>34</sup> These four scenes can be divided into two distinct sections. The narratives concerning the great Flood and Sodom and Gomorrah focus upon the horribly intense, allencompassing communal punishment meted out in response to widespread acts of physical perversion, while the descriptions of Jerusalem's fall and Belshazzar's murder emphasize the sin of *untrawpe* and form part of a much more minute, individualized and physically brutal picture of destruction. In each of these examples the unclean have willingly disregarded their obligation to obey, revere and fear God, thus transgressing the proper order of the relationship between humanity and divinity exhorted throughout the Bible and in works such as Peraldus's *Summae virtutum ac vitiorum.*<sup>35</sup> Unlike the poet's exemplars of perfect dread - Noah, Abraham and Lot, whom we shall examine later - the sinners' disobedience denotes that they do not fear God with any degree of purity or perfection. This amounts to a fundamental lack of respect on their part, and in response to this God decides to fill them with another and altogether different type of fear: natural dread.

The antediluvians and the Sodomites have ignored both natural and divine law, the Israelites have abandoned their worship of the Lord and Belshazzar has disregarded God's purity and power. Through their impure actions they overthrow and corrupt both natural and divine order, thereby bringing about their own destruction through divine judgment and vengeance. The poet's vivid descriptions of the Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the sacking of Jerusalem and the fall of Belshazzar all emphasize physical pain and agony, as well as specific aspects of *timor naturalis*. In concentrating upon physical descriptions of punishment, as Ad Putter has noted, the poet attempts 'to provoke in his readers an intensely physical response to moral issues, as if they were matters over which the body rather than the brain had jurisdiction.'<sup>36</sup> Sin, these scenes teach, is as much a terrifying danger as bodily pain and death, and as such it should also be fled from. By

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> O. G. Hill argues that traditional rhetoric 'did not insist very strongly on unpleasant or realistic description' in order to put across its message. Although traditional rhetoric may not have insisted on such descriptions, as we saw in the previous chapter medieval preachers and moralists frequently used both unpleasant and realistic imagery in their descriptions of hell, death and purgatory. The poet of *Cleanness* follows this practice and in his portrayal of divine wrath and violent destruction we are given 'unpleasant' and 'realistic' description at its best, Patience: *Style, Background, Meaning, and Relationship to* Cleanness, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Illinois (Urbana, 1965), p. 29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> VI, 3, 2 (i, fol. 285r): 'Ad commendationem Timoris divinae. Primo valere possunt admonitiones quas scriptura sacra facit ad timendum Deum. Leviticus (19:32). Time Dominum Deum tuum. Deuteronomium (6:13). Dominum Deum tuum timebis. Iosue (24:14). Timete Dominum, et servite ei corde perfecto. In Psalmis (2:11). Servite Domino in timore... Ecclesiasticus (2:1). Fili, accedens ad servitutem Dei, sta in iustitia et timore. Eiusdem (Ecclesiasticus 7:31). In tota anima tua time Deum. Mattheus (10:28). Timet eum qui potest corpus et animam mittere in gehennam ignis.' See note 20 above.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> An Introduction to the Gawain-Poet, p. 233.

focussing upon the consequences of sin, the poet sets out to define sin itself as an object of fear. In her study of pain, Elaine Scarry argues that 'in order to express pain one must *both* objectify its felt characteristics *and* hold steadily visible the referent for those characteristics.'<sup>37</sup> Her theory corresponds perfectly to the way in which fear functions within *Cleanness*. The poem's scenes of judgment and destruction emphasize the anguish and grief of their sinners while also objectifying and holding steadily visible the threatening promise of pain and the dread it is supposed to promote.

Cleanness's destruction scenes, then, reflect not just God's punishment and purification of creation through the exhibition of his punitive power. They also signify the poet's active attempt to purify his audience by imprinting on the reader's mind terrifying images of the consequence of sin. As the Speculum Morale explains, mental images, or fantasiae as they were called in the Middle Ages,<sup>38</sup> were fundamental to the inspiration of fear: 'Fear arises from the vision (fantasia) of a saddening or corruptive future misfortune.<sup>39</sup> The extraordinary force and detail with which the poet describes his visions of judgment, punishment and destruction provide the images of saddening and corruptive misfortune which make his use of the rhetoric of fear so effective. Within this section I shall examine the elements of natural fear which are present in each scene, as well as the kinds of dread which each episode is supposed to promote. I shall also note how in each case, as the poem progresses, the scale of destruction decreases as 'the focus of God's judgment narrows.<sup>40</sup> This narrowing of focus enables the poet to depict in minute detail fear's effects on the individual sinner, thereby helping each individual reader understand dread fully while at the same time allowing him or her to experience dread vicariously. Each of the narratives tries to include the reader in the poem's punitive action. As the poet recounts the story of the Flood, the audience witnesses God's profound and far-reaching

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World (New York, 1987), p. 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> See J. F. Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus* (Leiden, 1976), p. 410. Niermeyer defines '*phantasia*' as an 'image of the mind,' 'the power of imagination,' a 'vision,' 'dream' or 'nightmare.' Alternatively, it could also signify a 'mirage,' 'illusion,' or 'delusion,' as well as a 'phantom,' 'ghost,' or 'apparition.' For a discussion of the role of images and *fantasia* and their relation to emotional states and the memory see Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, pp. 148-49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> I, 1, 27 (col. 86): 'Timor provenit ex fantasia futuri mali corrutivi et contristativi.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> C. Morse, *The Pattern of Judgment*, p. 159. For further explication of the poem's narrowing of focus, see also Gardner, p. 68: 'The most obvious element of profluence is the gradual narrowing of focus from all mankind, in the Noah story, to a particular kingdom, in the story of Lot, to particular men - Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar... But within the purity motif another progression is equally important. Noah's generation engenders monsters, deforming Nature in general; the homosexual Sodomites defile themselves and other men, but the rest of Nature only incidentally, if at all; and the emphasis in the third episode is individual self-defilement, though again all Nature may be tainted incidentally.'

wrath and figuratively drowns along with the rest of creation. The vivid description of the obliteration of Sodom and Gomorrah allows the reader virtually to feel the burning cinders and smell the stink of sulphur. The exceptionally grotesque and physical depiction of the fall of Jerusalem and the slaughter and enslavement of its people, though smaller in scale than either of the previous two examples, draws the reader even further into the poem through its sickening and grotesquely naturalistic portrayal of torture and grief. Finally, Belshazzar's murder, augmented by the poet's near textbook-perfect description of the terror inspired by the *ferly* of the Writing on the Wall, exemplifies and emphasizes specific characteristics of *timor naturalis* by centralizing it in a single character, thus encouraging each individual reader to place him or herself in the place of the sinful king. Through each of these scenes, then, the rhetoric of fear works, to borrow the words of Charlotte Morse, by '[inviting the audience] to recognize that eventually [judgment] will fall upon each one of them.'<sup>41</sup>

## II.i. A communal call to dread: mass-destruction and the rhetorical discourse of fear

As we have seen, the retelling of the Parable of the Wedding Feast establishes *Cleanness*'s admonitory tone by introducing a rhetorical discourse of fear into the poem's narrative and thematic structures. The unclean wedding guest and his punishment figuratively exemplify the individual sinner and the personal suffering he or she will experience. In the main body of the poem which follows the paraphrase of the parable, the poet underlines its frightening message by resorting to graphic descriptions of mass punishment. He does so by describing the terrors of divine wrath and punishment in his retellings of two Old Testament events which the Gospel of Luke specifically links to the theme of Final Judgment: Noah's Flood and the eradication of Sodom and Gomorrah. Nicholas of Lyre's commentary on this passage focusses upon the second coming of Christ, but it also clarifies for the audience the importance of fearing God and judgment by emphasizing the antediluvians' and Sodomites'sinful lack of dread:

In his first arrival Christ came in humility, was little known and was disdained and condemned by many. But in his second arrival he shall come in power clearly and gloriously to judge the world. But because the time of this arrival is uncertain... it is introduced by two examples. The first example is the time of the flood... when men were unconcerned and feared nothing until that time when the flood unexpectedly drowned everyone except Noah and those who were with him in the ark. The second example is the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Morse, p. 159.

time of the destruction of Sodom... because they were unconcerned up until that hour in which the Lord destroyed that land with fire and sulphur. [In our own time] men shall be unconcerned, fearing nothing about their future judgment until that time in which Christ, in his human glory, clearly shall be seen coming to judgment.<sup>42</sup>

The ignorance of when Judgment Day was to occur was a commonplace of medieval spiritual instruction. In order to stress to his audience the very real danger it posed the poet had to resort to using familiar stories that would adequately convey the threats of judgment and damnation. Lecklider maintains that the poem's three main narratives 'are meant to serve as exhortations to preparedness, and as examples, rather than as signs of impending Doom.' Had the poet really wanted to prefigure doomsday, she argues, he could have found sharper analogues for his apocalyptic visions in pericopes such as the prophecies of Daniel or Matthew 24: 15-35. She claims that Cleanness focusses not on Final Judgment, but upon the preliminary judgment that occurs at the moment of a person's death.<sup>43</sup> In terms of the rhetoric and discourse of fear at work throughout the poem, however, it does not matter whether the poet is concerned predominantly with preliminary rather than final judgment. The terms of fear remain the same regardless, and it is enough that the poet's detailed descriptions of the violence, pain and terror implicit in two such well-known stories as Noah's Flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah convey to the audience the fact that there is historic precedent for Final Judgment. Reference to future judgment becomes more effective in the biblical-historical images of drowning sinners and burning Sodomites than if the poet only referred to a certain - but still unknowable punishment yet to come. The poem's biblical-historical exempla make the whole idea of judgment, and the fear it should inspire, more immediate and memorable.<sup>44</sup> Nicholas's commentary stresses the lack of dread exhibited by the antediluvians and the Sodomites and equates it to the absence of fear which will exist before Christ's second coming. The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> *Biblia Sacra*, literal commentary, Luke 17:25-30 (v, fol. 169vb): 'In primo enim adventu venit in humilitate et paucis cognitus, et a multis despectus et reprobatus. Sed in secundo adventu veniet manifestus et gloriosus in potestate orbem iudicaturus. Sed quia tempus illius adventus est incertum... ideo inducit ad hoc duplex exemplum. Primum est de tempore diluvii... quod notatur cum dicitur... quia homines illius temporis erant in securitate, nihil timentes, quousque diluvium subito submersit omnes, excepto Noe, et his qui cum eo erant in arca. Secundum exemplum est de tempore subversionis Sodomorum... quod notatur cum dicitur... quia erant in securitate usque ad illam horam qua dominus per ignem et sulphur destruxit terram illam. ...homines erunt in securitate, nihil timentes de futuro iudicio usque ad illud tempus quo Christus in humanitate gloriosa, tamen manifeste videbitur veniens ad iudicium.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> *Structure and Meaning*, pp. 6-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> See Mary Carruthers's study, *The Book of Memory*, pp. 59-60. Here Carruthers discusses the centrality of the emotions, including fear, in 'successful memory schemes.' By imprinting an image on the memory, emotion transforms 'each memory as much as possible into a personal occasion.' The *Cleanness*-poet's exceptional use of fearful images serves this very purpose. For a fuller discussion of this in relation to concepts of dread, see my previous chapter.

drowning of the antediluvians and the fiery destruction of the Sodomites, his gloss implies, were direct results of the sinners' failure to fear their own condemnation or the wrath of God. Through his terrifying recital of these two scenes of mass-destruction, the poet sets out to redress any lack of fear in his own readers by instilling in them a strong feeling of impending natural dread that will ensure that they will never again be 'unconcerned' or 'fear nothing about [their] future judgment.'

## II.i.a. Punitive water: the rhetoric of fear in Noah's Flood

Noah's Flood and the terror it provokes in its victims comprise *Cleanness*'s first frightening *exemplum*. Contrary to Noah's fearfully pure obedience to and reverence for God (which shall be examined below), the antediluvian sinners disrespected the Lord by refusing to live according to divine and natural laws. They have overturned nature, the poet explains, for those who were the most sinful were considered by their peers to be the best ('And ay be bigest in bale be best watz halden,' 276). Their willful commission and glorification of impure acts denotes their preoccupation with inordinate love, a love which Aquinas defined as being evil because it focussed solely upon things of the temporal world. This love, in turn, gave birth to sinful forms of fear.<sup>45</sup> The antediluvians' own voluntarily inordinate love implicitly denotes their fundamental lack of properly ordered spiritual dread, and it is this lack of dread and the reverence, obedience and respect it should promote which God intends to punish. Witnessing the multiplying and growing sins of the antediluvians, God begins to grow angry and finally decides that the only way he can eradicate sin is by completely and utterly destroying all those who commit or are tainted by it:

Me forþynkez ful much þat euer I mon made, Bot I schal delyuer and do away þat doten on þis molde, And fleme out of þe folde al þat flesch werez, Fro þe burne to þe best, fro bryddez to fyschez; Al schal doun and be ded and dryuen out of erþe Þat euer I sette saule inne; and sore hit Me rwez Þat euer I made hem Myself... (285-91).

The reader, having already seen the harsh punishment prescribed for the unclean wedding guest (155-60) and the consequences of Satan's and Adam's transgressions (205-48), can begin to anticipate something exceptionally grim and frightening. The Lord's reasons for destroying his creation are clear, but the wilfulness of his design, as expressed through the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 19, 3 (xxxiii, 53).

poet's affective personification of God, is chilling. The poet characterizes God psychologically, emphasizing his sorrow and angry frustration. God's thoughts betray extreme emotion, including elements of self-recrimination and self-pity as he regrets his creation of humanity and laments its failure to offer him anything but disobedience and disrespect. Andrew and Waldron note that it is unusual that the poet should have chosen to describe God in human terms; but his decision makes sense in light of the poem's rhetorical discourse.<sup>46</sup> By attributing to God familiar human emotions the poet enables the audience to understand divine disappointment and rage more fully and intimately, thus making judgment and punishment more immediately comprehensible and frightening. The easier it is for *Cleanness*'s readers to comprehend God's reasons for destroying humanity, the easier it will be for them to understand - and fear - the punishment and pain which result from sin and impurity.

God's decision to destroy the entirety of his Creation recalls the poem's earlier warning that divine power should be feared above all else (49-50). Indeed, God's firm intent to eradicate everything - including unreasoning animals ('Fro be burne to be best, fro bryddez to fyschez,' 288) - accentuates this maxim and stresses to the poem's readers their obligation to fear God. As the Speculum Morale states, 'If creatures which have not sinned are to be punished thus, how much more ought he who has warranted punishment morally fear [God].'47 God's anger, as lines 285-91 make clear, is more than severe; it is virtually unquenchable. The poet accentuates God's displeasure and the threatening tone established in lines 285-91 further by describing his vexation (nwy), his wild and vengeful mood (301-2), and by reiterating the Lord's violent plans for his disrespectful, filthy creation (303-8; 353-58). By giving his readers such vivid insight into God's vengeful thoughts and violent plans, the poet fulfils the recommendation of St. Bonaventure's 'mode of threatening.' The divine plan for vengeance supplies the audience with 'wise warnings,' 'promises which ring true,' and 'terrifying threats' which help create an atmosphere of foreboding and fear. This threatening atmosphere, then, intensifies the poet's rhetorical discourse,48 a discourse whose purpose mirrors Hugh of St. Cher's explanation of why God decided to destroy his prediluvial Creation. God, Hugh says, decided to drown the world so that humanity will fear

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> *Poems of the* Pearl *Manuscript*, p. 120.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> I, 1, 27 (col. 88): 'Si sic punitur creatura, quae non peccavit; quantum debet timere ille, qui hanc poenam moraliter inuexit...'. The author of the *Morale* does not appear to have Genesis 6-7 in mind, as he cites Romans 8, Genesis 3 and Wisdom 5 and 9, respectively. However, this statement is implicit in the rhetorical discourse promoted by God's all-encompassing act of destruction by means of the Great Flood. <sup>48</sup> See Minnis and Scott, *Medieval Literary Theory*, p. 236.

to sin.<sup>49</sup> The poet of *Cleanness*, in turn, chooses to retell the well-known story of Noah's Flood for an identical reason: to frighten his own audience into forsaking uncleanness. His vivid psychological portrayal of God's wrath and frustrated disappointment in humanity accentuate the fear which the terrifying description of the Flood is supposed to promote.

Having established the frightening tone of the scene which is to follow, the poet begins his description of the Flood itself. After the ark has been filled and sealed, the poet describes how the streams and oceans begin to rise, breaking their restraining banks and rising toward the sky. At the same time, clouds gather, collide and are ripped apart, inundating the saturated earth below (363-68). The rising and falling waters merge in a chaos-creating moment; but, these tumultuous events are just the beginning. The destruction, death and damnation the Flood denotes are not the only wages of the antediluvians' sin. As we shall see, so too is the fear which they inspire. Lines 363-68 describe only nature's catastrophic upheaval, for the poet has yet to introduce the human element into his narrative - a task he performs with verve five lines later:

ber watz moon for to make when meschef was cnowen, bat no3t dowed bot þe deth in þe depe stremez; Water wylger ay wax, wonez þat stryede, Hurled into vch hous, hent þat þer dowelled (373-76).

The Flood no longer only exceeds nature's bounds; it now destroys the barriers humanity has erected to protect itself. The torrent destroys every shelter and the sinners, trapped between the rising and falling waters, have no choice but to flee before it. Hoping to find safety on high ground, those who are not already dead 'feng to be fly3t' (377) in an effort to flee the retribution brought by the surging waves. In their fear of God's vengeance ('for ferde of be wrake,' 386) the sinners gather together and cry out for deliverance, little realizing that there will be no escape from either death or fear. Humanity's plea for mercy is amplified by the screams of the dumb beasts who 'wyth a loud rurd rored for drede' (390).<sup>50</sup> The cries of the animals poignantly accentuate for the audience the horror experienced by the sinners. Humanity's *moon* and wildlife's *rurd rore* merge together to make the scene's intense atmosphere of terror immediately palpable.

But in spite of this piteous clamour, as the poet reveals, the time for divine mercy has passed (393-96), for the antediluvians' newly-found fear of divine power and wrath has begun too late for it to do them any good. In its list of things which make judgment such

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> *Postillae*, Genesis 6:17 (i, fol. 10va): '[Ecce ego adducam diluvii aquas super terram...] Comminatur Dominus diluvium, ut vel sic timerent homines peccare.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> See above, n. 46.

a frightening prospect, the *Summae Virtutum ac Vitiorum* discusses two related factors which explain why Noah's contemporaries receive no help from God: first, Final Judgment is inflexible, and second, there is no possibility of heavenly aid for unrepentant sinners. Saints and angels would not dare pray for someone who was condemned, the encyclopaedic texts says, and even if the Virgin Mary were to pray along with all the angels and saints in heaven, so long as a soul in judgment remained in mortal sin, the divine judge would not listen to their pleas.<sup>51</sup> The Flood's victims have not repented; rather, they only cry for help out of their fear of death, a fact which classifies their dread as morally valueless *timor naturalis* at best. But because of their preoccupation with and inordinate love for the temporal world, their flight from the Flood's punitive waters could also denote their culpable possession of *timor mundanus* and *timor humanus*.<sup>52</sup> Whether sinful or natural, however, the fear they experience falls far short of the spiritual dread they should have shown God long before they were faced with destruction.

By demonstrating to his audience that God shows no mercy to those who remain subject to sin, the poet clearly reveals that for those who are unclean there can be no happy ending. He hammers this point home in lines 399-402, where he compassionately describes the doomed sinners saying their farewells to one another after realizing they have no hope of salvation:

Frendez fellen in fere and fabmed togeder, To dry3 her delful destyné and dy3en alle samen; Luf lokez to luf and his leue takez, For to ende alle at onez and for euer twynne.

This passage has attracted much comment over the years, and most critics seem to see in it an attempt by the poet to treat the Flood victims in a sympathetic, 'heartfelt and heartrending' manner.<sup>53</sup> It is a very emotive passage, on the surface appearing not to have much to do with fear. As Wilson explains, it gives 'to the sinful a dignity, nobility, and pathos unchecked by authorial moralizing. No author enters... to incorporate conflicting

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Peraldus, VI, 3, 4 (i, fol. 292r - 292v): '[Item] iudicis infexibilitas: quia si beata virgo et omnes angeli et sancti et sanctae rogarent in iudicio pro aliquo qui tunc esset in mortali peccato, iudex non exaudiret eos... [Item] defectus auxilii, quia non audebit nec angelus nec aliquis sanctus pro aliquo damnato rogare.' For a similar mention of God's inflexibility, see the *Speculum Morale* II, 2, 5 (col. 783).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Peraldus, VI, 3, 3 (i, fol. 288v): 'Fuga poenae sensu temporalis pertinet ad timorem humanum... fuga damni temporalis, ad timorem mundanum.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Wilson, p. 93. Also see, for example, Spearing, p. 67. Lynn Staley-Johnson notes that these lines are especially effective in that they describe 'scenes with which an audience can empathize... Neither the fear, the friendship, nor the love of those who were drowning save them from the Flood.' The poet's compassion, she says, 'vivifies the consequences of impurity.' *Voice of the* Gawain-*Poet*, p. 116.

feelings of admiration, contempt, and Christian fear and love.'54 Wilson is correct, to a certain extent, but no author has to enter the poem at this point. The Cleanness-poet already has played an active and significant role in the text by establishing his fearful discourse at a much earlier stage in the poem through his paraphrase of the Parable of the Wedding Feast and his vivid description of the Flood and humanity's terrified response to it. In this particular instance, however, he steps back and allows his characters' actions to speak for themselves. Fear might not be explicitly mentioned in this specific passage, but it does not have to be in order to inspire dread. This quiet interlude between the Flood's onset and the final surge of its waters provides both the characters themselves and the poem's audience a moment in which to feel grief and reflect upon their impending fate. But just because they have accepted their doom does not mean they no longer fear. The sadness which they feel is an integral part of fear's effectiveness. For dread was considered to be a specific type of sadness, 'in that the object of fear is saddening when it is present... [and] arises from the representation of a future evil which is corruptive or saddening.<sup>55</sup> The poet's methodical description of the rising waters and creation's increasing terror finally culminates in a climax of fearful sadness. By the time the remaining survivors begin to grieve and say goodbye to their families, friends and lives, the overriding sense of fear prevalent during the early course of the Flood's description may no longer be glaringly present. But its residue remains and permeates creation's woe-filled last gasp. By illustrating the sinners' terror and grief so vividly, the poet portrays what William Peraldus classifies as the fourteenth frightening element of judgment: 'the anguish of the damned.'56 The sinners' fearful flight may defer the moment of their death but ultimately does nothing to save them. But for the witnesses of this harrowing scene, Cleanness's readers, there is still time to abandon the impurity of sin and adopt a more spiritual form of fear, one which will ensure that their own cries for mercy on the Day of Judgment will be heard.

Throughout his narrative of destruction the poet ignores Noah, choosing instead to focus upon the grief and fear of the Flood's victims. The audience is not allowed into the safety of the ark but is locked out of its secure confines and, to use Wallace's words, is forced 'to share the fate of drowning Creation.'<sup>57</sup> By excluding the audience from the ark,

<sup>55</sup> Aquinas, Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 41, 2 (xxi, 29). Aquinas here draws upon Aristotle's Rhetoric 2, 5, 1382a21. The Speculum Morale, drawing upon Aquinas, also discusses this in I, 1, 27 (col. 86).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Wilson, p. 93.

<sup>56</sup> Summae virtutum ac vitiorum VI, 3, 4 (i, fol. 292v): '[Item] angustia reproborum.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> *Cleanness* and the Terms of Terror', p. 93.

the poet creates a powerful rhetorical discourse which places the poem's readers directly in the path of judgment, thereby forcing them to participate vicariously in the destruction of Creation. Unfortunately for the antediluvians, as Peraldus explains in his treatment of cleanness, 'the impurity of one mortal sin cannot be cleansed by all the water under the sky unless the water of grace which purifies the heart should descend from above.'<sup>58</sup> The poet echoes this idea when he closes his narrative, just as he does with his retelling of the Parable of the Wedding Feast, with an explicit warning to fear and avoid impurity:

Forþy war þe now, wy3e þat worschyp desyres In His comlych courte þat Kyng is of blysse, In þe fylþe of þe flesch þat þou be founden neuer, Tyl any water in þe worlde to wasche þe fayly (545-48).

Through these words the poet addresses the audience members directly, shaking an admonishing finger at them whilst urging them never to forget the horrifying threat of judgment exemplified by the story he has just finished telling. By embracing the salutary fear which the narrative is supposed to promote, *Cleanness*'s readers will be able to turn themselves away from *timor mundanus*, *timor humanus* and the inordinate love they signify, thus forsaking their sinful, unclean love for the world. In doing so, as the *Glossa ordinaria* states, they will be able to build within their own hearts an 'ark of safety' complete with faith, hope and charity.<sup>59</sup> So long as the poem's readers recall the Flood's lesson and fear the consequences of impurity, the very waters which terrify, condemn and destroy the antediluvians will at the same time offer them the possibility of fearful salvation and purification.

## II.i.b. Punitive fire: the rhetoric of fear and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah

By retelling the story of the Flood, the poet relies upon a frightening discourse to inspire his audience to fear judgment and damnation. However, his use of violent imagery to promote dread does not end once Noah disembarks from the ark. He includes a second prefiguration of Final Judgment - the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah - in order to illustrate the consequences of sin and to amplify his rhetorical use of fear. In *Cleanness*,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Summae virtutum ac virtutis VI, 10 (i, fol. 346r): 'Praeterea immunditia unius mortalis peccati non potest ablui tota aqua quae sub caelo est, nisi aqua gratiae desursum descendat quae cor abluat.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> *Biblia Sacra*, marginal gloss, Genesis 6:15 (i, fol. 51va): '... autem qui se ab amore mundi convertit, in corde aedificat arcam salutis, habens in se longitudinem id est trinitatis fidem ac longitudinem vitae et immortalitatis. Latitudinem in charitate, qua potest bene facere etiam inimicis. Altitudinem in spe, qua se erigat ad coelestia et summam actuum suorum ad unum referat.'

the Sodomites arouse divine wrath specifically because of their unnatural lusts. The poet adds new material to his biblical source, describing how God reveals to Abraham the Sodomites' particular sin and his own reasons for seeking vengeance. Choosing to dedicate themselves to fautez be werst and vsage vnclene (694 and 710), the Sodomites, God says, have skyfted divine skyl and scorned natwre (709). This, of course, angers God and he tells Abraham that he intends to punish them so severely 'bat wy3ez schal be by hem war, worlde withouten ende' (711-12). By combining these two rationalizations for a single act of divine vengeance - it is at one and the same time a punishment for an already committed sin as well as a severe warning to others who have not yet committed similar crimes but are still vulnerable to temptation - the poet explains to his readers how they are to interpret the scene of destruction to which they will soon bear witness. The sin of the Sodomites becomes a danger which the poem's readers must fear forever, and the poet intends to ensure that they do so by employing his admonitory discourse in two distinct, but interrelated stages, the first of which exemplifies a preliminary judgment of the Sodomites, the second of which illustrates for the audience the violent terms of irrevocable and Final Judgment.<sup>60</sup> In each stage, as we shall see, fear plays a part in defining the actions of the poem's characters while also acting as a rhetorical tool which should inspire in Cleanness's readers a proper perception and exhibition of dread.

The narrative's depiction of preliminary, anticipatory judgment occurs when the Sodomites reveal their own inherent sinfulness by wishing to *lere* Lot's angelic visitors *of lof* as their unnatural *lyst biddez* (843). Disordered love lies behind their impurity, and it is clear that they do not fear or revere God but are only desirous of fulfilling their own inordinate lusts. Their voluntary choice to do as their perverted desire (*lyst*) bids them rather than fear to displease God or arouse divine wrath indicates that their sense of dread is just as disordered as their perception of love. This decision to place physical desire (unnatural desire at that) and a fear of losing the object of their lust before a properly ordered love and fear of God, according to Aquinas, denotes that the Sodomites have voluntarily chosen to live in mortal sin.<sup>61</sup> However, Aquinas notes that this state of mortal sin need not be permanent:

But the situation can exist whereby even if fear is a mortal sin, a man is not so gripped by fear that he cannot be dissuaded from it; just as a man sometimes commits a mortal sin by consenting to lust, but is prevailed upon not to carry out in action what he proposed to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Biblia Sacra, Nicholas of Lyre, moral commentary, Genesis 19:8 (i, fol. 72va): 'Ideo percutiuntur primo caecitate per obstinationem. Et secundo, igne et sulphure per aeternam damnationem.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 125, 3 (xlii, 67-9).

do.<sup>62</sup>

The Sodomites are given a chance to forsake their impurity when Lot tries to dissuade them from their sinful intent, first by explaining to the lustful crowd the joys of licit acts of natural love, and second by offering them his own daughters as proof of his words (859-72). But their irrational desire to subject the angels to their sinful ways wins out over his rational arguments.<sup>63</sup> By refusing to heed Lot's words the Sodomites scorn nature and reason yet again, thereby confirming the disordered character of their love and fear.

The *Glossa ordinaria* makes their sinfulness clear, noting how the very name 'Sodom' expresses the notion of worldly desire and can be interpreted as signifying 'blindness.'<sup>64</sup> Of course the blindness to which the gloss refers is figurative and spiritual, but it is made literally and physically manifest when the angels strike a blow amongst the Sodomites which deprives them of their sight and forces them to search fruitlessly for Lot and the objects of their lust (885-88). Nicholas of Lyre interprets this sightlessness as a loss of judgment or discernment (*privatio judicii*),<sup>65</sup> an interpretation which is supported by the definition of blindness in John Trevisa's Middle English translation of Bartholomeus Anglicus's Latin encyclopaedia *De proprietatibus rerum*:

begileþ þe vertu ymaginatif in knowinge, for in demynge of white þe blynde weneþ it is blak, and a3enward. Hit lettiþ þe vertu of avisement in demynge, for he demeþ and auyseþ and castiþ to go estward, and is begiled in his dome and goþ westwarde. And blyndenes ouerturneþ þe vertu of affeccion and desire, for if me profreþ þe blynde a siluerin peny and a copren to chese þe bettir, he desireþ to chese þe siluerin and chesiþ þe copryn... Also ofte in periles þere alle men doutiþ and drediþ, for he seþ no perile, þe blynde is siker, and a3enward, ofte þere no perile is þe blinde drediþ most.<sup>66</sup>

The Sodomites' perverted morals and inability to distinguish between right and wrong reflect this scientific description of blindness perfectly. They do not recognize Lot's visitors for the pure angels they are but deem them to be potential partners - willing or not - in sin. In doing so they move not toward the rewards of heaven, but closer to the pains of hell. And because their 'vertu of affeccion and desire' has been overturned by their lust

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 125, 3 (xlii, 69).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> Lot's attempt to convert the Sodomites does not just confirm their obstinate sinfulness; it also reveals the extent of Lot's properly ordered spiritual fear. This will be examined in more detail below.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Biblia Sacra, marginal gloss, Genesis 19:20 (i, fol. 73ra): 'Sodoma interpretatur caecitas, et exprimit mundana desyderia.' Sarah Stanbury says much the same thing as the Glossa when she explains the Sodomites' 'sexual deviance' as a 'failure of vision,' Seeing the Gawain Poet (p. 57). In her treatment of Cleanness, Stanbury argues that 'the language and imagery of sight define both... sin and ideal behavior,' (p. 57). See pp. 57-9 for her treatment of the Sodom and Gomorrah scene. Also see her related article, 'In God's Sight: Vision and Sacred History in Purity', in Text and Matter, pp. 105-16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> *Biblia Sacra*, literal commentary, Genesis 19:11 (i, fol. 73ra-b): '... et vocatur talis caecitas... privatio judicii.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> VII, xx, (i, p. 364, l. 33 - p. 365, l. 10).

they spurn the silver penny of virtue offered by Lot and instead choose the poorer, copper penny of sodomy and unnatural love. This blindness of reason results in the Sodomites' stupefied insensibility and suggests that they may be subject to a particular type of fear, namely *stupor*.

The De proprietatibus rerum makes explicit stupor's connection to blindness and the Sodomites by describing it as a 'blindenes of resoun' in which 'be soule demeb nou3t of pinges pat be iseyne, as Sodomitis were ismete at Lote his 3ates."<sup>67</sup> According to Aquinas, the only type of stupor which was classified as a fear was one 'whose object is unusually disagreeable.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, according to Bonaventure, it was a reaction to a deficiency or failing of what was customarily considered to be normal.<sup>69</sup> As we saw earlier, the Sodomites' sin was believed to transgress the boundaries of normal, licit love; thus it is hardly surprising that their unnatural, unusual desire should result in stupor. The Sodomites themselves are unable to comprehend what the object or cause of their suffering might be. However, because of his earlier condemnation of sexual impurity (693-712), the poet makes certain that his readers do not share their ignorance, but instead understand the sinners' stupefied blindness as a direct result of unnatural and unusually disagreeable lust, a vice which has already been constructed as a significant cause for fear. The preliminary judgment expressed by this literal and figurative blindness takes the place of the Sodomites' privatio judicii by prefiguring divine vengeance and forcing the audience to consider the approach of destruction. The poet has put his rhetorical discourse of fear into motion. It is now time for him to use it to its full effect in an effort to ensure that his audience, unlike the Sodomites, will dread the certainty of punishment rather than be wilfully blind to it.

In the *exemplum*'s second depiction of judgment the poet focusses on the final destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in an effort to build upon and intensify the rhetorical discourse of fear promoted through the earlier, analogous retelling of Noah's Flood. With a crash of thunder, a sound which both William Peraldus and the *Speculum Morale* explain as signifying the coming of judgment and the fear which should be excited because of it,<sup>70</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Trevisa, VII, vii, (i, p. 350, ll. 25-8).

 $<sup>^{68}</sup>$  Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 41, 4 (xxi, 37).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> In sententias III, xxxiv, 2, 3 (iii, 770a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Summae virtutum ac vitiorum VI, 3, 4 (i, fol. 290r): 'Tonitruum intelligas terribilem adventum maiestatis eius, vel sententiam dandam in extremo iudicio.' This description of the significance of thunder is located in Peraldus's treatment of the twelve things which inspire fear. The Speculum Morale, in its discussion of destructive, final proclamation (*peremptoria citatio*) of judgment, explains that arrival of judgment will be announced not only by thunder, but also by storm, whirlwind and lightning, II, 2, 5 (col. 778): 'Haec autem citatio vocatur iussus Dei, vox Archangeli, tuba Dei, tempestas, turbo, tonitruum. fulgur,

the cataclysm begins. The way in which Sodom's destruction is described is essentially an inversion of the Flood. Rather than cold, surging waters rising to heaven (366), the obliteration of the Sodomites is characterized by unbearable heat and descent. Fiery rain and thick sulphurous smoke pour down from the sky and settle on the cursed cities (956), burning and roasting them and their inhabitants (959) and striking (gorde, 957) them with such force that the ground beneath them cracks open and the surrounding cliffs burst apart like the leaves of a torn book (965-66). The poet's account of the blistering tempest's effect upon the Sodomites differs from his portrayal of the antediluvians. Whereas he tinged his depiction of drowning sinners with a certain element of compassion, he is entirely unsympathetic in his description of the dying Sodomites. This portrayal may have found its inspiration in such traditional biblical commentaries as the Glossa ordinaria and the *Postillae* of Hugh of St. Cher. The waters of the Flood, these glosses say, exterminated the first sinners who, like the Sodomites, offended God through their fleshly desire. But the Sodomites were punished more severely than the antediluvians because their carnal sins went directly against the dictates of nature. Because they broke natural law and committed acts of unnatural lust, a sin which Aquinas specifically defines as uncleanness,<sup>71</sup> 'they were destroyed by an example of the gravest punishment.'72 Here the poet does not compassionately describe the piteous cries of wild beasts and the lamenting complaints of families and friends. He only cares about depicting death, pain, destruction and the terrified reactions of the Sodomites to the pain and fear their sin has wrought.

