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Department of English Studies

Mirrors More Than One: Tracing the Early Modern
Mirror-Moment

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Abstract

This research examines the intersections between the sciences of optics and catoptrics, and literature and art. The themes of science, religion, vision and the mirror, are allied and must be considered in tandem with each other in order to form a full and proper picture of mirrors and vision in the Early Modern period.

Throughout the period, the changes and developments in the theories of vision and reflections, and the technologies of mirror manufacture, were vast. These changes are made manifest in the literature and art of the Renaissance, demonstrating a distinct overlap in theories of vision, ideas of the ‘self’, mirror technology, and mirror metaphors. The mirror’s associations are myriad – they include pride, vanity, self-love, fear, the counterfeit, and death – and these motifs are to be found across a range of literature, from myths, to moralising poetry, to conduct manuals and plays, as well as in emblems and paintings. The mirror, through the course of this research, will emerge as a tool of the artist, an object in which to seek the self, with which the self may be portrayed, and in which to seek to improve the self.

Abstract

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Inwardness in the English Renaissance is almost always formulated in terms of a double spectatorship...The difference between the inner and the outer man is a function of the difference between the limited, fallible human observer and the unlimited divine observer...The work of interpretation is thus imagined as a process by which limited human spectatorship might approach divine omniscience.¹

The Early Modern period saw significant changes in the technology and understanding of mirrors and vision.² Optics and catoptrics (the study of reflection), topics which we now consider to be the domain of science, were, from ancient Greece through to the 1700s, intertwined with philosophy and mathematics.³ The mirror entered into the vocabularies of a number of different aspects of culture and experience, including poetry, theatre, religion, art and science.⁴ Whilst literary, scientific, and historical studies have provided thorough investigations of the uses and applications of the mirror, as well as details of its emergence throughout history, this important conceptual connection between the mechanics of the science of vision

¹ Katharine Eisaman Maus, 'Proof and Consequences: Inwardness and its Exposure in the English Renaissance', *Representations* 34 (1991) 29-52, p.38.

² Informative and comprehensive overviews of the history of optics and catoptrics can be found in David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago & London: Chicago University Press, 1976) and Vasco Ronchi, *Optics: The Science of Vision* trans. by Edward Rosen (New York: Dover, [1957] 1991).

³ These texts include Plato's *Timaeus*, the *Republic*, *De Anima*, and *Sense and Sensibilia*, Lucretius's, *De Rerum Natura*, Ptolemy's, *Optica*, Galen's, *On the function of the parts of the body*, Euclid's *Optica*, Augustine's, *Confessions* and *De Trinitate*, and in later years the works of Robert Grosseteste, Roger Bacon, Kepler, and Galileo.

⁴ For example, artists including Parmigianino, Jan Van Eyck, Albrecht Dürer, Lubin Baugin, David Bailly, Artemesia Gentileschi, Sofonisba Anguissola, and Johannes Gump; literary works including Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet and Richard II*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and poems by John Donne, Michael Drayton, and Sir John Davies, as well as myths from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which I will discuss in more detail in the forthcoming chapters.

and the technology of the mirror seems somewhat neglected.⁵ The aim of this thesis is to examine this link in order to offer a more fully contextualised discussion of the mirror and vision throughout the literature and art of the early modern period. Avoiding the idea that selfhood emerged during the Early Modern period, I will show that there is a clear distinction between ideas of inward and outward self, and this thesis will argue that the competing theories of vision, the extramission and the intromission theories, are connected to this division of inward and outward selves. Furthermore, I will argue that the exemplary mirror, through which the mirror is often characterised with classic negative connotations, such as pride and vanity, moves beyond its simple moral lessons and encourages the viewer/reader to look inward and examine themselves. I contend that throughout this period, women wishing to express themselves had to negotiate the problematic associations and motifs of the mirror but men, however, were far more free to examine the the implications and mechanisms of mirrors. However, although newer technologies and theories were available, this thesis will argue that these were not always used, thus allowing the classic mirror-metaphors to persist throughout the period in literary and artistic works.

⁵ Bruno Schweig, *Mirrors: A Guide to the Manufacture of Mirrors and Reflection Surfaces* (1973), William S. Ellis, *Glass: From the First Mirror to Fiber Optics, The Story of the Substance that Changed the World* (1998), Sabine Melchoir-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History*, trans. by Katherine H. Jewett (2002), and Mark Pendergrast, *Mirror Mirror: A History of the Human Love Affair with Reflection* (2003) offer historical studies of the mirror; Herbert Grabes, *The Mutable Glass: Mirror-Imagery in Titles and Texts of the Middle Ages and English Renaissance*, (1982), Rayna Kalas, *Frame, Glass, Verse: The Technology of Poetic Invention in the English Renaissance* (2007) and Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (2007) each provide substantial examinations of the mirror and literature, and the effects of mirror technology in literary works.

Interpreting the Mirror

Although explorations of visual theory and mirror technology are largely absent from major critical works on English Renaissance poetry, drama or pamphlets, discussions that examine material culture's influence on literature are popular. Jonathan Sawday's *Engines of the Imagination* states that 'the elaborate devices of the artist-engineers of the Renaissance reached deep into early-modern political, aesthetic, and philosophical structures of thought', placing technology firmly at the centre of everyday Renaissance life, across a range of spheres of influence.⁶

This focus on technology as rooted in daily life and the imagination is explored in *Science, Reading, and Renaissance Literature* by Elizabeth Spiller, a text that is concerned with knowledge and new ways of thinking because 'early modern imaginative literature and experimental science are inventions of a startling new attention to knowledge'.⁷ This new knowledge and new approach to knowledge informs 'new ways of writing that try to recreate those ideas for readers'.⁸ The connection between knowledge and technology highlighted by Spiller is also discussed by Sabine Melchior-Bonnet in *The Mirror: A History*, particularly in her chapter entitled 'The Magic of Resemblance', which attends to the development of self-knowledge, and how subjectivity can be related to the mirror. Noting the dual concerns of the 'suspect moral imperative' and Christian piety, which place the mirror in a 'double bind', Melchior-Bonnet positions the mirror and its duality as the

⁶ Jonathan Sawday, *Engines of the Imagination: Renaissance Culture and the Rise of the Machine* (Routledge: London & New York, 2007), p. xviii.

⁷ Elizabeth Spiller, *Science, Reading and Renaissance Literature: The Art of Making Knowledge, 1580-1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.1.

⁸ Spiller, p.1.

place where ‘the individual could define himself as a subject’.⁹ However, neither Spiller’s work, nor Melchior-Bonnet’s book deals specifically with the connections between visual theory and mirror-technology, and their influence on early-modern literature, which is the central concern of my thesis.

In *Frame, Glass, Verse*, Rayna Kalas attends to what she terms the ‘signal metaphors’ of Renaissance poetry: windows, lenses, frames and glass; and she argues for these objects as uniquely linked with the ‘craft of poetic invention’.¹⁰ Kalas joins matter and meaning, and argues for a ‘flexibility in the application of the word’, an approach that this thesis will follow with respect to the many mirror-terms and their diffuse connotations.¹¹ Kalas argues that ‘at the level of the conceit, the Sonnets establish a relationship between technical and figurative invention that integrates...the articulation of thought with matter and social rank with craft production’.¹² For Kalas, ‘glassmaking...was a critical reference point for both scientific and poetic discourse in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries’, and she finds that Shakespeare’s sonnets make use of ‘windows, mirrors and other glass objects to illustrate that ‘links between the verbal and the visual in poesy’ can be ‘articulated as technical invention and craft practice’ and ‘not only through the recourse to either the symbolic emblem and the Neoplatonic device...or the work of art’.¹³ Kalas’s text is, however, mostly restricted to the frame, as she devotes three of her six chapters to the object, and glass receives much less attention, whereas my

⁹ Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History* trans. by Katherine H. Jewett (New York & London: Routledge, 2002), p.156.

¹⁰ Rayna Kalas, *Frame, Glass, Verse: The Technology of Poetic Invention in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2007), p.1.

¹¹ Kalas, p.1.

¹² Kalas, see chapter six, pp.166-198.