The poet firmly locates the Sodomites' punishment in the physical, fleshly world in order to counteract the specific sin of carnal concupiscence of which they are guilty. Divine wrath attacks the Sodomites at the focal point of their sin - their bodies. The 'felle flaunkes of fyre and flakes of soufre'(954), as biblical commentary attests, reflect the stench and burning cupidity of Sodom's sin.<sup>73</sup> The magnitude of the pain and destruction God

coruscatio, quae omnia terrorem incutiunt, et ipsam citationem terribilem fore dicunt.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 154, 11 (xliii, 245). For a fuller discussion of Aquinas's discussion of lust and how it relates to Cleanness, see Keiser, Courtly Desire and Medieval Homophobia, especially pp. 93-112.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Biblia Sacra, Glossa ordinaria, marginal gloss, Genesis 19:24 (i, fol. 73va): 'Notandum, quia primos peccatores aqua diluvii exterminavit qui similiter offenderant Deum concupiscentia carnis. Sodomitae vero gravi supplicio ignis scilicet et sulphuris diluvio perierunt. Licet enim illi mensuram excederent, quasi naturaliter peccabant, isti vero contra naturam, ideo gravissimi supplicii exemplo damnati sunt.' Hugh of St. Cher expresses this in nearly identical terms in his *Postillae*, Genesis 19:24 (i, fol. 25ra).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Biblia Sacra, Glossa ordinaria, marginal gloss, Genesis 19:24 (i, fol. 73va): 'Sulphur, foetor carnis, Ignis ardor carnalis desyderii, cum dominus carnis scelera punire decrevisset, qualitate ultionis innotuit macula criminis. Sulphur enim foetet, ignis ardet, qui ergo ad perversa desyderia carnis foetore arserant, iure sulphure et igne perierunt: ut ex iusta poena dicerent, quod iniusto desyderio fecissent.' Also see Nicholas

visits upon them is extreme - as it must be if it is to punish them adequately for their extraordinary and unnatural sin - and the fiery embers which sear their flesh results in a fear which also affects their minds by destroying the last vestiges of the rational faculty they have so wilfully misused. The poet describes them as being *ferlyly flayed* (960) and *rydelles* (969). Their own terrified amazement is contrasted to and accentuated by the wondrous delight of Hell, which the poet describes as *ferlyly fayn* (962), as it unbars and throws open its gates, cruelly welcoming those whom the angels had earlier so firmly locked out of Lot's house. The complete destruction of the sinful cities and their ingestion by Hell are frightening precisely because each is a *ferlyl*, a term which, according to Blanch and Wasserman, signifies 'an incident, either *praeter* or *supra naturam*, wherein the laws of nature and principles of reason are seemingly violated or held in suspension in order to generate wonder...'.<sup>74</sup> As was noted above, the Sodomites have violated natural law themselves, so it stands to reason that God should punish them in some way which will produce shock and wonder, or in terms of the discourse of fear, *admiratio* and *stupor*.

The Sodomites' reaction to divine wrath follows Aquinas's definition of these two types of fear. Both arose when a threatening danger exceeded a person's ability to resist it. *Admiratio* stemmed from a danger's great magnitude and unpredictability, while *stupor* was inspired by the perception of unprecedented and unusual misfortune.<sup>75</sup> Each, it was understood, affected a person's ability to understand the danger which threatened.<sup>76</sup> Strictly speaking, neither *admiratio* or *stupor* need always be terrifying, but in the Sodomites' case it seems clear that the intensity and suddenness of God's wrath do indeed inspire stupefied fear. The *stupor* they initially experienced through their blindness has returned. Only this time, even though they are unable to understand the divine purpose underlying their destruction, they can at least see the physical cause of their suffering. *Rydelles* and *ferly flayed* because of what they experience, but still ignorant of their sin, the Sodomites' miserable outcry (*3omerly 3arm of 3ellyng*, 971) illustrates the depth of their fear.<sup>77</sup> Its

of Lyre's literal commentary on the same passage (i, fol. 73vb): 'Ignis enim sulphureus habet ardorem et foetorem ad significandum vitium Sodomorum, cuiusmodi est vitium contra naturam, quod foetet vilitate, et ardet concupiscentiae fervore.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> From Pearl to Gawain, pp. 46-7. See chapter three of this study for its discussion of *ferly* and miracles, pp. 45-64. For a further treatment of stupefied fear in *Cleanness*, see the discussion of Belshazzar and the Writing on the Wall below.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 41, 4 (xxi, 37).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> See chapter 1, section I.ii.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Commenting upon the fearful cries of the Apostles when they see Christ walking on water (Matt. 14:26), Hugh of St. Cher glosses the word 'clamour' as being 'an indication of fear,' *Postillae* (vi, fol. 54vb): 'Clamor enim indicium est timoris.'

noise is so great, the poet says, that Christ might pity them; but like the antediluvians the Sodomites have remained stubbornly sinful to the end and the inflexibility of divine judgment (*iudicis inflexibilitas*) dictates that they shall receive no mercy.

In an effort to intensify his readers' affective reaction to this scene and ensure that they understand the frightening *sententia* of his rhetorical discourse, the poet also focusses on the reaction of Lot and his family to the threat of judgment and divine vengeance. Immediately before the onset of Sodom's destruction, Lot's two angelic guests rouse him and his family from sleep to warn them of the impending cataclysm. They do so by threatening them terribly ( $a_3ly$ , 937), driving them out the city gates by appealing to their fear of being caught up in the sin of their neighbours and having to suffer God's wrath:

bise aungelez hade hem by hande out at be 3atez, Prechande hem be perile, and beden hem passe fast: 'Lest 3e be taken in be teche of tyrauntez here, Loke 3e bowe now bi bot; bowez fast hence!' And bay kayre ne con, and kenely flowen (941-45).

The angels make the approaching danger extremely clear, and Lot and his family can do nothing but fear and flee from it. However, the words of the angels are not intended for them alone. As the word '3e' implies, the angels' threats could also signify the poet's own voice as he addresses his audience directly and warns it of impending doom. Like the angels, the poet preaches (prechande) to those in his care, urging them to recognize and fear the judgment and pain they will have to endure should they choose not to flee from sin. He accentuates this lesson by describing the fugitives' fearful obedience. In direct contrast to the Flood's victims, they flee without complaint or lament, for their situation is not so hopeless that they have reason to succumb to grief. But while Lot and his family hasten out of Sodom the poet halts his readers in mid-flight, drags them back to Sodom and forces them to witness the horrifying *ferly* of Sodom's descent into Hell in order to show them the frightening consequences of uncleanness. After showing them the violent, painful destruction impurity merits, the poet shifts his readers' attention back onto Lot and his daughters who, upon hearing Sodom's horrible death-scream, are struck by a terrible fear (ferly ferde, 975) which recalls the stupefied terror of the Sodomites (ferlyly flayed, 960) and gives added impetus to their - and ideally the readers' - headlong flight. Hoping to inspire his readers to fly from damnation by abandoning uncleanness - just as Lot and his daughters flee from the terrible destruction of the cities behind them - the poet encourages them to identify with the fugitives. The dread exhibited by Lot and his daughters serves as a rhetorical counterpoint to the illicit, disordered love and dread of the Sodomites, and thus

reveals that fear, indeed, is necessary for salvation.

In this second *exemplum*, the poet's exceptionally detailed and violent description of destruction and the dread it inspires provides for the audience a clear picture of judgment and damnation which illustrates why uncleanness in general, and unnatural lust in particular, should be feared. His vivid description of a gleefully cruel Hell swallowing the terrified and stupefied Sodomites is a frightening addition to his biblical source. The *Glossa ordinaria*'s remarks on Exodus 15:12-16, describe an analogous scene and convey a mood similar to *Cleanness*'s description of Sodom's destruction:

Today the earth devours the impious, they who always meditate on, make, speak, quarrel over and desire earthly things. They place their faith in worldly things, they do not respect heaven, nor think about the future, fear the judgment of God or desire his promises.<sup>78</sup>

Respecting neither natural or divine law and failing to fear God, in life the Sodomites' were consumed by their libidinous, corrupt desires. It follows, then, that in death the same order should be maintained. The Sodomites' punishment, then, is just: their fiery lusts burn them alive, the sulphurous stink of their sins overcomes them and their unclean habits drag them down to hell. Impurity corrupts not only the sinners themselves, but the environment surrounding them, and Sodom and Gomorrah are left perpetually desolate. Their earthly remains become indistinguishable from Hell. Whereas the waters of the Flood destroyed all life, effectively cleansing the entire earth, the punitive storm which breaks over Sodom brings not water, but sulphur and fire. In Sodom's case God does not want to purify the sinful region. Instead he chooses to burn it from the face of the earth, leaving its sterile, blasted remains as a monumental warning against uncleanness. As the *Glossa ordinaria* explains, 'through the remains of this destruction by fire, the memory of [Sodom's] ruin is imprinted within us as an example of punishment.'<sup>79</sup> According to another gloss, the transformation of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt, yet another frightening *ferly*, serves a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Biblia Sacra, marginal gloss (i, fol. 154va): 'Impios etiam hodie terra deuorat, qui semper de terra cogitant, terrena faciunt, de terra loquuntur, litigant, terram desiderant, in ea spem suam ponunt, ad caelum non respiciunt, futura non cogitant, iudicium dei non metuunt, nec promissa eius desiderant.' S. Pierson Prior notes that this physical ingestion of Sodom recalls the 'images of Babylon's fall in the illustrated Apocalypses' as well as the widespread artistic representations of hellmouth, *The Fayre Formez of the* Pearl Poet, p. 71. The idea of hellmouth also appears in *Patience* when the poet describes Jonah's descent into the belly of the whale.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> *Biblia Sacra*, interlinear gloss, Genesis 19:28 (i, fol. 73v): 'Per reliquias conbustionis imprimitur nobis memoria subversionis, ad exemplum correctionis.' Hugh of St. Cher also discusses the significance of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the Dead Sea: 'Quatuor hic attenduntur. Foetor sulphuris, ardor ignis, aeterna sterilitas, lacus dulcis amaricatio. Unde dictur mare mortuum, in quo nihil vivit, lucerna ardens supernatat, extincta submergitur. Ista inveniens in mundo, qui per Sodomam significatur. Sulphur, foetor luxuriae. Ignis, ardor cupiditatis. Aeterna sterilitas, vanitas superbiae,' *Postillae*, Genesis 19:24 (i, fol. 25rb).

similar purpose by 'warning men against doing similar things and by making their hearts safeguards against becoming fools.'<sup>80</sup> The poet's description of the blasted scar on the landscape that had once been

... an erde of erþe þe swettest, As aparaunt to paradis, þat plantted þe Dry3tyn (1006-8)

objectifies uncleanness by serving as a physical representation of Final Judgment and damnation which, - to recall Stephen of Bourbon's definition of *exemplum* - 'instructs, warns, stirs and inspires men to fear and avoid future evils, and thus flee from sin, approach goodness, repent of the evil they have already committed, vigorously repel temptation and persevere in goodness.<sup>81</sup> By making the wages of sin explicitly clear, the poet has given his readers 'teches and tokenes to trow vpon' (1049). Meditation upon these 'tokens' of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> Biblia Sacra, Glossa ordinaria, marginal gloss, Luke 17:32 (v, fol. 170ra): 'Uxor Loth... statua salis facta est, quia admonendo homines ne similia faciant, corda eorum condit ne sint fatui.'

<sup>81</sup> Tractatus de diversis materiis praedicabilibus, p. 3. See above, Chapter 2, n. 49. The Liber exemplorum, a late thirteenth-century preacher's handbook, explains how preachers could employ the story of Sodom's destruction in their sermons. The fire which destroys the Sodomites, the exemplum explains, signifies the punishment which the impious shall suffer without end, while the beautiful, yet ashy, foetid fruit represents the true nature of the apparent attractiveness of sin ('Adhuc autem ad detestacionem huius peccati reperitur hec invectio in libro qui dicitur Gemma Sacerdotalis in hunc modum. Super hunc locum in epistola Petri secunda civitatem Sodomorum et Gomorreorum in cinerem redigens eversione dampnavit, dicit expositor: "Voluit etiam regionem circum positam speciem prisce pene servare. Nascuntur enim in ea poma pulcherrima que edendi cupiditatem spectantibus generant, si carpas fatiscunt et resolvuntur in cinerem, fumumque excitant, quasi adhuc ardeant. Ignis ergo qui Sodomitas semel punivit, significat quod impii sine fine sunt passuri; quod terra fumigabunda est, quod fructus pulcherrimi cinerem intus habent et fetorem, innuit quod delectacio carnalis etsi stultis arridet, nil tamen in invisibilibus nisi incendium sibi reservat, nisi ut fumus tormentorum eius in secula seculorum ascendat." Hec verba invenies ibi in duabus glosis. Explicit exemplum. - Quod autem de Sodomitis dicitur proferri potest de quibusdam hominibus viliter luxurie servientibus, ut habeatur via honestior et planior ad predicandum'), ed. A. G. Little, Pt. 2, no. 200, pp. 117-18. Also see Liber exemplorum, Pt. 2, no. 206, pp. 120-21. The Gemma sacerdotalis to which the Liber Exemplorum refers is probably Gerald of Wales's Gemma ecclesiastica, II, iii. In his discussion of 'simple fornication' as a mortal sin (II, ii), Gerald presupposes the Cleanness-poet's use of Noah, Abraham and Lot as exemplars of purity by employing the three biblical figures as models of proper sexuality: 'Two things ought to be considered as regards pleasure in the use of sex, which is implanted in man by nature. First, the use of such vile members [of our body] and the performance of such a filthy act should not, through his own defilement, cause a rational creature to become degenerate... Second, abstinence from such sweet and enjoyable pleasures by certain elect ones (who have happily exchanged vile and temporary pleasures for precious eternal ones) can procure fellowship with the angels... If, therefore, you wish to be found in the number of those to be saved, that is, among the sheep at [the Lord's] right hand and not among the goats; if, I say, you wish to be separated from the chaff by the winnowing fan of justice and to be found among the wheat grains when the threshing floor is fanned, then you must apply yourself by every means to the class of the married, with Abraham, Noah, and Lot ...', The Jewel of the Church: A Translation of Gemma ecclesiastica by Giraldus Cambrensis, J. J. Hagen, Davis Medieval Texts and Studies 2 (Leiden, 1979), pp. 136-37. Gerald also notes the importance of threatening exempla and stories of punishment and destruction as rhetorical tools which promote 'instruction and salutary fear.' He argues that descriptions of 'the punishment of a few may serve for the fear and correction of many, just as lightning strikes with danger for a few and fear for many, according to the poet: "When lightning strikes one, it terrorizes many" [Ovid, Ex Ponto, III, ii, 9]. And again: "He who restrains a few by punishment restrains many by fear" [Ex Ponto, I, ii, 125]. Thus do the divine punishments frighten many more than they destroy, because the bounteous mercy of God seeks the conversion of delinquents and grievous sinners more than their destruction', I, liv, pp. 124-26.

judgment and punishment is to inspire *Cleanness*'s readers to live cleanly and dread servilely. These signs of impending judgment and punishment, along with the previous *exemplum* of the Deluge, recollect a time when men 'did not fear the flood... or the conflagration,' and warn the audience that 'thus death comes frequently when no danger is feared.'<sup>82</sup>

# II.ii. An individual call to dread: Belshazzar, the Writing on the Wall and the rhetorical discourse of fear

In Cleanness Noah's Flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah are narratives whose shared rhetorical discourse relies upon the representation of communal uncleanness, guilt and the judgement and punishment they merit. Each scene portrays punishment in harsh and graphic terms, thereby revealing to the poem's audience the frightening consequences of impurity. However, whereas these first two exempla focus upon societal guilt and God's all-encompassing vengeance, in his third exemplum - the story of Belshazzar and the Writing on the Wall - the poet depicts sinfulness and its consequences in a much more intimate way. He does so by concentrating upon individual sinners rather than society. This allows the poet to create a more visceral, familiar and personal atmosphere of dread, one which is frightening precisely because of the specificity of its descriptions of the effects of divine vengeance. He establishes this personal mood and reinforces his poem's admonitory rhetoric by including two more exhortatory 'war be wel' clauses in his text. Comparing the purified soul to a clean parchment, the poet cautions his readers to avoid the sin of backsliding, urging them, lest they provoke God's anger, to beware becoming soiled by sin after being washed in the water of shrift (1133-38). He intensifies this warning with another a mere five lines later ('War be benne for be wrake,' 1143). Implicit in each of these warnings are the need to dread both sin and its punishment and also the importance of fear as a tool which prepares the soul to receive divine grace. In their note to lines 1133-34, Andrew and Waldron cite an analogous passage from a twelfth-century sermon which reveals fear's place in the process of becoming - and remaining - spiritually clean:

the parchment on which we write for him is a pure conscience, whereon all our good works

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> Biblia Sacra, Nicholas of Lyre, moral commentary, Luke 17:26 (v, fol. 169vb): 'Et sicut factum est in diebus... In quibus non timebant homines diluvium, nec in diebus Loth incendium, sic frequenter venit mors, quando nullum timetur periculum.'

are noted by the pen of memory, and make us acceptable to God. The knife wherewith it is scraped is the fear of God, which removes from our conscience by repentance all the roughness and unevenness of sin and vice.<sup>83</sup>

Like the author of the anonymous sermon from which this passage comes, the *Cleanness*poet, as Wallace says, 'figures God as the knife of fear which scrapes the parchment of individual conscience.'<sup>84</sup> Noah's Flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah have prepared the reader to fear divine judgment, and the poet is now asking each individual member of his audience to do so personally.

The audience is given its sharpest, most specific picture of punishment yet in the introduction to the third exemplum. In it, the poet describes how the Temple vessels which Belshazzar will later use uncleanly came to Babylon in the first place. He relates how the Israelites have aroused God's wrath by forsaking 'be faythe trwe' (1168). In response to their sin, God sends Nebuchadnezzar, a follower of 'be falce lawe'(1167), to destroy them. There is verve in the poet's description of the sacking of Jerusalem. Like the death and destruction portrayed in the previous two exempla, the punishment depicted in this scene encompasses an entire population. But while the antediluvians and Sodomites essentially remain faceless 'victims' of divine wrath, the Jerusalemites are portrayed in more familiar terms. The poet describes how King Zedekiah's eyes are 'holkked out' (1222) after he has been forced to witness the slaving of his sons and how, upon entering the city, Nebuchadnezzar's troops kill the 'swettest semlych' children, crush priests and bishops, rip open the bellies of helpless women, put to death everyone in the Temple and cruelly enslave all those who survive their onslaught (1247-68). Here the violence of divine wrath recalls the widespread destruction of Noah's Flood and the subversion of Sodom and Gomorrah. At the same time it steps back from the overwhelming, senses-shattering imagery of nature overthrown and evokes a more readily imaginable picture of judgment and destruction. Human society, rather than nature, is overthrown and mankind, rather than elemental force, is the agent of Jerusalem's destruction. Complete and utter eradication is displaced in favour of grotesque illustrations of bodily pain, human cruelty and agonizing death. By portraying the punishment of the Jerusalemites in such a way, the poet redefines

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> Poems of the Pearl Manuscript, p. 159. For interpretations of memory as a written surface or book see M. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, pp. 16, 29 and 224. Carruthers argues that such interpretations were 'so ancient and so persistent in all Western cultures that it must... be seen as a governing model' (p. 16). The written word, she explains, 'has visual shape (its *painture*) and calls to mind sound (its *parole*).' Together the sight and sound of words acted upon the memory and helped recall specific pieces of data (p. 224). Also see E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, tr. W. R. Trask (New York, 1953), pp. 326-32.

<sup>&#</sup>x27;Cleanness and the Terms of Terror', p. 98.

his fearful discourse. The rhetoric of fear built upon the figurative pictures of judgment and punishment presented by Noah's Flood and the destruction of the Sodomites is given new impetus and added effectiveness through the literal and specific illustration of the Jeruselamites' - and later Belshazzar's - physical pain, anguish and suffering.

The overt physicality of this scene continues once the exemplum concerning Belshazzar's sin and the Writing on the Wall begins. The poet describes the cause of Belshazzar's impending pain and fear, relating how the wicked king's mind was always concerned with 'mischappen binges' such as the beauty of his concubines, the luxuriousness of his clothes and the novelty and rarity of his food (1353-55). According to Aquinas, such preoccupation with earthly things constituted 'worldly love,' a love which was 'rooted in [the temporal] world for its own fulfilment' and was always evil. Arising 'from [this] worldly love as from its evil source,' Aquinas continues, was timor mundanus, a type of disordered fear which was also considered to be evil.<sup>85</sup> This culpable fear, as the Speculum Morale explains, precluded the possession of proper, spiritual dread and amounted to a 'defrauding' of God.<sup>86</sup> Belshazzar compounds this 'defrauding' and, hence, his own guilt when he sets out to impress his guests with his own wealth and majesty, ordering the Temple vessels to be brought out for the use of his concubines (1433-36), thus subjecting that which is dedicated to heaven to his own base desires. The king's plan, the poet says, is an insanity which consumes his heart ('a dotage ful depe drof to his hert,' 1425)<sup>87</sup> and thereby blinds Belshazzar to the fear of God which, according to Peraldus, ideally should reside there.<sup>88</sup> Although the wine which has 'blemyst his mynde' (1421)<sup>89</sup> may heighten the degree of his insanity, the madness and the sin which arises from it rely upon his own voluntary decision to sin ('And a caytif counsayl he ca<sub>3</sub>t bi hymseluen,' 1426). Belshazzar places the Temple vessels before his concubines, and himself before

Summae virtutum ac vitiorum VI, 3, 2 (i, fol. 286r): 'Cor est ubi timor Domini est...'.

<sup>89</sup> Trevisa's translation of the *De proprietatibus rerum* explains that certain meats and drinks could help promote madness (*amencia*): '[Madness] comeb somtyme of malencoly metis; and somtyme of dringke of stronge wyn bat brenneb be humours and turneb hem into askes...', VII, vi (i, p. 350, ll. 3-5).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 19, 3 (xxxiii, 53).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> I, 1, 26 (col. 79): 'Item timor mundanus est, quando aliquis propter timorem quem habet, ne deficiant ei temporalia Deum non timet amittere, ea vel iniuste acquirendo, vel retinendo; ut villicus iniquitatis, qui timens defectum horum, defraudabat Dominum suum.'

As M. Twomey has suggested, in *Cleanness* madness serves as a 'metaphor both for the tendency toward sinfulness incurred by man in the Fall and for the state of sin itself... [and] describes the condition of disorder in which concupiscence triumphs over reason, whose natural role is to direct the soul to God,' *The Anatomy of Sin: Violations of 'Kynde' and 'Trwathe' in* Cleanness," unpublished PhD dissertation, Cornell University (Ithaca, New York, 1979), p. 105. For a discussion of insanity in medieval literature, see P. Doob, *Nebuchadnezzar's Children: Madness in Middle English Literature* (New Haven and London, 1974).

God, specifically because of pride, a vice which itself signified madness (*wodnesse*) because it 'blyndeb a man bat he ne knoweb not hymself, ne seeb not hymself.<sup>90</sup> The poet stresses the king's pride, describing him as *bolde* and stating how the temple vessels are set before him 'wyth bost and wyth pryde' (1450); even his home is described in similar terms as a 'palayce of pryde passande alle ober' (1389). Thinking himself to be greater than he is, Belshazzar foolishly chooses to display his own power and majesty and fails to recognize his inherent human weakness, forgetting all the while that God is to be highly feared because of the immensity of his own power and his ability to reduce sinners to nothing.<sup>91</sup>

This wilful choice to sin sickens God to such a degree that he sets out to counter it by instilling an altogether different form of madness, one which will inspire a punitive fear that, according to Aquinas, will destroy the root of Belshazzar's pride and stand in for the dread, humility and respect for God which he lacks.<sup>92</sup> In order to inspire this dread, God, the poet relates, 'wayned hem a warnyng þat wonder hem þo3t' (1504), and soon thereafter 'a ferly bifel þat fele folk se3en' (1529). The form which this wondrous and frightening warning takes is the Writing on the Wall, but its message is not for Belshazzar alone. It is addressed also to the poem's audience. Throughout the course of *Cleanness* the poet has consistently warned his readers of the consequences of sin, both explicitly through his 'war be wel' clauses and implicitly through his terrifying *exempla*. God's purpose in warning Belshazzar of his impending fate is an extension of this rhetorical discourse. The Writing on the Wall acts as both literal and figurative exhortation and admonition, and expresses to the sinful king, as well as to the audience, not just the threat, but also the terrifying promise, of judgment and damnation.

The fear which the disembodied hand inspires in Belshazzar is much like the dread felt by the Sodomites. Like their terror, the king's fear is inspired by a *ferly*; but in this *exemplum* the poet's description of the fear this marvel provokes is much more detailed:

When bat bolde Baltazar blusched to bat neue, Such a dasande drede dusched to his hert bat al falewed his face and fayled be chere; be stronge strok of be stonde strayned his joyntes,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> The Book of Vices and Virtues, p. 14, ll. 6-7, p. 11, ll. 25-7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> Speculum Morale I, 1, 27 (cols. 89-90): 'Ideo summe timendus est, a quo sumus quod sumus, ne si eum peccando offendimus se subrahat a nobis, et nihil simus... [Item] summe timendus est Deus, propter immensitatem potentiae.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 19, 9 (xxxiii, 72): '... timor excludit principium superbiae, propter quod datur contra superbiam. Nec tamen sequitur quod sit idem cum virtute humilitatis, sed quod sit principium ejus.'

His cnes cachches toclose, and cluchches his hommes, And he with plattyng his paumes dispysis his leres, And romyes as a rad ryth þat rorez for drede (1537-43).

Belshazzar's reaction, as Hugh of St. Cher wrote, was a result of 'excessive fear.' Two specific types of reaction, each inextricably linked together, occur here. The first is an almost textbook description of *stupor* and the physical effects of fear. The second recalls descriptions of madness (*amencia*) and frenzy. The poet's description of Belshazzar's response to the *ferly*, a response which Hugh of St. Cher attributed to 'excessive terror,'<sup>93</sup> stays close to his biblical model (Daniel 5:6),<sup>94</sup> and he may very well have found the material for his amplification, particularly fear's effect on Belshazzar's voice, in Nicholas of Lyre's commentary:

Then the face of the king was changed, because due to his fear his blood fled to his heart. As a consequence of this his face became pallid and his limbs began to tremble... And he shouted out because he was not only disturbed in his heart, but because he showed his disturbance in his voice.<sup>95</sup>

The poet's only real additions to his biblical source are his description of Belshazzar slapping his own cheeks and his two explicit uses of the word *drede*. It is apparent that the poet understood the king's reaction to the *ferly* in terms of the particular physical effects of *timor naturalis*, and it is notable that he should choose to make this so obvious to his audience. Biblical commentary was a likely source for his knowledge, but he also may have been familiar with natural-philosophical descriptions of fear's effects such as the following:

As we have seen fear results in a contraction from the external to the internal regions, which leaves the deserted region cold. Cold causes them to tremble because one's control over these members is weakened... In a state of fear heat leaves the area of the heart and drops from the upper to the lower parts of the body. This is why people who are afraid tremble especially in the heart area and in the members adjacent to the chest region in which the heat is located. In addition, when they are afraid their voice trembles, because of the proximity to the heart of the vocal artery. The lower lip and the lower jaw also tremble, again because of their connection with the heart, which is also why the teeth chatter and why the hands and arms shake. It may also be because these members are more mobile and this is why when men are fearful their knees knock...<sup>96</sup>

In the *Cleanness* passage we see a close resemblance between the poet's description of Belshazzar's terrified reaction and Aquinas's description of fear's physical effects. At the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>93</sup> Postillae, Daniel 5:6 (v, fol. 152vb): 'Et compages renum ejus solvebantur, nimio terrore.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup> The biblical text reads as follows: 'Then was the king's countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him: and the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees struck one against the other.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>95</sup> *Biblia Sacra*, literal commentary, Daniel 5:6 (iv, fol. 306ra): 'Tunc facies regis commutata est: quia ex timore, recursus factus est sanguinis ad cor. Et perconsequens factus est pallor in facie et tremor in membris exterioribus... Exclamavit itaque: quia non solum fuit turbatus in corde, sed turbationem ostendit voce.'

Aquinas, Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 44, 3 (xxi, 69).

beginning of these lines the king is *bolde*, but the poet quickly offsets this by describing his fear as stupefying (*dasande*). His dread rushes to his heart, a paraphrase of the thought expressed by both Nicholas of Lyre and Aquinas,<sup>97</sup> and growing pallor swiftly follows. His astonishment and increasing frigidity cause his knees to knock and his hands to beat his own face. This loss of bodily control is also attributable to frenzy, which Trevisa's translation of the *De proprietatibus rerum* notes has the following effects: '... meuynge and castinge aboute be i3en, raginge, strecchinge and castinge of hondes, meuynge and wagynge of hede, grisbaitinge and knockinge togedres of teep.'<sup>98</sup> The king's frenzy leads, in turn, to madness and the 'privacion of ymaginacioun,' something which Trevisa's text links explicitly to *melancolia, drede* and *sorwe* - all of which are concepts whose signs are mirrored in Belshazzar's actions: '... be tokenes and signes [of sorwe] is divers, for som crieb, and lepib, and hurtib and woundib hemself and obir men.'<sup>99</sup>

Linking all these mental conditions together in Trevisa's translation is a reference to Deuteronomy 28:28 which discusses God's response to sin and wilful disobedience: 'The Lord strike thee with madness and blindness of mind.' The *Glossa ordinaria*'s comment on this verse associates this divinely-inspired madness with '*timore vel stupore cordis*.'<sup>100</sup> What is particularly interesting here is that *cordis* could be variously interpreted as 'heart,' 'soul,' 'mind' or 'judgment,' and that, just as *timor stupor* has done to the Sodomites before him, the fear inspired by the Writing on the Wall has had a powerfully crippling effect on Belshazzar's ability to function physically, intellectually and spiritually. As a result of his terrified madness, the king has lost all physical control, he is unable to think rationally and his soul is destined for eternal damnation. His physical exhibition of fear's effects, as we can see in a Middle English sermon cited by G. R. Owst, are analogous to the signs of approaching death:

ffor then is chaungyng of chere; for he that was be fore full roddy and wel colowrde then becommythe he all pale. then the yeen wynkythe, the mowthe frowt, the tethe gryndythe, and the hed schakythe, and the armys spredithe abrode, the hondythe pullythe and pluckythe, the feete rubbythe, the herte sy3hethe, the voyce gronythe and gruntithe. And

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Hugh of St. Cher also mentions the movement of blood to the heart in his commentary on Daniel 5:6: 'In magnis timoribus frigidioribus corporis partibus, et ossosis, sanguine qui amicus naturae ad cor confugit, destitutis, et renum juncturae solvi videntur, et toto corpore magno tremore concusso, tam genua quam dentes ad se invicem colliduntur,' *Postillae* (v, fol. 152vb).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> Trevisa, VII, v (i, p. 348, ll. 32-5).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> De proprietatibus rerum, VII, vi (i, p. 349, ll. 25-30 and p. 350, ll. 11-14).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>100</sup> Biblia Sacra, interlinear gloss, Deuteronomy 28:28 (i, fol. 364v).

thus all the lymmys of the body schewt the grete sorow3e of his departyng.<sup>101</sup>

The physically manifested effects of the king's dread, then, also foreshadow his violent murder at the hands of the Medes. Belshazzar is no longer the proud, bold and brazen king he was. His fear-inspired madness has transformed him into something no better than an irrational beast. The poet's comparison of him to a frightened ox (*rad ryth*, 1543) recalls the earlier merging together of the antediluvians and beasts during the Flood and reveals that God's wondrous warning has successfully fulfilled its purpose. The king has most definitely been terrified and stupefied. The message the poet is trying to expound through his metaphorical descriptions of the spiritual, intellectual and physical effects of the king's impurity is simple: 'They who possess more, ought to fear more.'<sup>102</sup> Fail to do so and the result will be the terrors of madness, death and damnation.

A. C. Spearing questions the effectiveness of this scene, remarking that 'in the Book of Daniel, the appearance of the hand... has a real effect of mystery and terror.' In apparent contrast to this, however, although the poet's own retelling of the story might be 'utterly convincing', the 'mystery' which characterizes the biblical description of the Writing on the Wall 'has vanished.' The poet's version of the story suffers, Spearing continues, because in it 'there is a hint of contrivance, by which [the readers] become partial accomplices with the poet in the attempt to terrify the courtiers.' This 'contrivance,' then, actually lessens the scene's excitement and divorces the reader from the poem's rhetorical discourse. I believe Spearing is wrong to think that the poet's detailed description detracts from the scene's rhetorical effectiveness. The poet could hardly reduce God's act to a simple 'conjuring trick,' for to do so would be to trivialize the potency of God's power and purpose, not to mention his own attempt to make his audience feel a sense of salutary fear. In contrast to his retelling of the Flood narrative and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the poet's vivid description of the dread Belshazzar feels in response to the ghostly hand's writing emphasizes the specific effects of fear on the individual sinner. By

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> Preaching in Medieval England, p. 342, n. 5. Owst is here quoting from a 'sermon for Second Sunday - "post Oct. Epiphanie" in MS Lincoln Cathedral Library A. 6. 2, fol. 46. John Mirk includes similar imagery in one of the sermons included in his *Festial*: '... at be last, dethe comybe and castybe hym downe seke yn hys bed, gronyng and sykyng, and sone castybe vp hys mete and hys drynke, and turnet hyde and hew; and how his brethe stinkyth, hys lyppys wexyn blew, hys face pale, hys een 30low, hys mowbe frobys: and so, at be last wyth debe 30skyng 3eldyth vp be gost... Hold bys yn your mynd; and I hope bys schall put away pryde', *Mirk's Festival: A Collection of Homilies by Johannes Mirkus*, ed. T. Erbe, EETS ES 96 (London, 1905), Sermon 19, p. 84, 11. 23-30. For a discussion of the signs of death in medieval English literature see R. H. Robbins, 'Signs of Death in Middle English,' *Mediaeval Studies* 32 (1970): 282-98.

Speculum Morale I, 1, 27 (col. 91): 'Qui plus habent, plus timere debent.'

illustrating every aspect of the sinful king's terror in such minute detail, the poet intends to frighten his readers and convince them that the *ferly* and its mysterious words of warning are intended for them as well.

The rhetorical discourse promulgated by the Writing on the Wall culminates in the poem's final destruction scene: the brutal murder of the senseless Belshazzar. The king's initial sin lay in his mistreatment of the holy vessels, but his inability to read God's message compounds his guilt and makes his death a certainty. Blanch and Wasserman link Belshazzar's ultimate death to 'the breakdown of language, and, in particular, the inability to read signs.' In this exemplum, they continue, 'linguistic failure and moral failure are inextricably linked.<sup>103</sup> This idea is similar to Elaine Scarry's explanation of pain's effect on language: 'Physical pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it, bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to the sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learned.<sup>104</sup> Fear itself is intimately related to pain, as Aquinas explains when he defines fear as an emotion which arises from the image of future or threatening pain.<sup>105</sup> Belshazzar's terrified madness may prevent him from fully comprehending the promise of pain represented by the divine writing; but in doing so it produces an effect similar to Scarry's description of pain's destructive effect on language: it reduces him to the state of a roaring, irrational and illiterate beast (1543). He is unable to read the admonitory text, and even after Daniel interprets the message for him and provides him with the penitential exemplum of Nebuchadnezzar's pride, fall and eventual reconciliation (1641-1740), Belshazzar refuses to heed the warning's sententia. Instead he chooses to carry on with the festivities, and at the end of the evening is carried 'to his bedd with blysse' (1765) - a bliss which signifies his ignorance and spiritual insensibility in contrast to the bliss he could have possessed had he lived cleanly and respected God.

Belshazzar's active choice to disregard the warning shows that he is stupefied spiritually as well as intellectually and physically, and his willful inaction and illiteracy suggest to the audience that there can be no other end for the king but death. Once again the poet expands upon his biblical source, describing how

Baltazar in his bed watz beten to debe, Pat bobe his blod and his brayn blende on be clobes;

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> From Pearl to Gawain, p. 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> *The Body in Pain*, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 42, 2 (xxi, 41).

The kyng in his cortyn watz ka3t bi be heles, Feryed out bi be fete and fowle dispysed (1787-90).

The Bible's account of this event is remarkably flat, stating simply that on the 'same night [as the feast] Baltassar the Chaldean king was slain' (Dan. 5:30). The further detail supplied by the poet amplifies the scene's violent and frightening discourse, brutally exposing the reader to the consequences of sin. Nothing stands between the reader and the event, and the audience is brought directly into the king's bed chamber by the disgusting and graphic description of the murder. The stark image of blood and brain-soaked sheets and the comparison of Belshazzar's corpse to a filthy, ditch-dwelling dog (1792) combine to inspire revulsion for sin and a specific terror of judgment in a manner markedly different from the earlier descriptions of the Flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The intimacy of the poet's depiction of Belshazzar's murder personalizes the consequences of uncleanness, showing the audience the exact effects of sin not in terms of societies and whole populations, but in regard to the lone, individual sinner. This, the poet says, is what happens to those who choose not to fear God properly. The king's death is itself the proverbial 'Writing on the Wall' for Cleanness's readers, and each one of them who disregards its message, the poet's rhetorical discourse implies, will someday lie in the ditch alongside Belshazzar.

By far, the most memorable images in Cleanness are the three scenes of destruction. They function rhetorically by providing the poem's audience with concrete descriptions of They emphasize the consequences of vice, perversion and fearful punishment. transgression and foreshadow the punishments to come and the extreme fear which should arise from them. However, in spite of this the poet does not want his readers to forget that God not only punishes, but also gives humanity a chance of redemption. The Flood narrative ends with Noah and the remnant of creation safe and dry, venerating God through 'comly and clene' sacrifice. The savoury scent of Noah's reverent gesture wafts up to the heavens, and in response God blesses the survivors, promising never again to curse creation so widely (501-44). The poet also discusses redemption and reconciliation after his description of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by explaining to his readers how they should 'schyne bur3 schryfte' and be purified by penance (1115-16). If they follow this advice they will be saved. But even these glimpses of salvation and deliverance are always accompanied by exhortations to fear impurity and sin. The description of God's covenant with Noah and the explanation of the power of shrift and penance are each cut

short by calls to 'war be wel' (545 and 1133) which cast a punitive shadow over these examples of reconciliation and signal that the poet will soon return to his main theme: illustrating the punishment of uncleanness. Unlike the previous two *exempla*, the story of Belshazzar ends without a description of reconciliation. Instead the poem's final lines emphasize the conditional nature of salvation and stress the necessity of meditating upon the frightening and exhortative 'brynne wyses' (1805) which illustrate destruction, describe the terror it inspires, and employ a rhetorical discourse of fear that should inspire in *Cleanness*'s readers the servile dread of judgment and damnation.

# III. Obedience, reverence and rhetorical exemplars of spiritual fear

The poet's primary and most noticeable means of instilling fear is, of course, through the terrifying illustrations of sin, judgment and punishment in the retellings of Noah's Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the downfall of Belshazzar. However, the servile fear of punishment which these scenes are to promote is balanced, reinforced and refined by the poet's depiction of cleanness and pure, spiritual fear through the characters of Noah, Abraham and Lot. In his treatise entitled *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard articulates exactly what I feel is the reasoning behind the poet's use of these three men as positive exemplars of dread:

That there may be some who need compulsion, some who, if they were free-footed, would riot in selfish pleasures like unruly beasts, is doubtless true; but a man must prove precisely that he is not of this number by the fact that he knows how to speak with dread and trembling; and out of reverence for the great one is bound to speak, lest it be forgotten for fear of the ill effect, which surely will fail to eventuate when a man talks in such a way that one knows it for the great, knows its terror - and apart from the terror one does not know the great at all.<sup>106</sup>

The antediluvians, the Sodomites and Belshazzar - perhaps, even the members of *Cleanness*'s audience themselves - all fit into the category of those who need compulsion, a compulsion which the rhetoric of fear employed in the destruction scenes provides. These sinners, when feeling themselves to be free-footed, 'riot in selfish pleasures like unruly beasts.' Indeed, the poet, as we have seen, frequently compares those who are unclean to dumb animals. Noah, Abraham and Lot, however, are all set apart from their sinful counterparts because they know 'how to speak with dread and trembling.' The poet accentuates their knowledge, holding it up for the audience to imitate. In doing so he supplies the example of cleanness his readers need in order to progress through, and past,

the understanding of physical fear inspired by the poem's violent imagery. The poet's depictions of his virtuous characters employ both implicit and explicit elements of spiritual dread, thereby showing the audience that fear is not only an emotional response related to the threat of judgment and damnation, but that it also can be a spiritual quality linked to divine love, obedience, reverence and salvation. By pursuing this second, separate rhetorical approach to fear the poet intensifies his lesson and provides for the reader a discourse of salutary fearfulness which offsets and supplements the frightening rhetoric expounded in the poem's representations of destruction.

### III.i. Noah: the poet's pinnacle of spiritual fear

As we saw above, the beginning of the Flood narrative clearly puts forth the reasons why God has decided to destroy his creation. In the Lord's eyes, the absolute impurity and perversion of the world leaves him little choice but to eradicate sin completely. He regrets ever having made humanity and resolves to annihilate it (285-92). However, having revealed the motivation behind God's desire to destroy his Creation, the poet partially mitigates the notion of divine vengeance by introducing an ambiguous term in his description of God's resolution. The Lord, he says, intends to 'delyuer' all impure sinners (286). The poet's choice of this word is interesting, for it at one and the same time suggests destruction as well as salvation. God makes it eminently clear that he is resolved to obliterate humanity, therefore implying that 'destruction' must be the word's main sense. But before he actually begins to execute his decision to punish humanity he chooses to fulfil the other potential meaning of 'delyuer' by offering Creation a chance for redemption and salvation (500). God finds the mechanism of this deliverance - and the poet finds his first exemplar of spiritual fear - in the person of Noah.

Why does God select Noah, alone of all the people in creation, to be privy to his plans and be singled out, with his family, for salvation? Genesis 6:8 simply states that Noah 'found grace before the Lord' (Gen. 6:8); but, following the words of Hebrews 11:7,<sup>107</sup> the poet goes a step further and explains *how* this grace was acquired, clearly stating that Noah's deliverance is contingent upon his perception of fear:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>107</sup> 'By faith Noe, having received an answer concerning those things which as yet were not seen, moved with fear, framed the ark for the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world; and was instituted heir of the justice which is by faith.' Nicholas of Lyre recognizes Noah's fear as being an indication of his faith: 'Hic ponit exemplum de fide ipsius Noe... quia credens adimpleri dictum dei timuit, et hoc est quod dicitur, *Metuens'*, *Biblia Sacra*, literal commentary (vi, fol. 155rb).

benne in worlde watz a wy3e wonyande on lyue, Ful redy and ful ry3twys, and rewled hym fayre, In he drede of Dry3tyn his dayez he vsez, And ay glydande wyth his God, his grace watz he more (293-96).

The poet ensures that positive, spiritual fear is immediately brought to the reader's attention, thereby setting up the spiritual paradigm - and goal - his readers must obtain. It is clear that laudable dread orders Noah's life, and in these lines the poet stresses the presence in Noah of particular characteristics which were part and parcel of properly ordered spiritual fear. Noah is submissive, obedient and righteous, and governs his life courteously, humbly and reverently according to God's precepts. After setting out these qualities, the poet draws them all together and places them under a single term: 'De drede of Dry3tyn.' The poet's depiction of Noah's fear recalls the definition of properly ordered dread set out by Aquinas. Reason, Aquinas explains, directs that some things should be feared more than others and 'insists that it is better to concentrate on pursuing particular goods rather than on avoiding particular evils.<sup>108</sup> Contrary to the sinners who fear more for their own physical pleasure and thus transgress the natural law established by God, Noah's voluntary decision to pursue virtue by ordering his life willingly and faithfully according to divine mandates reveals the inherent spiritual perfection of his fear and, thus, of his love. This properly ordered dread goes hand in hand with the clean love it represents, and, as Bonaventure says, as one increases, so does the other.<sup>109</sup> The poet implies a similar sentiment in his depiction of Noah: all of Noah's actions and movements are dictated by his perfect dread of God, and as his fear keeps him going (glydande) with the Lord, his grace continuously grows. By making spiritual dread the centre of Noah's character, the poet complicates his poem's rhetorical discourse, providing for his audience an alternative picture of fear from that illustrated by the disordered love, dread and terror of the poem's sinners. In doing so, he supplies his readers with a laudable figure worthy of imitation, one which makes them aware that a properly ordered, voluntary fear of God will preempt the threat of judgment and the fear which comes with it. As the Flood scene progresses and the poet's discourse of fear emphasizes the horrors of death and damnation, Noah's perfect spiritual dread acts as an exemplary light that can guide Cleanness's audience through the dark clouds of terror brought by God's punitive storm.

Noah's spiritual fear allows him to live in and with God, thus increasing his

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> *Summa Theologiae* 2a2ae 125, 1 (xlii, 63).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>109</sup> In sententias III, xxxiv, 2, 2, 2 (iii, 765a): '... unde quanto aliquis plus habet de spiritu amoris, tanto plus habet de spiritu timoris...'.

possession of grace and outlining the moral disparity between him and the rest of his filthcovered society. But how do we know that in this instance the poet is not using dread simply as a stock phrase? A single mention of the fact that Noah ordered his life according to his fear of God is hardly in itself a complete lesson. However, any doubt that the poet had a well-formulated idea of fear in mind while conceptualizing his characterization of Noah must be abandoned when, some forty-six lines after introducing him, he once again describes him in fearful terms. God has just finished commanding Noah to build his ark, and he sets out to fulfil his divine instructions with an explicit feeling of fear:

Ful graypely gotz bis god man and dos Godez hestes, In dry3 dred and daunger bat durst do non ober (341-42).

The unequivocal allusion to dread in lines 294-96 firmly establishes for the audience Noah's fearfully pure character; but this second specific reference to his dread accentuates its spiritual value by tying together the three words 'dry3,' 'dred' and 'daunger.' Perhaps the most noticeable thing about the combination of these three words is that they fulfil the poem's alliterative requirements, but this cannot be the only reason why they are all found here together. Each is too closely related to the others, conceptually speaking, for this to be the case. 'Dred' in this instance could signify either fear itself or the reverent awe of God,<sup>110</sup> while the other two words offer a wide range of lexical possibilities. 'Daunger,' for instance, could express the threat of the coming storm and thereby reflect the cause of Noah's 'dred' itself. But the poet has already told his readers that Noah's fear of God is not dependant upon the threat of punishment but is instead a habitual state of mind which reflects his faithfulness, obedience and reverence. Therefore it seems unlikely that 'daunger' should represent the cause or object of Noah's fear. According to the Andrew and Waldron edition of the poem, 'daunger' could also signify the emotion of fear itself. The Middle English Dictionary provides even further possible interpretations of the word, including the related notions of 'domination,' 'power,' 'possession,' 'influence' and 'obligation.'111 When seen in conjunction with the description of Noah in lines 294-96, these various definitions seem to suggest the most likely meaning for 'daunger.' They stress God's superiority, Noah's self-perceived inferiority and his fearful submission to divine power, and thus reflect the theological definition of reverential fear (timor

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>110</sup> *MED*, ed. H. Kurath and S. M. Kuhn (1956-), s. v. dred, n., 1 and 3.

<sup>111</sup> *MED*, s. v.daunger, noun, 1, 5 and 6.

#### reverentialis).<sup>112</sup>

'Dry3' also has a wide number of potential meanings and builds upon the interpretative possibilities offered by 'daunger.' Signifying the notions of 'heaviness,' 'severity,'and the endurance of hardship,<sup>113</sup> it defines the tone of Noah's fear and provides the reader with an accurate reflection of reverent dread. The poet's choice of 'dry3' reveals that Noah is fully prepared to weather God's storm without complaint and submit himself completely to God's power. On a lighter note, it might also be a clever pun calling to mind the impending flood and the comparative dryness of the ark which Noah's spiritual fear has earned him.<sup>114</sup> But even if it is a subtle joke, it is one which reveals much about Noah's fear. Indeed, as Hugh of St. Cher wrote, 'fear is called the treasure of God because it preserves all of the good things and gifts of God, as [in an] a chest (arca) lest they be seized by thieves. Fear particularly protects one from the wind of pride because it humbles a person.'115 Noah's recognition of divine power and his own humility and fearful obedience in the face of it places him in the protecting shelter of the ark and allows him to escape the winds of the approaching storm. The various interpretations suggested by 'daunger' and 'dry3' are all mirrored in the Speculum Morale's discussion of spiritual dread's effects. The fear of God, the Speculum says, 'induces vigilance,' 'excludes pride,' 'gives sustenance in affliction,' 'makes one diligent in labour,' 'offers reverence to God' and 'merits eternal glory.'<sup>116</sup> Noah has been vigilant in his life, keeping himself free from the sin that infects his neighbours. He recognizes his own inferiority in relation to God, thus keeping himself from falling into the sin of pride. His faithful fear will sustain him during his time in the ark, and it keeps him working diligently on its construction and the gathering of its cargo. Following the words of the Middle English Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God which explain that a person who properly fears God 'leueh no goodnes undo whiche he mai

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>112</sup> Speculum Morale I, 1, 27 (col. 85): 'Et notandum, quod iste timor [timor reverentialis] est quando inferior creatura respicit Dei magnitudinem, vel superioris, et in suam resiliens parvitatem pertimescit, et obstupescit.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> *MED*, s. v. dri(e) / dri<sub>3</sub>(e), adj., 2 and 3.

MED, s. v. drie, adj., 1. Indeed, Rosemary Woolf says that 'in the Middle Ages puns implied synthesis, for they were thought of as a rhetorical means of revealing underlying correspondences. Ambiguities of meaning were not random, nor similarities of sound comic coincidences, but both were linguistic indications of the intricate unity of the divine plan,' *The Middle English Religious Lyric*, p. 85.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>115</sup> *Postillae*, Isaiah 33:6 (iv, fol. 72ra): '... *timor Domini ipse est thesaurus ejus*. Dicitur autem timor thesaurus Domini: quia omnia bona, et dona Domini conservat, ut arca, ne rapiantur a furibus... Timor proprie custodit a vento superbiae, quia humiliat.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>116</sup> I, 1, 29, (cols. 104-7): '... timor inducit vigilantiam... excludit extollentiam... timor Dei dat in afflictione sustinentiam... timor Dei facit in operatione diligentiam... timor Dei praebet Deo reuerentiam... timor Dei meretur aeternam gloriam...'.

do to be plesaunce of God,'<sup>117</sup> Noah's dread ensures that he 'durst do non ober' than what God commands. In doing all of this his actions offer reverence to God, and subsequently he is able to merit earthly deliverance, spiritual salvation and eternal glory.

Noah's recognition and acceptance of his own absolute inferiority points to the ultimate message the poet attempts to convey in these lines. As Edward Wilson states in his study of the Gawain-poet, Noah's dread is 'a righteous fear of the Lord which existed before the threat of the Flood might induce a more creaturely instinct of fearful selfpreservation,' and its 'gravitas... is never dappled... by any grumbling.'<sup>118</sup> That his fear does precede the threat of divine vengeance is irrefutably true - after all, without it God would not have singled him out for deliverance. And it is also not 'dappled' because it is castus, or pure and spotless. Surely, then, this is one of the poet's main points: Noah's cleanness contrasts with the rest of society's uncleanness, and although his fear dictates that he can do nothing but obey, he does possess the habitus of spiritual dread which allows him to live cleanly and merit salvation. The willing obedience which his dread inspires is in sharp contrast to the perversity and recalcitrance of the antediluvian sinners, and by illustrating this, the poet makes Noah's fear-inspired purity the ideal object of the audience's aspirations. His inward perception of fear and subsequent ordering of his life according to its dictates fulfils the requirements for becoming a faithful child of God laid out in the ordinary gloss on Proverbs 14:26, which reveals that only they who are ruled by the fear of God will be called his children. This internally ordered dread, the gloss continues, then acts as the 'fount of life' - a source of salvation for Noah which clearly contrasts with the flooding founts about to condemn and kill the rest of God's irreverent and disobedient creation.<sup>119</sup> The poet's portrayal of properly-ordered, spiritual dread combines with his depiction of punishment and terror in his description of the Flood to create a rhetorical discourse which encourages Cleanness's readers not just to fear God for the sake of punishment, but also to dread him out of an overriding sense of love and reverence. As Noah disembarks from the ark he walks into a world washed clean of sin, but it is still one in which humanity should fear God. As Hugh of St. Cher says in his commentary on Genesis 8:18, accompanying Noah are 'first, timor servilis, second, timor

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup> Ed. M. Connolly, Ch. C, p. 9, ll. 46-7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>118</sup> *The* Gawain-*Poet*, pp. 98-9.

Biblia Sacra, Glossa ordinaria, marginal commentary (iii, fol. 323ra): 'Filii autem timoris dicuntur, qui divino timore reguntur... Timor domini fons vitae.' The verse reads as follows: 'In the fear of the Lord is confidence of strength, and there shall be hope for his children.'

*initialis* and third, the fear possessed by purged souls, *timor castus*.<sup>120</sup> The *exemplum* of the Flood should make the poem's readers fear judgment, but at the same time Noah's spiritual dread encourages them to transcend this servile dread and instead begin to fear purely by acting reverently and readily (*graypely*) when dealing with God.

### III.ii. Abraham: perfect fear and surrogate servility

In Abraham, the poet provides another shining example of proper reverence, obedience and fear. His introduction of the patriarch functions in much the same way as his earlier introduction of Noah, despite the fact that he does not once explicitly state that Abraham lives in 'be dred of Dry3tyn.' Whereas Noah dealt with a disembodied voice from the sky and revealed his perfect fear through his prompt performance of its commands, in Abraham's case God appears directly before him in three incarnate, human forms. Referring to the poet's treatment of Genesis 8:5 and Sarah's failure to believe that the Lord will allow her to become pregnant and her subsequent fearful denial of disbelief (645-70), Spearing proposes that the 'realism' the poet gains by depicting God in such familiar, physical terms necessitates a loss in 'suggestiveness.' This loss of 'suggestiveness,' then, leaves little or no space in the narrative for fear, for as Spearing argues,

... God has become man all to completely for the purposes of this particular story. God's power has lost some of its essential mystery, and it is symptomatic... that the almost chillingly bald explanation in Genesis, 'For she was afraid' (*timore preterrita*), has been simply omitted by the *Gawain*-poet. In this scene, his God has no power to arouse fear.<sup>121</sup>

In the Bible, Sarah's disbelief arises from her fear, a fear which the *Glossa ordinaria* says reproves 'the incredulous woman.'<sup>122</sup> Why does the poet eliminate this obvious biblical example of dread if, as I believe, he utilizes and emphasizes fear as a major rhetorical theme? This omission - which seems odd in light of the fact that the poet rarely seems to exclude material from his biblical source, instead choosing to amplify and add to its narrative - is, I feel, quite appropriate. The poet has just finished narrating the Flood scene, a horrifying *exemplum* in which he purposefully attempts to instill in the reader a strong

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>120</sup> *Postillae* (i, fol. 12vb): '*Egressus est ergo...* primo advenit timor servilis, deinde initialis, tertio timor purgati animi, idest timor castus.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>121</sup> The Gawain-Poet, p. 60. In his introduction to his edition of *Cleanness*, J. J. Anderson states that the poet omits fear in this instance 'probably because it would conflict with the domestic tone of this scene,' *Cleanness* (Manchester, 1977), p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>122</sup> Biblia Sacra, interlinear gloss, Genesis 8:15 (i, fol. 70v): 'Adhuc foeminam incredulitatem increpat.'

feeling of *timor servilis*, and after this brief scene with Abraham he will do the same again with his retelling of the violent destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Sarah's frightened denial indicates neither uncleanness nor purity; it serves no rhetorical purpose and, thus, has no place in the poet's discourse of fear. By ignoring Sarah's fearful incredulity and concentrating instead upon Abraham and his willing obedience to and reverence for God, the poet chooses to focus upon a type of fear which will provide another model of exemplary behaviour for his readers to imitate.

Contrary to what Spearing says, in this scene the poet's depiction of God does indeed have the power to inspire fear. The dread he arouses, however, is not the stupefied terror experienced by the antediluvians, Sodomites and Belshazzar or the servile fear the audience is to feel upon witnessing the poet's horrible descriptions of destruction. Rather, the dread God does excite is, once again, the reverent fear exhibited by Noah. Spearing's remark is proven wrong by Abraham immediately after he notices the 'wlonk Wy3ez prynne' (606) who approach him. As soon as he perceives them, he rushes to them 'as to God' and salutes them as one ('haylsed Hem in onhede,'611-12). Identifying himself in three successive lines as his triune visitors' poor and faithful servant (by lede, 614; bi pouere, 615 and Pi burne, 616), he humbly beseeches (lo3ly biseche, 614) them to rest while he fetches them water and washes their feet (617-18). Abraham's behaviour is indicative of the perfect reverential fear he possesses. He recognizes the three Wy3ez at once for who they really are, and, acknowledging his own inferiority, places himself completely at the Lord's disposal. His actions show God that like Noah, he rules himself in the 'dred of Dry3tyn.' Latin theological examinations of Abraham's character show us that his behaviour toward his guests was understood in terms of reverential fear. As we already noted in our discussion of Noah, timor reverentialis was defined as 'a fear in which an inferior creature respects the magnitude or superiority of God.'123 In its discussion of timor reverentialis the Speculum Morale specifically cites Abraham's behaviour as an example of what it means to feel and exhibit reverential fear, stating how 'when seeing three, he fell prostrate and adored one."<sup>124</sup> All of his actions, from his repeated referral to himself as God's humble servant to his washing of the Lord's feet - an act which Nicholas of Lyre calls humility itself<sup>125</sup> - indicate that he understands, respects and reverently fears

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>123</sup> Speculum Morale 1, 1, 26 (col. 85). See note 113 above.

<sup>124</sup> I, 1, 26 (col. 85): 'Et Abraham Gen. 18... cum tres videns, procidens vnum adorauit.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup> Biblia Sacra moral commentary, Genesis 18:4 (i, fol. 70rb): Et laventur pedes vestri... Ecce humilitas.'

the divine superiority of his triune guest.

As in his depiction of Noah, the poet bases his portrayal of Abraham on the reverent dread the patriarch shows to God. However, he also characterizes Abraham's fear in new terms by introducing evidence of a different - but still pure - type of dread, one which scholastic sources identified as *timor amicabilis*. Bonaventure defined *timor amicabilis* as a type of dread in which a person feared any discord that might arise between God and man (*voluntatum dissensionem*). It was, he explained, understood to be based upon grace-given friendship (*gratia, quae facit esse... etiam amicum*).<sup>126</sup> According to Ecclesiasticus 6:16-17, an active, properly-ordered fear of God was instrumental in creating this faithful friendship between God and man:

A faithful friend is the medicine of life and immortality: and they that fear the Lord shall find him. He that feareth God, shall likewise have good friendship: because according to him shall his friend be.

This friendship, Nicholas of Lyre says, is characterized by a charitable love which spiritually enlivens a person and leads to the eventual immortality of heavenly glory and honour. The fear of which Ecclesiasticus 6:16-17 speaks, Nicholas explains, can be understood as, in the first case, initial fear, and, in the second case, filial dread, both of which lead and bind a person to God through chaste love (*per amorem castum*). A person who greatly loves God, he continues, in return will be loved greatly by the Lord.<sup>127</sup> Abraham extends to God his gracious hospitality, an offer which the Lord accepts 'as a glad gest' who makes 'god chere' (641) and was happy to see his friend ('fayn of his frende,' 642). The friendliness God exhibits is a response to Abraham's faithfulness, love and reverent dread. Abraham's possession of *timor amicabilis* earns him divine friendship and reveals that his fear arises from more than just simple obedience and subservience.

Further evidence of the mutual friendship shared by Abraham and the Lord surfaces when God decides to inform the patriarch of his plan to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. God asks how he can hide his intent from Abraham 'be trwe' and ultimately decides that he cannot (682-88). Nicholas of Lyre's commentary states that a large part of the Lord's decision to share his plan with Abraham was based upon the friendship which existed between them: 'It is as if God had said, "Since Abraham is an intimate friend of mine, it is not proper that I conceal from him the vengeance which I shall take on the cities of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>126</sup> In sententias III, xxxiv, 2, 3 (iii, 770a-b).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>127</sup> Biblia Sacra, literal commentary, Ecclesiasticus 6:16-17 (iii, fol. 393vb): 'Nam amicus fidelis diligit ex charitate... quae vivificat spiritualiter, et perducit ad immortalitatem gloriae...  $\P Et qui metuunt dominum...$ timore initiali...  $\P Qui timet deum...$  timore filiali... qui magis diligit deum, magis diligitur ab eo...'.

Sodom.<sup>1128</sup> Abraham's reverent dread denotes his inherent cleanness, demonstrates that he avoids *dissensio* by living his life obediently in agreement with divine commands and merits the friendship of God. Through Abraham the poet adds a new dimension to his discourse of fear by showing his readers that in addition to constituting obedience and reverence, spiritual dread is something which can be enjoyed as well.<sup>129</sup>

The terms of fear at work in this scene do not remain pleasant for long, however. In depicting God's friendship with Abraham, the poet does portray the ideal fearful relationship, but once he starts to describe God's design for the Sodomites he again begins to evoke the frightening imagery of judgment and punishment. Upon hearing God's plan to do something so dreadful 'Pat wyzez schal be by hem war, worlde withouten ende' (712), his mood changes and he grows frightened (arzed, 713-14), and because of his fear he decides to bargain with God for these sinners' lives. Abraham tries to convince God that outright destruction is unfair to the innocent, and through his tenacious negotiating he assures that Sodom and Gomorrah at least have a chance to repent and survive. Nicholas of Lyre attributes Abraham's actions to his piety: 'Moreover Abraham stood face to face with the Lord. Indeed, having heard about the condemnation facing the Sodomites, motivated by piety, he began to ask the Lord for their acquittal.'<sup>130</sup> Although Abraham's piety is implicit and self-evident, the poet does not mention it as the prime motivating factor behind Abraham's actions. Instead, he gives pride of place to dread as he describes how Abraham grew afraid (ar3ed) in the expectation of God's wrath. With this word the poet completely changes the scene's mood and skilfully shifts the emphasis away from a reverent and amicable fear toward a more servile response to physical pain. However, in Abraham's case this fearful reaction does not detract from his own spiritual state; rather, it actually strengthens his own perfect position. The Sodomites are the ones under threat, but although their sin is not his own and the punishment not his to dread, Abraham still actively experiences fear. He bears the emotion and habitus which should be felt by the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, and his surrogate sense of anxiety and his attempt to pacify God's anger indicate that mankind's condition is not completely without possibility

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>128</sup> *Biblia Sacra*, literal commentary, Genesis 18:17 (i, fol. 70vb): '*Num celare potero...* ac si diceret: Cum Abraham sit mihi familiaris amicus, non est decens quod ego celem ei vindictam quam facturus sum in civitatibus Sodomorum...'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>129</sup> Charlotte Morse notes that Abraham 'enjoys the privilege of companionship with God;' and that 'he sets a standard of cleanness and courtesy for Christians to match.' *Pattern of Judgment*, p. 165.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>130</sup> *Biblia Sacra*, literal commentary, Genesis 18:22-23 (i, fol. 71rb): 'Abraham vero adhuc stabat coram domino. Abraham enim audita populi condemnatione, pietate motus coepit rogare dominum pro eius liberatione.'

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of redemption. While Abraham's own anxiety represents the fear of judgment everyone is obligated to possess, his effort to save the innocent among the Sodomites symbolizes the ideal selflessness that every faithful follower of God should have.

In the above scenes, God may not immediately inspire the type of dread which Spearing expects, but it is clear that Abraham nonetheless fears him, albeit in different ways. The poet does not describe the patriarch's fear as blatantly as he does Noah's, but in his descriptions of Abraham's reverent behaviour and friendly relationship with God he does succeed in promoting specific elements of perfected pure dread. Spearing may feel that the poet's anthropomorphic characterization of God as man 'sometimes runs out of control,' but if we carefully examine the scene taking place in lines 601-70, look for references to fear within it, and then compare it to the scene in which God reveals his plans and Abraham, frightened, seeks to ameliorate the Sodomite's dreadful fate, it seems difficult to believe that the poet has indeed let his work run amok. Rather, through the fearful reverence and friendship Abraham first offers God and the surrogate sense of servile dread he later feels for the Sodomites, the poet tightly controls the mood and action of the text, shows his readers what it means to fear purely and properly and at the same time looks forward to the horrifying destruction and terror he shall soon describe.

### III.iii. Lot: the mean between physical and spiritual fear

Abraham's fear leads directly into the dread described during the poet's narration of the fall of Sodom and Gomorrah. Its servile aspects exemplify the fear that the Sodomites *should* feel and anticipate the terror they *will* feel, while its reverent qualities foreshadow elements of Lot's own sense of dread. Lot, however, is a somewhat problematical figure in biblical tradition, and in terms of the fear he exhibits in *Cleanness* he is a much more complex character than either Noah or Abraham. In *Cleanness* he is used as an exemplar of laudable fear, but by selecting him as a model the poet has made what appears to be a questionable choice, as medieval commentary on his character shows. Exegetical tradition dictated that even though Lot deserved praise because 'he lived in Sodom amongst the worst men [but still] preserved cleanness,'<sup>131</sup> unlike either Noah or Abraham he was not completely pure. His deliverance from the destruction of Sodom and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>131</sup> Biblia Sacra, Nicholas of Lyre, literal commentary, Genesis 6:9 (i, fol. 50vb): '... ad laudem ipsius Loth dicitur... quod habitavit in Sodomis, quia inter homines illos pessimos mundiciam servavit.'

Gomorrah did depend in part on his own goodness. But, as standard commentary says, he is pure 'only in comparison to the Sodomites,' and not in regard to Abraham whose prayers are the principal reason Lot is saved from Sodom's destruction.<sup>132</sup> Any purity Lot did possess, as Vincent of Beauvais's Speculum Historiale argues, was tainted by various sins, including his 'prostitution' of his daughters to the Sodomites (more on this shortly), his refusal to believe the angels' promises that he would be safe in either the mountains or in Segor, and his drunkenness and subsequent incest with his daughters.<sup>133</sup> These statements seem to devalue Lot. He is perfect only in relation to the Sodomites; he has nowhere near the same degree of purity as either Noah or Abraham and it even takes Abraham's direct intercession to assure Lot's salvation. However, the Cleanness-poet needed a 'perfect,' or at least virtuous, model to counter the impurities of the Sodomites, and his decision to use the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah as one of his main exempla left him little choice but to use Lot as his exemplar, despite the traditional views of his many flaws. Hence, as we will see, the poet diminishes the negative aspects of Lot's character either by adapting them to his purpose or by omitting them from his narrative altogether. In so doing the poet succeeds in accentuating Lot's spiritual purity, but at the same time he is never able to divorce him completely from his latent human weaknesses. The combination of virtue and weakness Lot typifies creates for the reader a model of human behaviour more accessible and understandable than the absolute perfection and purity exemplified by Noah and Abraham.

The poet makes a conscious effort to emphasize Lot's virtuous traits and link him to the poem's other two positive exemplars. He is introduced in terms sharply reminiscent of Abraham's first appearance, and like Noah his spirituality is emphasized from the beginning:

As Loot in a loge dor lened hym alone, In a porche of þat place py3t to þe 3ates, Þat watz ryal and ryche so watz þe renkes seluen.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>132</sup> Biblia Sacra, Glossa ordinaria, marginal commentary, Genesis 19:29 (i, fol. 73va): 'Patet meritis Abrahae Lot fuisse liberatum, quem scriptura appellat iustum. Et sciendum quia iustus erat, non sicut Abraham sed comparatione Sodomitarum.' Hugh of St. Cher includes the same remarks in his Postillae, Genesis 19:29 (i, fol. 25va): 'Et sciendum, qui justus erat, non sicut Abraham, sed comparatione Sodomitarum.' Nicholas of Lyre says much the same thing in his literal commentary on the same verse, Biblia Sacra (i, fol. 73vb): 'Ex quo patet quod Lot non solum fuit liberatus pro iustitia sua, sed principaliter pro precibus Abrahae.' And Vincent of Beauvais, in his Speculum Historiale, also argues that Lot was saved by Abraham's prayers, I, 106, (p.38b): '... et Loth precibus Abrahae liberavit.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>133</sup> I, 106 (p. 39a): '... Loth licet comparatione Sodomorum dicatur iustus, in quatuor tamen peccavit, quia filias suas Sodomitis prostituit, flagitium flagitio volens commitare: periculosissime siquidem ut ait Augustinus admittitur compensatio talis, ut faciamus mala, ne fiant ab aliis graviora. Item quia Angelo sibi salutem in monte, vel in Segor promittenti non credidit, et quia se inebriavit, et quia incaestum commisit.'

As he stared into be strete ber stout men played, He syze ber swey in asent swete men tweyne (784-88).

Lot stands waiting by the side of the road leading into Sodom, but rather than resting under a tree, alone in the country, he is in the midst of a city. This firmly locates him in everyday urban life. But despite being surrounded by other men he is a solitary figure. Lynn Staley Johnson notes that the 'poet... associates Lot with his city as the poet previously associated Abraham with the great tree. Each landscape,' she says, 'manifests the nature of the man who stands against it.<sup>134</sup> She stresses how Lot's wealth is bound up with the doomed city, and that this unfavourably contrasts him with Abraham. As noted above, Lot was traditionally seen as being spiritually and morally inferior to his kinsman; but why would the Cleanness-poet want to devalue Lot when he plans to use him as the third positive exemplar of his poem? If the poet is, indeed, stressing Lot's wealth it would make more sense to understand lines 784-88 in terms of the imagery of Parable of the Wedding Feast. If we do so, the poet's emphasis on Lot's affluence contrasts directly with the ragged clothes and implied impurity of the unclean wedding guest. Lot's rich appearance, then, suggests the degree of his purity and sets him apart as being clean in spirit. The poet accentuates Lot's separation from the rest of society by placing him alone in a porch, staring into the street where 'stout men played' (787), attentively waiting for something of which all the other people amusing themselves are oblivious.<sup>135</sup> His position and mood alone, framed by the gateway and intently looking at the road - noticeably contrast with the scene around him and set him apart from the other citizens. He represents the inherently good man caught within a sinful society. His reaction to the approach of two strangers, whom the poet explicitly states Lot recognizes as God's angels (795-96), and the way in which he greets them further differentiate him from everyone else:

He ros vp ful radly and ran hem to mete,

And loze he loutez hem to, Loth, to be grounde (797-98).