¹³ Kalas, p.168.

project will have the mirror as the central strand running through each chapter. Furthermore, I will argue that while the mirror seemed ‘uniquely linked’ with literary and artistic forms of expression, the technology is not necessarily positively reflected in these works. Rather, I will argue that often the mirror is negatively represented, and the object seems unable to escape its damaging discourse, not despite, but because of scientific progress, which only works to contribute to the mirror’s problematic iconography.

Mark Pendergrast’s *Mirror, Mirror: A History of the Human Love Affair with Reflection* provides an accessible and full history of the mirror, in that his book traces the looking-glass back to the Egyptians and Etruscans. He covers folklore, religion, magic and science, among other topics, in a number of concise chapters that reveal the mirror to be an object of fascination and intrigue. However, due to the nature of the text, his engagement with optical and catoptrical science is minimal, and neither literature nor art are investigated in depth. The approach of this thesis will be to preserve the broadness displayed in Pendergrast’s method, but to focus more strongly on the literature and art of the period. Optical theory is, however, discussed in David C. Lindberg’s *Theories of Vision: from Al-Kindi to Kepler*. Lindberg, prolific in the field of the history of visual theory, uses as his starting point the process of visual perception as it ‘not only embraces the anatomy and physiology of the visual system’ but explores ‘the mathematical principles of perspective, and the psychology of visual perception’.¹⁴ The problem of vision is, argues Lindberg, ‘a microcosm of the entire optical enterprise’.¹⁵ This thesis will take this further and argue for vision and its theory as central to, and intimately linked with, the mirror

¹⁴ David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago & London: Chicago University Press, 1976), p.x.

¹⁵ Lindberg, p.x.

and its technology. While Lindberg writes from a purely historical, scientific approach, this thesis will draw on the history of the science of optics, in order to examine its influence on selected poetry and painting of the period, as well as popular pamphlets and plays. Both Lindberg and Melchior-Bonnet concentrate on producing a detailed history – Lindberg of optics, Melchior-Bonnet of mirrors – and, while Melchior-Bonnet includes art and literature in her ‘historical essay on the mirror’, her history is of the French mirror, and often her resources are thus rooted in French culture.¹⁶ This thesis will focus on English literary and printed texts only, thus moving away from Melchior-Bonnet’s approach.

English literary sources are discussed in Herbert Grabes’s *The Mutable Glass: Mirror-Imagery in Titles and Texts of the Middle Ages and English Renaissance*. Grabes works with the vast array of printed texts from as early as 1100 to 1700, and traces specifically those that are related to the mirror. Grabes’s study does not engage with the science or philosophy of the mirror, but rather seeks to establish a method by which the wide-ranging mirror-metaphor may be categorized. A large portion of his study is taken up by the generation of an exhaustive list of the potential definitions and uses of the mirror-metaphor, under which texts (both printed and literary) are listed. Whilst this categorising of mirror-metaphors provides a useful glossary, and demonstrates just how mutable the mirror was during his chosen period, this approach presents the problem of restriction. Often, as this thesis will demonstrate, multiple meanings can be encoded in a single usage of a mirror-metaphor, and so categorisation can often create unhelpful limitations that, if applied, would hinder the potential signifiers of a given text. The aim of this thesis is to

¹⁶ Melchior-Bonnet, p.ix.

provide as broad and inclusive a study as possible, in order to protect the complexity of the object of the mirror, and thus while the classifications Grabes makes will often be of use throughout my study, I will move away from this organising principle.

In terms of vision in Early Modern European culture, Stuart Clark's monograph *Vanities of the Eye* examines the trajectory of vision through the Renaissance, investigating the implications of developments such as perspective on the integrity of vision, and seeks to understand 'what happens to intellectual life when "visible signs of indeterminate meaning" suffuse a particular culture'.¹⁷ The eyes were considered so important that they were associated with the mind and learning, and perception was considered a visual process. In depictions of the five senses, sight was represented by the 'symbolisms of accurate representation itself – naturalist painting, reflected light, and perspective depth' or the 'symbolisms of objects designed to achieve or display it', such as 'spectacles, telescopes, terrestrial globes, and, above all, plain, flat mirrors'.¹⁸ However, Clark argues that the emphasis turned to 'likeness' or 'similitude' and, eventually, 'visual anomalies and paradoxes' caused the collapse of 'the cognitive theory that permitted them to occur'. Sight therefore was not always the preferred sense in the hierarchy, and often hearing and touch were favoured as the 'prime vehicle of learning'.¹⁹ Clark's text provides a fascinating and particularly nuanced account of vision, on which my thesis will draw for context, and for the breadth of resources that will help inform my understanding of vision throughout the period. However, where my work departs from Clark's is in my unification of vision and mirrors, while Clark concentrates solely on the issue of

¹⁷ Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.3.

¹⁸ Clark, p.12-13.

¹⁹ See Clark, chapter one, 'Species', of *Vanities of the Eye*, pp.9-38.

sight. Clark, in his discussion of George Hakewill's *The Vanitie of the Eie* (1608), a text that sits at the heart of his research, analyses what he refers to as the 'demolition of Renaissance optimism about vision'.²⁰ Hakewill's text cites vision as the cause of all evil, responsible for gluttony, jealousy, contempt, and envy, among other vices. The eye was blamed for adultery, and so it was framed in this series of 'biblical connotations'.²¹ Clark demonstrates, through Hakewill that vision could be closely allied with religion, and certainly the mirror's obvious links to sins such as vanity and pride see that it, too, falls down with vision. This argument, which places both vision and the mirror as objects of sin, objects whose essentially dual nature lends itself to becoming susceptible to sin, and also to encouraging corruption, is one that this thesis will follow, although I would argue that these themes had been well articulated prior to Hakewill's text, so that when *The Vanitie of the Eie* appeared in 1608, there were already several texts, both visual and literary, that fully described and established the message that Hakewill expounds. Visually, for example, Hans Baldung Grien's *Three Ages of the Woman and the Death* of 1510 (see figure 13), clearly works with the established traditions that place the mirror and self-examination in a context of self-love and sin.

Debora Shuger's essay 'The "I" of the Beholder: Renaissance Mirrors and the Reflexive Mind', picks apart and attempts to conceptualise the mirror. Shuger considers the notion of subjectivity and identity as related to what the individual saw reflected in the mirror, and immediately encounters difficulties in making this connection – 'up to the late seventeenth century, references to mirrors...are very

²⁰ Clark, p.25.

²¹ Lindberg, p.25.

odd'.²² These mirrors are odd, Shuger claims, because the mirror rarely reflects the self, that is, the face of the viewer, and so these mirrors 'obviously have nothing to do with self-consciousness'.²³ Most Renaissance mirrors do not reflect the face of the person before the mirror, but rather, reflect an exemplary image, and those that do reflect an 'inner self', in fact reflect 'theological commonplaces', a 'generic rather than individual' self.²⁴ This leaves us, Shuger claims, 'hard-pressed to find any early modern English instance of mirroring used as a paradigm for reflexive self-consciousness'.²⁵ Thus far, I would not disagree with Shuger on these points, though rather than categorising references and instances of mirrors in English literature as 'odd', I view them as entirely commensurate with biblical, scientific and philosophical discourse. However, I feel that the difficulty that arises from Shuger's research comes in the attempt to apply an anachronistic theory of selfhood onto a period and object that is rooted in an entirely different context. This thesis will argue that a sense of self is not necessarily essentially detached from the structures of society and religion. Rather, it is my contention, and a central concern of this thesis, that an independent sense of self can exist during the early modern period, and it is achieved through the careful negotiation and interpretation of societal norms and rules.

The link between vision and biblical sins is replicated with the mirror. As seen in Grien's painting of 1510 (see figure 13), the Vanitas motif was established, with the mirror standing as a symbol of pride, vanity, and transience. This unseemly object

²² Debora Shuger, 'The "I" of the Beholder: Renaissance Mirrors and the Reflexive Mind', in *Renaissance Culture and the Everyday* ed. by Patricia Fumerton & Simon Hunt (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 21-41 (p.22).

²³ Shuger, p.22.

²⁴ Shuger, p.22, p.26.