His welcome of the newcomers is every bit as swift and reverential as Abraham's salutation of God. Staley Johnson argues that Lot's vision of the two angels 'reveals his own emphasis upon riches and luxury,'<sup>136</sup> and, thus, taints his obedience. I disagree with this. By describing the angels in such glowing terms (789-94), the poet is only adhering to his poem's theme as set out in the retelling of the Parable of the Wedding Feast: clean clothes

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>134</sup> The Voice of the Gawain-Poet, p. 121.

Biblia. Sacra, Glossa ordinaria, interlinear gloss, Genesis 19:1 (i, fol. 72r): The gloss on the word 'sedente,' describing Lot's actions as he sat by the road, indicates that he was 'expecting the arrival of friends,' ('Expectante cuiuslibes hospitis adventum').

<sup>136</sup> The Voice of the Gawain-Poet, p. 122.

signify a pure spirit. By noting the angels' richness Lot recognizes their inherent spiritual cleanness. His humble salutation of his heavenly visitors, his offer of hospitality and continued reverence and his reminder to his wife not to feed them leavened or salted food (819-20) lest it offend them clearly reveal his own spiritual virtue.<sup>137</sup> The fact that only he perceives the true nature of the angels, in direct contrast to the inaction and apparent ignorance of the other people on the road, starkly draws attention to the impurity of the Sodomites and accentuates his own relative cleanness.

Up to this point in his portrayal of Lot the poet's discourse of fear has depended upon terms of reverential dread similar to those he used in his depictions of Noah and Abraham. However, he soon puts the spiritual perfection of Lot's fear to the test when he describes how the Sodomites come to exert their perverted will on his angelic guests:

If bou louyez by lyf, Loth, in byse wones,

zete vus out pose zong men pat zore-whyle here entred (841-42).

The Sodomites explicitly appeal to Lot's sense of *timor naturalis* - if he fears to die, he should hand over his beautiful guests.<sup>138</sup> If he wants to maintain his perfect fearful relationship with God, Lot must ignore their warning and refuse to give in to their demand. Despite this threat, Lot's subsequent actions reveal that the reverence he has shown the angels is indeed founded upon properly ordered love and fear:

What! he wonded no wohe of wekked knauez, Pat he ne passed he port he peril to abide (855-56).

When combined with the previous lines, the poet effectively illustrates the testing of Lot's fear. The Sodomites appeal to his dread of pain and death, but he remains unshaken and instead weighs their threat against the penalty which would result if he were to betray his heavenly guests. As Aquinas shows, Lot's refusal to succumb to this worldly fear is eminently laudable. While addressing the particular question of whether or not fear is sinful, Aquinas reveals that it is culpable only when one 'avoids particular things which reason commands us to endure.'<sup>139</sup> 'Evils of the soul,' he says, 'are to be feared more than those of the body.'<sup>140</sup> Lot understands this and acts accordingly. Following the *sententia* of Matthew 10:28, he refuses to be frightened of 'them that kill the body, and are not able

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>137</sup> Compare lines 781-804 with the earlier scene illustrating Abraham's welcoming of the divine travellers in lines 612-21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>138</sup> It is interesting to think about the Green Knight's words to Gawain at the end of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: 'Bot for 3e lufed your lyf - be lasse I yow blame,' (2368). In Gawain's case natural fear is a mitigating factor. For Lot, however, it provides no such moral aid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>139</sup> Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 125, 1 (xlii, 63).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>140</sup> Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 125, 4 (xlii, 71).

to kill the soul' or to shrink (*wonded*) from their threats. Instead, he chooses to 'fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell,' thus providing for the reader a positive image of laudable fear and the spiritual fortitude it leads to. Lot realizes that, he 'ought not to fear death, since God will ordain [him] to his final end.'<sup>141</sup> Although Lot does worry about his situation, as the poet's description of him as 'gloped' and 'doted' (849-52) and his exclamation 'Allas!' (853) show, he is not anxious for his own physical well-being. In sharp contrast to Jonah's culpable behaviour in *Patience*, as we will see, Lot fears for his soul more than his body and refuses to hand over his guests, instead choosing to place himself in peril.

In an act which further illustrates the positive spirituality of his fear, Lot joins the crowd outside his house in an attempt to divert them from their sinful intent. In aiming to 'chast' the Sodomites by explaining to them the sinfulness of their impurity and teaching them the beauty and superiority of ordained love and natural law, Lot compounds his danger and, thus, his virtue. In this context, 'chast' signifies the act of restraining or correction, but it is also interesting to note a potentially important alternative reading. Although 'chast,' here, does not denote the perfect state of chastity, by utilizing this word to promote the correction of sin the poet might very well be implying some sort of connection with more traditional meanings of *castus*. By chastizing the Sodomites, Lot hopes to wipe away the filth of their sin and purify them; but the offer which he makes to the Sodomites to teach them how to correct their sin is not without its own moral difficulties: he proposes to correct them and lead them back into the order of natural law by offering them his daughters. As we have seen, Vincent of Beauvais considered this act to be sinful, but as Nicholas of Lyre's commentary explains, although the motivation behind this action might be ambiguous, in this particular case it was commendable:

Lot said this so that the greater evil, certainly the sin against nature and the violation of his guests, might be avoided. It must be asked whether Lot sinned by offering his daughters to their lechery. And it seems that it was not a sin, since when there are two evils, the lesser evil must be chosen: in this case sin against nature is a greater evil than the defloration of virginity through dishonour.<sup>142</sup>

This passage immediately recalls Aquinas's explanation of how fear should be ordered. While under normal circumstances prostituting his daughters would be sinful, in terms of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>141</sup> Biblia Sacra, Nicholas of Lyre, literal commentary, Matthew 10:28 (v, fol. 37vb): '...iusti non debent mortem timere quia deus ordinabit ad finem vltimum.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>142</sup> *Biblia Sacra*, literal commentary, Genesis 19:8 (i, fol. 72va-b): 'Hoc dixit ut evitaretur maius malum scilicet vitium contra naturam, et violentia hospituum suorum. Hic quaerendum est utum Lot peccavit offerendo filias illis luxuriosis. Et videtur quod non, quia de duobus malis minus malum est eligendum: sed maius malum est vitium contra naturam, quam defloratio virginum per stuprum ergo etc.'

ordering things according to their relative fearfulness, this option is less objectionable than its alternative. His obligation to fear spiritual transgression more than physical evils, as well as his obligation to protect his guests, outweigh the sanctity of his daughters' virginity. Even if one did not subscribe to this belief, Lot's guilt is diminished, if not completely voided of any sinfulness. The Glossa ordinaria describes Lot as 'perturbatus' - disturbed, troubled or alarmed.<sup>143</sup> The natural fear arising from the Sodomites' threat to his life may indeed be affecting him and confusing his judgment when he offers them his daughters, but as Aquinas says, quoting Aristotle's Ethics, 'there is need to act when under immediate pressure of fear, and any act which springs from fear is not wholly voluntary' and, hence, is either less sinful or not sinful at all.<sup>144</sup> Lot's decision to prostitute his daughters might simply be a reflexive response to the danger he feels, but in terms of his earlier actions and his willingness to place his own life in danger, his behaviour is completely voluntary. He weighs his fear, decides that the violation of his angelic guests is worse than his own violation or that of his daughters, and consciously goes out alone to face the Sodomites, putting all he physically loves and possesses - life, daughters and property - at their mercy. Hugh of St. Cher interprets Lot's behaviour in terms of the sententia of Matthew 10:28 and holds up Lot's behaviour as an example of proper fearful behaviour to be imitated by all: 'In order that he might save his guests Lot exposed himself to danger. And we, so that we might preserve the gifts of grace which sojourn within us, ought to expose ourselves to every danger and hardship, indeed, all the way to the point of death. Matt. 10: Nolite timere eos.'145 By refusing to give in to the Sodomites' unnatural demands and by trying to teach them what is appropriate Lot reveals his fear's properly ordered spiritual virtue and value both to the sinners at his gate and to Cleanness's audience itself.

The poet disregards the possibility that there may have been anything wrong with Lot's action, and the sin of 'prostituting' his daughters, as the *Speculum Historiale* puts it, is mitigated, even transformed, into a mark of Lot's virtue. His offering of his daughters recalls the poem's earlier exposition of the joys of proper sexual relations (693-708), and, when seen in conjunction with this passage, Lot's morally ambiguous course of action accentuates the need for purity. By stressing the natural love and the sexual union that is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>143</sup> Biblia Sacra, interlinear gloss, Genesis 19:8 (i, fol. 72v): 'Perturbatus flagitium flagitio vult commutare.' Also see the note on lines 861-72 in the edition by Andrew and Waldron, p. 147.

<sup>144</sup> Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 125, 4 (xlii, 71).

<sup>145</sup> *Postillae*, Genesis 19:6 (i, fol. 24rb): 'Loth vt salvet hospites suos exponit se periculo: et nos vt salvemus dona gratiarum quod apud nos hospitantur debemus nos exponere omni periculo et labori etiam vsque ad mortem. Mattheus 10. *Nolite timere eos.*'

commonly the preserve of marriage, the poet could, perhaps, be creating a link between ordained law, purity and the traditional understanding of *timor castus*. A typical definition of this concept explains that chaste fear consists of fearing 'lest our spouse [God] does not come to us, but instead departs from us, and lest we offend and lose him.'<sup>146</sup> As we saw in the first chapter, perfect fear was founded upon ordained and gratuitous love. These origins might imply an intriguing parallel between the poet's promotion of ordained love in lines 693-708 and his clear use of traditional interpretations of fear throught the poem. By attempting to 'chast' the Sodomites, Lot urges them to discard their perverted thoughts and pursue the love ordained by nature and God. This would, then, order their fears and result in chaste behaviour. Lot's attempt to win over and redeem the crowd fails, Sodom's doom is set and all that remains is for its sinful inhabitants to experience the terror their destruction will bring about. However, for the audience the outcome is still at issue.

Despite the fact that Lot's perception of fear is properly ordered, with the commencement of Sodom's annihilation the poet amplifies the faithful man's 'perturbation,' thereby revealing that his holy dread is also coloured by a certain degree of timor naturalis. The destruction of the region occurs the day after Lot's attempt to 'chast' his fellow citizens, and just before it is set to begin the angels awaken him. God has chosen to spare him, in part because of Abraham's prayers, but also, like Noah, because of his fearfully ordered virtue. But in spite of the fact that he does possess qualities of perfected holy dread, the fear he experiences upon hearing the angels' warning is far from the pure, unflinching veneration of Noah's obedient dread. While Noah feels no concern for himself or his own death whatsoever and Abraham experiences imperfect dread only surrogately, Lot is gripped by natural fear - a fact which reveals his relative imperfection in comparison to them. The poet accurately conveys the effect of timor naturalis when he describes how Lot jumps out of bed, 'ful ferd at his hert' (897). Thomas Aquinas's explanation of natural fear provides theological and philosophical context for Lot's dread: 'To explain, fear is aroused by the prospect of something disagreeable, imminent and difficult to withstand... The difficulty is due to weakness... The weaker one is, the less one is able to undertake.'147

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>146</sup> Peter Lombard, *Sententiae* III, xxxiv, 4 (ii, 193): 'Et succedit deinde timor castus... quo timemus ne sponsus tardet, ne discedat, ne offendamus, ne eo careamus.' This interpretation remained current throughout the Middle Ages, and we can see this image, as well as other related concepts, surface in treatments of chaste fear by Bonaventure, Aquinas, Rainier of Pisa, and Stephen of Bourbon, as well as in texts such as *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God*, *The Ayenbite of Inwyt* and *The Book of Vices and Virtues*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>147</sup> Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 44, 1 (xxi, 61-3).

Lot's response to the angels' exhortation reveals his own perceived weakness in the face of God's wrath:

Hov schulde I huyde me fro Hym þat hatz His hate kynned In þe brath of His breth þat brennez alle þinkez? (915-16).

He doubts the facility of flight. Nicholas of Lyre cites three Hebrew interpretations of Lot's fearful uncertainty: first, he was afraid to encounter Abraham lest he be punished by God because his own imperfections would stand out in contrast to Abraham's sanctity; second, he feared that even if he were to flee to the surrounding mountains he would not be able to escape God's wrath because of their proximity to Sodom; and third, because he was old, he feared that he might catch cold in the mountains and become sick.<sup>148</sup> The poet ignores such views of Lot's dread and instead has him speak in terms which reveal that the terrified man still knows where he stands in relation to God. Lot's human weakness does suggest that he is experiencing timor naturalis, but at the same time it also recalls the terms of timor reverentialis. He reflects upon his own insignificance in the face of God's might and submits himself to divine will. He is perfectly willing to admit that any action he takes will not matter if God chooses to let it have no effect. But because of his brief moment of fearful doubt, his perception of dread is not as pure as that of Cleanness's other two spiritual exemplars, Noah or Abraham. However, even though Lot may exhibit signs of natural fright, timor naturalis does not control him. His dread remains properly ordered and laudable.

Although the poet does substantially revise, gloss over or ignore some of the more distasteful elements of Lot's character, we must nevertheless assume that many medieval readers would undoubtedly have been familiar with his culpable qualities. The poet would have been unable to escape the less-friendly interpretations of Lot common in many texts such as the *Speculum Historiale*.<sup>149</sup> However, I believe that this dichotomy actually promotes the efficacy of his characterization by the *Cleanness*-poet. Lot is at one and the same time an example of laudable dread and reverent behaviour, but he also represents the average sinful individual. He is better than the worst, but worse than the best. The notions of his relative purity and implicit sinfulness merge to create a model that the poem's audience can easily identify with and understand. By treating Lot in terms of both spiritual

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>148</sup> Biblia Sacra, literal commentary, Genesis 19:19 (i, fol. 73rb): '... timebat enim Lot secundum expositores hebraeorum, ne si veniret iuxta Abraham qui erat sanctus: eius imperfectio magis appareret et a deo puniretur... Alii expositores dicunt, quod Lot dixit hoc, eo quod mons ille propinquus erat Sodomae, et timebat ne subversa civitate mons rueret. Vel quia erat senex, timebat ne frigus ipsum apprehenderet ibi et infirmaretur.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>149</sup> See note 133 above.

and natural fear, the poet creates a sympathetic character who shows the audience that a proper sense of laudable dread can be maintained in spite of impending physical danger and suffering. Lot's example teaches that it is possible for the average person to fear properly, live virtuously and thereby strive towards personal salvation.

Before finishing our analysis of the exemplars through which the poet employs his discourse of positive, spiritual fear, we should briefly consider Daniel, the prophet who successfully interprets the Writing on the Wall for Belshazzar. Daniel is able to decipher God's warning precisely because he 'hatz be gost of God bat gyes alle sobes' (1598), or in other words, has received the Holy Spirit, the wisdom it bestows and, presumably, the Gift of Fear which comes with it. His possession of properly ordered spiritual fear is implicit, but the poet does not describe Daniel as fully or as colourfully as he does his other three models of positive fear. Daniel, in fact, hardly seems to be a character at all. Of course he is introduced as such, but his role in the poem is markedly different from those of Noah, Abraham and Lot. He seems to exist only on the poem's narrative margins. Through his interpretation of the *ferly* and his preaching to Belshazzar he acts as the poet's undiluted voice and, hence, becomes more narrator than character. Perhaps there is a reason for this. Scholars have noted how as the poem progresses the destruction scenes narrow their focus from the entirety of creation to the lone individual.<sup>150</sup> Earlier in this chapter I commented on how the nature of fear changes in its emphasis and corresponds with this narrowing of focus. It is also possible that this conceptual shift lies behind the difference between Daniel and the poem's other positive exemplars. In his first two exempla the poet addresses a general audience, allowing his sweeping descriptions of judgment and destruction to transmit his admonitory lesson impersonally. In the third exemplum, however, the poet confronts his audience in a much more immediate way as, through Daniel, he steps directly into the poem's narrative action. While explaining the meaning behind the mysterious writing, Daniel relates the story of Nebuchadnezzar's madness, and in doing so he does to Belshazzar exactly what the poet does to his audience: he gives him a historical precedent for divine judgment and punishment. Daniel thus becomes an authorial tool in a way Noah, Abraham and Lot cannot match, although we shall see a similar rhetorical strategy in the poet's depiction of Jonah in Patience. Daniel, as a character, may not play a large part in the poem, but in rhetorical terms his role is extremely important. His interpretation of God's message for Belshazzar exemplifies the poet's discourse and its purpose of

<sup>150</sup> Morse, p. 259 and Gardner, p. 68. See note 40 above.

explaining to the poem's audience the necessity of experiencing proper forms of fear in the pursuit of cleanness.

It is through the characters of Noah, Abraham and Lot, then, that the poet primarily describes the requirements and benefits of perfect spiritual fear. But while each of these characters typify properly-ordered dread, the poet differentiates their behaviour and motivations in order to reflect the various ideals, or levels, of this laudable fear. All three characters are properly reverent and obedient, they understand and accept their own inferiority in relation to divinity and are willing to comply with whatever God requires of them. Each is the antithesis of the sinful society in which he lives. With each character, however, the poet complicates his portrayal of spiritual dread. Noah spends his whole life living in the dread of God; his perception of dread is perfect and is the pinnacle of the Gift of Fear. The poet includes it so prominently in his poem to show his readers that toward which they need to strive. Abraham's dread is no less perfect. His fear, too, is completely reverent; however, through the surrogate dread he feels for the Sodomites, his fear extends the terms of Noah's dread to include notions of timor servilis. Lot's dread elaborates the discourse of laudable fear still further. He also reveres God and knows what and what not to fear, but he also shows signs of timor naturalis. These related, but diverse, depictions of fear illustrate exactly what laudable dread entails and encourage Cleanness's readers to live according to its precepts.

In *Cleanness* the poet employs two competing, yet complementary, discourses of dread, each of which illustrates both how and why God should be feared. The horrifying *exempla* of destruction and the death, pain and terror they portray centre themselves in the readers' physical sensibilities by evoking their natural fear of death and pain; but the poet also appeals to their spiritual consciousness by describing properly-ordered *timor reverentialis* and the salvation and grace it affords. Emotionally evocative images such as terrified families tenderly saying their last goodbyes before being swallowed by the Flood, irrational beasts lowing in pain and confusion, Hell's gleeful swallowing of Sodom and Gomorrah, the stink of sulphur and burning flesh and the stupefied insensibility of Belshazzar as he is clubbed to death, thrust themselves into the reader's memory and contrast sharply with the positive exemplary images of the reverent, obedient dread displayed by Noah, Abraham and Lot. The poet encourages his readers to be virtuous by showing them the benefits of a reverent fear of God. But at the same time he compels them to avoid sin through his horrifying descriptions of violence, punishment and the terror it

inspires. Spiritual and natural fear combine to give a taste of the rewards of laudable dread as well as the physical terrors of extreme pain, a combination which should give birth to the dread of judgment and damnation known as *timor servilis*. It may be suggested, indeed, that *Cleanness*'s audience begins the poem at the same figurative level as the unclean guest in the Parable of the Wedding Feast, whose clothes are soiled and torn by evil works. But through the influence of the poet's various rhetorical uses of dread, by the end of the poem these ragged vestments have begun to be stitched and purified. The fear of God the poem's rhetorical discourses should inspire, a fear alternately based upon the servile dread of God's punitive power and the loving obedience which characterizes reverent dread, mends these clothes and acts as the mechanism of spiritual repair and renewal:

If there is not fear then charity cannot enter [the soul]. For it is just as when a needle draws thread through cloth when something is sewn. First the needle must enter, and unless it exits [is pulled completely through], the thread cannot follow. And so it is when fear first occupies the mind.<sup>151</sup>

In *Cleanness*, then, the threads of the poet's rhetorical discourses of fear tie his audience directly to the poem's events and provide them with the means to bind the sinful rents in their own moral raiment.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>151</sup> Peter Lombard, *Sententiae* III, xxxiv, 5 (ii, 194): 'Si autem nullus est timor, non est qua intret caritas. Sicut videmus per setam introduci linum quando aliquid suitur: seta prius intrat; nisi exeat, non succedit linum; sic timor primo occupat mentem...'.

### **Chapter 4**

# Elaborating the discourse of fear: conversion and the modus timendi in Patience

Patience immediately follows Cleanness in Cotton Nero A.X., and, as much critical work acknowledges, the relationship between them is strong. The two texts have been described as 'companion poems'1 which 'share important continuities [and] similarities that make sequential placement of the texts... seem more than coincidental.<sup>2</sup> The 'full import' of Patience, one critic says, can only be grasped by comparing it to Cleanness; both poems 'must be seen in conjunction, for they articulate the eternal debate between God's justice and mercy.'3 While none of these comments deal specifically with fear and its presence in either Cleanness or Patience, each statement does in some sense apply to how the poet rhetorically and structurally utilizes traditional medieval interpretations of dread. In a recent article, J. J. Anderson states that, unlike Cleanness, Patience does not aim 'to frighten the reader into submission, but rather to seek to persuade him to see the rightness of the narrator's point of view;' Patience's rhetoric, he says, 'is reflective and ironic rather than explicit and didactic.'4 Although I agree that the poet is more concerned with persuading his audience rather than simply terrifying it, I disagree with Anderson's view of the poet's rhetoric. The use of the modus timendi may be lighter in Patience than it is in Cleanness, but this does not mean that it is not 'explicit and didactic.' Just as in Cleanness, Patience employs destructive, fantastic and frightening imagery - such as a storm at sea, an implicit reference to the fall of Sodom and Gomorrah, and a marvellous ferly - in order to promote its frightening message. Both poems, as A. C. Spearing notes, rely on similar depictions of God's power 'not in a human way, but through description of the dark, violent aspect of his handiwork, the natural world.'5 Each text draws upon these displays of divine strength, wrath and vengeance in an effort to instill in their audiences a distinct feeling of dread. As we shall see, the fearful rhetoric the poet uses in Patience is essentially the same as that used in Cleanness, but whereas Cleanness's rhetoric is supposed to provoke a simple, fear-inspired desire to avoid sin and its punishment, in his

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Ed., I. Gollancz, *Patience* (London, 1913), p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> S. Stanbury, *Seeing the Gawain-Poet*, p. 71.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> R. H. Bowers, *The Legend of Jonah* (The Hague, 1971), p. 66.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> 'Rhetorical Strategies in *Cleanness* and *Patience*', p. 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> The Gawain-Poet, pp. 90-91.

retelling of the Book of Jonah the poet attempts to show his readers how to perfect this dread and transform it from a simple fear of judgment and damnation into an active veneration of God.

Many critical studies of the poem acknowledge fear's place in Patience, but usually they do so only on a very general level. For example, W. A. Davenport notes that the poet 'adds a strong element of fear of life itself' to his characterization of Jonah,<sup>6</sup> while Piero Boitani remarks that the motives behind Jonah's disobedience are 'dictated mainly by fear.<sup>7</sup> Similar broad views of Jonah's fear appear in many other criticisms of the poem.<sup>8</sup> While recognizing the place of fear in the prophet's psychology, most of these comments do not discuss fear's larger presence throughout the poem. Exceptions are Lynn Staley Johnson and Joseph B. Zavadil who do address the important place held by fear, specifically in its servile form, within the text. Both contend that Patience is a poem about penance and the motivational fear behind it.<sup>9</sup> Zavadil recognizes fear as the poem's driving force, calling it a text which 'warns against pride and encourages humility and endurance... through the Gift of Dread.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, if not quite so forcefully, Staley Johnson also places fear at the poem's conceptual centre, explaining that it influences conversion because it is 'catalytic.' 'God teaches man to fear him, rather than the world... in order to refine him,' she writes. Throughout the course of Patience Jonah undergoes just such an educational process, she maintains, and it is the fear of punishment which he experiences which encourages the Ninevites to repent.<sup>11</sup>

Both Zavadil and Staley Johnson are correct in their recognition of servile dread, but by choosing to focus almost exclusively on it they fail to appreciate fear's overall

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> The Art of the Gawain-Poet, p. 130.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> English Medieval Narrative in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries, tr. J. Krakover Hall, (Cambridge, 1982), p. 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> For example, B. S. Lee broadly states that 'Jonah's attempts to justify his flight show clearly that he is afraid of the Ninevites.' 'Jonah in *Patience* and Prudentius', *Florilegium* 4 (1982): 194-209 (p. 198). For a similar view, see Spearing's *The* Gawain-*Poet*, p. 86. F. N. M. Diekstra attributes Jonah's decision to flee to fear, a fear which he also interprets as 'a sense of ineptitude in the face of his [Jonah's] commitments', 'Jonah and *Patience*: The Psychology of a Prophet', *English Studies* 55 (1974): 205-17 (p. 206). J. T. Irwin and T. D. Kelly describes Jonah as a 'frightened doubter of God's providence', 'The Way and the End are One: *Patience* as a Parable of the Contemplative Life', *ABR* 25 (1974): 33-55 (p. 34). In his book, *An Introduction to the* Gawain-*Poet*, A. Putter agrees that fear is directly responsible for the prophet's disobedience, saying that this is 'a highly plausible interpretation,' p. 119.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Staley Johnson defines *Patience*'s 'central theme' as 'the need for penance,' *The Voice of the* Gawain-*Poet*, p. 5; while Zavadil argues that the story 'in precise detail... follows the course of action prescribed for the individual Christian by the doctrine of Penance,' *A Study of Meaning in* Patience *and* Cleanness, unpublished PhD thesis (Stanford University, Stanford, 1962), p. 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Zavadil, p. 207.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Johnson, p. 29.

complexity and succeed only in capturing one of its aspects. Although Jonah does experience the effects of *timor servilis*, his personal perception of dread is much more complex; his experience of fear is constantly shifting. He begins by suffering from human fear and does progress, after much hardship, to the perception of *timor servilis*; but he later loses its benefits by willfully regressing into his earlier disordered, sinful dread. The sailors and the Ninevites, on the other hand, progress through servile fear, partake of more perfect forms of spiritual dread and adhere to the blessedness they facilitate. Although he should be the poem's positive example of fearful behaviour, Jonah actually shows the audience how not to fear while, in a subtle inversion, Patience's sinners - the sailors and Ninevites - become the effective and affective models of proper spiritual fear in his place. Throughout the poem the poet relies upon this opposition of negative and positive fears in order to illustrate how fear should be perceived, embraced and converted. Rather than simply relying upon graphically violent descriptions of death and destruction to promote an all-encompassing servile fear, as he does in Cleanness, in Patience the poet shows the specific motivations behind different types of dread and the dynamic process by which individual sinners can transcend its imperfect forms and begin to possess perfect fearful salvation and the patience that comes with it.

## I. From fear to patience: traditional and conceptual connections

If the poet did place so much emphasis on fear, there must have been some conceptual link between dread's various forms and patience, the poem's stated theme. In his *De Patientia*, an early and fundamental treatment of patience, St. Augustine shows the close relation of the two concepts:

Son, when thou comest to the service of God, stand in justice and fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation. Humble thy heart and endure... Wait on God with patience: join thyself to God and endure: that thy life may be increased in the latter end. Take all that shall be brought upon thee: and in thy sorrow endure, and in thy humiliation keep patience. For gold and silver are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation.<sup>12</sup>

A proper perception of fear was a fundamental part of being patient. Augustine's words touch upon many of the ideas present in *Patience*. The concepts of humility, justice, the necessity of endurance and the refining powers of patience - as well as fear - are all central to the poet's message, and each is firmly established from the poem's very outset. The poet

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> St. Augustine, *Patience*, translated by Sister Luanne Meagher, in *The Fathers of the Church* vol. 16 (New York, 1952), pp. 231-264, Ch. 14, p. 248.

begins his text with an exhortation to patience which simultaneously explains the nature of the virtue while affirming that though it may be bitter to endure, patience is, indeed, a worthwhile and powerful spiritual quality (ll. 1-8). Following upon this straightforward explanation of his theme, the poet contextualizes patience by focussing upon its place within the eight Beatitudes, as listed in Matthew 5:1-10.<sup>13</sup> Two of the Beatitudes are of particular interest to the poet: the first and the last.<sup>14</sup> The first Beatitude praises they 'bat han in hert pouerte' (13), while the last concerns they 'bat con her hert stere' (27); each form the conceptual boundaries of the system. The first leads on to the others, while the last presupposes the previous seven and leads back to the first. They are self-perpetuating. While fear does not explicitly appear in these opening lines, it is noteworthy that the opening and closing Beatitudes are both fundamentally concerned with the notion of spiritual dread. If we look at the underlying theological traditions we can see that patience and fear are not as divorced as we might at first think, and it becomes easier to see how and why fear is such a rhetorically and didactically active and important part of the poem.

In her study of *Patience*, Lynn Staley Johnson notes the connection between fear and the first Beatitude. The first Beatitude, she says,

concerns humility, with which the process of spiritual refinement begins. Accordingly, this Beatitude was linked with Proverbs 1:7, 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,' and to the seven steps from fear to wisdom outlined by Saint Augustine in *On Christian Doctrine* 2.8. Beginning in humility or fear, the progression ends in patience...<sup>15</sup>

Staley Johnson's analysis could do with more detailed explanation, and this is provided in the biblical commentaries of Hugh of St. Cher. Hugh glosses Proverbs 14:29 ('He that is patient, is governed with much wisdom') in the following way: 'Therefore the patient man possesses total wisdom, since he possesses the light of cognition and the refinement of sweetness in everything. And so it is true, that the patient man is governed by much wisdom, that is, by total wisdom.'<sup>16</sup> Fear is not mentioned in Hugh's gloss on this

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> J. Scattergood has suggested that the poet could have based the first 60 lines of *Patience* and its discussion of the Beatitudes upon a homiletical text such as Alain of Lille's *De Arte Praedicatoria*. Alain dedicates the fifteenth chapter of his treatise to the subject of patience, initially defining patience in terms of the first Beatitude and later adding further detail to his description of the virtue by linking it to the petitions of the Lord's Prayer and the remaining seven Beatitudes. 'Alain de Lille and the Prologue to *Patience*', *Medium Aevum* 61 (1992): pp. 87-91 (pp. 89-91).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> It is also significant that the sixth Beatitude, 'Blessed are the clean of heart', touches upon the theme presented in *Cleanness*. The poet clearly links his theme with the cleanness exhorted by the Beatitude in lines 27-34 before further expanding its message through his retelling of the Parable of the Wedding Feast and his moralization of it (II. 35-192).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> The Voice of the Gawain-Poet, p. 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> *Postillae*, Proverbs 14:29 (iii, fol. 31ra): 'Totam igitur sapientiam habet patiens, quia lumen cognitionis, et saporem suavitatis in omnibus habet. Et ideo verum est, quod patiens multa gubernatur sapientia, id est, tota sapientia.'

particular verse, but if we look at his commentary on Ecclesiasticus 1:20 ('The fullness of wisdom is to fear the Lord') we can see the inherent connection between the two ideas. 'The fear of God,' he says, 'operates the fullness of wisdom, that is, complete wisdom. And where there is a greater fear, there is a greater wisdom... Wisdom introduces two things: knowledge and refinement.'<sup>17</sup> These two passages, then, form a clear link between patience and fear based on 'the fulness of wisdom.' The patient man is governed by wisdom, but without fear wisdom and the patience which depends upon it cannot exist. The two passages, however, are connected by more than just the idea of wisdom. As Staley Johnson's statement suggests, each uses the concept of 'refinement' (*sapor*) in its discourse. Properly ordered spiritual fear, as we saw in the first chapter, was typically understood to refine less perfect varieties of dread, while at the same time refining and perfecting spiritual existence as a whole.

This process of refinement is described in more depth in Hugh's commentary on the Gospel account of the Beatitudes in Matthew 5. 'The gift of fear,' he explains, 'initiates in us [the] poverty of spirit.'<sup>18</sup> It is a poverty which 'exists in the spirit of humility and in the renunciation of [worldly] things.'<sup>19</sup> He continues, discussing fear's relationship to the first Beatitude by describing poverty of spirit in terms which specifically recall qualities of dread: 'poverty is always timid, thinking itself helpless, undefended, unfortified and odious in everything.'<sup>20</sup> Like fear, it offers no security unless it is felt in regard to God. St. Bonaventure also notes the link, stating that 'the gift of fear destroys pride and induces the good of poverty.'<sup>21</sup> If we look at these comments in the light of Thomas Aquinas's definition of fear, we can see the connection between poverty's timidity and fear's own inherent weakness: '... fear is aroused by the prospect of something disagreeable, imminent and difficult to withstand... The difficulty is due to weakness... The weaker one is, the less one is able to undertake.'<sup>22</sup> The poverty which spiritual fear induces is one which

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> *Postillae*, Ecclesiasticus 1: 20 (iii, fol. 173va): '... timor Dei operatur plenitudinem Sapientiae, idest plenam Sapientiam. Et ubi major timor est, ibi major Sapientia... Sapientia duo importat, scientiam & saporem.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> *Postillae*, Matthew 5:1 (vi, fol. 14vb): 'Hanc paupertatem spiritus operatur in nobis donum timoris...'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> *Postillae*, Matthew 5:2 (vi, fol. 15ra): 'Et qui habet timorem habet paupertatem spiritus, qui consistit in animi humiliatione & rerum abdicatione.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> *Postillae*, Matthew 5:6 (vi, fol. 15va-b): '... quia paupertas semper timida est, inopem, indefensam, immunitam, omnibus odiosam, se semper existimans.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Collationes de septem donis Spiritus Sancti II, 3 (v, 463a): 'Donum timoris destruit superbiam et inducit bonum paupertatis...'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 44. 1, (xxi. 61-3).

recognizes the individual's inherent inferiority in the face of God's superiority. It represents 'that extreme state of spiritual deprivation in which, trusting absolutely and completely in divine providence, one totally submits one's personal will to the will of God.'<sup>23</sup> The poet expresses this submission of will and recommends it to his readers by stressing his own obligation to his earthly master:

**z**if me be dyzt a destyné due to haue, What dowes me þe dedayn, oþer dispit make? Oþer zif my lege lorde lyst on lyue me to bidde Oþer to ryde oþer to renne to Rome in his ernde, What grayþed me þe grychchyng bot grame more seche? Much zif he me ne made, maugref my chekes, And þenne þrat moste I þole and vnþonk to mede, Þe had bowed to his bode bongré my hyure (49-56).

This passage strongly expresses the ideas of obligation, command, active and prompt obedience, the uselessness of inaction and, in the final line, the correlation between duty and reward. Although written in terms of the relationship between a temporal servant and his lord, these lines apply equally to the obligation of obedience which exists between mankind and God. There is a distinct presence of helplessness and weakness in this passage, and in the poet's words we can see both his fearful respect for superior power as well as the poverty of spirit, or humility, with which he accepts his own inferiority.

Lines 49-56 also keenly express the theme which underlies the eighth Beatitude: 'Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice's sake.' The poet departs from his biblical source, substituting the notion of 'steering,' or controlling, one's heart for the Vulgate's *persecutionem patiuntur*. Andrew and Waldron note that the poet's alteration of his source material 'places emphasis on self-control and moderation.'<sup>24</sup> In the lines cited above, the poet clearly expresses the notion of self-control as he stresses the necessity of subjugating one's own desires to those of one's superior. Running to Rome on an errand for his master is presented as a difficult and distasteful task, but, he asks, what is the good of complaining? It is better to accept the task and endure it, for only by doing so can one avoid greater hardship and discomfort. These notions of patient acceptance and endurance represent the voluntary control of the heart and, as such, are directly related to the first Beatitude and the humility it promotes. The poet connects the first and last Beatitudes, calling them *playferes* (45) and revealing to the audience the identical benefits in store for those who possess each. Those who are poor in spirit receive 'heuen-ryche to hold for euer'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Irwin and Kelly, 'The Way and the End are One', p. 35.

Andrew and Waldron, p. 186, note to ln. 27.

(14), while those who control their hearts, or suffer patiently, receive the same (28). In this way, the two spiritual constructs are linked. The first Beatitude sets the foundation for the others, while the eighth completes the cycle, acting, as Hugh of St. Cher says, as 'the illumination of the preceding Beatitudes by turning back to them singly.'<sup>25</sup>

I have already shown the close connection between the first Beatitude and fear, and the poet has made clear the fundamental relationship between poverty of spirit and patiently controlling one's heart. It stands to reason, then, that there should be some explicit connection between patience and fear as well, and ample evidence for an explicit association between the two concepts does exist. For instance, under his entry for Patientia in his Summa Praedicantium, John Bromyard draws upon Ecclesiasticus 2:21 in order to affirm this link between fear and patience, saying that 'those who fear the lord shall have patience.<sup>26</sup> Bromyard chooses not to elaborate upon this relationship, but in spite of this silence, the fact that he so specifically includes a reference to fear in his discussion of patience is an important indication that the two concepts were commonly, traditionally and popularly linked. If we look at his entry for *Timor* we can see further evidence for the association of the two ideas. In his explanation of fear's usefulness, Bromyard discusses the similar action of fear and patience, noting proper fear's willingness to endure discomfort in order to obtain a greater reward: '... for just as a person sick from fear, which he feels lest his soul be separated from his body, freely drinks bitter draughts and endures a [particular] diet, so he who fears the separation of his soul from God patiently endures tribulations, poverty and other things for God.'27 Hugh of St. Cher also notes the relationship between the two, telling us that the author of Ecclesiasticus specifically teaches us what lies behind the virtue of patience:

The Author has taught [us] patience; now he offers that which contributes toward the possession of patience, namely, faith, hope and fear. Indeed, when someone by faith sees eternal joy, by hope trusts in God's assistance, and by fear dreads eternal punishment, he freely suffers in the present so that he is able to avoid eternal torture and thereby approach eternal joy.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> *Postillae*, Matthew 5:10 (vi, fol. 17ra): 'Non est haec octava beatitudo solum, sed praecedentium illuminatio, & ad singulas referenda.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Summa Praedicantium, Patientia (ii, fol. 166va): 'Sic, qui timent dominum, patientiam habebunt. Ecclesiast. 2.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Summa Praedicantium, Timor (ii, fol. 396va): '... nam sicut infirmus ex timore, quem habet ne anima separetur a corpore, libenter bibit potiones amaras, & sustinet dietam: Sic qui timet separationem animae a Deo patienter sustinet tribulationes, paupertas, et huiusmodi pro Deo. Ecclesiast. 2.'

Postillae, Ecclesiasticus 2:6 (iii, fol. 174va): 'Monuerat Auctor ad patientiam; nunc ostendit, quid operatur ad habendam patientiam, scilicet, fides & spes, & timor. Quando enim aliquis videt fide aeterna gaudia, & spe confidit in auxilio Dei, & timore timet aeterna supplicia, libenter patitur in praesenti, ut aeterna supplicia possit vitare, & adipisci gaudia aeterna.'

Each of these comments strongly emphasizes the element of choice inherent in suffering and the distinction between enduring greater or lesser hardship and evil. The treatment of fear in the thirteenth-century text *Summa Virtutum de Remediis Anime* further clarifies the choice which needs to be made, stating that one

must distinguish whether an injury [to be endured] is general or personal. If it is general and affects the whole church, in that it constitutes a danger to faith or failure in justice, a man may and must offer himself willingly... But if the injury is personal, and especially if it affects an everyday object, not a spiritual one, then it was not necessary to get involved, but one may withdraw oneself for reasons of place, time, cause and person.<sup>29</sup>

Essentially, choosing to be properly patient is synonymous with choosing to fear spiritually rather than physically. A similar act of weighing and selecting relative dangers and discomforts is employed in each process.<sup>30</sup> We saw this relationship at work in *Cleanness* when the poet describes how Lot properly orders, or steers, his fear and his heart, when he opts to dread spiritually while patiently enduring the threats and jibes of the incensed Sodomites. He fears the 'general injury to faith' and the 'failure of justice' that the Sodomites' sinful intent represents, and decides to ignore the threat of 'personal injury.' As we shall see, Jonah, the main character of *Patience*, is faced with a similar situation; but unlike Lot, he chooses wrongly in his unwillingness to endure personal hardship rather than deliver the spiritual message of justice God has asked him to preach. The question of patiently enduring one fearful object in order to avoid a greater dread is at the foundation of the entire narrative, didactic and rhetorical structure of Patience; it colours Jonah's behaviour throughout the poem and is the foundation underlying the conversion of the sailors and Ninevites. Through the respective actions and choices of these characters, the poet teaches his audience that a proper perception and exhibition of dread promotes patience and merits *be heuen-ryche*.

There is another interesting link between fear, patience and the Beatitudes in general. Two very popular biblical exhortations to fear resemble the Beatitudes in their phrasing. Proverbs 28:14 states, 'Blessed is the man that is always fearful;' and Psalms 111:1 simply reads, 'Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord: he shall delight exceedingly in his commandments.' Neither of these, of course, is included in the 'official' list of Beatitudes, but the words which introduce each statement - 'Blessed is...' - suffice to link these two verses and Matthew 5:1-10. In his commentary on Psalms 111:1, Hugh of St.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Ed. Wenzel, IV, p. 182.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> See my discussion, in Chapter 1 section II, on determining fear's moral value. See also, Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 2a2ae 125.

Cher explicitly connects this verse with Proverbs 28:14 and asks how it is that a fearful person can be said to be blessed. He solves this apparent problem in a discussion of the threefold nature of fear's blessedness, during which he introduces the eight Beatitudes as listed in Matthew 5.<sup>31</sup> By making this association, Hugh creates an unofficial ninth Beatitude. Perhaps it is asking too much to assume that the poet would have seen fear in this light, but Hugh's statements show us that fear and the Beatitudes did rely on many of the same concepts, and that fear, poverty of spirit, patience and the Beatitudes were discussed explicitly in relation to each other.

Given the popularity of Bromyard's *Summa*, Hugh of St. Cher's commentaries and similar texts, as well as the overt scriptural authority lying behind the connection between fear and patience, it is reasonable to assume, I think, that the *Patience*-poet would have been familiar with the relationship between them. These commentaries and treatises are interesting, as F. N. M. Diekstra says, 'not [because] they are able to provide us with a vicarious reading of the poem, but [because] they help us to ask the right sort of questions, by making us aware of an area of traditional significance that was more alive then than it is now.'<sup>32</sup> By looking at these texts, we can see that patience becomes both stronger and clearer, and it seems likely, or at least very possible, that the poet had a specific rhetorical and didactic purpose in mind when making his frequent and specific references to fear throughout his poem. In the sections which follow, I shall examine exactly how the poet uses fear in his amplification of the Book of Jonah. I hope to show how his handling of the story and implementation of traditional discourse concerning fear relates to, and builds upon, his usage of dread in *Cleanness*.

### II. Jonah's unstable and shifting dread: teaching the audience how not to fear

The biblical account of the story of Jonah, his flight from God, swallowing by the whale, subsequent obedience and ultimate failure to understand God's nature, is told at a rapid pace, leaving no real room for the development of Jonah's character or the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> *Postillae*, Psalms 111:1 (ii, fol. 291vb): '*Beatus, &c*, Idem Prov.28. Beatus homo, qui semper est pavidus. Sed quomodo beatus est, qui timet, cum timor poenam habet? ut dicitur I Joan. 4. Timor poenam habet. Sol. Triplex est beatitudo. Prima est intrantium... Secunda beatitudo est certantium: Et haec habet octo partes. De quibus Mat. 5... Tertia est pervenientium...'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Diekstra, p. 216.

exploration of his motivations, fears or desires. In spite of this, however, there are 'latent possibilities for characterization'<sup>33</sup> within the Book of Jonah, possibilities which, as J. J. Anderson remarks, made it easier for the *Patience*-poet to turn the reluctant prophet into 'an entirely believable human being.'<sup>34</sup> Jonah's credibility as a type of everyman is predominantly founded upon his emotional responses to God and the hardships he is forced to face. The poet expands Jonah's psychological profile to such a degree that the audience can sympathize with, as well as condemn, the prophet. The request God has made of him is difficult and threatening, and Jonah can hardly be condemned for being anxious. However, he allows his anxieties to overcome his proper use of reason and thus becomes disobedient, spiteful, wrathful, stubborn and foolish. All these dispositions illustrate his innate guilt as well as what constitutes impatience and contributes to its continuation. Underlying all of these emotional responses and actions, however, is one thing which the poet also translates into moral and spiritual terms: Jonah's fearfulness.

Jonah's fear changes as we progress through the text. At the beginning of the narrative his dread is decidedly negative. Midway through the poem, after experiencing the wrath of the divinely-inspired storm and the stupefying wonder of being swallowed by the whale, it is transformed by becoming more positively and spiritually servile. This change acts as the crux of conversion within the text as it signifies an alteration in Jonah's own perception of dread, signals the fearful conversion of the sailors and Ninevites and figuratively represents the spiritual transformation of fear each and every member of the audience should experience. After he preaches to the Ninevites, however, Jonah's fear undergoes yet another metamorphosis as it reverts back to its initially sinful state. By looking at these shifting perceptions of dread not only can we begin to understand more fully what drives the poet's characterization of the prophet, we can also begin to comprehend the poet's rhetorical and didactic message: fearful conversion is the way to patience and salvation.

#### II.i. Disobedience: Jonah's flight and sinful fear

Once the poet has finished with his introductory explanation of his theme (ll.1-56), he quickly begins his retelling of the Book of Jonah. God issues his commands to his

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Diekstra, p. 206.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Ed., J. J. Anderson, *Patience* (Manchester, 1969), p. 15.

prophet, telling him to rise up and preach to the sinful Ninevites. To make his orders more imperative, God describes the sinners in strong terms - *so wykke* (69), and *her malys is so much* (70) - and exhorts his prophet to quick, unhesitating action with phrases such as

God's words impel action and immediately establish the poem's fearful mood and rapid pace. Enjoining him to set out *radly* - a word which here primarily means 'quickly' or 'promptly,' but which also can denote a state of fright - God explicitly instructs his prophet not to speak. He requires and expects nothing but reflexive obedience. Coupled with this command to travel to Nineveh is God's explanation of why he is sending Jonah to preach to its sinful citizens. In order to justify his planned vengeance, God describes to Jonah the depth of the Ninevites' wickedness. They are so evil, God says, that he cannot abide them (69-70), and it will be Jonah's job, he has decided, to make them aware of his displeasure and warn them of their impending destruction.

The themes of sin, violence, punishment and disobedience are introduced, not only justifying God's plans for the sinful Ninevites, but also planting a seed of fearful doubt in Jonah's mind. God's disgusted description of the Ninevites makes his command both more effective and affective; it becomes, as one critic says, 'much more dramatic and frightening, and it is phrased so as further to characterize God as furious, vengeful and impatient.'35 God's fury turns him into a figure of terror, and his potential destructive capabilities are highlighted. These lines, and the picture of God they paint, cannot help but recall the poet's personification of the Lord in Cleanness in which God directly addresses Noah and Abraham, just as he does Jonah, and says much the same thing when foretelling the destruction of the antediluvians and Sodomites. God's words and his subsequent vengeance are truly terrifying, and his punitive plan in Patience, as described at the beginning of the poem, draws upon similar imagery. Together, the command to rys radly and the description of the Ninevites' sinfulness complement each other and emphasize the severity of God's behest. They stun Jonah (74) and force him to react, but whereas Noah obeys God 'in dry3 dred and daunger' and Lot obediently flees from Sodom's destruction, Jonah's response to God's words is a far cry from their fearful obedience. He does indeed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Davenport, p. 116.

experience fear, but the apprehension he feels is founded not upon an exemplary dread of God, but instead upon a disordered fear for himself. The poet will use this negative portrayal of dread to illustrate for his audience how not to fear.

Jonah acts upon God's words, but he does so only after considering what exactly it is he has been asked to do and what difficulties it holds for him. After a quick, but intense, meditation on the dangers his task presents, the prophet does decide to rise up and go on his way; but rather than pursuing God's command, he flees from it. In his *In Jonam Prophetam*, St. Jerome acknowledges the fear responsible for Jonah's flight and establishes what would become the predominant medieval explanation behind Jonah's disobedience: '... he feared lest by the occasion of his preaching, and the conversion [of the Ninevites] to penitence, Israel would be forsaken completely.'<sup>36</sup> According to this tradition, he fears that God's mercy can only extend to one people at a time, and that his choice to save the Ninevites necessarily entails his forsaking of the Jews. Philip of Harvengt offers another interpretation of the prophet's flight, commenting that Jonah disobeyed God because he feared to preach 'hard things' (*dura*).<sup>37</sup> The poet, however, seems to ignore these traditional interpretations and instead attributes Jonah's actions to a far more culpable form of fear. In *Patience* Jonah does not spare a single thought for the fate of his people or the severity of his message, much less the fate of the Ninevites.<sup>38</sup> Rather, God's command has

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> *PL* 25, col. 1121: '*Et surrexit Jonas...* timebat ne per occasionem praedicationis suae, illis conversis ad poenitentiam, Israel penitus relinqueretur.' The *Ennarratio in Jonam Prophetam* attributed to Haymo of Halberstadt echoes this view (*PL* 117, col. 129), as does Rupert of Deutz's commentary on the Book of Jonah, *In Jonam Prophetam* (*PL* 168, col. 403). These commentaries influenced later exegetical works such as Hugh of St. Cher's *Postillae* and the *Glossa ordinaria*, ensuring that this tradition was widely known. Throughout this chapter I shall refer to the author of the *Ennarratio* as Haymo of Halberstadt (*ob.* 853), although current scholarship suggests that this treatise may have been composed by Haymo of Auxerre (*ob. ca.* 875); see *Commentary on the Book of Jonah*, tr. D. Everhart, TEAMS Commentary Series (Kalamazoo, 1993), pp. 1-2 and p. 40, n. 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> De silentio clericorum, PL 203, cols. 943-1206 (col. 1108). In his Treatise on Preaching, Humbert of Roman discusses a related idea, namely the fact that some preachers are often unwilling to preach because of their fear 'of the bodily fatigue which travelling would impose upon them,' Treatise on Preaching, ed. W. U. Conlon, trans. The Dominican Students, Province of St. Joseph (London, 1955), Ch. IV, xvi, p. 67. Although this could be one of the fears underlying Jonah's reluctance to preach to the Ninevites the poet, as we shall see below, focusses instead upon the reluctant prophet's fear of physical pain and death. The fact that he embarks on a long sea journey in order to escape his preaching responsibilities also argues against the fear of travelling as being a source of Jonah's negligence.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Even if Jonah had fled from his responsibility to God out of a fear for the destruction of his own people, this form of dread could also be considered sinful. In its definition of the six types of fear, *Jacob's Well* describes the third type of fear, 'wordly dreed,' (the equivalent of *timor mundanus*) as that type of fear in which a person would rather commit 'dedly synne banne for to lesin... wordly good; bis wordly dreed is dedly synne, as it was to be iewys. bei slewyn Crist for dreed, bat he schulde ellys haue takyn awey here place & here folke,' ch. 38, '*De humilitate & timore filiali*', p. 241, ll. 1-5. We can, perhaps, draw an analogy between this description of sinful worldly dread and the interpretation of Jonah's flight as arising from his concern and love for his people. The Jews, Jacob's Well explains, condemned Christ in order to

awoken in him an extraordinarily vibrant and selfish fear of death.<sup>39</sup>

In contrast to the Bible's unadorned account of the prophet's flight in Jonah 1:3 -'And Jonah rose up to flee into Tharsis from the face of the Lord' - the *Patience*-poet provides detailed psychological motivation for Jonah's actions:

If I bowe to His bode and bryng hem þis tale, And I be nummen in Nuniue, my nyes begynes: He telles me þose traytoures arn typped schrewes; I com wyth þose tyþynges, þay ta me bylyue, Pynez me in a prysoun, put me in stokkes, Wryþe me in a warlok, wrast out myn y3en (75-80).

The prophet recognizes that God's words express not a wish but a command, yet rather than acknowledge its necessity he chooses to weigh his actions conditionally. If he submits (bowe) to God's will, he thinks, only then will his troubles (nyes) begin. He has a difficult time overcoming the intimidating manner in which God describes the Ninevites, convincing himself that if they are so horrible they would surely imprison and torture him for bringing them such an obviously unwelcome message. The punishment he envisages is remarkably similar to that which the unclean wedding guest receives in Cleanness. Essentially Jonah fears the literal fate that befalls the filthy guest as he sees himself bound and put in stocks (compare *Pat.* 79 and *Cl.* 46 and 155-57). In actuality, however, what he should fear is the allegorical fate in store for the unclean guest: damnation and the loss of the Beatific Vision. In direct contrast to the teaching of Matthew 10:28, Jonah fears the physically painful immobility and blindness which he perceives would result if he obeys God and preaches to the Ninevites, but what he fails to realize is that by refusing to carry out the Lord's command he disregards his spiritual obligations and damages his soul, thus spiritually blinding himself to God's true nature as he figuratively rends and soils his own garments. As we will see, the spiritual filth created by his inordinate fear will become apparent physically after he has spent time in the whale's belly.

prevent the loss of their own 'place and people.' Although one could argue that Jonah is merely being faithful to his co-religionists by refusing to preach to the Ninevites, essentially his blatant act of disobedience conforms to the same pattern of guilt and worldly fear exhibited by the Jews of Christ's time. Jonah refuses to warn the Ninevites of their impending destruction because he wishes to preserve his own 'folke' and their 'place' as God's chosen people.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> J. K. Lecklider argues that the poet does indeed follow the traditional explanation of Jonah's flight established by St. Jerome's commentary. She also suggests that in his portrayal of the prophet's flight, the poet could have been thinking about the motivations behind Jonah's disobedience in terms similar to those set out in St. John Chrysostom's sermon *De Ieiunio Ninevitarum* in which Jonah's flight is attributed to his knowledge of God's mercy and his fear of being seen as a false prophet if God spares the Ninevites. As we shall see below, this particular fear does become an important part of the poet's characterization of Jonah, but this idea does not appear until the end of the poem. The prophet's initial flight instead is a direct result of his dread of physical pain and death, Cleanness: *Structure and Meaning*, pp. 12-13.

Adam Brooke Davis calls this passage 'a startling innovation upon the Vulgate text,' an addition which amplifies terror and 'would seem consistent with the rest of the poet's design.' We are, he says, 'probably justified in seeing this addition as both deliberate and stategic.<sup>40</sup> If this is the case, what exactly are we to make of the poet's purposeful use of fear in describing the motivation behind Jonah's disobedience? Gary D. Schmidt sees in these lines and in Jonah's fear-inspired flight the very theme of the poem, 'as expressed in [its] opening lines,'41 while Lynn Staley Johnson argues that the degree to which they describe Jonah's anxieties makes his fear seem 'absurd.'<sup>42</sup> As we have seen, humility and the willingness to endure hardship are the poet's main concern; each of these concepts is fundamentally related to fear, and in his description of Jonah's terror-stricken thoughts the poet explores the implicit links between fear, humility and patience. He turns the prophet's self-directed speech outward to the audience, converting it into a rhetorical plea for justification and understanding. The vivid detail with which the poet colours Jonah's imaginings is hardly 'absurd.' Rather, it is believable and comprehensible, and it is an emotion with which *Patience*'s readers would easily have been able to identify. Jonah's internal debate forces the audience to weigh their own understandings of dread and human strength and weakness. In doing so it constitutes the first rhetorical question posed by the poem: does the prophet's fear excuse his disobedience?

At first this might seem to be the case, for his anxieties appear to be natural and logical. In his moral commentary Nicholas of Lyre interprets Jonah's flight as having arisen from 'human fragility.'<sup>43</sup> The prophet recognizes his own weakness and assumes that he will not be able to carry out the task God has given him or endure the hardships he will face along the way. This perception of his own fragility gives rise to a particular mental state - one rooted in theories of natural fear. Upon hearing God's command, the poet describes the prophet as 'stowned in mynde' (73). The magnitude and difficulty of the task God has set before him is astounding, and it is his inability to think rationally which first inspires his dread. His reaction is based upon the ideas of *timor admiratio* and *timor stupor*, the two types of fear which, as we saw earlier, arose as a result of great or unusual evils or hardships. The magnitude of their objects, in Jonah's specific case the extreme

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> 'What the Poet of *Patience* Really Did to the Book of Jonah', *Viator* 22 (1991): 267-78 (p. 277).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> "*Pis Wrech Man in Warlowe's Guttez*": Imagery and Unity of Frame and Tale in *Patience'*, in *Text and Matter*, pp. 177-93 (p. 179).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> The Voice of the Gawain-Poet, pp. 7-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> *Biblia Sacra*, literal commentary, Jonah 1:3 (iv, fol. 373vb): '... nam praedicator ex humana fragilitate declinat praedicandi laborem et vt euitet magnatorum maleuolentiam.'

difficulty of travelling to Nineveh only to face thousands of wicked and terrifying sinners he thinks will be bent upon torturing and killing him, obfuscates rational thought and hinders proper action.<sup>44</sup> Although they interfere with the use of reason, neither type of dread could be considered sinful because each was merely a variety of natural fear, or *timor-passio*. Piero Boitani sees this passage in exactly this way. Even though it illustrates Jonah's 'rebellious spirit and his bad-tempered irony,' his fearful motivation to flee God is completely natural and makes him 'profoundly human,'<sup>45</sup> and hence, one would think, without moral fault. This seems to be standard critical reasoning concerning the prophet's flight, and it is, in many ways, convincing,<sup>46</sup> and it is not without its own support from medieval sources. As the *Glossa ordinaria* says, 'The human race is signified through the prophet's flight.'<sup>47</sup> His desire to avoid danger is perfectly understandable, and put in Jonah's place, most people would probably react in the same fashion. After all, who would relish the possibility of delivering a very unwelcome message to a group of degenerate sinners who hold God's - and nature's - laws in contempt?

But in discussing Jonah's fear solely in terms of its natural origins, we fail to see its moral significance. Boitani is so caught up in his attempt to 'humanize' Jonah and make of him a believable character - a needless task, since the poet has already done a pretty good job of it himself - that he misses the point when he comes to identifying Jonah's fear. Jonah is, he says, 'so terrified that he even doubts God's word... imagines the most frightful punishments... and reasons... like a rational being.'<sup>48</sup> Boitani fundamentally misunderstands reason's part in determining the moral value of fear. In fact, his interpretation of Jonah's reaction to God's request goes against the very nature of the dread Jonah experiences, a dread which leaves him stunned and unable to think properly. Boitani describes Jonah as acting rationally, but then says the prophet doubts God's word, an act which in itself is hardly rational and is, as a matter of fact, inherently sinful. If the prophet is to act properly he should realize that God will not let anything happen to him and, additionally, he should know that offending God is a much more fearful prospect than either confronting mortal

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> See *Speculum Morale* I, 1, 26 (col. 78). Also see above, Ch. 1, section I.ii.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Boitani, p. 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> For example, W. A. Davenport says that Jonah's 'weaknesses are realized in terms of everyman's human failings', *The Art of the* Gawain-*Poet*, p. 132. J. Rhodes tells us that Jonah is 'neither a positive nor a negative *exemplum*, but the human *exemplum*...', 'Vision and History in *Patience*', *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 19:1 (1989): 1-13 (p. 5). Also see note 8, above.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> *Biblia* Sacra, marginal gloss, Jonah 1:3 (iv, fol. 374vb): 'Per fugam prophetae potest significari humanum genus...'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Boitani, p. 12.

sinners or facing certain death. The *Speculum Morale* echoes Nicholas of Lyre's comments on 'human fragility,' including 'the fragility of the human condition' in its list of things which, if contemplated, draw one back from sinfulness by inspiring a person to rely upon God's protection.<sup>49</sup> Jonah's own perception of his inherent fragility, however, places inordinate emphasis on physical and temporal weakness, thereby giving rise to a culpable fear which does exactly what Aquinas describes in his *Summa* as sinful: 'fear is a sin in the sense that it is disordered, that is, in so far as it avoids *what reason demands* should not be avoided.'<sup>50</sup> In terms of this argument, then, it appears that the degree of sinfulness of this flight is extreme. Jonah voluntarily decides to shirk his duty by fleeing down a road he mistakenly assumes God cannot see: 'I wyl me sum oper waye pat He ne wayte after' (86). It is obvious that Jonah is using his rational capabilities, but he is not using them as a 'rational being' should. Because of his conscious choice to avoid his duty and his foolish idea that God will not be able to find him, Jonah's fear leads him into what Aquinas classifies as mortal sin:

... sometimes this disorder of fear extends to the rational appetite, called the will, which avoids by free choice anything which is not according to reason... For if a man, fleeing from fear of danger of death or any other evil of this world, is ready to commit some forbidden act or *to leave undone something which the divine law prescribes*, such a fear is a mortal sin.<sup>51</sup>

Jonah fears death, and while it is natural that he does so, his flight, the vividness of his terrified imagination and the anger he directs toward God all reveal that his dread does not fall under the definition of *timor naturalis*, or morally valueless fear, but rather fulfills Aquinas's definition of sinful dread.<sup>52</sup>

Although he does not discuss Jonah's fear in exactly this way, William J. Vantuono does recognize that the prophet's dread possesses an inherent negativity and culpability. By characterizing Jonah in such a fearful manner, Vantuono tells us, the poet's 'aim was not to ennoble the prophet, but to humanize him, even to degrade him, and the best way to do this was to portray in him the human emotion of fear for one's life.'<sup>53</sup> Once again we see the critical use of the terms 'humanize' and 'human'. Vantuono comes closest to realizing that this is, indeed, the type of fear Jonah feels, but his interpretation nevertheless falls short of the mark. It is not the generic 'human fear' which he and many other critics

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Speculum Morale I, 1, 27 (col. 92).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 2a2ae 125, 3 (xlii, 67). Emphasis mine.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 2a2ae 125, 3 (xlii, 67-69). Emphasis mine.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> See above, Chapter 1, section II.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> W. J. Vantuono, 'The Structure and Sources of *Patience*', p. 418.

seem to associate with natural fear. Rather, it fulfills the sinful conditions of *timor humanus*, defined as that fear in which 'a man fears excessively for his own skin... [and which] is born from an excessive love of one's own body and present life... [and] is culpable because in it man wishes more to sin... than to *endure* severe bodily pain.<sup>154</sup> In effect, by choosing to flee Jonah chooses to sin. Although his fear may have understandable physical and natural foundations, the way in which he interprets and handles his dread corrupts it and firmly qualifies it as a culpable construct. Line 73 may hint that the natural fears known as *admiratio* and *stupor* typify Jonah's flight, but line 74 indicates that this is not the case, stating that the prophet began to grow angry and think rebellious thoughts ('Al he wrathed in his wyt, and wyþerly he þo3t'). Jonah's fear and consequent disobedience may be understandable and 'human,' but they are hardly natural or morally faultless. They are decidedly irrational and sinful, as the *Speculum Morale* reveals when it explains that 'It is natural that man should flee on account of bodily harms... but that man should recede from justice on account of these things is against natural reason.'<sup>55</sup>

Only after disregarding God's command to depart to Nineveh without discourse or thought (66) - having carried on an internal discussion by which he justifies his flight - does Jonah begin his journey. He finally follows God's initial command and *ryses radly* (89), but it is at the instigation of his disordered dread, not from any sense of the proper fearful obligation or obedience he owes to God. Provoked by fear, he rises quickly and sets out on his way, but instead of wending his way to Nineveh he flees in the opposite direction, wrongly thinking he will be able to escape God's sight. As we noted above, Jonah 'wills' (86) himself into disordered action instead of subjecting himself to divine will, and once he reaches the sea and boards the ship bound for Tharsis his happiness and sense of security are unlimited:

Watz neuer so joyful a Jue as Jonas watz þenne, Þat þe daunger of Dry3tyn so derfly ascaped; He wende wel þat þat Wy3 þat al þe world planted Hade no ma3t in þat mere no man for to greue (109-12).

He thinks he has fled beyond God's reach, and the fact that he has even tried to do so cheapens the value of his fear. His flight from God's *daunger* directly contrasts with Noah

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Speculum Morale I, 1, 26 (col. 80): 'Timor humanus est, quando nimis timet homo pelli suae, & nascitur ex nimio amore corporis proprij, & vitae presentis; iste est culpabilis, quia potius vellet homo peccare, quam vitam perdere, vel quam grauem dolorem corporis sustinere.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> I, 4, 2 (col. 590): 'Sciendum autem quod naturale est homini quod refugiat proprij corporis detrimentum, vel etiam damna temporalium rerum, sed quod homo propter ista recedat a iustitia est contra rationem naturalem.' Also see the comment concerning 'general and personal justice' in the discussion of patience in the *Summa virtutum de remediis anime*.

who willingly subjects himself to it by following the divine will "In dry3 dred and daunger bat durst do non ober" (*Cleanness*, 342). As I discussed in the previous chapter, *daunger* was a word which implied notions not only of power and control; it also could be synonymous with fear. In the lines above, Jonah is certain that he has escaped God's power, influence and, thus, his obligation to fear the Lord. He reasons that God will not be able to find him, and that even if he does, he will have no power over the sea; hence, there is no need to fear him. He is safe, or so he thinks.

Unlike Noah, whose perfect fear enables him to enter a ship in order to escape God's wrath, Jonah's disordered sense of dread leads him to a vessel which does not offer him refuge, but will only intensify his hardship and fear. He has indeed avoided the fear of God, if we take *daunger* to intimate notions of spiritual dread, but he does so only by turning away from his obligations and embracing culpable human fear. Jonah's behaviour decidedly locates him in the physical world. Ignoring the teaching of Matthew 10:28 by choosing to fear the Ninevites more than God, he thinks only of his own dread of death and pain; and by conceiving divinity in circumscribed, anthropomorphic terms he projects his own human limitations onto God. His fear is 'inordinate,' and thus sinful, as the Speculum *Morale* states, because in fleeing from a threat which reason dictates to be a lesser object of fear, he only succeeds in incurring greater misfortune.<sup>56</sup> His irrational dread results in his failure to understand God's omnipotence, a failure which contributes to his fearmotivated retreat and its fundamental culpability. Rupert of Deutz reveals this as plainly as possible when he describes the inherent sinfulness of Jonah's flight, saying, 'It is always evil to wish to flee from the Lord.'57 The poet makes a note of Jonah's disordered state and tells the audience that the prophet's rash ignorance has done nothing more than compound his danger:

Lo, be wytles wrechche! For he wolde no3t suffer, Now hatz he put hym in plyt of peril wel more (113-14).

It is unfortunate for Jonah that he does not realize this as he gets on the ship bound for Tharsis, for as he will soon discover, 'there are so many and such great dangers that he who wishes to avoid one unexpectedly comes upon another.'<sup>58</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> I, 3, 82 (col. 435): 'Si autem aliquis propter timorem fugiens mala quae secundum rationem sunt minus fugienda, incurrat mala quae secundum rationem sunt magis fugienda, non posset totaliter a peccato excusari; quia timor talis inordinatus esset.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Rupert of Deutz, *In Jonam Prophetam*, col. 410.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Speculum Morale I, 1, 27 (col. 92): 'Sunt enim tot & tam magna pericula, quod qui vult euitare vnum, incidit in aliud.'

Once Jonah boards the ship the sailors make ready to leave port. The poet's description of their preparations expresses a strong sense of secure purpose (99-108). It is clear that Jonah is amongst men who know their business; sensing this he grows happy and confident, and thinks himself to be safe. As I have already pointed out, however, the poet immediately undercuts the prophet's sense of security by calling him a 'wytles wrechche' (113). He intensifies this view of Jonah as mad and foolish by translating a portion of Psalm 93:

Hope 3e þat He heres not þat eres alle made? Hit may not be þat He is blynde þat bigged vche y3e (123-24).

Jonah has chosen a path he believes God cannot see, and thinking God cannot hear him, he has given voice to his doubts, fears and disobedience. In response to this, God speaks to his creation, calling 'on bat ilk crafte He carf with His hondes' (131) to rise up against his disobedient prophet's refuge. Though unliving and non-rational, the winds and waters waste no time in obeying his commands, thus amplifying Jonah's own relative disobedience and sinfulness. In his description of the storm's onset, the poet once again rhetorically uses violent imagery to express a point. Like the antediluvians, Jonah fails to fear properly. In response to this failure, God decides to inspire in his prophet the dread which he lacks, an act which closely follows Gregory the Great's instructions on how to admonish those who refuse to carry out their preaching duties: 'Let those who hide the words of preaching within themselves hear the terrible divine sentences against them, so that one fear might expel another fear from their hearts.'59 Jonah has refused to preach God's message of vengeance. Consequently, the divinely-inspired storm's rising winds and waters grow more violent each second, and the righteous wrath which they embody underlines the inherent culpability of Jonah's dread as it begins to displace the prophet's disordered fear and transform it into a more ordered, laudable construct.

After perceiving the storm, Jonah begins to lose his sense of security as his sanctuary becomes a 'joyles gyn' (146). Jonah, formerly described by the poet as a 'joyful' Jew (109), may have been happy with his assumed escape, but he has done nothing but bring unhappiness and hardship to his supposed refuge. The rough weather dampens Jonah's spirits, and once again, as he begins to see that he has stepped into greater danger here than he faced on land, his fear gets the best of him and he flees - both physically and mentally. The threat the Ninevites represented was only something which *could* happen

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> *Liber regulae pastoralis*, *PL*77, col. 96: 'Hi itaque cum apud se sermonem praedicationis occultant. divinas contra se sententias terribiliter audiant, quatenus ab eorum cordibus timorem timor expellat.'

in an undetermined future - although to Jonah's mind the danger they represented seemed certain enough - but the storm embodies a threat which is all too immediate and apparent for the prophet's liking:

He watz flowen for ferde of þe flode lotes Into þe boþem of þe bot, and on a brede lyggede, Onhelde by þe hurrok, for þe heuen wrache, Slypped vpon a sloumbe-selepe, and sloberande he routes (183-86).

The clamour of the flood terrifies him and in an outward display of the internal effects of his own fear, he shrinks inwardly, fleeing toward the *bohem* or innermost part of the boat, curling himself up next to the hurrok in his extreme dread of divine wrath. According to Andrew and Waldron, the precise meaning for 'hurrok' is unknown, but they indicate that it most likely 'denotes a rudder-band encircling the rudder to keep it in position.' That Jonah should choose to sleep here is not without its own significance. Since first receiving God's command he has felt out of his depth and threatened. He only begins to feel secure once he boards the ship. However, he soon realizes that his troubles are not over, and perhaps the hurrok embodies a sense of control and stability which he has lost. At any rate, once he huddles beside it he falls - or escapes, as the *Middle English Dictionary* says *slyppe* could mean - into a deep sleep and is oblivious to the storm raging around him.