²⁵ Shuger, p.31.

afforded the individual the opportunity to examine themselves and, perhaps, to develop some form of autonomous selfhood. A. J. Piesse, in her article ‘Identity’, offers an exploration of early-modern identity. In her introduction, Piesse notes that much of the scholarship on identity asserts that ‘the notion of self-interrogation in anything other than the religious sense flourishes across a range of disciplines only from the beginning of the sixteenth-century’.²⁶ However, Piesse locates notions of self-scrutiny in the writings of Plato and Aristotle and argues that, since the sixteenth-century looks back to classical philosophers, Platonic and Neoplatonic notions of selfhood are ‘vital’ to understanding the early modern individual.²⁷ This is an argument to which I will adhere in this thesis; I propose that an identity mediated through religious doctrine is a legitimate identity nonetheless.

During this period, we are reminded, scholars were aware ‘in the wake of the condemnation of Galileo’ of the risks of writing about theology and science – Nicholas Jolly cites Descartes whose views are often ambiguous but regularly cite the ‘tight connexion between philosophy and theology’.²⁸ Richard Popkin addresses the debate of the relation of theology and philosophy during the seventeenth century, and argues that the seventeenth century does not entirely ‘divorce itself from theology in order to march towards the Enlightenment’, but rather ‘religious issues were deeply intertwined with philosophical conceptions of knowledge, revelation, the importance of scientific enquiry, human nature and what it is to be reasonable’.²⁹

²⁶ A. J. Piesse, ‘Identity’, in *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, ed. by Michael Hattaway, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p.634.

²⁷ Piesse, p.635.

²⁸ Nicholas Jolly, ‘The Relation Between Theology and Philosophy’ in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* ed. by Daniel Garber & Michael Ayers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), i, pp.363-388, (p.365).

²⁹ Richard Popkin, ‘The Religious Background of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy’ in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* ed. by Daniel Garber & Michael Ayers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), i, pp.393-422.

Margaret Miles, in her essay ‘Vision: The Eye of the Body and the Eye of the Mind in Saint Augustine’s “De Trinitate” and “Confessions”’, links together the importance of St Augustine’s implementation of physical vision as a method of understanding and expressing spiritual vision. Miles claims that ‘Augustine’s understanding of the physics of vision enables him to describe a process by which one comes to a vision of “that which is”’.³⁰ Miles sees the role of vision as ‘pivotal’ to Augustine’s theory of devotion, and points to the particular physicality of the visual theory as significant as part of his sense of spirituality.³¹ Miles is referring to the first model of visual theory, the extramission theory, described by Plato and Aristotle – a theory that pervaded philosophy, optical science, and literary works throughout the Medieval and Early Modern periods. This theory stated that a ‘fire’ was emitted by the eyes and reached out towards the object. The form of the object would mingle with the visual ‘fire’, and produce a sensation in the soul that caused an individual to see the object. Therefore, ‘in the act of vision, viewer and object are momentarily united’.³² The extramission theory was extremely popular throughout the Medieval and Early Modern periods, despite there being evidence of its inaccuracy.

This act of seeing relates directly to Augustine’s sense of spiritual vision, where ‘the object and the viewer are both essential to an activity in which the attention of the human being has been consciously concentrated and trained’.³³ This particularly physical sense of seeing, in which there is contact between the object viewed and its viewer, characterises a notion of the theory of vision that prevailed but did not

³⁰ Margaret Miles, ‘Vision: The Eye of the Body and the Eye of the Mind in Saint Augustine’s *De Trinitate* and *Confessions*’ in *The Journal of Religion* 63 (April, 1982), 125-142, (p.125).

³¹ Miles, p.126-7.

³² Miles, p.128.

³³ Miles, p.130.

remain unchallenged. In the intromission theory, the eye was the passive recipient of the images that entered it, thus reversing the power of the viewer.

Michael Camille addresses the impact of the intromission theory of vision in his essay, 'Before the Gaze: The Internal Senses and Late Medieval Practices of Seeing'. Camille argues that the shift from the extramission theory to the intromission theory was significant for the understanding of the human subject in the Medieval period, particularly so in the context of religion.³⁴ In Camille's discussion, the subject's relationship with God is altered dramatically by this reversal of the visual flow. This thesis will discuss and connect the distinction between the two major theories of vision – extramission and intromission – to ideas of internal and external selves. Going beyond Camille's analysis, which is restricted to the context of religious devotion during the Medieval period, this thesis recognises that although the intromission theory had been proposed before the beginning of the Early Modern era, it did not displace the popular extramission theory. David C. Lindberg & Nicholas H. Steneck argue that the earlier belief that lenses and other optical devices deceived through optical illusions, coupled with a lack of a theory of vision, 'prevented the invention of the telescope for centuries' and that it was not until Della Porta, Galileo and Kepler's work that this 'horrendous...error' was corrected.³⁵ In acknowledgement of this, my research will therefore discuss how both theories are linked to subjectivity and mirroring, throughout the Early Modern period. It could be expected that the progress of science and technology would be reflected in the

³⁴ Michael Camille, 'Before the Gaze: The Internal Senses and Late Medieval Practices of Seeing', in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw*, ed. by Robert S. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp.197-223 (p.204).

³⁵ David C. Lindberg & Nicholas H. Steneck, 'The Sense of Vision and the Origins of Modern Science' in Allen G. Debus (ed.), *Science, Medicine and Society in the Renaissance*, Vol 1 (London: Heinemann, 1972), pp. 30-31.

literature and visual art of the time, however, as I will show throughout the course of this project, this is not necessarily the case. In many cases, the intromission theory was viewed with suspicion – objects such as the mirror, the lens and the telescope were framed in terms that were frightening and destabilising - while the, perhaps safer, motifs and images surrounding the extramission theory persisted.

Mirrors in Myth and Early Modern Literature

The literal mirror reflects whatever is placed before it, whether that mirror is fashioned from glass, metal or stone. The early modern period made regular use of the multiple meanings that the word ‘mirror’ connoted.³⁶ Its wide range of metaphors was bolstered by the advances in technology, which moved from looking-glasses made from stone, to metal mirrors, to convex and concave pieces of glass of different quality and clarity, to plane, crystal mirrors. The mirror, it is argued, ‘makes an early appearance in the vocabulary of the theologian’ where ‘it gives rise to a moral...discourse that charts out the capacity for self-examination’ and ‘develops the dialectic of essence and appearance’.³⁷ However, Melchior-Bonnet argues that ‘the mirror as an element of identity in autobiographical accounts comes about much later and much less frequently’.³⁸ The mirror’s involvement in any process of self-knowledge during this period is certainly contested, and creating links between selfhood and the mirror or its reflection should be approached with caution.³⁹ This thesis will examine the complexities of the relation of the looking-

³⁶ See Herbert Grabes, *The Mutable Glass: mirror imagery in titles and texts of the Middle Ages and the English Renaissance*, trans. by Gordon Collier (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

³⁷ Melchior-Bonnet, p.3.

³⁸ Melchior-Bonnet, p.3.

³⁹ See Shuger, ‘The “I” of the Beholder’, pp.21-41.

glass to apparent expressions of 'self', such as the self-portrait, and will position these within a cultural and religious context.

The mirror must surely have provided quite the riddle to the individual at the first moment of perceiving his or her own reflection. Psychoanalysis now considers this moment to be seminal in the development of the individual, and, in Jacques Lacan's well-known essay 'The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience', the 'relation between the organism and its reality' is established for the first time when the individual understands the reflection as his or her own image.⁴⁰ In this instance, the individual moves from viewing the body as fragmented to understanding it as a unified whole.⁴¹ In the story of Narcissus we find the young man battling for this moment of comprehension and, ultimately, perishing for it. Ovid's tale of Narcissus, in book three of his *Metamorphoses*, is most often associated with the theme of self-love but, within that, we find his struggle to understand the image that he sees reflected before him in the water. The warning issued to Narcissus's mother, when she enquired as to how long he might live, was that 'if he does not come to know himself', then he would live to 'a ripe old age'.⁴² This warning was initially considered to be 'empty words', until 'the strange madness...afflicted the boy' and the 'nature of his death proved its truth'.⁴³ However, this aspect of the myth receives less attention and, during the early modern period, the moral of this tale is the danger of gazing at oneself in the mirror.⁴⁴ Narcissus pays the ultimate price not for falling in love with himself, but for realising

⁴⁰ Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. by Alan Sheridan, (London: Tavistock, 1977), p.4.