Critical interpretations of Jonah's slumber vary widely. Laurence Eldredge maintains that his 'sleeping is exactly right... at such a crucial moment in the storm,' and that it represents 'the trust he has in his shelter' and is an 'effort to dream his security into place around him.'<sup>60</sup> To some extent I see this as correct - Jonah is trying to make himself feel as secure as possible - but I disagree with the statement that his sleep is 'exactly right' at such a critical moment. His slumber is irresponsibly wrong and foolish. By ignoring his situation and failing to act in any sort of positive manner he only intensifies his guilt. Sarah Stanbury recognizes his action's culpability when calling his sleep 'the inverse of divine vigilance,'<sup>61</sup> and Lorraine Kochanske Stock develops this negative view further, seeing Jonah's sleep as an effect of sloth and arguing that the contrast between patience and *accedia* is a main point of the poem.<sup>62</sup> She notes the relationship between *accedia* and *tristitia*, saying that the prophet's slumber arises because of the realization of his own sin and its resultant sadness. Citing Thomas Aquinas, Stock defines this sadness as 'the very

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> 'Sheltering Space and Cosmic Space in the Middle English *Patience*', *Annuale Mediaevale* 21 (1981): 121-33 (p. 122).

<sup>61</sup> Seeing the Gawain-Poet, p. 75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> 'The Poynt of *Patience*', in *Text and Matter*, pp. 163-75. W. A. Davenport also interprets Jonah's sleep as sloth. *The Art of the* Gawain-*Poet*, p. 118.

fundamental reaction... [of drawing] back from anything that presents itself as evil, whether the object is present or anticipated, real or imagined, easy to flee or hard to overcome.<sup>63</sup> Stock's interpretation has much support in medieval commentary tradition. Drawing upon Jerome's influential commentary, Hugh of St. Cher and the *Glossa ordinaria* both acknowledge that Jonah flees because of fear, but sleeps because of sadness. This sad sleep, they say, is analogous to the rest taken by the Apostles before Christ's crucifixion.<sup>64</sup>

The poet's presentation of Jonah's sleep does in part rely upon the notions of *tristitia* and *accedia*, but given the fact that up to this point the poet has made fear the predominant motivating agent behind all of his actions we should be able to see fear at work here as well. In keeping with his apparent disregard for Jerome's interpretation of Jonah's fearful disobedience, I believe the poet - to some extent - once again departs from this traditional view and chooses to understand the prophet's sleep in fearful terms. Nicholas of Lyre's commentary explicitly links the two ideas, stating that Jonah slept because he was afraid to witness the power of the storm's force, and he realized that it had arisen because of his own actions, not just because of any overwhelming slothfulness.<sup>65</sup> Nicholas acknowledges that Jonah may have fled to the bottom of the ship and gone to sleep because of the distressing sense of responsibility he feels, but, crucially, he also plainly perceives fear as one of the predominant motivations behind the prophet's continued flight.

The *Patience*-poet clearly sees Jonah's sleep in the same light, spelling out that the prophet's flight to the ship's interior resulted from fear: 'He watz flowen for ferde of be flode lotes' (183). By attributing his second flight and subsequent sleep to fear and the desire to escape the immediacy of the storm's threat, the poet links Jonah's actions and description here to lines 73-80 and the type of dread described in them. In these lines the prophet perceives the difficulty of the task he is assigned as being so great that its threats assume gigantic proportions and interfere with his rational faculties, thus giving rise to *timor admiratio* and *timor stupor*. Jonah's initial flight is partially dependant on these

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> 'The Poynt of *Patience*', pp. 164-66.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> *Postillae*, Jonah 1:5 (v, fol. 192va): 'Vel potest esse quod scivit Dei iram, & fugit ex timore, & dormivit ex tristitia, sicut discipuli in Passione Domini.' *Glossa ordinaria*, iv, fol. 374r.1: '... et dormit non ex securitate, sed ex tristicia, sicut Apostoli...'. For the original statement, see Jerome, *In Jonam*..., col. 1125. Haymo of Halberstadt expresses the same idea in his commentary, col. 130. We must recognize Jonah's traditional typological importance, of course, but I do not think that the poet was thinking along these lines when he wrote this section.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> *Biblia Sacra*, literal commentary, Jonah 1:5 (iv, fol. 374rb): '... horrens videre maris tempestatem, et maxime quia sciuit eam propter se exortam.'

fears, and his senseless, slobbering sleep is also related to them. For example, Trevisa's Middle English translation of the De proprietatibus rerum defines stupor as 'a maner slepy slombirnes bat is a disposicioun to ful greuous sikenes, and namliche to lytargye... bat is "forzetingnes", for it inducith forzetinge."66 The magnitude of the task God has set him and the disordered dread which he feels because of it has made Jonah forget what it is he is properly supposed to fear: divine power. In his Postillae Hugh of St. Cher understands Jonah's sleep in a similar way, explaining that it signifies 'the stupefied man in the sleep of error who, overwhelmed by a certain madness, disregards the wrath of God.'67 The fear Jonah exhibits by going to sleep is fundamentally connected to the 'madness' promoted by admiratio and stupor and, as such, is the physical manifestation of their intellectual effects. Timor segnities, or fear-inspired laziness, like admiratio and stupor, arose from the perception of a fearful object of great magnitude, only it focussed on the idea of physical labour rather than intellective thought. If a given task was deemed to be too great, it would promote a growing sense of fear and, in turn, result in laziness and inaction. Lines 75-80 make it clear that Jonah saw God's command as heavy work, and part of his flight, as F. N. M. Diekstra notes, is inspired because he 'recoils at the heaviness of his task.'<sup>68</sup> The Speculum Morale makes the connection between these fears clear:

... just as *segnities* flees work related to external operation, so *admiratio* and *stupor* flee the difficulty of considering great and unusual things... in this way *stupor* and *admiratio* hold themselves in relation to the act of the intellect, just as *segnities* holds itself in relation to external acts.<sup>69</sup>

Jonah's fear of the task God has assigned him destroys both his mental will and his physical capabilities. After seeing the storm, recognizing its power, forgetting his security and remembering his fear, the prophet, already 'stowned in his mynde' (73), now falls unconscious, slobbers, and gives physical form to his fear's obfuscating power. His sleep represents a form of flight, both from the task God has set him as well as from the waters beating on his refuge's hull. Jonah is overwhelmed by the power of the storm and the sight of the waves, and he is unable to do anything save flee to the safest, most solitary place he can imagine. The fact that he flees and goes to sleep, rather than help the sailors try to save

<sup>68</sup> Diekstra, pp. 207-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> VII, vii, (i, p. 351, ll. 7-11).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Jonah 1:5 (v, fol. 192va): 'Gravis autem sopor prophetae significat hominem erroris sopore torpentem: qui quadam vecordia obrutus ignorat iram dei...'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> I, 1, 26 (col. 78): 'Vnde potest dici quod sicut segnicies refugit laborem exterioris operationis; ita admiratio & stupor refugiunt difficultatem considerationis rei magnae & insolitae... vt hoc modo se habeant stupor & admiratio ad actum intellectus, sicut segnicies ad exteriorem actum.'

the ship, once again negatively colours his dread. His actions reveal that he still thinks only of himself as he subjugates the greater good to his own personal security and comfort. In the storm Jonah sees God's displeasure, but he is still unprepared to face and fulfil his responsibilities, so he fearfully tries to ignore his obligations and guilt.

While Jonah slumbers the sailors hardly remain inactive. I shall discuss their behaviour in more detail later, but for now we must look at Jonah's interaction with them after they rouse him from his sleep. After doing everything in their power to save their ship only to see their efforts fail, the sailors realize that the storm's cause must be rooted in someone's personal sin:

I leue here be sum losynger, sum lawles wrech, Pat hatz greued his god and gotz here amonge vus. Lo, al synkes in his synne and for his sake marres (170-72).

They have not yet found Jonah, but the words the sailors use to describe the person responsible for their hardship typify him perfectly. He is called a traitor (*losynger*) and a lawless wretch, two terms which accurately describe his fearful actions. By placing so much emphasis on his own safety, his fears break natural law and become disordered. As a result of his sin, the ship and everyone on it nominally share in his guilt and are in danger of being destroyed, or sullied (*marres*). Eventually the sailors find Jonah, awaken him and cast lots to see who is guilty. Once the lot has fallen on the prophet, they question him harshly and force him to face his sin (187-204). By this point Jonah realizes that there is nothing for him to do but acknowledge his guilt and accept his punishment. He finally understands that he cannot escape God's sight or ignore his commands. Although not specifically speaking about Jonah in his *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus Sancti*, St. Bonaventure nevertheless provides us with a very interesting summation of what it is that the prophet finally begins to understand:

If you should be in a small ship when the waves surmount it from all sides, you cannot flee, since the waves are everywhere; you cannot lie in safety because you cannot hide yourself, just as a man hides himself from lightning flashes; indeed, you cannot resist, because you possess nothing that you can place against the waves. Gather together these three things... And Job says: '...I am unable to flee because of the sublimity of divine power... I am unable to hide on account of the clarity of divine wisdom, since God sees everything. I cannot resist because of the severity of divine vengeance, since he who sins is punished by eternal judgment.' Therefore, it is necessary that we fear God.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Coll. 2, 13 (v, 465b): 'Si esses in navi parva, quando fluctus transcenderent navem ex omni parte; non posses *fugere*, quia fluctus essent undique; non posses *latere*, quia non posses te abscondere, sicut homo abscondit se contra fulgura; non posses etiam *resistere*, quia nihil haberes, quod *contra undam ponere posses*. Collige ista tria... Et Job dicit... "Non possum *fugere* propter sublimitatem divinae potentiae... non possum *latere* propter perspicacitatem divinae sapientiae, quia Deus omnia videt. Item, non possum *resistere* propter severitatem divinae vindictae, quia aeterno iudicio punitur qui peccat...". Necesse est igitur, quod

Bonaventure uses this passage to illustrate the inescapability of God's power and the necessity of properly ordered spiritual fear. It is distinctly analogous to Jonah's situation on the ship, and it clearly counters each of the effects of his improper human fear. Both his flight over the sea and his search for refuge in the ship's interior are proven to be useless; his assumption that God would not be able to see him once he left land is proven wrong and the inevitability of divine judgment and punishment is established. Jonah will give God's message to the Ninevites, whether or not he himself approves. The prophet finally understands and accepts all this, and in doing so he takes the first step toward fearing God and thus converting his previously disordered, physical dread into a more positive spiritual construct.

Jonah freely acknowledges his guilt, but he does not say he fears God, as he does in the Book of Jonah, where he identifies himself as a Hebrew and says, 'I fear the Lord God of Heaven, who made both the sea and the dry land' (1:9). In *Patience* this passage is rendered in the following way:

'I am an Ebru,' quob he, 'of Israyl borne; bat Wy3e I worchyp, iwysse, bat wro3t alle bynges, Alle be worlde with be welkyn, be wynde and be sternes, And alle bat wonez ber withinne, at a worde one (205-8).

This passage does not change the meaning of the biblical account, but it elaborates upon God's creative power by cataloguing for the reader the things God has made and the governance he has over them. If the poet is as concerned with fear as I argue, however, why does he not include it in his translation explicitly? In the Bible, Jonah's use of the word *timeo* to describe himself does convey an implicit sense of 'reverence' or 'worship,' but it does so specifically in conjunction with fear. In *Patience*, however, the poet only stresses 'worship' and ignores the fearful overtones and connotations present in the Book of Jonah. Zavadil attributes this omission to the poet's wish 'to postpone specific verbal identification of the Dread which has come to the prophet.' Jonah's fear only fully appears after he has been thrown overboard and the sailors have been delivered from the storm's threat.<sup>71</sup> This is correct, I think, but only in part. As we have seen, the poet has portrayed Jonah in fearful terms from the poem's outset. There is no doubt that the prophet knows dread intimately. However, up to this point his fear has been sinful; he very clearly has not feared God, so it would be incongruous for the poet to describe Jonah as being spiritually

timeamus Deum.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Zavadil, pp. 62-3.

fearful now. Therefore, it is apt that the poet does not use any explicit mention of 'dread' to describe Jonah's relationship with God. The poet has gone to some length to characterize Jonah in negatively fearful terms, and to allocate him any sense of positive dread at this point would be premature. At this particular time it is enough for Jonah to admit to himself that he is beaten, that he cannot flee from God, deny his power or ignore his commands. This personal admission sets the stage for the conversion of his fear in the poem's next section.

As for the commentary tradition lying behind Jonah 1:9, standard readings classified his fear as being of the servile variety.<sup>72</sup> The Glossa ordinaria's interlinear commentary on the verse succinctly states that the prophet feared as a servant, not as a son.<sup>73</sup> But its marginal gloss on verse 11 questions his definitive avowal of spiritual fear: 'If you fear God whom you say has such power, in what way do you think you can avoid him?<sup>74</sup> This argument draws upon St. Jerome's commentary, which asks, 'if the same God made both sea and land, why do you choose to leave the land to avoid in the sea the creator of the sea?<sup>75</sup> Hugh of St. Cher's commentary begins by saying the same thing as the interlinear gloss, but his thoughts question the servility of Jonah's fear: 'Therefore he possessed servile fear, so he was in mortal sin. [But] this was not servile fear, although it did resemble servile fear more than it did filial fear.<sup>76</sup> The only thing that is clear here is how unclear the exact nature and value of Jonah's fear are. In his depiction of Jonah, the poet has done away with this confusion. He does not worry too much about making his version of the prophet fit any typological role. Instead, he gives him natural human motivations and culpable human dread. In Patience Jonah does not have any ingrained sense of proper spiritual fear as do Noah, Abraham and Lot in Cleanness; rather, he is forced to discover it for himself and obtain it the hard way. After accepting his guilt he willingly hands himself over to the sailors and encourages them to throw him overboard. As the Glossa ordinaria notes, Jonah 'does not dissimulate or deny, but having confessed his guilt freely

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> For a brief discussion of this commentary tradition see J. Scattergood, "Patience" and Authority', in *Essays on Ricardian Literature*, pp. 295-315 (pp. 301-2).

Biblia Sacra, Jonah 1:9 (iv, fol. 374v): 'Vel timeo vt seruus, et si non diligo vt filius.' Haymo of
 Halberstadt expresses a similar idea, col. 131: 'Timebat autem Deum timore servili, a quo fugere volebat.'
 Biblia Sacra, Jonah 1:11 (iv, fol. 374va): 'Si times deum quem tam potentem praedicas, quomodo

putas te eum posse euadere?'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> In Jonam, col. 1122: '... si autem ipse fecit mare et aridam; cur aridam relinquens arbitraris te conditorem maris in mare posse vitare?'

*Postillae*, Jonah 1:9 (v, fol. 192va): 'Timeo ut servus, etsi non diligo, ut filius. Ergo habebat timorem servilem, ergo erat in peccato mortali. Resp. Non erat timor servilis, sed magis accedebat ad illum, quam ad filialem.'

accepts his punishment, choosing by his sin to die alone rather than that others should sin and die with him.<sup>77</sup> His self-sacrifice and insistence that the sailors throw him overboard is the first sign that his disordered fear is finally developing along spiritual lines.<sup>78</sup> It signals the beginning of a shift away from *timor humanus* and the movement toward *timor servilis*.

## II.ii. Conversion: spiritualizing Jonah's 'human' fear

Jonah may acknowledge and accept his guilt, but his trials are far from over. The prophet *3et dredes* (241), but exactly what type of fear is it that he now feels? Zavadil argues that lines 241-44 indicate that Jonah 'has been filled with the Gift of Dread,' and that the fear he feels upon being thrown overboard 'is spiritual, and not merely physical.'79 I believe Zavadil is on the right track here, but I think he is premature in attributing the prophet's acceptance of his fate to the Gift of Dread. Jonah's fear is not yet spiritual, it is only properly ordered. His initial flight from God, as we have seen, was based upon disordered natural fear, one which God addresses and counters by calling up a vicious storm which displaces Jonah's culpable fear of the Ninevites and acts as the embodied, perceived object of physical dread. The self-analysis and realization of his sin that the storm inspires negates his culpable fear by giving him a natural, licit outlet for his dread after all, the storm does represent a concrete threat to his life. But it only operates physically and does not mark his fear as specifically spiritual. Before Jonah can be 'filled with the Gift of Dread' he must undergo a supernaturally fearful experience, one which will leave no doubt in his mind as to the efficacy of divine power. God summons a whale to swallow Jonah, a ferly which reveals to the reluctant prophet his guilt and eventual damnation if he fails to obey God and embrace spiritual fear.

In the Book of Jonah the sailors lift the prophet overboard and lower him into the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> *Biblia Sacra*, marginal gloss, Jonah 1:12 (iv, fol. 374va): 'Fugitiuus deprehensus non dissimulat, non negat, sed confessus culpam libenter assumit poenam, malens ex suo peccato solus perire, quam alij secum peccent & pereant.'

The Summa virtutum remediis anime specifically cites Jonah's selfless act as an exhibition of patience: 'Therefore you may expound "turn the other cheek" as: be prepared to turn it, because it is not fitting to expose ourselves to risks in violent acts, but rather to bear inflicted injuries in patience. With this Jerome agrees in commenting on Jonas, "Cast me into the sea," and so forth, in the Gloss: "It is not our business to reach for death, but willingly to accept in when it is inflicted" IV, p. 182. Jonah here apparently accepts the necessity of his own death if the sailors are to live, but, as we will see, after his prophecy fails to come true he illicitly begins 'to reach for death,' thus losing the patience he earlier possessed.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> *A Study of Meaning in* Patience *and* Cleanness, pp. 66-8.

waves; he is only swallowed by the whale after the sailors leave him. In *Patience*, however, the poet alters this moment, emphasizing the transitional nature of the scene: 'De folk **3**et haldande his fete, be fysch hym tyd hentes' (251). For a split second, the whale and the sailors hold him simultaneously. The action is frozen as Jonah is pictured crossing from the natural world to a supernatural realm where physical laws do not apply and God's will, vengeance and mercy are all immediately made apparent. Needless to say, Jonah is terrified, but the poet makes it clear that the prophet is only undergoing this hardship because of his guilt, and that in spite of the wondrous nature of the act, God will keep him safe:

Wyth þe mon in his mawe malskred in drede, As lyttel wonder hit watz, 3if he wo dre3ed, For nade þe hy3e Heuen-Kyng, þur3 His honde my3t, Warded þis wrech man in warlowes guttez, What lede mo3t leue bi lawe of any kynde, Þat any lyf my3t be lent so longe hym withinne? (255-60)

Jonah is dazed (*malskred*) by his dread; the whale represents an extremely unusual threat and acts as a terrifying source of stupefying fear. It is no surprise, the poet says, that Jonah now suffers, or endures (*dre3ed*) woe. The close association of the words *drede* and *dre3ed* once again inspire a comparison between Jonah and the poet's other seafarer, Noah. Noah carries out God's commands 'In dry3 dred' (*Cleanness*, 342); his sense of fear is heavy, and he willingly obeys his Lord without complaint. Jonah, on the other hand, has failed to do this and, subsequently, is forced to endure a terrifying and marvellous penalty. In this passage the poet stresses God's power in relation to Jonah's impotence, describing the Lord as the 'high King of Heaven,' and as the sole reason the 'wretch' remains alive. By guarding (*warded*) Jonah God suspends all natural laws, and the poet's description of the scene makes it clear to his readers that they are no longer witnessing natural events. Jonah's original fear was sinful because of its willful perversion of natural forms of dread, while the dread inspired in him by the storm is typical of morally valueless *timor naturalis*. His dazed dread upon entering the whale's mouth recalls these earlier physical terrors, but at the same time it begins to redefine them in supernatural and moral terms.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> C. D. Benson argues that during his description of this marvellous event the poet keeps his audience from identifying with the prophet emotionally, noting that as readers 'we are not allowed to share or sympathize with Jonah's feelings', 'The Impatient Reader of *Patience*', in *Text and Matter*, pp. 147-61 (p. 150). I agree with this to an extent, but I believe that the poet only defers emotional identification until later. The audience is not supposed to focus upon Jonah because in this instance the main action of the scene is the behaviour and conversion of the sailors. In this light the prophet acts as a sacrifice - an important figure, indeed, but still only a prop - which codifies and solemnizes the sailors' new fearful and obedient pact with God. I will examine the sailors and their fear-inspired conversion later in this chapter.

Once Jonah is swallowed by the whale, his fear continues to change as he realizes that his flight from God has taken him somewhere completely unexpected. His first action after envisaging the difficulties of his task was to 'ryse radly' (89), but after boarding the ship his flight is marked by descent. In his search for safety he flees to the 'bobem of the bot' (184), only to be awoken and forced to face his sin. He is then thrown overboard and his descent continues. The whale seizes him, and after tumbling 'hele ouer hed' (271) down its throat - an action which reflects the disordered nature of his fear - he comes to rest in its hellish stomach and builds himself a bower 'As in he bulk of he bote her he byfore sleped' (292). He has found the solitude he craved, but it is not at all what he had hoped for or expected. The great fish quickly makes its way 'to be se bobem' (253) and swims 'bur3 be depe,' wallowing in darkness (263). Jonah can go no lower, he can flee no farther and he will never be more hidden. However, this divinely ordained descent does not result in the security he so desperately seeks; rather, it illustrates for him the futility of his fear and flight. The shelter and safety he sought in the ship are overturned. His flight has not saved him, but trapped him, and this 'sense of enclosure becomes complete as Jonah, the narrator, and the audience are brought within [the whale].<sup>81</sup>

This feeling of enclosure is in direct contrast to that offered by Noah's ark in *Cleanness*. David Wallace calls the ark a 'watertight casket' to which only the righteous are granted access, while the poem's audience is denied its safety along with the rest of creation.<sup>82</sup> In *Patience*, however, the ship is not so watertight, as it threatens to break apart under the storm's force. The whale - Jonah's second sea-going vessel - though himself 'watertight' like the ark, does not harbour the purity of God's creation but is filled with filth ('ramel ande myre,' 1. 279). In an inversion of the rhetoric the poet employs in *Cleanness*, in *Patience* the audience is not denied access to these vessels but is instead locked inside them, thus becoming trapped along with Jonah and forced to learn the same lesson: if you act against God's will you shall not find shelter or salvation, only restrictive enclosure, judgment and damnation. 'The *Pearl*-Poet's point,' as Clark and Wasserman write, 'is that man creates his own prison, which is, in effect, any barrier with which he separates himself from God.'<sup>83</sup> The whale's belly becomes Jonah's own self-made prison, and he is oppressed by its filth and blinded by its darkness. This blindness represents what

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> S. L. Clark and J. N. Wasserman, 'Jonah and the Whale: Narrative Perspective in *Patience*', *Orbis Litterarum* 35 (1980): 1-19 (p. 6).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> D. Wallace, '*Cleanness* and the Terms of Terror', in *Text and Matter*, p. 93.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> Clark and Wasserman, 'Jonah and the Whale', p. 7.

Bonaventure calls 'the judgment of blinding,' one of seven particular judgments which should be feared: 'From sin, indeed, man possesses a darkness in his mind, so that nothing seems to be a sin. He considers light to be as shadows and shadows to be as light, since his spiritual eyes have been blinded.'<sup>84</sup> Jonah has considered the threat of the Ninevites to be more terrifying than the results of disobeying God, and as a result of this inversion his disordered fear constructs a barrier between divinity and himself as he finds himself further from God than he ever wished to be. What he feared the Ninevites would do to him he has already done himself; his sinful fear and the disobedience it inspires have put him 'in a prysoun' (79) and figuratively 'wrast out' (80) his own eyes.

The abnormality of his situation, the filth of the whale's belly and his complete isolation from both God and the physical world bring his fear into sharp focus: 'colde watz his cumfort, and his care huge' (264). His original anxieties have been given corporeal form, a fact which contributes to the steady growth and transformation of his dread. Up to this point his fear, though not as disordered as it was previously, is still not spiritual; it is morally valueless, a reflexive reaction to the unusual circumstances surrounding him. However, before long the fearful contemplation inspired by the filth, stench and darkness of the whale's belly begin to alter his thinking. The divinely-inspired *ferly* has done what God has intended by fundamentally altering the nature of Jonah's dread. His fear's conversion is marked by two prayers which he makes to God from the depths of the ocean and his own distress. The first reveals that the prophet realizes the foolishness of his actions, but it nevertheless is devoid of any true sense of repentance:

Now, Prynce, of by prophete pité bou haue. baʒ I be fol and fykel and falce of my hert, Dewoyde now by vengaunce, burʒ vertu of rauthe; Thaʒ I be gulty of gyle, as gaule of prophetes, bou art God, and alle gowdez ar graybely byn owen. Haf now mercy of by man and his mysdedes, And preue be lyʒtly a Lorde in londe and in water (282-88).

In this prayer the prophet admits his guilt and recognizes God's majesty, but his tone is one of grudging reverence, not freely given veneration or love. He addresses God formally, calling him 'Prince,' referring to his mastery of creation, citing his just vengeance and acknowledging his own fickle heart and guilt. But in spite of this apparent confession,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> Collationes de septem donis, Coll. 2, 10 (v, 465a): 'Ex peccato enim habet homo caliginem in mente, ita quod nihil reputet peccatum; putat, lumen esse tenebras et tenebras esse lucem, quia oculos spirituales habet excaecatos.' See Stanbury, *Seeing the* Gawain-*Poet* for a fuller discussion of Jonah's blindness while in the whale (p. 80-7) and the theme of vision in general in the works of the *Gawain*-Poet. Also see my discussion of the blindness of the Sodomites in chapter 3, above.

Jonah never expresses true contrition. He recognizes his disobedience but does not apologize for it, and his request for mercy in line 288 sounds more like a command or a challenge rather than the humble supplication it should be. He still retains a culpable doubt of divine power, challenging God to prove himself as true master of both land and sea by delivering his prophet from his troubles. Why does the poet add this preliminary supplication to his retelling of the story? The Vulgate account contains no such prayer, depicting Jonah as repenting immediately and offering a prayer with just the right degree of humility and feeling. Davenport explains the poet's rejection of the biblical version as evidence that he 'does not wish to show Jonah as free from corruption, but rather to bring out the fact that Jonah is attempting to influence God,'<sup>85</sup> an explanation with which I agree. Jonah might be uncomfortable and frightened, but his degree of dread is not yet sufficient to deliver him from his prison. Unsurprisingly, God ignores the prophet's supplication, electing instead to let Jonah ponder his dilemma and work his way toward a better and fuller understanding of his situation and of the fear he should feel.

The insufficient character of Jonah's prayer necessitates his continuing detention, and he spends the next three days and three nights 'benkande on Dry3tyn' and contemplating divine power and mercy (294-95). The time he spends thinking of such things gives him a chance to reflect upon what makes God the most fearful object of all. The *Speculum Morale* presents a list of God's characteristics which demand fearfulness and prove that, in line with the teaching of Matthew 10:28, he is to be feared strongly and that offending him is to be avoided. Included in this list are his supreme essence, power, wisdom, justice, purity or goodness, providence and generosity.<sup>86</sup> After three days of nothing but muck, murk and meditation, Jonah begins to understand all of these things, his disordered dread finally snaps and he starts to fear servilely: 'Now he knawez Hym in care bat coube not in sele' (296). As this line indicates, Jonah has finally gained true knowledge of the relationship between God and man. It has taken hardship, trouble, threat and punishment, but he finally feels the spiritual dread and veneration that he should have felt when God first commanded him to go to Nineveh.

The result of the prophet's new-found understanding is another prayer, a more heartfelt and humble petition which succeeds in obtaining his deliverance where his first

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> Davenport, p. 122.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> I, 1, 27 (col. 89): '... multae considerationes attributorum Dei, quae summe sunt in Deo, & Deum probant esse summe timendum, & eius offensam esse summe cauendam, quae sunt eius summa essentia, potentia, sapientia, iustitia, puritas, seu bonitas, prouidentia & munificentia.'

entreaty failed. In this second prayer Jonah explains that it was his extreme fear which finally made him remember God and contritely ask for his mercy:

Lorde, to be haf I cleped in carez ful stronge; For when b'acces of anguych watz hid in my sawle, benne I remembred me ry3t of my rych Lorde, Prayande Him for peté His prophete to here (305, 325-27).

Once his dread works its way from his flesh into his soul - a process helped along by the terrifying storm and his swallowing by the whale - it begins to initiate in him a transformation. He has come to understand that those who involve themselves in 'vanyte and in vayne bynges' forsake God's mercy for things which amount to nothing (331-32). 'Despairing of every human strength,' as Nicholas of Lyre says, here he has at last subjugated his physical fear to his spiritual dread.<sup>87</sup> The 'fragility of flesh' which Nicholas attributes to Jonah is exceptionally pronounced while he is in the whale's stomach, but the prophet finally realizes that 'whatever seems impossible,' namely his salvation, 'can be overcome by the remembrance of God.'<sup>88</sup> His fear of God helps him endure his hardship and compels his vehement prayer.<sup>89</sup> The whale becomes 'the setting for Jonah's repentance,'<sup>90</sup> and the three days of suffering he endures within it signify 'bitter contrition, full confession and the satisfaction of his debt.'<sup>91</sup>

Having served its purpose, his time in the whale is about to end and God orders the great fish to deposit Jonah on dry land. Jonah's fear has led him to penance, but once the prophet has been vomited up by the whale the poet gives us a glaring hint that Jonah's new-found spiritual purity and rectitude are not as complete as they should be:

Penne he swepe to be sonde in sluchched clobes:

Hit may wel be pat mester were his mantyle to wasche (341-42).

The prophet emerges from the whale covered in the clinging, literal filth of his sin. Schmidt sees this filth as belonging to the whale, it is only the residue of the hellish place in which Jonah has spent the last three days and nights: 'Jonah is thus expelled onto dry land, finding his garment soiled with the filth of the whale. His personal cleansing, then, represents both a literal and symbolic need, for with cleanness his previous disobedient

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> Biblia Sacra, literal commentary, Jonah 2:3 (iv, fol. 375rb): '... desperans omni virtute humana.'

Hugh of St. Cher, Jonah 2:3 (v, fol. 193va): 'Cum carnis fragilitas in ventre ceti nihil me de vita
 sperare permitteret: quicquid impossibile videbatur domini recordatione superatum est.'
 Speculum Margle L 1 20 (col. 105): '

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> Speculum Morale I, 1, 29 (col. 105): '... timor dei dat in afflictione sustinentiam... timor dei facit in oratione clamoris vehementiam.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> Schmidt, p. 184.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> *Biblia Sacra*, Nicholas of Lyre, moral commentary, Jonah 2:1 (iv, fol. 375rb): 'Per quos significatur amara contritio, integra confessio, et debita satisfactio.'

attitude peels away.<sup>92</sup> Schmidt, I think, dismisses the significance of Jonah's filthy clothes too quickly. They are not dirty simply because he has spent time in the whale's stomach. This might be true on a literal level, but the poet adds this detail to his retelling of the Book of Jonah in order to show that at a deeper level the prophet's filthiness is due to his own inherent, stubborn impurity. The muck with which he is covered is a slimy embodiment of his former sin, and although Jonah has repented, the poet's depiction of him gives the audience pause and impels it to wonder whether or not Jonah has truly purged himself of his moral uncleanness. One cannot but remember the lesson the poet presents in his retelling in *Cleanness* of the Parable of the Wedding Feast:

Bot war þe wel, if þou wylt, þy wedez ben clene And honest for þe halyday, lest þou harme lache, For aproch þou to þat Prynce of parage noble, He hates helle no more þen hem þat ar sowlé (165-68).

For the moment Jonah's fear is properly ordered and he obeys God willingly, but the state of his clothes forces the audience to question exactly how long his fear-inspired obedience will last.

## II.iii. Obedience: the effects of Jonah's spiritual fear

Jonah's dread has been at the heart of all that has happened thus far. It provoked him to flee from God, an act which in turn inspired the storm, his discovery by the sailors and his swallowing by the whale. Once inside the great fish he has nothing to do but contemplate the culpability of his actions, and in so doing his dread is converted into its spiritually positive, servile form. This transformation marks the poem's thematic midpoint. After regaining his foothold on dry land - a literal return to stability occasioned by the reordering, or conversion, of his fear - the Lord asks him if he is now ready to apply himself to the task he should have undertaken voluntarily three days before. The prophet agrees, rather emphatically, and he once again rises quickly ('radly ros,' 351), only this time he does not flee but directs his steps toward Nineveh. His unhesitating response and action recall the ninth effect of spiritual fear mentioned by the *Speculum Morale*: '... the fear of God makes one industrious in labour.'<sup>93</sup> He now understands that 'it is foolish to fear what you cannot avoid, '<sup>94</sup> and he wastes no time in setting off and 'obeying without delay,' as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> Schmidt, p. 189.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>93</sup> I, 1, 29 (col. 105): '... timor dei facit in operatione diligentiam...'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup> Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Doctrinale*, col. 342: 'Stultum est timere, quod non vitare possis.'

Hugh of St. Cher says.95

A complete revision of what has gone before now takes place. When God asks Jonah if he is willing to obey him, the prophet responds swiftly and with certainty:

'**ž**isse, Lorde,' quob be lede, 'lene me by grace For to go at bi gre: me gaynez non ober' (347-48).

Although not identical to the poet's description of Noah's fearful obedience in Cleanness, Jonah's words nevertheless recall a similar mood. Because of his fear, Noah 'durst do non ober' than what God commands him to do; after his time in the whale, Jonah's sense of dread becomes similarly imperative as he willingly subjects himself to God's pleasure (gre), telling his Lord that nothing but his divine wishes profit or avail him. Once again the poet describes Jonah as rising 'radly,' only this time his quick response to God's words is punctuated by spiritually laudable servile fear rather than its culpable counterpart, timor humanus. It is a spiritual awakening, of sorts, as Nicholas of Lyre, commenting on the words 'et surrexit' in Jonah 3:3, notes, equating the prophet's rise and departure to his arousal 'from the sleep of negligence' to which he was subject in the ship.<sup>96</sup> Having been awoken from sin by his experience of God's wrath, he no longer places his physical fears of the Ninevites ahead of his dread of divine punishment. His terrifying experiences have been firmly impressed on his memory and make it impossible for him to forget what he has endured; consequently he becomes determined to fulfil God's command both fully and promptly and thereby avoid any future pain or punishment. Jonah's newly-acquired servile fear not only sets him on the road to Nineveh, it also places him on the path to spiritual redemption and recompense.

Jonah reaches Nineveh and hurries through it, spreading 'be trwe tenor of his teme' (358). What is the true purport of his sermon? It is clear that he is preaching a message of fear, and his threats evoke images very similar to those we see in *Cleanness*'s destruction scenes:

get schal forty dayez fully fare to an ende,
And þenne schal Niniue be nomen and to noʒt worþe;
Truly þis ilk toun schal tylte to grounde;
Vp-so-doun schal ʒe dumpe depe to þe abyme,
To be swolʒed swyftly wyth þe swart erþe,
And alle þat lyuyes hereinne lose þe swete (359-64).

The forty days the Ninevites are given to repent recall the forty days of the purifying,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>95</sup> *Postillae*, Jonah 3:3 (v, fol.193va): '... obediens sine mora.' The *Glossa ordinaria* expresses this in identical fashion, as does Nicholas of Lyre.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> Biblia Sacra, moral commentary, Jonah 3:3 (iv, fol. 375vb): 'Et surrexit... a somno negligentiae.'

creation-killing Flood, while the description of Nineveh's impending subversion remind the Ninevites - and Patience's audience - of the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah.<sup>97</sup> But the fact that God is giving these sinners this time to repent rather than destroying them outright, as he did the antediluvians and Sodomites, reveals that the threat and the fear it is supposed to inspire do not denote final condemnation but instead represent a chance for reconciliation. The 'true tenor' of Jonah's theme is fearful, but it remains conditional and is primarily remedial rather than punitive. The spinning, upside-down imagery the prophet uses to convey his threat actively draws upon two pictures with which Patience's audience should already be familiar: Jonah's own head over heels descent into the whale's belly, and the subversion of Sodom and Gomorrah and its descent into hell. Both of these images share a powerful, common tradition: Hell-Mouth. In Cleanness Hell is described as being delighted at Sodom's descent as it throws open the 'grete barrez of be abyme' (Cleanness, 963) and swallows the region whole. In Patience the terrifying image of hell is borne by the whale. Nicholas of Lyre says that the whale's belly metaphorically represents hell, noting that it was an extremely horrible place for Jonah to be.<sup>98</sup> Gary D. Schmidt notices the similarities between the whale's mouth and popular medieval artistic presentations of Hell-Mouth, telling us that the poet's concentration on the whale's gaping maw 'recalls the traditional Hell-Mouth and... underscores the horror of Jonah's personal experience."99 After being freed from his terrifying prison, the prophet carries the memory of his experience with him as it drives him to carry out his task with extreme verve, preaching to all the Ninevites and traversing the city in a single day - a journey which, Haymo of Halberstadt writes, should normally take three days!<sup>100</sup> In his prophecy, Jonah draws upon

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> In their psychological study of the Book of Jonah, A. Lacocque and P. Lacocque discuss the similarities between the cities, stating that Nineveh 'is but another name for Sodom and Gomorrah... [the] allusion is discreet but unmistakable.' The original Hebrew text of the Book of Jonah supports this connection, they say: 'The Hebrew verb used by Jonah is, as a matter of fact, *hapak* ('to overthrow'), a term that is specifically used by the Bible in connection with the total destruction of the two ancient cities along the shore of the Dead Sea.' *Jonah: A Psycho-Religious Approach to the Prophet* (Columbia, SC, 1990), p. 118.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> *Biblia Sacra*, literal commentary, Jonah 2:2 (iv, fol. 375rb): '*De ventre piscis...* id est de ventre piscis qui dicitur infernus metaphorice, quia valde horridum erat ibi esse.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> Schmidt, p. 184. A fuller discussion of the connection between the whale and Hell-Mouth in terms of the power of the visual arts to inspire fear would be a fertile avenue of research, but I do not here have the space to pursue this.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>100</sup> Ennaratio In Jonam Prophetam, col. 137. 'Suffecerat enim durissima naufragii et devorationis correctio... Sed Jonas jam correctus, et naufragii quod pertulerat memor, iter trium dierum unicus diei festinatione complevit.' Haymo, however, is willing to look at more mundane explanations for Jonah's rapid success, noting that some commentators maintain that Jonah only spoke to a third of Nineveh's population, who then spread the word to the rest of its citizens themselves: 'Sunt qui putant quod in tertia tantum parte civitatis praedicaverit, et sic ad omnes praedicationis sermo pervenerit.'

his own residual terror and uses it to amplify his own message of destruction and intensify his attempt to make the Ninevites feel fear themselves. The frightening image of Hell-Mouth Jonah has himself seen and which he tries to paint for his audience - both the Ninevites and *Patience*'s readers themselves - is extraordinarily vivid. It is reasonable to assume that the poem's audience would have been familiar with representations of Hell-Mouth and the thoughts and feelings they were supposed to inspire: most notably the fear of judgment and damnation.

Jonah ends his sermon with a final frightening declaration: 'De verray vengaunce of God schal voyde bis place!' (370) His speech's 'trwe tenor,' then, does seem to rely strongly on the rhetorical use of fear, and although he has experienced the salvational efficacy of this rhetoric himself, he speaks of Nineveh's destruction as if it is already certain. He fails to understand the conditional nature of his prophecy and forgets the mercy God has shown him, little suspecting or expecting that these sinners could be forgiven as well. The rapidity with which Jonah judges and sentences the Ninevites suggests that he has not come as far spiritually as the audience is initially led to believe. Zavadil maintains that the prophet's experience on the ship and in the whale, and the obedience which is its result, reflect his 'reception of the Gift of Dread and acquisition of the virtue of humility,'101 but, as we will see below, this is not the case. He may obediently preach God's message, but his own ability to understand its divine 'teme' fails. He does what his fear has compelled him to do, failing to understand the message of hope and reconciliation spiritual fear should deliver. The lingering imperfections foreshadowed by his filthy clothes including his imperfect reception and perception of dread - reveal themselves fully in the poem's final section.

### II.iv. Regression: re-humanizing Jonah's spiritual fear

Anger, rather than fear, is the emotion which dominates the final section of *Patience*, but this does not mean that dread disappears from the poem's thematic or rhetorical framework. The forty days God has given the Ninevites to repent passes, and he withholds the punishment Jonah so vehemently prophesied. The suspension of divine wrath is greeted by the prophet's extremely angry response:

Much sor3e benne satteled vpon segge Jonas;

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> A Study of Meaning in Patience and Cleanness, p. 56.

He wex as wroth as be wynde towarde oure Lorde (409-10).

Lynn Staley Johnson explains that his emotion is not 'marked by fear - he is simply angry.' Her observation is correct provided we see it only in terms of spiritual fear and the servile dread Jonah acquired as a result of the shipwreck and his time in the whale, but her statement passes over the subject much too quickly. As one modern psychologist has explained, 'anger, in either its mild or severe grades, is one of the most common masking operations for anxiety.'<sup>102</sup> The extreme wrath Jonah feels after seeing his prophecy go unfulfilled does indeed mask explicit feelings of dread; however, they have nothing to do with spiritual fear or the gift of dread but instead represent his complete spiritual regression and submission to inordinate, physical forms of fear.

As I noted earlier, much biblical commentary maintained that Jonah did not want to preach to the Ninevites for fear that in doing so he would condemn his own people. We have seen that the poet does not adapt this reading in his own retelling of the story; but he does incorporate an alternative motivation for Jonah's reluctance to preach, one which Nicholas of Lyre emphasizes. The prophet, Nicholas comments, fears for his own reputation: 'Because he saw the city still standing after 40 days, he feared to be defamed and vilified as a false prophet, which was to him the greatest torment, so much so that he wished more to die rather than to live in such a state.'<sup>103</sup> In another comment Nicholas links the fear Jonah now feels with the dread he felt when he first fled from God. In chapter one of the Book of Jonah Nicholas states that 'Jonah, truly considering the magnitude of divine mercy... feared lest his prophecy be unfulfilled, and he would be called a false prophet.'<sup>104</sup> Then, in the Book's fourth chapter, Nicholas again brings this idea to the forefront of his interpretation of the prophet's angry reaction to the Ninevites' salvation: '[Jonah] feared that his decree would not be fulfilled on account of God's great mercy. [It is] because of this that he wished to flee from the face of God, as is said above and as the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> H. S. Sullivan, *The Psychiatric Interview* (New York, 1954), p. 135; cited in Lacocque and Lacocque, p. 142.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> *Biblia Sacra*, literal commentary, Jonah 4:1 (iv, fol. 376rb): '*Et afflictus est...* quia vidit adhuc ciuitatem stantem post terminum xl dierum: Et sic timuit diffamari et vilipendi sicut falsus propheta quod erat sibi afflictio maxima intantum quod magis volebat mori quam viuere in statu tali.' Also see Nicholas's moral commentary, fol. 376r.2: '*Et afflictus est...* Et sic in proposito Ionas timens vocari de falsitate prophetiae, desiderabat subuersionem Niniue...'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> *Biblia Sacra*, literal commentary, Jonah 1:3 (iv, fol. 374ra): 'Ionas vero considerans diuinae misericordiae magnitudinem... timuit ne prophetia sua non impleretur, et sic falsus propheta diceretur...'.

letter reveals.<sup>105</sup> Nicholas ties together the first and last chapters of the Book of Jonah, linking the prophet's original sinful fear and its eventual resurgence here, as together they enclose the servile dread Jonah develops and experiences in the central portion of the story. Nicholas stresses the culpability of Jonah's fear by basing it not on a threatening object, but on something which should be embraced rather than spurned: God's mercy. As Jonah ought to know intimately, he should fear God's wrath, not his ability to forgive. This misplaced dread shows just how little Jonah does understand of God's nature or his own spiritual obligations. In this final scene he stands before God physically, but spiritually he has fled yet again.

Clark and Wasserman note that it is 'highly revealing that Jonah will... attempt to excuse his original flight from God... because of his fear of being called a fool by the Ninevites,'106 but why, exactly, is this so? Jonah first fears physical suffering; but although his dread is initially founded upon morally valueless natural fear, the inordinate degree to which he dreads the pain he imagines he will endure at the hands of the Ninevites displaces the fear he should properly feel toward God and thus makes his dread sinful. After being disappointed in his desire to see Nineveh's destruction, Jonah begins to fear that he will be seen as a false prophet and thereby becomes subject to yet another type of natural dread: timor verecundia. Vincent of Beauvais's Speculum Naturale classifies this fear as existing 'in respect to one's bad reputation.' It was an emotion which arose when others become conscious of one's own foolish deeds. This sensation, in turn, was linked to the experience of anger.<sup>107</sup> The degree to which Jonah fears for his reputation colours his response to God's mercy, making him forget that he too has benefitted from it. The dread of shame he feels only allows him to remember the hardships he faced and the pain he was forced to endure on the ship and in the whale, and it is here that we can see an explicit link between his fear and the anger which he directs toward God.

In his *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas Aquinas defines anger as being 'aroused by the concourse of several emotions.' Although he does not mention fear in his explanation, in Jonah's case it is clear that dread does play a part in the birth of his vexation. Aquinas

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> *Biblia Sacra*, literal commentary, Jonah 4:2 (iv, fol. 376rb): '*Numquid non hoc...* Quod timebat dictum suum non impleri propter magnitudinem misericordiae dei, propter quod voluit fugere a facie dei, vt supra dictum est, et patet litera.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>106</sup> Clark and Wasserman, 'Jonah and the Whale', p. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>107</sup> XXVII, 70 (col. 1966): 'Verecundia respectu mali in opinione... verecundamur, quia alius est conscius nostri turpis actus. Et notandum quod malum dicitur hic communiter secundum quod est commune ad tristabile, & difficile, & disconueniens quodcunque. Consequenter subdit de ira...'.

continues, saying, '... an angry reaction arises only when one has endured some pain, and desires and hopes for revenge.'<sup>108</sup> Jonah feels exactly this. He has endured the pain of storm and whale, and he has done what God has asked of him, only to see the Ninevites forgiven and the destruction he has prophesied forestalled. His role as God's messenger, he believes, gives him a certain degree of authority which should not be questioned, not even by God himself; and his desire for his prophecy to be proven true reflects his yearning for worldly respect and honour. In its discussion of patience, the thirteenth-century *Summa Virtutum de Remediis Anime* reveals the disordered nature of Jonah's fear of shame:

Whoever longs for the glory of heaven does not fear shame on earth, and the more one delights in people's praise, the more one is saddened by their reproach. He who gets exalted by praise, gets depressed by censure; where one looks for honor, one fears embarrassment. But he who only looks for honor before God does not fear being embarrassed in the face of men.<sup>109</sup>

This is patently true of Jonah, who fears for his worldly reputation rather than pursuing divine honour by humbly and patiently accepting divine will. The hardships he has suffered, although ultimately self-inspired and self-inflicted, are compounded by his disappointment, and together they instill in him the keen desire to see others humiliated and punished, even at the cost of sacrificing justice. Hugh of St. Cher's commentary on Job 9:35 indicates that Jonah may not be as faithful a servant as he thinks he is: '... because of fear a servant does not dare to reply to his lord fiercely.'<sup>110</sup> This, however, is exactly what Jonah does, thus revealing that he has lost the dread of God he so briefly possessed. The physical stain with which he emerged from the whale's belly spiritually reasserts itself as he shows that his true fear still centres on himself rather than on God or the salvation of the Ninevites.

Jonah's fear is inclined merely to repeat itself. It begins in disordered natural terms, eventually assumes positively ordered spiritual value and ultimately regresses by falling back into the sinfulness from which it earlier had escaped. What does the poet hope to achieve by presenting his audience with such a problematic character? The prophet's inherent weakness may make him seem to be a less than ideal figure to hold up for the audience's imitation. W. A. Davenport sums up Jonah's complexity, noting that because of his shortcomings 'we cannot approve of him but neither can we simply condemn him.'<sup>111</sup> The confusion underlying any attempts to interpret his character's moral worth is exactly

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> 1a2ae 46, 1(xxi, 89).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>109</sup> Ed. Wenzel, IV, p. 172, (p. 173, ll. 385-90).

<sup>110</sup> Postillae, Job 9:35 (i, fol. 410ra): '... servus ex timore non audet respondere Domino suo saeve.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>111</sup> Davenport, p. 124.

what makes him such a valuable exemplary tool. Although he is a prophet of God, his imperfections, hesitations, misunderstandings and emotions make him as human as the members of *Patience*'s audience, a fact which Hugh of St. Cher clearly recognizes in his commentary on Luke 11:29 when he describes Jonah not as 'a sign of power given to humanity, but as a sign of human infirmity and death.'<sup>112</sup>

The emotions Jonah feels and the hardships he endures are sympathetic, and put in his place, the audience, too, would most likely feel the stirring of fear in its guts as it contemplates the possible tortures the Ninevites might inflict, witnesses the gaping Hell-Mouth of the whale approach and endures the infernal stench and filth of the great fish's stomach. The anger he feels after the 'failure' of his prophecy is also understandable. Each of these events, as one critic observes, 'dramatize Jonah's spiritual education;'113 and while doing so, they teach Patience's audience the same object lessons. Jonah is not as near to perfection as *Cleanness*'s protagonists. He does not possess their inherent perception of spiritual dread, but instead begins in sinfulness and must learn how to fear properly the hard way. Unfortunately for him, by the end of the poem his fear is once again culpable, but this only serves to underline the poet's message: the acquisition of spiritual fear and its accompanying patience and blessedness require an active desire to subject all lesser fears to an active, loving and obedient dread of God. The poet's detailed emotional depiction of Jonah's failure to comprehend this simple fact directly involves the audience in the poem's thematic and narrative framework and gives it easily recognized and understandable concepts - such as the prophet's human fears - upon which to focus. The realism which underpins Jonah's character turns him into a type of everyman, and as he moves from scene to scene and fear to fear the audience learns and is judged along with him.<sup>114</sup> Through the prophet, the poet defines and explores not only patience and impatience, but also the fear so closely related to it. Jonah has shown the audience how not to fear and, as we will now see, it is up to the poem's other characters - the sailors and Ninevites - to teach it how to acquire and retain spiritual dread and its benefits.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>112</sup> *Postillae*, Luke 11:29 (vi, fol. 203va): '*Et signum non dabitur ei, nisi signum Jonae Prophetae*, idest non dabitur ei signum de potestate, sed de infirmitate, idest, humanitatis, & mortis, cujusmodi signum datum est Jonae...'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> Lee, p. 198.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>114</sup> Benson, p. 148.

The poet balances Jonah's largely negative possession of dread with two lasting examples of positive fearfulness: the conversions of the sailors and the Ninevites. In each case the scenes are inversely analogous to the destruction scenes the poet presents in Cleanness. The language and rhetoric the poet uses to describe the destruction of the antediluvians and Sodomites reappears in Patience as the sailors face drowning and the Ninevites are threatened with a subversion much like that visited upon the Cities of the Plain. But whereas there is no chance of salvation for Cleanness's sinners, the sailors and the Ninevites are given the opportunity to repent and convert. In Patience, the divinelyinspired tempest is primarily bent upon forcing Jonah to address his guilt and modify his fear. Its destructive power does represent a significant threat, but it only assaults the ship and its occupants as a means of ensuring that the prophet's spiritual conversion takes place. As we have seen, the storm is successful in this regard, but it also has another effect: it inspires in the sailors an even greater, more laudable fearful conversion which encourages them to abandon their heathen beliefs and begin to revere God. A similar spiritual transformation occurs in the Ninevites when they hear Jonah's terrifying prophecy. The language which the prophet uses to foretell their imminent destruction is laden with the rhetorical use of fear, and the Ninevites' response to it is swift and powerful as they begin to exhibit a correspondingly heavy sense of dread. Unlike Jonah, the sailors and Ninevites recognize God for what he is. They understand that his power cannot be denied and that their obligation to him cannot be ignored. Because of this, they are able to embrace their fear, transcend its physical origins and follow it to the spiritual deliverance and salvation it promises. It is through these figures that the poet fully illustrates his fearful lesson and makes clear his rhetorical use of fear. In contrast to Jonah's exhibition of dread, the fear the sailors and Ninevites display provides a model which, if imitated by Patience's readers, will perfect their own perception of dread.

# III.i. The sailors: the progression from timor naturalis to timor reverentialis

God creates the tempest in order to make his reluctant prophet see the error of his ways, but its effects are not limited only to Jonah; the sailors also assume a very important place in the narrative's action. According to B. S. Lee, the storm provides the backdrop for

both 'the terror of the sailors... and for the amazing sluggishness of Jonah.'<sup>115</sup> Its doing so at one and the same time supports two contrasting interpretations of fear: one which, in Jonah's case, leads to stupefied unconsciousness, and another which, in regard to the sailors, promotes unrestrained motion and a concerted effort to overcome danger. The terrifying effect the storm has on the sailors is reflected by the boat's reaction to the rising winds and waves. It

... reled on roun vpon þe ro3e yþes. Þe bur ber to hit baft, þat braste alle her gere, Þen hurled on a hepe þe helme and þe sterne; Furst tomurte mony rop and þe mast after; Þe sayl sweyed on þe see, þenne suppe bihoued Þe coge of þe colde water, and þenne þe cry ryses (147-52).

The sailors are as helpless as their ship, and they can only hang on as the surging waters toss about their vessel. What happens to the ship here contrasts with the poet's description of Noah's ark as it rides the Flood's waters. The ark's movement is defined by the guiding purpose of God; it is nothing more than a wooden box devoid of all navigational implements, but it nevertheless remains afloat and, though thrown about by the waves, all within it are safe (*Cleanness*, 11.415-24). The poet clearly states that the ark has no mast, cables, capstan or hurrok; it needs none of these things because Noah earned his salvation by living in 'be drede of Dry3tyn' (294). In *Patience*, however, the poet methodically lists the piecemeal destruction of each of the ship's parts. Being gentiles and with no faith in God, and because of Jonah's willful refusal to submit himself to divine guidance, the sailors and their ship effectively are left rudderless, directionless and completely subject to the storm's fury. Noting the difference between the two storm scenes, A. C. Spearing remarks that its power here 'may be either destructive or providential,' as opposed to the storm in Cleanness which is only destructive.<sup>116</sup> Survival is possible, but it requires swift action and heartfelt conversion on the part of the sailors. With their ship about to sink, the sailors attempt to save themselves, first by their own devices, and then, after realizing they are powerless, by reverently turning to God and entrusting their lives to him.

But this conversion does not occur instantaneously. In response to the storm's systematic destruction of the ship, the sailors are subject at first to a reflexive, natural fear which inspires them to try to save themselves by conventional means:

**3**et coruen þay þe cordes and kest al þeroute; Mony ladde þer forth lep to laue and to kest -

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>115</sup> Lee, p. 199.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>116</sup> *The* Gawain-*Poet*, pp. 92-3.

Scopen out he scahel water hat fayn scape wolde -For he monnes lode neuer so luher, he lyf is ay swete (153-56).

Their physical actions are an attempt to regulate and control the frenetic rolling of the ship. They cut away the now useless navigational equipment, and when this has no effect on their situation they begin to empty their cargo holds, throwing all of their wares into the sea. Here we can recall Aristotle's discussion of whether actions undertaken because of fear are to be considered voluntary or involuntary:

Something of the sort happens also with regard to the throwing of goods overboard in a storm; for in the abstract no one throws goods away voluntarily, but on condition of its securing the safety of himself and his crew any sensible man does so. Such actions, then, are mixed, but are more like voluntary actions; for they are worthy of choice at the time when they are done, and the end of an action is relative to the occasion.<sup>117</sup>

The items the poet lists, featherbeds, rich clothes, caskets and coffers (157-159), could be interpreted as signifying the luxury of the world, and by having the sailors voluntarily choose to throw them overboard rather than allow them to imperil the ship, the poet subtly introduces to his narrative a degree of morality and *contemptus mundi*.<sup>118</sup> Line 156 adds a poignant reminder that death is near and life is dear (*swete*). Although their fear is only physical, their actions indicate that it is properly ordered by showing that they fear more for their lives than for the loss of their worldly goods. However, in spite of their efforts to save themselves, their dread is still incomplete. In response to this shortcoming, the storm's intensity only escalates.

As its force intensifies, so too does the sailors' dread. Metaphorically speaking, they have purged themselves physically; however, seeing that their initial efforts to lighten their vessel - and, by association, their suffering - have failed, they turn from this outward display of their fear's effect to a more internal, spiritual exhibition of it. They each cry out to whichever gods they believe in, hoping that one of them may be able to solicit mercy where all else has failed. Once again the poet catalogues their action, listing the names of all the gods they invoke. This addition to his biblical account accentuates the fact that they still do not fear properly, although they are on the right track. They understand that without divine assistance they cannot endure the storm much longer. It is interesting to note that the poet reverses the order of the sailors' actions in comparison to the way in which his biblical source handles the scene. In the Book of Jonah they first call upon their gods for help, and afterwards cast their cargo overboard. William Vantuono indicates that the poet

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup> Nicomachean Ethics III, 1, ed. McKeon, pp. 964-65, 1110a. See the brief discussion of Aristotle's *Ethics* in the Introduction above.

Andrew and Waldron, p. 192, note to l. 157.

makes this change in order to make the scene more effective. By crying to their gods after attempting to save themselves by physical means, the poet puts 'the mariners... in a more desperate plight.'<sup>119</sup> Further intensifying their desperation is his depiction of the measures the storm almost consciously seems to take to counter the sailors' attempts to keep the ship afloat. As they run about and pray, the storm grows stronger, the winds harsher and the waves higher. They correctly understand that they need to fear divine power, but their dread is still imperfect. The sailors have exhausted nearly all their options and are put in check. They now look to each other to see where responsibility lies, and the answer they receive finally leads them into the servile fear of God.

In order to ascertain who is responsible for their troubles the sailors cast lots, and discover that Jonah is to blame. They upbraid him, asking him what he has done to bring such hardship upon them. The prophet tells them not who he is, but that he worships the God who has created all things. Jonah's words identify God more than they do himself, thus positively evoking the Lord as the driving force behind the storm. The sailors' reaction is profound:

benne such a ferde on hem fel and flayed hem withinne bat þay ruyt hym to rowwe, and letten þe rynk one. Haþeles hyʒed in haste with ores ful longe, Syn her sayl watz hem aslypped, on sydez to rowe, Hef and hale vpon hyʒt to helpen hymseluen Bot al watz nedles note: þat nolde not bityde (215-20).

This news brings their terror to a sharp climax as their fear rises to such a degree that it sends them to their oars in a final, desperate attempt to save themselves by their own efforts. The storm responds by breaking their oars (221), destroying their last physical source of succor and, thus, stressing their impotence and the only course of action open to them:

Þenne hade þay no**3**t in her honde þat hem help my**3**t; Þenne nas no coumfort to keuer, ne counsel non oþer, Bot Jonas into his juis jugge bylyue (222-24).

Absolutely nothing physically remains for them to do; nothing will help them and they can think of no other option than to hand Jonah over to judgment as quickly as possible. They finally realize that God's power and desire are synonymous with the power of the storm and that the terror each inspires cannot be denied.<sup>120</sup> Having come to this conclusion, their

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>119</sup> Vantuono, p. 408.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>120</sup> In his commentary on Nahum 1:3, Hugh of St. Cher elucidates the similarities between the terrifying powers of both God and the storm: '*Dominus in tempestate...* Loquens ergo metaphorice dicit: Dominus veniet in tempestate, id est, in terrore, et fortitudine' (v, fol. 199va).

servile fear becomes fully formed: 'Indeed, by their experience of the storm, they thus understood the power of God...'.<sup>121</sup> They recognize the storm's true spiritual and punitive nature and succumb to their fear of judgment.

Their dread has become an encompassing tempest itself; they fear the storm and the power lying behind it, and they dread the negligent prophet who has identified himself specifically in relation to that power. Their return to physical action and the apparent disregard of spirituality which it implies is, in this case, not as culpable as it might seem. Rather, it indicates that their fear is developing laudably. By fearing divine punishment, a fulfillment of the requirements of *timor servilis*, and by praying to God before laying hands on Jonah, they reveal that their dread has progressed to the next stage of spiritual fear: *timor initialis*. They still fear the power of the storm and the death it threatens, but their greater concern is the possibility of displeasing God by harming his prophet. They make their first prayer to 'the one, true God,' expressing their desire to avoid offending him:

Fyrst þay prayen to þe Prynce þat prophetes seruen Þat He gef hem þe grace to greuen Hym neuer, Þat þay in balelez blod þer blenden her handez, Þa3 þat haþel wer His þat þay here quelled (225-28).

Before doing anything to Jonah, they pray to the Lord to secure his blessing. The sailors' newly-obtained fear of God, as the *Speculum Morale* says, inspires clamouring and vehement prayer.<sup>122</sup> They ask for his grace, and pray that they never do anything to offend him, even though they have to throw his prophet overboard. Their prayer reflects Jonah's earlier description of himself. He is not his own man in the sailors' eyes, but an extension of God; consequently, they feel they must proceed carefully when dealing with him. They dread divine power, but their prayer indicates that they also fear offending God. Nicholas of Lyre's commentary shows that the notion of offense was on the sailors' minds. Their fear intensifies because they understand the 'offense Jonah acknowledged he offered to God.'<sup>123</sup> The sailors' fear has already surpassed Jonah's own sense of dread. The prophet took no heed of offending God, but the danger of offense is the focus of their prayer. They want to ensure that throwing Jonah overboard is what God desires. In *Patience* the poet simply describes them as taking Jonah by head and feet as they drop him in the sea, but as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>121</sup> Biblia Sacra, Nicholas of Lyre, literal commentary, Jonah 1:15 (iv, fol. 374vb): '*Et tuluerunt Ionam* & misse... Experientia enim tempestatis iam cognoscebant potestatem dei quem Ionas colebat.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>122</sup> I, 1, 29 (col. 105): '... timor Dei facit in orationem clamoris vehementiam.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>123</sup> *Biblia Sacra*, Nicholas of Lyre, literal commentary, Jonah 1:10 (iv, fol. 374vb): '*Et timuerunt viri...* propter offensam dei Ionae quem confitebatur...'.

Hugh of St. Cher's biblical commentary notes, they did this with reverence: 'They do not drag him away but carry him with honour and obedience.'<sup>124</sup> They throw the prophet overboard 'not out of malice, but because they recognize authority when they see it.'<sup>125</sup> The sailors now understand that any physical action they do take must be subject to God's will. Because of their newly-developed spiritual fear they are now able to put their hands to use as they lower Jonah into the whale's mouth.

As soon as they lower Jonah into the surging waters the storm immediately ceases, the sea grows calm and strong currents and gentle winds push the ship to shore (234-36). The sailors' display of fearful obedience now transforms itself into an exhibition of fearful reverence as, forsaking their pagan deities and recognizing the Lord 'to be God and graythly non oper' (240), they offer to him solemn prayers and sacrifices. Their fear is now perfected. The Vulgate describes the sailors as having 'feared the Lord exceedingly,' but the poet does not mention this dread in his retelling of the story. Edward Wilson notes this alteration, saying that instead of speaking of their fear, the poet emphasizes their 'praise and joy' and states that this acts as 'a prelude to the mercy which God will later show.'<sup>126</sup> This is true; however, I do not think the poet intends to omit fear from this scene or play down its significance as a result of this rewriting. Up to this point the entire scene has been defined and intensified by fear. The poet's rhetorical use of it underlines each of the actions the sailors take in their efforts to save themselves, and, in this final portion of the scene, his emphasis on praise and joy also represents the ultimate perfection of the sailors' fear. Their dread is complete, an interpretation based upon the writings of St. Jerome, but one which ran throughout all the major commentaries on the scene reveals: '... that is, [the sailors] revere and worship the Lord, and they do not fear simply, as we read in the beginning, but they do so with great dread, [so, it is said]: [fear him] "with all your soul, all your heart and all your mind."127 Haymo of Halberstadt spells out fear's role in their reverence even more clearly: '... and they revere him not with small but with great dread, just as is directed by the law, so that [God] is feared and loved with their entire heart and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>124</sup> *Postillae*, Jonah 1:15 (v, fol. 192vb): '*Et tuluerunt Ionam...* Cum obsequio et honore portant non rapiunt.' See also the interlinear *Glossa ordinaria* for this interpretation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup> Davis, p. 273.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>126</sup> Wilson, p. 62.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>127</sup> In Jonam. Prophetam, col. 1130: '... id est, venerantur et colunt, et non timent simpliciter, ut in principio legimus, sed timore magno, juxta illud: "Ex tota anima, ex toto corde, et ex tota mente tua...".

their entire soul.<sup>128</sup> Drawing upon St. Jerome, Hugh of St. Cher says essentially the same thing, but adds to the comment the contrast between their fear of God and their earlier terror which made them call out to their heathen gods: 'And so the sea ceased its raging, and, moreover, it was not because they fear other gods, but because they fear God with great dread...'.<sup>129</sup>

Although all three of these commentaries convey the same basic message, each brings something new to the verse's meaning. They all stress the difference between 'small' and 'great' fear. The sailors' dread of death and their spiritual, but wrongheaded, dread of their gods constitute lesser fears. The reverence they ultimately show God represents a greater fear. In these commentaries, then, as well as in the poem's action, we see the progression and proper ordering of their dread. They begin with natural fear, throwing their cargo overboard to lighten the ship, and then move on to a type of spiritual dread only to discover that their gods are powerless. This realization then promotes true servile fear which, in turn, leads to the initial fear they display in their first prayer to God. The whole process finally results in their acquisition of properly ordered, reverent dread. Once the sailors have completed this progression from imperfect physical fear to perfect spiritual dread the storm dissipates and, as with the ark in *Cleanness*, God guides his fearful subjects to safety.

The penitent behaviour exhibited by the seamen is in striking contrast to the very negative portrait of sailors found in the fourteenth-century priest's manual, *Memoriale presbiterorum* (ca. 1344). In it, confessors are instructed to inquire into sailors' characters 'cautiously and zealously' because their sinfulness is so deep 'that it exceeds the sins of all other men.' The author of the *Memoriale* goes on to describe in some detail the evil qualities commonly believed to be possessed by sailors, many of which specifically run counter to the behaviour *Patience*'s own sailors exhibit:

... sailors sin [as follows]: first, they are ill believers and of weak faith. Item... they never perform the penance enjoined on them. Item, they blaspheme Christ and his saints, swearing habitually... and committing perjury and denying God. Item, they do not conduct themselves reverently towards the church of God nor priests nor other ministers of the church. Item, they strike priests and clerks and kill some... [And] when put in peril of the sea they throw merchandise overboard in order to lighten the ship, sparing - corrupted by a bribe - the goods of one merchant and inflicting damage on another merchant in his

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>128</sup> Ennaratio in Jonam Prophetam, col. 133: '... et venerantur non parvo, sed magno timore, juxta quod in lege praecipitur, ut ex toto corde, et ex tota anima timeatur, et diligatur.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>129</sup> *Postillae*, Jonah 1:16 (v, fol. 193ra): '*Et timuerunt viri*... Et ita stat mare a fervore suo: et non iam deos alienos sed deum timerent timore magno in toto corde, tota anima, tota mente.'

The fearful conversion inspired by the storm's manifestation of God's wrath eradicates any of these sins the sailors might have possessed. The sins the *Memoriale* attributes to sailors are, in *Patience*, actually exhibited by God's own chosen representative, Jonah. Far from being irreverent deniers of God who are weak in faith, the sailors become firm believers in his power and grace. They are not quick to strike Jonah, but instead, after learning that he follows God, treat him with great respect and only put him overboard after prayer, deliberation and every attempt to save themselves indicates that there is no other remedy for their situation. They consign their entire cargo to the depths, not sparing a single thing out of any worldly or base concern. The fact that such stereotypically inveterate sinners could convert so fully and completely and compare so favourably to one of God's prophets is a sharp rhetorical testimony to the power of fear-inspired conversion.

The sailors surpass Jonah in their perception and perfection of fear, but this would not have happened had they not seen the prophet's own negative example. In the Vulgate, when Jonah admits to them that he is Hebrew and worships the God who created land and sea, the sailors perceptively ask him why, if he reveres God, he seeks to flee from him. In the poet's account, all of their questions are rolled into a single passage (195-204). Jonah does not answer them in either the biblical or poetical accounts because he does not need to. The foolishness of his position is clear to all. His folly acts as an effective sign which at one and the same time embodies the prophet's negative actions, the storm they promote and their remedy. By these signs, Nicholas of Lyre says, the sailors 'are converted to venerating the true God who holds all creatures in his power: for by Jonah's evil God taught [them] this good.'<sup>131</sup> The prophet's improper fear and the sinful disobedience and flight it

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>130</sup> Ed. and tr. by M. Haren, 'Interrogatories of the *Memoriale presbiterorum*', in *Handling Sin: Confession in the Middle Ages*, ed. P. Biller and A. J. Minnis (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 109-63 (pp. 151-53).

*Biblia Sacra*, literal commentary, Jonah 1:10 (iv, fol. 374vb): '*Et timuerunt viri timore magno...* ex signis visis fuerunt conuersi ad colendum verum deum, qui habet super omnem creaturam dominium: et hoc bonum docuit deus de malo Ionae.' In his *Dialogus miraculorum* Caesarius of Hesteirbach includes an edifying *exemplum* concerning a group of pilgrims crossing the sea on their way to the Holy Land which is obviously indebted to the story of Jonah, the storm and the conversion of the sailors. While the pilgrims are at sea, God sends a violent storm to threaten them. 'Seeing death before their eyes,' Caesarius says, each passenger 'began one by one, each to his neighbour, to make confession of their sins.' As it happens, however, God has raised up the storm because of the vile sins of one particular passenger, and it is not until he confesses fully that the ship and the rest of the travellers are delivered from the tempest's divinely-inspired wrath. In the postscript to the *exemplum*, Caesarius's novice questions God's motivations, stating that 'it seems a marvellous thing that God should afflict so great a number of men for the sins of one.' The novice's learned teacher then explains to his pupil the reasoning behind God's actions: 'We read in the Scriptures that the sea was troubled and his shipmates brought into great peril because of the disobedience of Jonah, and that when he was thrown overboard the sea became calm. For, as sometimes God afflicts for a reason a number of people for the sin of one, so also does He often spare many for the righteousness of one' III, xxi

inspires may be evil, but they also give rise to the laudable spiritual fear the sailors eventually possess. By being the ultimate cause of their dread, Jonah unwittingly converts the sailors, and the fearful lessons they, as well as the audience, have learned foreshadow both Jonah's conscious rhetorical use of fear when he preaches in Nineveh and the penance it inspires: 'Indeed, through the safety and conversion of the sailors it is shown that the great multitude of Ninevites, by similar confession, can also be saved.'<sup>132</sup>

# III.ii. The Ninevites: *timor naturalis*, *timor reverentialis* and the choice between physical and spiritual subversion

Having illustrated the process by which timor naturalis can be transformed into timor reverentialis, the poet now uses the conversion of the Ninevites to show his audience how properly ordered fear can forestall condemnation and damnation. We have already seen how Jonah, motivated by the terrifying experiences he has been forced to endure, fearfully proceeds to Nineveh and foretells its destruction. His rhetorical language, I have argued, is laden with fear, and through his message of impending doom 'Pe trwe tenor of his teme' (358) becomes linked both implicitly and explicitly to the transformative power of dread. The force of Jonah's message lies in the images of subversion and destruction it evokes, images which, Lynn Staley Johnson aptly recognizes, 'excite... dread that produces penance.'<sup>133</sup> Another of *Patience*'s critics, Adam Brooke Davis, also notes the role of fear in the Ninevites' conversion, stating that Jonah's prophecy inspires in the Ninevites 'an appreciation of God's power, and a capacity for repentance which is not the less sincere for its activation by fear.<sup>134</sup> Davis here seems to suggest that fear should somehow call into doubt the sincerity of their conversion. Biblical commentary, however, clearly reveals that the Ninevites need to possess a certain amount of dread because they 'impudently sinned without either reverence or fear.'<sup>135</sup> Just like the sinners in *Cleanness*, the Ninevites distinctly lack any sense of proper dread. In response, God sends Jonah to deliver a

<sup>(</sup>i, pp. 153-55). Through the punishment of Jonah the sailors are made aware of their own shortcomings, and, through the poet's retelling of the Book of Jonah, *Patience*'s readers should be made aware of their own sins as well.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>132</sup> Biblia Sacra, Glossa ordinaria, marginal gloss, Jonah 1:12 (iv, fol. 374va): '*Et dixit...* Instruitur etiam per salutem et conuersionem nautarum, magnam Niniue multitudinem simili confessione posse saluari.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>133</sup> *Voice of the* Gawain-*Poet*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>134</sup> Davis, p. 273.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>135</sup> Haymo of Halberstadt, *Ennaratio in Jonam Prophetam*, col. 128: `... quia impudenter et sine ulla reverentia vel timore peccabant.'

frightening message which will address their sinful deficiency.