⁴¹ Lacan, p.4.

⁴² Ovid, *The Metamorphoses*, trans. by Mary M. Innes, (London: Penguin, 1955), p.83.

⁴³ Ovid, p.83.

⁴⁴ See Calvin R. Edwards, 'The Narcissus Myth in Spenser's Poetry' in *Studies in Philology*, 74 (January, 1977), 63-88. Edwards touches on the enigmatic nature of the Narcissus myth, and questions whether or not the moment of recognition actually constitutes self-knowledge.

the truth of his reflection. The Narcissus myth is treated repeatedly by ancient and Renaissance artists, writers and poets: Pausanias (2nd century AD) in his 10 book *Description of Greece* (c.50-70AD); Leon Battista Alberti characterised Narcissus as the inventor of painting in *Della Pittura* (1435); Sir Philip Sidney's second song in *Astrophil and Stella* (1591) refers to the 'beauty' of he 'who til death looked in a wat'ry glass'; Edmund Spenser describes 'hungry eyes through greedy couetize, / Still to behold the obiect of their paine / with no contentment can themselves suffize' (l.1-3), in his thirty-fifth sonnet in the *Amoretti* (1595); while Christopher Marlowe alludes to Narcissus's plight in *Hero and Leander* (1598), when he describes Leander's beauty thus – 'my slack muse, sings of Leander's eyes, / Those orient cheeks and lips, exceeding his / That leapt into the water for a kiss / Of his own shadow and.../ Died ere he could enjoy the love of any' (l.72-76); and Benvenuto Cellini sculpts Narcissus between 1500 and 1571, and Caravaggio and Nicholas Poussin paint *Narcissus* (1597-99), and *Echo and Narcissus* (1628-30) respectively.⁴⁵ Narcissus's mirror-experience, then, is an enduring image that permeates Renaissance literature and art, characterising the mirror as the object of vanity and self-love, themes that I will investigate in chapter three.

The mirror is often the key object around which other Ovidian myths centre. The myth of Medusa also receives regular treatment in works of literature and art, and has its place in my fourth chapter. In this myth, the powers of vision and reflection are combined, pitted against each other, in order to achieve the climactic beheading of the Gorgon. Petrarch describes the power that his love for Laura has over him as

⁴⁵ Sir Philip Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella* (1591) in *Renaissance Literature: An Anthology*, ed. by Michael Payne & John Hunter (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), stanza 82, p.554; Edmund Spenser, *Amoretti and Epithalamion* (printed for William Ponsonby, 1595), EEBO, image no 23, C3^r; Christopher Marlowe, *Hero and Leander* (1598) in Payne & Hunter, p. 688.

the same as ‘Medusa had over the old Moorish giant, / when she turned him to flint’, comparing the power of love to the destructive, active force of Medusa’s sight, a power so strong it renders others inanimate; Giorgio Vasari describes Leonardo painting the head of Medusa in his *Le Vite di Piu Eccellenti Pittori, Scultori e Architettori* (1550); in *Macbeth* when King Duncan is killed, the sight this produces is so horrific that Macduff advises Lenox, ‘Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight / With a new Gorgon’ (II.iii.70-71), a moment that reverses the usual flow of sight and adds the unusual notion of Medusa’s deathly stare as being beneficial in certain circumstances; Ben Jonson in ‘Ode’ alludes to the ‘crystal shield’ that Minerva provided to Perseus so that he could make ‘gorgon envy yield’ (l.38-41); while Cellini sculpts *The Triumphant Perseus* (1545-54), Caravaggio paints *Medusa* (1598) and Bernini sculpts *Medusa’s Head* (1630).⁴⁶ Here, the reflection in the mirror allows Perseus to force defeat and triumph over the powerful stare of the Gorgon, a stare that has, until this point, rendered others lifeless. These two myths, interpreted and reinterpreted during the course of the Renaissance, illustrate the currency of the mirror, as well as its multiple applications - each version shows the interrelation of the ideas of power, destruction, will and force. These two examples, and their repeated re-use, demonstrate ably the irreducible links between vision, mirrors, reflections and comprehension.

The mirror became a popular motif, and was regularly used in the titles of printed texts during the early modern period to connote a number of different meanings. Mirrors and their reflections became synonymous with pride, femininity, vanity, self-

⁴⁶ Petrarch, *Rime Sparse*, no 197 - see *The Medusa Reader*, ed. by Marjorie Garber & Nancy J. Vickers (New York & London: Routledge, 2003); William Shakespeare, *Complete Works*, ed. by Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson & David Scott Kastan, (London: Thomson Learning, 2001), p.782; Ben Jonson in Payne & Hunter, p. 896.

love, Venus, death, spiritual devotion, and compendia, such was the mutability of the object. This thesis will address the issues that the myths of Narcissus and Medusa bring to the fore, and will examine the ways in which the meanings associated with the mirror are used across a selection of literature and art of the period. This research will offer readings of lesser-known printed texts alongside canonical authors such as Spenser and Milton, in order to analyse more fully the extent to which mirrors, optics and catoptrics filtered from science and philosophy into literature and art.

Optics and Catoptrics, Mirrors and Mirror-Metaphors

Everything does seem to vie
Which should first attract thine eye:
But since none deserves that grace,
In this crystal view thy face.⁴⁷

Andrew Marvell's 'Dialogue Between the Resolved Soul, and Created Pleasure', published some time after 1667 takes dualities and oppositions as its topic. This poem ties together the key themes of vision and mirrors, and marries them with a sense of the spiritual. Marvell uses the metaphysical conceit of the body as a prison, within which the soul is confined, to explore the themes of temptation and restraint. The poem's religious themes are represented in the fact that it 'mirrors and thematically expands the temptation of Christ in the wilderness' (Luke 4:1-13).⁴⁸ Pleasure repeatedly makes attempts at tempting the soul, using the senses of the body to appeal to the soul. Nigel Smith notes that the senses are 'treated in order' so that

⁴⁷ Andrew Marvell, *The Poems of Andrew Marvell* ed. by Nigel Smith (Harlow: Pearson, 2007), , l.31-34, p.35-36.

⁴⁸ Smith in Marvell, *The Poems*, p.33.

the higher senses are sight and hearing, senses that ‘operate without contact’.⁴⁹ The world, Pleasure finds, is full of temptations and beauty, to the extent that it is difficult for the eye to know where to look first. Therefore, Pleasure advises the Soul, ‘in this crystal view thy face’.⁵⁰ The fickle eye does not know which way to look first, or upon what its gaze should fall, and so the better option is to contemplate the self-image in the mirror. The Soul resists this temptation, referring to the ‘Creator’s skill’ which must always be ‘priz’d’. The Soul has no time for such trivialities and instructs, ‘cease tempter’, for the soul will not be bound by this. The Soul goes on to consider sight further: ‘If things of sight such heavens be / What heavens are those we cannot see? (l.55-56). The Soul further resists the fleshly, worldly pleasures presented to the eyes and eschews them in favour of a more spiritual, inward view – the invisible beauty of the spiritual that cannot be seen and is therefore all the more stunning. The mirror here is representative of weakness and the sins that emerge from delighting in trivial, earthly temptations as seen through the eyes. Simultaneously, sight comes to represent a deeper spirituality, an inner vision that can be put to work usefully in observing divine beauties. Sight then, can be internal (spiritual) or external (worldly) and is often linked with the mirror.

⁴⁹ Smith in Marvell, *The Poems*, p.33.

⁵⁰ Editor Nigel Smith notes the following on the use of the word ‘crystal’ in this poem: ‘it may seem that Pleasure is offering the crystal for the Soul to see its reflection in; however, all relevant OED entries refer to the transparent rather than reflective properties of crystals, and the OED does not give ‘mirror’ as one of the senses of “crystal”’. He further noted, however, that “Crystal” was an abbreviated form of “crystal-glass” (OED, A n. 5) or an object made from it (OED, A n. 6); crystal glass was known for its transparency but could also reflect.’ (Smith, p.37). However, Ian C. Parker argues that the lack of reference in the OED to the usage of ‘crystal’ as meaning ‘mirror’ does not necessarily preclude its use in this way. Parker convincingly argues otherwise, listing examples, and it is my feeling, given my findings throughout the course of this thesis, that the sense intended here is that of a mirror in which Pleasure encourages the soul to look. See Ian C. Parker, ‘Marvell’s ‘Crystal’ Mirrour’, *Notes and Queries*, 56 (June, 2009), 219-226.