Jonah's rhetorical use of fear ensures that the Ninevties will finally feel the dread they lack. The poet's description of the Ninevites' terrified reaction to the prophecy illustrates for the audience fear's effectiveness as a preaching tool. The sinners' response to the prophet's message of destruction leaves no doubt as to the power dread possesses; but whereas the antediluvians, Sodomites and Belshazzar are all made to feel fear only after their fate has been determined and their destruction begun, the dread God intends his prophet to inspire in the Ninevites is not supposed to be final, but transitional. Its presence is immediate and severe:

Such a hidor hem hent and a hatel drede, Pat al chaunged her chere and chylled at be hert (367-68).

In these two lines the poet focusses upon the Ninevites' physical reaction to Jonah's message, and the picture he paints is strongly based upon scientific discussions of the effects of fear:

in those who are frightened an increasing frigidity results in the transfer of spirits from higher to lower regions. The frigidity itself is produced by a consciousness of one's own failing strength. Heat and spirits are not concentrated in the area of the heart but rather deflected therefrom. The danger of death is contrary not only to sense appetite but also to nature itself. Hence the fear of death results in both a psychological and a physical contraction. The image of death will produce in an animal the same internal contraction of body heat as the actual threat of death. Thus we read in the *Ethics* that *those who fear death grow pale*.<sup>136</sup>

The images of death which Jonah so vehemently preaches initiate this drop in body temperature and result in the Ninevites' coldness and the changing of their 'chere.' The poet accentuates the link between fear and its effects with his subtle use of vocabulary. The alliterating words in line 367 all qualify and amplify the dread so baldly mentioned at the end of the line. Their terror (*hidor*) actively seizes (*hent*) them with great force. Underlining this description of fear's effects is the poet's further qualification of their dread's fierce, or cruel, quality (*hatel drede*). Opposed to these three words are the three terms in line 368, each of which emphasizes the physical effect this fierce, seizing terror has. The line's two verbs, 'chaunged' and 'chylled,' frame the third alliterating word, 'chere' and intensify the image of increasing dread. The blood drains from their faces as they cast their looks about in terrified confusion. The pair of lines is securely bound together by their final word, 'hert,' which reaches back to the alliterating sound of the previous line and makes explicit the link between fear and its debilitating effects. Together

<sup>136</sup> Aquinas, Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 44, 1 (xxi, 63-65).

these two lines succeed in creating a powerful rhetorical and affective image of dread.

The poet has described the notion of physical fear accurately and forcefully, and having done so he quickly transforms this dread into its spiritual form, signalling this change by having Jonah interrupt his descriptive narration to preach one final line of fearful rhetoric: 'Pe verray vengaunce of God schal voyde bis place!' (370). Up to this point his description of death and destruction has made no mention of God, but now he finally lets the Ninevites know who is behind their impending doom. The fear these words inspire is analogous to their earlier dread, but rather than physical contraction and change, it promotes spiritual reformation:

benne þe peple pitosly pleyned ful stylle, And for þe drede of Dry3tyn doured in hert; Heter hayrez þay hent þat asperly bited, And þose þay bounden to her bak and to her bare sydez, Dropped dust on her hede, and dymly biso3ten Þat þat penaunce plesed Him þat playnez on her wronge (371-76).

The sinners mourn severely and silently, and the fear of God makes them grieve in their hearts. This line essentially rewrites line 368, substituting the effect the spiritual fear has on their hearts for the physical effects their natural fear first caused. As Aquinas's *Summa* explains, this change of heart was instrumental to and characteristic of the process of repentance: 'Even the experiencing of fear proceeds from the act of God converting the heart... And therefore, though repentance comes from fear, its origin from an act of God converting the heart is not ruled out.'<sup>137</sup> Jonah's first words begin to change their hearts, but as with the sailors, it is only after he identifies God as the force behind his threatening prophecy that their conversion truly becomes complete. They now know who is behind the threat to their existence and their fear immediately makes them decide to change their ways and repent. They begin to do so by donning hair shirts and dousing themselves with dirt. Their actions reveal that they believe Jonah's message, a message which could have been inspired by Ecclesiasticus 27:4: 'Unless thou hold thyself diligently in the fear of the Lord, thy house shall quickly be overthrown.'

Jonah's warning sweeps through Nineveh, eventually reaching the ears of the king whose reaction to it, W. A. Davenport says, is exaggerated to such a degree that its rhetoric seems false.<sup>138</sup> I disagree with this. The king's actions follow those of his subjects, and together their response to Jonah's message is exactly what is required if they are to save

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>137</sup> 3a 85, 5 (lx, 67).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>138</sup> Davenport, p. 123.

themselves. His reaction's rhetorical significance might be 'exaggerated' but it is hardly The poet's detailed description of the king, his actions and his words 'false.' simultaneously make him the ideal voice of the individual, contrite sinner and a figure of collective repentance. In his fear, the king is all powerful and rapid motion and action from the moment he hears the prophecy. The first thing he does is to rise from his chair quickly. The words the poet uses to describe this action are 'radly vpros' (378), words which directly contrast with Jonah's own earlier disobedient failure to arise and do God's bidding. Unlike the reluctant prophet, the king's desire to appease God is immediate and spurs him into swift action as he strips himself of his rich clothes, wraps himself in a hair shirt and sits himself amidst ashes, laying dazed (dased) and tearful within them. His fear and the behaviour it inspires recall another example of an individual and rhetorical response to fear: Belshazzar and his reaction to the ghostly hand and the Writing on the Wall in *Cleanness*. When he sees the disembodied hand, Belshazzar is described as having experienced a 'dasande drede' which rushes to his heart and changes his 'chere' (Cleanness, 1538-39). The warning Jonah gives to the Ninevites, as we have seen, promotes the same reactions. However, whereas in Cleanness the disembodied hand is an irrevocable sign of judgment and impending punishment, Jonah's prophecy is only conditional. Both messages are rhetorical tools used to terrify their audiences, but only Jonah's offers the hope of redemption. Like Belshazzar, the king of Nineveh might be dazed by his dread, but he is not so hard-hearted or inactive as his sinful counterpart. Unlike Belshazzar, his fear makes him realize what he must do to save himself and his city. He orders every living creature in Nineveh to fast, be they innocent babe or dumb beast, so that the 'rurd' which 'schal ryse to Hym' will make God have 'rawpe' (396), and in doing so he illustrates for the audience the laudable and spiritually fearful behaviour God expects of his creation.

These words also recall *Cleanness* and its two major destruction scenes. During the Flood scene the poet describes the 'loud rurd' of creation's dumb beasts as they 'rored for drede' (*Cleanness*, 390), and while he describes the terror and pain of the Sodomites he notes the piteousness of their cries:

Such a 30merly 3arm of 3ellyng þer rysed, Þerof clatered þe cloudes, þat Kyrst my3t haf rawþe (*Cleanness*, 971-72).

The imagery is strikingly similar, but the major difference between the poet's use of it in each respective poem is that in *Patience* the Ninevites support their cries with deeds and genuine repentance. In *Cleanness* mercy is not forthcoming because the sinners' screams

of fear and pain have no spiritual value. The fear the Ninevites experience transforms itself from a purely physical emotion into a penitential terror, a servile dread which saves them all from Jonah's threat. While *Cleanness*'s sinners represent physical and sinful fear in its unyielding, static state, the Ninevites - and their king, in particular - signify laudable fear in process and motion. Notions of physicality do underlie their dread, but they are ultimately subordinated to spiritual concerns. Jonah wants to witness the overthrow of Nineveh, and although he does not get to see the type of subversion he expects, his fearful message nonetheless succeeds in promoting an inversion of sorts as Nineveh is converted from its guilt to a state of grace.<sup>139</sup>

In the two scenes detailing the conversion of the sailors and Ninevites, the poet provides the positive models of fearfulness, the penance it promotes and the grace it earns which are missing in his depiction of Jonah's disobedience and the prophet's mostly negative perception of dread. Nominally, Jonah is the main character in these events, but by amplifying the biblical pictures of sailors and Ninevites the poet places in his text concrete examples showing how a person can progress from imperfect to perfect perceptions of dread. Unlike Jonah who only experiences the very beginning of fearful conversion and whose fear never truly progresses past its own selfishness, the sailors and Ninevites completely give themselves over to dread's purifying influence and through it find their way to salvation. Their fear might begin physically and naturally, but after realizing that the power and mercy of God lie behind what threatens them their dread approaches perfection as it becomes both morally and spiritually flawless. Just as the prophet represents those who wallow in selfish uncertainty and the culpable fear which accompanies it, so do the sailors and Ninevites signify those who recognize their own sinfulness, dread its consequences and fearfully try to purge themselves of all uncleanness. Through his descriptions of the sailors' and Ninevites' reactions to their danger, the poet purposefully amplifies the fearfulness of each scene in order to show the possibility of redemption which dread offers and facilitates. In doing so the poet invites the members of Patience's audience to sympathize and identify with the sailors and Ninevites and figuratively place themselves in their place. This is intended to encourage them to come to the same realization that fearful repentance and reverence lead the way to grace and salvation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>139</sup> *Biblia Sacra*, Nicholas of Lyre, moral commentary, Jonah 3:7 (iv, fol. 375vb): '*Et clamavit et dixit...* tamen Niniue subuersa fuit a statu culpae in statum gratiae.'

*Patience* is at times a difficult poem to read in terms of fear because of the varying degrees of fearfulness it depicts. Zavadil asserts, and not without reason, that it is a poem specifically about the Gift of Dread, but he thinks of fear only in its broadest spiritual terms. He is not mistaken in his view of the poem, but he fails to notice that the poet's exhortation to fear encompasses much more than just a simple understanding of servile dread. Negative aspects of dread, notably Jonah's willful subjection of God's wishes to his own disordered human fears, play as great a part in *Patience*'s rhetorical mode of proceeding as do the positive spiritual fears exhibited by the sailors and the Ninevites. Whereas in *Cleanness* the depictions of culpable and laudable forms of fear remain static and unyielding, in *Patience* the poet depicts dread in its fluidity. Fear is the predominant motivation behind each of Jonah's actions, be they good or bad, and as the poem progresses its audience flees, sleeps, is swallowed by the whale, repents, is vomited up, preaches and grows angry along with the prophet, all the while explicitly being told by the poet how specific fears provoke each of Jonah's actions. The prophet, according to Hugh of St. Cher, is a sign in both 'word and deed':

He is a sign in word since by his live voice he pointed out to [the Ninevites] that they would be overthrown unless they converted. Also, through his own person he was an example to them, as if he tacitly said, 'Consider yourselves through me, since I wished to flee from the face of the Lord so that I would not have to follow his command; and thus I was thrown into the sea, swalowed by a whale, there was I moved to compute on and there did I obtain mercy; thus did God save my spirit. So can it be with you.<sup>140</sup>

Jonah's message does not speak only to the Ninevites; it is also directed to *Patience*'s audience. Even his slide back into his earlier display of culpable fear is exemplary, although in a negative way, showing the poem's readers that without the complete, willful subjugation of oneself to spiritual fear and the desires of God, sin can never be avoided. It is in the prophet's very humanity and his slow progression and subsequent regression into different states of spiritual understanding that the poet attempts to exhort and educate his audience.

But Jonah's example of *timor humanus* and imperfect *timor servilis* are not the only views of dread which the poet presents to his readers. *Timor initialis* and *timor reverentialis* and the worship, redemption and deliverance they facilitate are clearly

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>140</sup> *Postillae*, Luke 11:30 ('Nam sicut Jonas fuit signum Ninivitis...') (vi, fol. 203vb): 'Nota, quod Jonas signum fuit Ninivitis verbo, & opere. Ipso verbo, quia viva voce significavit eis, quia subverterentur, nisi converterentur. Exemplum etiam fuit eis in propria persona. Ac si diceret tacite. Considerate de me, quia volui fugere a facie Domini, ne exsequer mandatum ejus, ideo projectus sum in mare, absorptus sum a ceto, ibi motus sum ad compunctionem, & assecutus veniam, & salvavit Dominus animam meam. Ita erit de vobis.'

illustrated by the repentant and respectful behaviour of the sailors and Ninevites. By ardently subjugating their physical concerns to their spiritual anxieties, they illustrate for the audience the ideal perfection of dread. Their words and deeds are as exemplary as Jonah's. The fearful conversion of the sailors foreshadows the larger and more profound dread-inspired conversion of the Ninevites, whose transformation, in turn, serves as 'a model for the relationship between God and man possible through penance.'<sup>141</sup> Together these depictions of positive and negative fearfulness combine to give *Patience*'s audience a taste of the sweetness of spiritual dread while also forcing them to linger over the bitterness of disordered fear. God's final words to his prophet may not have anything to do with fear explicitly, but their message is laden with an implicit warning. Exhorting Jonah to be 'steadfast and patient' in all he does (525), God recalls a similar lesson to that taught by the poet's retelling of the Parable of the Wedding Feast in *Cleanness*:

For he bat is to rakel to renden his clobez Mot efte sitte with more vnsounde to sewe hem togeder (526-27).

However, whereas in *Cleanness* those who wear torn, soiled clothes are forever denied the sight of God, *Patience*'s final message implies that forgiveness can be earned so long as one actively tries to mend the rents in his or her own torn spiritual garment. The poet encourages his readers to undertake this cleansing process, just as God urges his prophet to do the same, but the outcome of each exhortation is uncertain. The poet does not reveal whether Jonah mends his ways or not, and by giving his poem such an ambiguous ending he reflects the equally unknown spiritual condition of each of his readers. The only certainties *Patience* reveals are that fear forms the foundation of spiritual conversion and the voluntary endurance of suffering that accompanies it, and that for those people who do not embrace proper dread and the obedience it inspires, the responsibilities of life will prove ultimately too difficult to endure.

### Conclusion

Though the overt themes of Cleanness and Patience are the very virtues which serve as their titles, fear, as I hope to have shown, is an essential element of each poem's rhetorical and conceptual frameworks, an element which plays a fundamental part in a person's acquisition of the virtues the two poems so stringently exhort. Ideally, the presence of rhetorical and theological constructions of fear in Cleanness and Patience is supposed to draw the audience into the poems' narrative, thematic and didactic programmes. In his commentary on the Book of Jonah, James Limberg cites the author's use of 'direct discourse' as one of the main reasons behind the story's popularity and success, noting how this method of proceeding 'enlivens [the] story by making it possible for the reader or storyteller to take the role of the various characters in the story." The poet of Cleanness and Patience uses a similar method in his effort to make his readers identify with each poem's characters and didactic message. He explicitly addresses the reader through rhetorical questions and calls to fear judgment. In doing so he blurs the boundary between intra- and extra-textual events and communities by drawing the audience into each text, thereby forcing each individual reader to consider the same imminent threats and moral responsibilities faced by the poems' characters. Be it the physical terror the audience is supposed to feel along with the antediluvians, Sodomites and Belshazzar, the disordered dread stubbornly held on to by Jonah, or the rewarding, reconciling spiritual fear exhibited by Noah, Abraham, Lot, the sailors and the Ninevites, fear lies at the heart of the poet's discourse, supplies its rhetorical language, and seeks to fuse the poems and their audiences into a single narrative and experiential construct.

The dread which is so prevalent in *Cleanness* and *Patience* relies upon, as well as creates, what Robert Blanch and Julian Wasserman identify as a common 'speech community,' something they define as

a group whose discourse is mutually intelligible and, above all, whose success as a distinct and identifiable group is dependent on the status of its body of common knowledge as well as on the system by which the members of a society learn and transmit, that is, decode and encode, those shared values.<sup>2</sup>

As we saw in the first and second chapters of this study, medieval theological interpretations of fear in all their variegated forms, and the *modus timendi* which grew out of them, acted as 'mutually intelligible discourses' in the religious and didactic atmosphere

Jonah: A Commentary (London, 1993), p. 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> From Pearl to Gawain, p. 15.

of the fourteenth century. In the third and fourth chapters we examined how the poet specifically drew upon these discourses in order to promote his audience's continued communal identification with the specific language and meanings of the rhetoric of fear. Natural, sinful and laudable types of dread implicitly underlie and explicitly punctuate the thematic, narrative and rhetorical processes at work in each poem. By understanding the poems in terms of the precise senses of fear they draw upon and promote, we can begin to see how the poet 'encodes' a popular mode of rhetorical proceeding in the very heart of his texts. At the same time we can also attempt to 'decode' his rhetoric and hypothetically determine what essentially will always remain indeterminable: the response each poem is supposed to elicit in its audience. In spite of this fundamental uncertainty, however, traditional medieval understandings of natural, culpable and laudable forms of fear were deeply ingrained within the 'speech communities' of *Cleanness* and *Patience*. The antediluvians and Sodomites all shriek in shared terror when faced by destruction, while the Ninevites, understanding the language of fear both implicitly and explicitly employed by Jonah, respond to imminent doom with their own dreadful cries, thus transforming - or 're-encoding' - the clamour of sin and physical terror into a new language characterized by reverent dread and the supplication and repentance it promotes. In these two poems, then, fear exemplifies both the collective, terrified speech of the damned and the communal, worshipful cry of the saved. Thus, by continuously 'encoding' and 're-encoding' dread and its different qualities, the poet attempts to fortify the language of fear within his own contemporary 'speech community.'

This fearful language acts in two significative ways: allegorically and literally. As A. J. Minnis notes in his study of medieval theories of authorship, the allegorical sense stems from the significative use of *things*, while literal interpretations proceed from the significative use of *words*.<sup>3</sup> The poet of *Cleanness* and *Patience* communicates the threat of damnation and the salutary fear which should arise from it in both these ways. He follows in the steps of preachers whose chief objective was to expose sin and inspire avoidance of it by threats of God's anger and divine punishment. Hence he emphasizes the dread of death, pain and punishment on two separate, yet interrelated, levels by presenting the Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and Jonah's time in the belly of the whale as allegorical representations of judgment and damnation, while employing the physically terrifying words of the Writing on the Wall and the harsh words of Jonah's

Medieval Theory of Authorship, p. 73.

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prophecy to the Ninevites as literal significations of divine displeasure and threats. The fear of punishment which these scenes are supposed to elicit, however, must be balanced by a more perfect, loving dread of God if the audience is ultimately to learn how to fear properly. Although the dread which should be inspired by these images of doom is a licit form of fear, it is important that the poet should also supply his readers with more positive examples of spiritual dread. Without the examples of chaste, filial and reverential fear provided by the poet's characterizations of Noah, Lot and Patience's sailors and the Ninevites, a person could confuse a proper, selfless and laudable fear of God with an insufficient, selfish and culpable fear of threatening danger and personal pain.<sup>4</sup> The allegorical and literal conceptualizations of fear in Cleanness and Patience bear the promise of spiritual reconciliation as well as punishment. For example, Noah's fear is allegorically signified by the ark itself; if he had not led his life 'In be drede of Dry3tyn' (295) God would never have informed him of the impending Flood or given him the instructions for building the ark. Spiritual fear and its effects are represented literally through the reverent words and prayers of the sailors after God delivers them from the storm, as well as through Lot's verbal attempt to 'chast' the Sodomites and turn them away from their sin by explaining to them the error of their ways. Thus, allegorical signification prefigures literal expression at the same time as the literal sense, in turn, strengthens and justifies the allegorical. The two forms of perception are 'mutually intelligible,' to use Blanch and Wasserman's words, and together they comprise a unified, single-minded rhetorical discourse firmly based upon the salutary nature of spiritual fear.

Such allegorical and literal representations of fear can be understood as either an 'objective circumstance' of or a 'subjective response' to the perceived threat of judgment, punishment and divine displeasure.<sup>5</sup> For example, God's request that Jonah should preach to the Ninevites inspires in the prophet an objective, understandable fear of how his

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Francis Seeburger notes the importance of distinguishing between a fear of God and natural forms of dread: 'The God who is revealed to us in such fear is not just one other thing to be afraid of, alongside spiders, snakes, strangers, and all the other things toward which we can experience natural fear. Instead, in the genuine fear of God, God is revealed as irreducible to any such finite objects of ordinary fear. To experience fear before God as one might toward a threatening natural event is to fall into a form of idolatry, in which we confuse God with some created being.' 'Humility, Maturity, and the Fear of God', pp. 167-68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Y. Tuan, *Landscapes of Fear*, p. 210. Tuan states that fear 'is not only objective circumstance but also subjective response.' An object which should be feared - a gibbet is the example Tuan uses - might indeed inspire fear, but not always in the way one might expect. Gibbets, Tuan says, were erected in order to be objects of fear within the cultural landscape, but that they eventually were accepted as 'a normal component of the urban and rural scene.' As such, they retained their status as landmarks, but lost their original terrifying significance. Whether, or how, a person chose to fear the gibbet, or any other dreadful object, becomes a matter of subjective outlook and response.

audience might receive his message and react to it. But Jonah's dread is at the same time subjective, for he actively devalues his fear by choosing to fear the Ninevites inordinately rather than subjecting this lesser fear to the greater obligation of obedience he owes to God. In Cleanness and Patience fear at one and the same time functions both objectively and subjectively. First of all, by focussing upon imminent judgment, violent destruction and their concomitant terrors, each poem objectively shows the audience why it should feel fear. Second, the two poems illustrate how a person should experience and exhibit dread properly by presenting laudably subjective reactions to danger in the spiritual fear of Noah, Lot, the sailors and the Ninevites. The threat of destruction presented by the exempla in Cleanness and Patience provide straightforward, objective examples of dread; but through their elaboration of the different types of fear experienced by their characters, these illustrative stories also are supposed to inspire in their audience a subjective response. Ideally they should encourage each individual reader to contemplate fear's various forms and motivations, and at the same time prompt him or her to respond to the impending threat of judgment in a manner which acknowledges and orders dread according to its relative moral value.

The words 'speech community' denote a multiplicity of voices sounding together in order to create a single unified language. However, underneath this perceived unity there lies a plurality of disparate discourses. Among the separate voices which I have examined in this dissertation have been the scholastic theologians and their dialectical approach to determining the qualities of fear and the preachers and moralists who adapted these ideas in their discursive, exhortative efforts to teach people how to experience dread. Together their dialectical and rhetorical approaches created a common language of dread, but in order for this mode of speech to be truly effective or affective it has to be spoken by the solitary voice of each individual reader. In *Cleanness* the poet first stresses fear's communal aspect through his retelling of the Flood and its eradication of nearly all creation, but as the poem progresses the focus of destruction and the dread it should inspire lessens as judgment and death next fall only upon a specific region (Sodom and Gomorrah), then a single city (Jerusalem), and finally upon a single individual (Belshazzar). Patience also incorporates elements of communal and individual dread. In it the poet depicts collectively fearful conversion amongst the communities of the sailors and the Ninevites, but he also stresses individual fearfulness through his characterization of Jonah. Although by the end of the poem we have witnessed the fear-inspired transformation of an entire city, the narrative

focus remains centred upon the spiritual development of the prophet. The dialogue between God and Jonah in the poem's closing lines clearly states that *Patience*'s message is primarily intended to promote personal understanding; we, as the poem's readers, are supposed to see the folly of Jonah's disordered dread and anger, but at the same time we are forced to ask ourselves whether we would have done any better had any of us been in Jonah's place.

By focussing upon fear in both collective groups and single characters the poet of Cleanness and Patience appeals to his audience, making clear to its members the spiritual obligations they each owe to God as well as the common weaknesses, strengths, punishments and rewards they share. At the same time, however, he shows his readers that choosing to fear properly or improperly is a matter of individual choice. He depicts, expounds and exhorts a variety of fears, employing images of natural and sinful dread in order to illustrate spiritual fear. Furthermore, by forcing his readers to face up to and accept these different forms of fear he attempts to teach them the fearful language necessary if one is to cultivate the virtues of cleanness and patience. Once each individual reader has learned this lesson and acquired this mode of speech, he or she will transcend, as Romans 8:15 says, the spirit of fearful bondage and instead will merit 'the spirit of adoption' - a spirit which perfects the language of fear by transforming the sinful clamour of Sodom into the Ninevites' plea for repentance. The poet uses the rhetoric of fear in Cleanness and Patience to inspire his readers to accept this spirit. In doing so he gives them the fearful vocabulary necessary to enable them to cry out - both individually and communally - the words 'Abba Pater!' and thereby avoid sinful fear and instead embrace a loving dread of God.

## **Appendix 1**

# An outline of treatments of fear in selected sources

# I. Peter Lombard: Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae, Book III, Distinction 34

Chapter 1: De septem donis Spiritus Sancti

Chapter 2: Quod septem dona sint in angelis et sint virtutes

Chapter 3: Quod in Christo fuerint illa septem dona

Chapter 4: Plena timorum distinctio

- Chapter 5: De casto et servili plenius agit, tangens interdum de initiali
- Chapter 6: Quomodo distent duo timore per similitudinem duarum mulierum ostendit
- Chapter 7: Quod timor servilis et initialis dicitur initium sapientiae, sed differenter

Chapter 8: De hoc quod Augustinus dicit, castum timorem esse aeternum

Chapter 9: An timor poenae qui fuit in Christo fuerit servilis vel initialis vel alius

#### II. St. Thomas Aquinas: Commentum in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi, Book III, Distinction 34, Part 2

Articulus 1: Utrum definitio Damasceni de timore sit bona

Articulus 2: Utrum timor servilis sit a Spiritus sancto

Articulus 3: Utrum timor castus sit idem in substantia cum timore servili

#### III. St. Bonaventure: Commentaria in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi, Book III, Distinction 34, Part 2

Articulus I: De timore informi sive servili

- Quaestio 1: Utrum timor servilis sit donum Spiritus sancti divinitus datum
- Quaestio 2: Utrum usus timoris servilis sit bonus, an malus
- Quaestio 3: Utrum timor servilis expellatur, gratia adveniente

Articulus II: De timor gratuito

Quaestio 1: Utrum timor initialis et filialis sint diversae timoris species

Quaestio 2: Utrum, crescente caritate, timor decrescat

Quaestio 3: Utrum timor gratuitus in patria maneat

#### Dubia circa litteram Magistri

- **Dubium 1:** 'Et quia de timore tractandi occurrit nobis locus, sciendum est, quatuor esse timores.'
- **Dubium 2:** 'Sciendum est, quatuor timore esse, scilicet mundanum vel humanum, etc.'
- **Dubium 3:** 'Attende, quod hic quatuor distinguuntur timores, cum supra Beda dixerit, duos esse...'
- **Dubium 4:** 'Item quaeriutr de hoc quod Beda vocat "amicabilem timorem castum."

**Dubium 5:** 'Item quaeritur de hoc quod dicit, quod "uterque timor, scilicet initialis et servilis, dicitur initium sapientiae."'

### IV. St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae

1a2ae Quaestio 41: De timore secundum se

Articulus 1: Utrum timor sit passio animae

Articulus 2: Utrum timor sit specialis passio

Articulus 3: Utrum sit aliquis timor naturalis

Articulus 4: Utrum convenienter assignentur species timoris

#### 1a2ae Quaestio 42: De objecto timoris

Articulus 1: Utrum objectum timoris sit bonum vel malum

Articulus 2: Utrum malum naturae sit objectum timoris

Articulus 3: Utrum timor sit de malo culpae

Articulus 4: Utrum timor ipse timeri possit

Articulus 5: Utrum repentina magis timeantur

Articulus 6: Utrum ea contra quae non est remedium magis timeantur

#### 1a2ae Quaestio 43: De causa timoris

Articulus 1: Utrum causa timoris sit amor

Articulus 2: Utrum causa timoris sit defectus

#### 1a2ae Quaestio 44: De effectibus timoris

Articulus 1: Utrum timor faciat contractionem

Articulus 2: Utrum [timor] faciat consiliativos

Articulus 3: Utrum timor faciat tremorem

Articulus 4: Utrum timor impediat operationem

#### 2a2ae Quaestio 19: De Dono Timoris

Articulus 1: Utrum Deus debeat timeri

- Articulus 2: De divisione timoris in timorem filialem; initialem; servilem; mundanum
- Articulus 3: Utrum timor mundanus semper sit malus

Articulus 4: Utrum timor servilis sit bonus

Articulus 5: Utrum sit idem in substantia cum filiali

Articulus 6: Utrum, adveniente charitate, excludatur timor servilis

Articulus 7: Utrum timor sit initium sapientiae

Articulus 8: Utrum timor initialis sit idem in substantia cum timore

#### filiali

Articulus 9: Utrum timor sit Donum Spiritus Sancti

Articulus 10: Utrum [timor] crescat crescente charitate

Articulus 11: Utrum maneat in patria

Articulus 12: Quid respondent ei in Beatitudinibus et Fructibus

2a2ae Quaestio 22: De praeceptis pertinentibus ad spem et timorem Articulus 2: De praeceptis pertinentibus ad timorem 2a2ae Quaestio 125: De timore
 Articulus 1: Utrum timor sit peccatum
 Articulus 2: Utrum peccatum timoris opponatur fortitudini

Articulus 3: Utrum timor sit peccatum mortale

Articulus 4: Utrum timor excuset a peccato

2a2ae Quaestio 126: De vitio intimiditas Articulus 1: Utrum intimiditas sit peccatum Articulus 2: Utrum opponatur fortitudini

**3a Quaestio 85:** De poenitentia secundum quod est virtus Articulus 5: Utrum principium poenitentiae sit ex timore

 V. Pseudo-Vincent of Beauvais: Speculum Morale, Book I, Part 1 Distinctio 26: De timore et audacia Distinctio 27: De obiecto timoris Distinctio 28: De causa timoris Distinctio 29: De effectu timoris

VI. Stephen of Bourbon: Tractatus de diversis materiis praedicabilibus, Part I Primus titulus: De VII speciebus timoris Secundus titulus: De effectibus timoris Domini in genere Tercius titulus: De Deo timendo Quartus titulus: De inferno Quintus titulus: De timendo purgatorio futuro Sextus titulus: De timore futuri judicii Septimus titulus: De timore mortis Octavus titulus: De timore peccati Nonus titulus: De presenti periculo timendo Decimus titulus: De qualitate inimicorum humani generis

VII. William Peraldus: Summae virtutum ac vitiorum, Vol. I, Tractatus 6, Part 3 Chapter 1: De ordine dicendorum de dono Timoris. Et de descriptionibus eiusdem

Chapter 2: De commendatione Timoris

Chapter 3: De speciebus Timoris

**Chapter 4:** De his quae possunt incutere Timorem. De attendendis circa extremum iudicium. Et varietate, acerbitate, et infinitate poenarum infernalium

# **Appendix 2**

### **Glossary of Terms**

- *timor naturalis* (natural fear): a morally valueless fear of death and pain arising from natural love, or the love of life. It is a fear 'of what is disagreeable and corruptive [and] repulsive to one's natural desire for one's own existence' (Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 1a2ae 41, 3; Aristotle, *Rhetoric* II, 5).
  - *segnities* (laziness): a dread based upon the amount of labour involved in a difficult task. If a deed is deemed to be extremely difficult, a person will fear to perform it because of the amount of labour it entails.
  - erubescentia (embarrassment): the fear of disgrace arising from a shameful act a person is performing; based upon present action.
  - verecundia (shame): a fear of disgrace arising from a shameful act a person has already committed; based upon past action.
  - *admiratio* (wonder / marvel): a fear arising from a person's perception of a threatening evil of great magnitude and unpredictability; results in a feeling of astonishment or wonder.
  - *stupor* (stupor): a fear arising from a person's perception of a threatening evil of unusual and unprecedented magnitude; results in stupor.
  - agonia (anxiety): a fear arising from an 'unforseen and unforeseeable' threatening object.
- *timor libidinosus* (libidinous fear): morally culpable fear arising from the sinful love of worldly and fleshly delights; a person fears to be deprived of temporal pleasures more than he or she fears to lose bodily health or spiritual blessedness.
  - *timor humanus* (human fear): a morally culpable type of fear in which a person fears excessively and irrationally for his or her own physical health and well-being to the exclusion of all other concerns.
  - *timor mundanus* (worldly fear): a morally culpable type of fear in which a person fears to lose temporal wealth and physical goods more than he or she fears death or displeasing God.
- *timor gratuitus* (gratuitous fear): morally laudable, grace-given fear; focusses on spiritual concerns and the love and fear of God
  - timor amicabilis (amicable fear): one name for the spiritually perfect, final manifestation of the Holy Spirit's Gift of fear; it is a type of dread based upon

grace-given friendship in which a person fears any discord that might arise between God and man. It is characterized by freely-given loyalty and respect, as well as a friend's steadfast and confident desire to please rather than disappoint or fail his or her companion; related closely to *timor castus* and *timor filialis*.

- *timor castus* (chaste / pure fear): another name for the Holy Spirit's perfected Gift of Fear; it is a perfect, loving fear of God analogous to the faithful love and respect a wife feels for her husband. It is characterized by a fear of offending and losing God, rather than a dread of punishment; related closely to *timor amicabilis* and *timor filialis*.
- *timor filialis* (filial fear): another name for the final, perfect manifestation of the Holy Spirit's Gift of Fear; it is a type of loving dread analogous to the love, dutiful obedience and reverence a child owes to his or her father. It marks the final, perfected culmination of the Holy Spirit's Gift of fear, an exhibition of veneration which denotes a person's possession of spiritual wisdom; related closely to *timor amicabilis* and *timor castus*.
- *timor initialis* (initial fear): intermediary stage of the Holy Spirit's Gift of fear. Like *timor servilis* it considers God's power to punish, but, similar to *timor filialis* and other perfected forms of spiritual dread, it's main object is the fear of offending God. Aquinas defines it as 'a fear characteristic of the state of beginners [in whom] the first signs of filial fear have begun to emerge as a result of the initial movements of charity' (*Summa Theologiae* 2a2ae 19, 8).
- *timor reverentialis* (reverential fear): another form of perfected spiritual fear; a fear characterized by a person's awe-filled recognition of his or her own human inferiority in comparison to God's overwhelming, divine superiority.
- *timor servilis* (servile fear): the first manifestation of the Holy Spirit's Gift of fear; characterized by a fear of God based upon his power to punish. It is a fear of judgment, damnation and the pains which accompany them. Considered to be an imperfect form of spiritual dread, but helpful and virtuous nonetheless.

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