This central theme, which sees vision and mirroring linked, is a core focus of this thesis. Chapter one, ‘Dark conceits’ and ‘the light of truth’: optics, catoptrics and the mirror’ has as its starting point a riddle from Thomas Tomkis’s *Lingua: or the combat of the tongue, and the fiue senses for superiority* (1607), which places the mirror in its context of mystery, science and mythology. From this point, the chapter draws together a selection of the key optical texts from philosophy and mathematics, in order to provide an appropriate background against which the literature and art of the thesis may be productively examined. During the period from Plato’s writings on the subject of optics and catoptrics, through to those of Roger Bacon in the thirteenth century, there were two dominant theories of vision – extramission and intromission. The former argues that a light flows out from the eye, meets the object and forms an image that is impressed upon the soul; the latter holds that images enter into the eye. Both of these theories persist, often alongside each other, throughout the Renaissance, even as more precise theories are discovered. The optical and philosophical treatises often appear to offer a threefold construction to their studies: Aristotle’s formulation of the soul is created by a union of three different aspects of the body; Plato’s concept of human beings consists of three genders, and his ideas on the object consists of the reality, its imitation, and its copy; Ptolemy creates a threefold structure of his study of mirrors; and Heron of Alexandria offers a tripartite model of vision that unites optics, dioptrics, and catoptrics. This repeated division into a ‘trinity’ will feature in my discussion in chapter four, where I analyse its appearance in a self-portrait and an extract from a piece of poetry.

The peculiarities of the mirror’s construction – moving from blown glass to flat mirrors; the variances in the substances from which it was created - such as stone,

metal and glass, as well as the opposing theories of extramission and intromission, therefore generated a particularly diverse set of meanings which filtered into the art and literature of the period. Furthermore, writers and artists made creative use of outdated or incorrect theories and mirrors in their work, a point that I will pursue in the course of this thesis.

The theme of self-discovery and self-knowledge is the subject of chapter two, 'Forgery and Seeming: painting and the self'. As I have noted earlier, this topic is particularly fraught with difficulties, not least of which is the fact that attempting to determine an understanding of self, mediated through the mirror, involves tracking such indeterminable factors as experiences, emotions, and comprehension. However, through the discussion of a number of self-portraits, as well as the consideration of alternative expressions of 'self', this chapter negotiates a space for a Renaissance sense of self-knowledge. In particular, my argument centres on the distinction between external and internal notions of 'self', making a link between these and the extramission and intromission theories of vision. Visual theories and vision played a significant part in the theology of the period – there was a division between a trust of the eyes as the most noble of the senses, and a suspicion of them. The eyes were, at the same time, considered particularly susceptible to temptations and involved in deeply spiritual moments, such as visions and transubstantiation. The link between extramission and intromission theories of vision can, I argue, extend into religious discourse and play a significant part in the relation of subject to object, internal and external. In the paintings of Parmigianino, Jan van Eyck and Dürer, I suggest that the interplay of internal and external, often featuring the use of a mirror, is cleverly manipulated to display aspects of self, or self-exploration. The

images of these artists each, in some way, work to illustrate my central argument in which I propose to connect the distinction between internal and external, to the extramission and intromission theories of vision.

The mirror often offers an example to the individual, rather than ‘reflecting’ what is in front of it. The ‘exemplary’ mirror forms the basis of the discussion of chapter three, which offers the myth of Narcissus as a means of leading out a deeper analysis of the ways in which the exemplary mirror-metaphor was offered as an instruction or means of modifying one’s behaviour. These mirrors, which point to the ‘other’ as the example, emerge in a range of genres, from pamphlets warning against the dangers of alcohol, to ‘mirrors’ that remind the individual of a past ‘self’. The exemplary mirror can include the individual who has self-fashioned, and offers his or her self as a model for others, and, within this, are the themes of transience and fakery that are commonly associated with the mirror. Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* offers the faerie queen as an example to all, but pushes this metaphor in other directions, suggesting the text itself as a mirror, as well as making use of the mirror metaphor on several occasions throughout the narrative. Extracts from *Hamlet* and *Richard II* will provide a further investigation of the theme of ‘seeming’ and self-fashioning, and once more, the connection between mirrors and mirroring, and light and self-knowledge are drawn and investigated.

While chapter three focuses on the exemplary mirror, which tends to point towards a single moral lesson, chapter four, ‘Multiplying the Gaze’, is concerned with the mirror’s capacity for replication, duplication, and multiplication. This chapter explores the problems that the exemplary or moral mirror presented for women, at whom it was often directed, and discusses the potential for the woman to

circumvent some of the mirror's negative associations. The painting, *Perseus Cuts the Medusa's Head Off* (c.1650), by Francesco Maffei, explores the chapter's central concern, that of the multi-directional or redirected gaze, highlighting the fear and danger surrounding the Gorgon whose powerful stare subverted traditional norms. A selection of self-portraits by female artists reveals the very different approaches of these women to the problem of representing themselves. Artists seek out a new method of either sidestepping the issues of self-representation, often through a redirection of the gaze, or by presenting themselves as adhering to a particular set of societal conditions.

That the mirror offered the artist a number of tricks and tropes is exemplified in Johannes Gump's *Self-Portrait* (1646). This painting will serve not only to illustrate the chapter's theme of the multiple viewpoints which can be appreciated by both viewer and artist, but is also a direct contrast which shows the disparity between women's self-portraits and those of men. Gump's portrait, which offers three views of the artist, plays on the theme of the threefold structure of representation. In chapter one I highlight the repeated use of a tripartite structure in models of vision, ideas of the soul, and concepts of the study of mirrors, and this chapter will develop this more fully through Gump's self-portrait and Sir John Davies's *Nosce Teipsum* (1599).

Chapter five, 'Milton's Vision', concludes this thesis with a discussion of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), paying particular attention to Milton's elaboration of the notion of microcosm and macrocosm. Chapter five builds on the interrelation of visual theories and theology, taking account of the significant changes in technology and optical science that occurred during Milton's life. Situating two opposing texts

that discuss vision and the eye alongside each other will demonstrate how the eye has come to be thought about during the seventeenth century, and establishes the links between visual theory, the eye and microcosm/macrocosm. Milton's story recounts the experiences of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, but, I will argue, treads a fine line between science and religion that signals Milton's awareness of the theoretical developments, and balances this with a caution that illustrates a recognition of the potential dangers of expressing a world view contrary to the bible's teachings. Milton's blending of new scientific findings into his epic of *The Fall* displays an acceptance of theories that caused concern and fear.

Inclusions and Exclusions

Finally, some words on the scope of this study: in terms of its literary coverage, my focus is chiefly on extracts from Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Shakespeare's *Sonnet III*, *Hamlet*, *Richard II* and *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Nosce Teipsum* by Sir John Davies and *Paradise Lost* by John Milton. These key texts will be supplemented, where appropriate, by printed texts by anonymous or lesser-known authors from the Early Modern period. The primary aim of this project is to maintain the broad scope that the subject merits, since the range of mirrors, mirror-metaphors and examples in which mirroring and reflections occur is vast. Without this breadth, the topic becomes greatly reduced so that it would be possible to discuss perhaps only one type of mirror. The limitation of such an expansive approach is that my discussions of the materials are also broad. However, I feel that to indicate the true nature of the mirror it is essential to take this broad sweep. It is worth nothing however, that there are a number of fascinating topics that could yet be included in this study but which, for lack of space and coherence, have been excluded. One such area is the study of

captromancy, which refers to divination using a mirror. Predictive or magic mirrors can be traced back as far as the Aztecs, and catoptromancy was still practiced throughout the Renaissance.⁵¹ Scrying ‘became more popular as a way to penetrate the mysteries of the universe’ but it ‘also became more dangerous’.⁵² John Dee, personal adviser to Queen Elizabeth I, had a polished obsidian mirror and ‘magic crystal balls’ and while scrying was one of his talents, his breadth of knowledge was extensive, including expertise in astronomy, mathematics, optics, cartography and theology, among other subjects.⁵³ This would make an appealing contribution to the discussion here, had I the time and space to include it. Similarly, the place of the mirror in folklore, as well in the study of alchemy, would be compelling topics to pursue but are currently beyond the scope of this thesis.

While my work locates its discussion in English literature, the works of art that I will draw upon are European. Throughout the Renaissance in England, the visual arts were far less prominent than in the Italian Renaissance. In Europe, painting was far more influential and often it moved far more swiftly towards new painterly techniques, such as realism, perspective, and a new understanding of the use of darkness and light in painting. Vision, then, with its intrinsic links to perspective and light, is intimately connected with painting and the new methods emerging in European art, and so the new techniques and ideas developing in Italy have direct relevance to the themes of this thesis. Furthermore, the repeated concern of Italian painting – in a move away from religious subject matter – with mythological themes makes the European works relevant to this thesis, in which analysis of Ovidian myth recurs.

⁵¹ Pendergrast, p.29.

⁵² Pendergrast, p.37.

⁵³ Pendergrast, p.29, p.41.

The chapters of this project follow a chronological order for the sequence of ideas. However, in some instances material from later or earlier than the date of the main texts of the chapter will be introduced where it is relevant to do so, and where it will contribute to the depth of discussion.

For the principal authors included in this study, figures such as Shakespeare or Spenser, for example, I have endeavoured to source the most recent scholarly editions and therefore reproduce the text exactly as in these editions. However, with regard to the printed texts by non-canonical authors, I have adhered to the original printed texts as located on Early English Books Online. In these texts, I have preserved the original spelling and punctuation in order to retain the full character and meaning of the text.

Finally, there are a number of terms that will be used repeatedly throughout the course of this thesis. These terms are not intended to be connected to any use they may or may not have in contemporary theory, as the basis of this study is literary and pictorial analysis, and not theory. These terms are as follows:

Self: The term self will be used to indicate a sense of that which is truly personal and unique to a given individual – the characteristics and personality which structure a person. In instances where it is required to discuss a particular type of self – perhaps referencing a past or historical self, for example, I shall qualify ‘self’ appropriately.

Other: This term will refer to that which is not the self, or is not understood to be part of the individual – for example, in the instance of Narcissus, he initially views

his reflection as an 'other' as he fails to recognise that the reflection is, in fact, an image of himself. I will draw on the work of Nancy Selleck, in my second chapter, who investigates the idea that 'self' relies upon an interchange with the 'other', where the 'other' becomes 'not merely the self's context but its source and its locus'.⁵⁴

Outward self/Inward self: Self, during the Renaissance is, I will argue, clearly divided into an internal self, and an outward self. The outward self is defined by clothing, objects and mannerisms that go towards fashioning the individual. These objects or fashion items may carry with them specific meanings, such as a mirror in an image connoting vanity, a board game indicating transience, or lavish clothing connoting luxury and social standing, for example. The inward self refers to identity that is specific to the individual, and which is not visible and cannot be represented. Furthermore, I will regularly refer to this division using the terms internal and external, though will refrain, for the most part, from using the term 'soul' in order to avoid the religious inflection it brings.

Generic self: This term is taken from the work of Debora Shuger who claims that Renaissance mirrors simply present an exemplary image or a 'theological commonplace'.⁵⁵ These reflections are a 'generic self', in that they are generally not reflecting or representing a specific individual or any particular self.

⁵⁴ Selleck, p.21.

⁵⁵ Shuger, p.22.

Gaze: This term will not be used in its current theoretical meaning. Instead, gaze will be used simply to indicate looking or staring.

Multiple Viewpoints: The mirror is capable of producing a number of different views via the reflection it offers. For example, if you place two mirrors opposite each other, the effect created is recursive, reflecting repeatedly as far as can be perceived. The placement of a mirror in a portrait will regularly offer the viewer more than one viewpoint in a painting – the reflection may, for example show the back of the room, or the artist. These are viewpoints that are not physically possible without the mirror's quality of replication and hence, more than one point of view is generated for the benefit of the viewer who gains additional information about the scene.

**‘Dark conceits’ and ‘the light of truth’:
optics, catoptrics and the mirror**

All the management of our lives depends on the senses, and since that of sight is the most comprehensive and the noblest of these, there is no doubt that the inventions that serve to augment its power are among the most useful that there can be.⁵⁶

To begin a history of mirrors during the Renaissance is to analyse not only glass, but also mathematics, optics and catoptrics. The mirror has value not only as a scientific object of experiment but holds its place in a context of literature and art. In Thomas Tomkis’s allegorical university play *Lingua: or the combat of the tongue, and the fiue senses for superiority* (1607), the character Visvs competes against the other senses for dominance. Each of the senses is invited to present their ‘objects’ and describe their ‘houses’ before the judges, who will decide which sense wins the crown. Visvs presents a boy who offers a short rhyme:

That’s nothing of it self, yet euery way,
As like a Man, as a thing, like may bee,
And yet so vnlike, as cleane contrary,
For in one point it euery way doth misse,
The right side of it a mans left side is
Tis ligher then a Feather, and withal
It filles no place, nor roome it is so small.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method, Optics, Geometry, and Meteorology* trans. by Paul J. Olscamp (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2001), p.65.

⁵⁷ Thomas Tomkis, *Lingua, or The combat of the tongue, and the fiue senses for superiority* (London, 1607) EEBO, image 26, G1^v.

Communis sensvs, Phantastes, Hevresis and Memoria attempt to decipher the riddle and eventually Hevresis arrives at the answer: ‘I haue it, tis a mans face in a looking Glasse’.⁵⁸ The mirror’s reflection is presented as a mystery, such that the other characters struggle to understand the ‘knotty enigma’ and proceed to investigate the issue of the mirror’s reversal.⁵⁹ As Phantastes stares into the mirror to see how his ‘left eie is [his] right in the glasse’, Memoria warns him: ‘take heede you fall not in loue with your self’ and asks ‘who wast that died of the looking disease?’, to which Anamnestes replies ‘Forsooth *Narcissus*’ who ‘died for loue of himselfe’.⁶⁰ Phantastes addresses a key concern and mystery of the mirror – its apparent reversal of what is before it. Phantastes stops and tries to understand the image before him, looking beyond what he already recognises to be himself, to that which he cannot understand. He realises at once that although the reflection is himself, it is different, which highlights the issues of similitude and difference that the mirror brings with it. Joined onto this is the classic association of the mirror with Narcissus: the moment of Narcissus’s death occurs when he comes to know himself, when he finally realises the reality of his situation and understands his own reflection. Anamnestes warns Phantastes against this fate, even though Phantastes looks not at himself but at the peculiar quirks and complexities of the reflection. This small section of the play draws attention to the mirror and its reflection, calling to mind multiple images that are intrinsic to the mirror, such as Narcissus, self-love, and death. However, it also touches on the science of the object, showing its reversals as a source of mystery and contemplation. That Anamnestes automatically and immediately warns Phantastes against the dangers of gazing narcissistically in the mirror illustrates that the link

⁵⁸ Tomkis, *Lingua*, EEBO, image 26, G2^r.

⁵⁹ Tomkis, *Lingua*, EEBO, image 26, G1^v.

⁶⁰ Tomkis, *Lingua*, EEBO, image 27, G3^r.

between the mirror and self-love is deep-seated. It is Visus who offers this riddle, thus linking the mirror and the reflection with vision.

The looking-glass, as described in this short riddle, is a complex object that is, in its own right, something of a riddle – a puzzle to be deconstructed, analysed and understood. It is Visus's aim to unravel the riddle and help his friends gain knowledge and understanding of the piece of technology that is described. While the mirror-riddle demonstrates its links to the theme of self-representation (both in Phantastes's gazing at himself and Anamnestes warning against this act), it also hints at a learning process offered, and provided, by the mirror. The riddle serves as a trope for this process, demystifying the technology of the mirror while simultaneously presenting its capacity for illusion. The mirror, 'as both Leon Battista Alberti and Leonardo da Vinci were proposing...can verify resemblance, educate the eye, but also provide illusions'.⁶¹

The substance at which they all stare is glass and Alan Macfarlane and Gerry Martin feel strongly that the significance and far-reaching impact of glass must not be underestimated. They claim that there are 'three major ways in which glass and an increase in reliable knowledge and representation' in the 'fourteenth to sixteenth centuries may have been linked':⁶²

One was through the influence of medieval optics and geometry on the perspective art of fifteenth century architects and painters. A second was through the influence of glass, particularly mirrors, windows and panes of glass, on the technology of enchantment and illusion. Thirdly, through the effect of mirrors on concepts and representations of the individual.⁶³

⁶¹ Arthur F. Kinney, *Shakespeare's Webs: Networks of Meaning in Renaissance Drama* (New York & London: Routledge, 2004), p.33.

⁶² Alan Macfarlane & Gerry Martin, *The Glass Bathyscaphe* (London: Profile Books, 2002), p.75.

⁶³ Macfarlane & Martin, p.75.

Combined with the sciences of optics and geometry, the mirror's extensive reach has an impact on multiple fields: the mirror had a role in the creation of Brunelleschi's dome and his perspective painting;⁶⁴ it brought to painting depth perception and the idea of the vanishing point, thus supporting artists in the creation of realistic and naturalistic images; it became a tool for artists to view their own work as if from another's perspective;⁶⁵ in its concave, convex or plane forms, the mirror was a useful object to the actor on stage who wished to create a special effect or the artist who wanted to create an anamorphic image with the use of a cylindrical mirror;⁶⁶ finally, for artists who wished to accurately portray themselves, the mirrors of increasing clarity supported them in the production of self-portraits. The sense of vision is ultimately intertwined with the mirror and its effects.

Making the Mirror

Throughout the Early Modern era, there were a number of reflecting objects in operation, in culture, literature and art. The varieties of materials from which they were made, and the differing types of reflection, meant that each of these 'mirrors' took their place in the literary and artistic contexts. The first mirror would have been

⁶⁴ For a narrative history of Brunelleschi's dome, see Ross King's *How a Renaissance Genius Reinvented Architecture* (New York: Walker & Company, 2000). Although he is not an architect or art historian, King provides valuable information as he describes the progress of the project in detail. See also Giulio Carlo Argan & Nesca A. Robb's article 'The Architecture of Brunelleschi and the Origins of Perspective Theory in the Fifteenth Century', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 9 (1946), pp.96-121, in which they link the invention of perspective with the discovery of antiquity, and draw links between the art of perspective-painting and science which they link to both art theory and mathematics.

⁶⁵ Leonardo argues this point in his notebooks, telling us that 'we know very well that errors are better recognised in the works of others than in our own', therefore 'when you paint you should have a flat mirror and often look at your work as reflected in it' as 'when you will see it reversed...it will appear to you like some other painter's work, so you will be better able to judge of its faults than in any other way' (see Leonardo da Vinci, *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, ed. by Irma A. Richter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980 repr 1998), p.221.

⁶⁶ Shakespeare makes use of the mirror on the stage on several occasions but perhaps most notably, in *Richard II* in which Richard calls for a mirror in which to look at himself, before he smashes it on the ground in disgust (see IV.1.265-289).

a pool of water which, when perfectly still, provided a reflection.⁶⁷ Alternative methods of viewing the face before metal or glass looking-glasses include materials such as obsidian, a black volcanic stone which, when highly polished, gives off a dark reflection. The earliest such mirrors have been found to date from around 6200 B.C.E.⁶⁸ Other mirrors that predate glass include bronze, copper, silver and gold mirrors found in Egypt, Persia and Northern Italy.⁶⁹ However popular these metal mirrors were, production eventually turned towards glass: the earliest glass mirrors date back to no later than the third century A.D. and are extremely small (their diameter is often less than three inches).⁷⁰ As we will see throughout the course of this thesis, even after they have been superseded by superior technology, these dull metal or stone mirrors feature regularly in Early Modern literature, their cloudy reflections lending themselves effectively to use in metaphors,.

A central problem in the production of glass mirrors was its lack of clarity—so dull was its texture, glass was originally considered as an alternative material to pottery. Glass was first made by casting and grinding, rather than by glass blowing, and this technique resulted in an opaque material.⁷¹

Glass blowing, a key process in the development of mirror-making, was not developed until the century before the birth of Christ.⁷² Ancient glass was made from a combination of sand, soda ash and lime (chalk) and, when this was heated to a temperature in which the ingredients became molten, a blowing rod was dipped into

⁶⁷ Throughout this thesis I will use the term mirror to describe all mirror-like, reflective objects. Where necessary, for clarification, I will specify if the mirror is concave, convex, glass, stone, metal, or water. In this way, I intend to release the term ‘mirror’ from its modern-day meaning and encompass the range of mirrors that existed throughout the medieval and early modern period.

⁶⁸ Mark Pendergrast, *Mirror Mirror: A History of the Human Love Affair with Reflection* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), p.3.

⁶⁹ Pendergrast, pp. 3-9.

⁷⁰ Melchoir-Bonnet, p.12.

⁷¹ Macfarlane & Martin, p.10-12.

⁷² Macfarlane & Martin, p.12.

the substance to gather a lump of molten glass which could be blown.⁷³ Early Roman glass mirrors, which were convex, were produced by pouring molten lead into the blown glass spheres but these ‘mirrors’ were often distorted and dark due to the discolorations and bubbles created during glass-blowing.⁷⁴

The introduction of manganese oxide, discovered in Alexandria in around 100 B.C.E., brought improved clarity and opacity to glass that allowed the production of glass windows for the most luxurious and important buildings in places such as Rome and Pompeii.⁷⁵ Mirror production improved and onto this newer, clearer glass, was laid a layer of hot lead that gave the mirror its shiny reflective surface. Initially this process was problematic as the heat of the lead often caused cracking and breakage of the glass however, ‘by the early fifteenth century, glassmakers in Germany, France and Italy’ had ‘learned to blow relatively large cylinders of glass’ that they then opened at the ends and ‘slit them down to produce sheets of glass as large as thirty-by-40 inches’ onto which ‘Florentine artisans...learned to apply unheated lead or tin’.⁷⁶ This newer, clearer, glass would lend itself well to metaphors that alluded to purity, as well as provide a more useful tool to artists wishing to create self-portraits.

Italy was an important centre for mirror and glass making and during the Medieval and Renaissance periods, Venice, together with its nearby island of Murano, was famous and unparalleled for glass production. Around 1450, glass-workers in Murano produced an extremely lightweight, clear, and high quality glass,

⁷³ William S. Ellis, *Glass: From the First Mirror to Fiber Optics, The Story of the Substance that Changed the World* (New York: Avon Books, 1998), p. 4-5, p.11.

⁷⁴ Pendergrast, p.117.

⁷⁵ The Glass Industry Online Portal <<http://www.glassonline.com/infoserv/history.html>> [accessed 6 April 2009].

⁷⁶ Pendergrast, p.118.

which they named ‘cristallo’, that was created with the use of ash and contained high quantities of potassium oxide and magnesium.⁷⁷ In 1507 Andrea and Domenico d’Anzolo del Gallo sought a patent for a ‘new foiling method’ that involved creating an extremely thin layer of tin and covering it in mercury to produce a shiny layer. The sheet of glass was then lowered onto this sheet of metal to create a highly reflective mirror.⁷⁸ These traditional methods remain largely in place in modern mirror manufacturing processes: the process of ‘silvering’ a sheet of glass is the most used method of making a mirror though the poisonous mercury has been replaced with non-toxic alternatives such as silver or aluminium.

While Italian glass-makers retained a reputation for progress and quality in producing clear, high quality glass, an important discovery was made in England. An English glass-maker called George Ravenscroft (1618-1681) was challenged with the task of finding a suitable substitute for the Italian cristallo glass: his solution, in 1676, involved increasing the quantity of lead oxide instead of potash and this produced a brilliant glass with a ‘high refractive index’ which, due to its softness, was particularly suited to cutting and engraving.⁷⁹ The glass industry then, directly impacted mirror-manufacture and dictated the types of mirrors that could be made and were used. While larger glass mirrors were available from the early 1500s, these were prohibitively expensive for all but the wealthiest of individuals. This would mean that concave mirrors, both cheaper and poorer quality, would have been in greater circulation, along with metal mirrors that, though dull, were more easily affordable for ordinary citizens. Melchior-Bonnet gives an example of mirrors

⁷⁷ Ellis, p.20.

⁷⁸ Pendergrast, p.119.

⁷⁹ The Glass Industry Online Portal <www.glassonline.com/inforserv/history.html> [accessed 1 April 2009].

purchased in France in the eighteenth century, noting that while the average salary of a worker was forty-five francs a month, a mirror could sell for upwards of ninety francs per square meter, excluding the costs of the frame or the retail mark-up, while at the beginning of the century, large mirrors (seventy by forty-five inches, for example) sold for £750, by 1734 the price of these mirrors had dropped to £425.⁸⁰

The progress of the manufacture of mirrors illustrates the range of reflecting objects that were available during the Renaissance, and factors such as cost go some way to suggesting reasons as to why ‘old’ technology was still in circulation and was still used in the literary and visual works of the era.

Modern Optics and Catoptrics

As well as learning about the changing methods of mirror-manufacture, it is important to the subsequent sections of this chapter, and the thesis as a whole, that we understand the basics of vision. This project will continually link optics and catoptrics, and will use the first theories of vision - extramission and intromission - to frame and understand the mirror-metaphors used in Early Modern writing and art. The progress made in these fields throughout the period covered in this thesis often involved the eye and its physical construction, therefore this section offers a short discussion of modern optics and catoptrics in order to illustrate how we now understand these processes to work, and to provide a contrast with the attempts of philosophers and medieval and early modern scholars to make sense of these

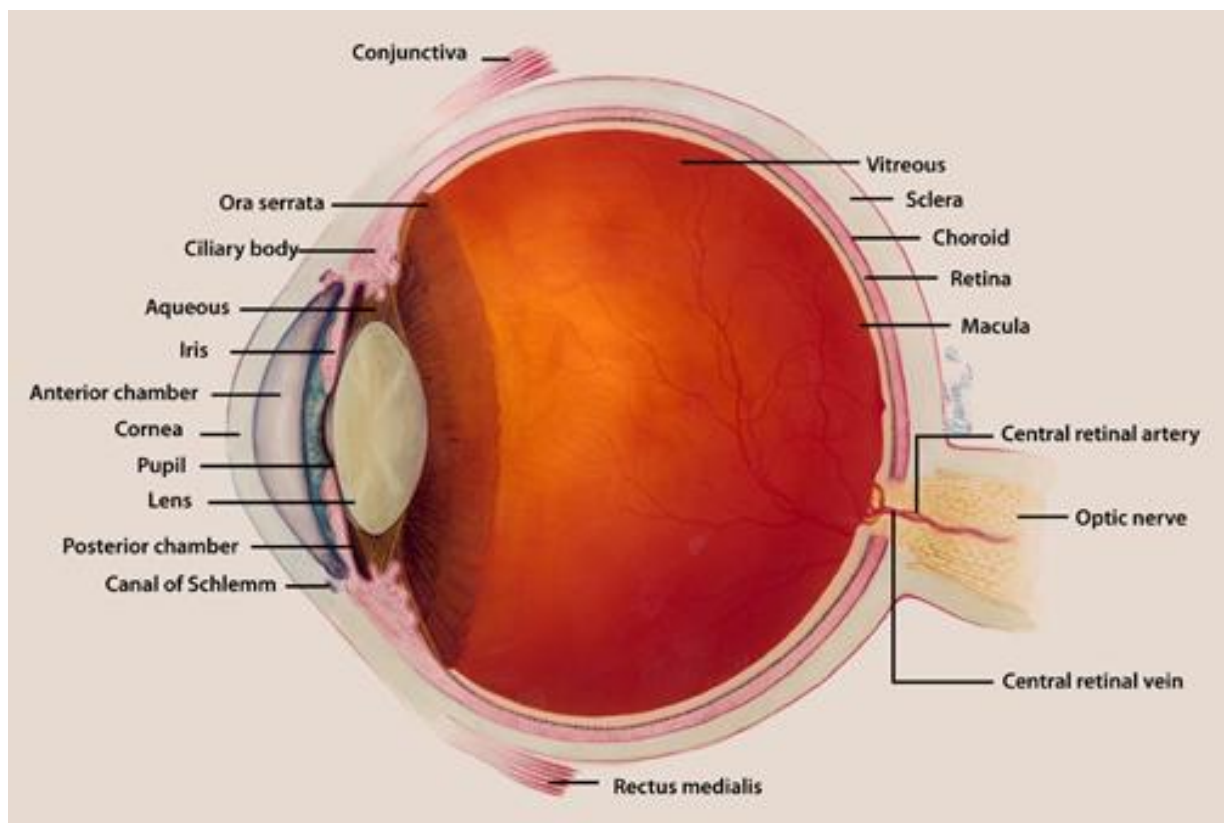
⁸⁰ Melchior-Bonnet, p.74.

phenomena.⁸¹ In modern physicist Vasco Ronchi's *Optics: The Science of Vision*,

Ronchi retells the story of his first experience with optics:

I learned that there was light, consisting of rays capable of being reflected and refracted; that there were mirrors, prisms and lenses able to produce images; that there were optical instruments; and that there was a sense organ called the eye.⁸²

Ronchi's comment suggests that at the core of the mirror and its reflections is vision, without which the mirror is useless. The diagram below illustrates the structure of the human eye:



The anatomy of the human eye⁸³

⁸¹ Catoptrics is 'that part of Optics which treats of reflection', *The Oxford English Dictionary*, <http://dictionary.oed.com/>.

⁸² Vasco Ronchi, *Optics: The Science of Vision* trans. by Edward Rosen (New York: Dover, [1957] 1991), p.3.

⁸³ The National Eye Institute, < <http://www.nei.nih.gov/health/coloboma/index.asp#2> > [accessed 1 April 2009].

In the process of vision, light enters the eye through the cornea, which curves and refracts the light, that is, bends it inwards. Once the light has passed through the cornea it enters the anterior chamber and moves through the pupil and iris, in front of the lens. The suspensory ligaments surrounding the lens can contract or loosen to alter the shape of the lens and thus focus so that relaxed muscles will focus on distant objects and tight muscles on close objects. The lens will focus the image/light that enters the cornea and proceeds to the retina. When the light has passed through the lens it enters the vitreous body. The retina detects the light and the light projected onto it is an inverted or ‘real’ image, meaning that it is upside down. The brain learns to turn the image the right way up.⁸⁴ In basic terms this is the modern understanding of how we see. But, in many ways, it is very different from the varying models of vision offered in the pre-modern world which I will address in subsequent sections of this chapter.⁸⁵

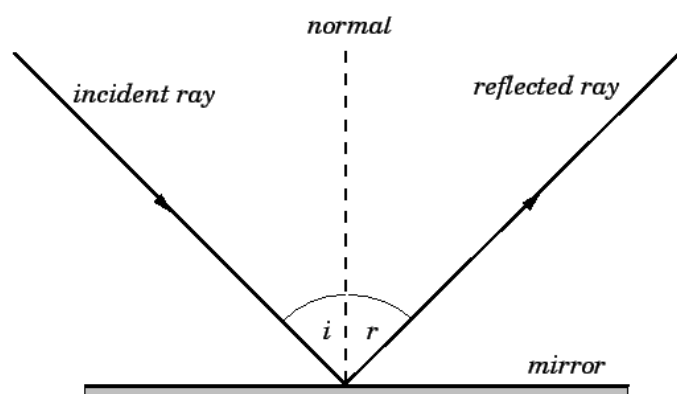
Our understanding of catoptrics (the theory of reflection) has its basis in the works of ancient, Medieval and Renaissance mathematicians and scientists.⁸⁶ The law of reflection describes the reflection of light-rays off smooth, shiny surfaces, such as polished metal or metal-coated glass mirrors. The law of reflection states that each ray – that is, the incident ray (the ray of light that strikes the surface), the reflected

⁸⁴ Shar Levine & Leslie Johnson, *The Optics Book: Experiments with Light, Vision & Colour* (New York: Sterling Publishing, 1953), p.46.

⁸⁵ There are comprehensive accounts of the theories of vision to be found in Vasco Ronchi’s *Optics: The Science of Vision* trans. by Edward Rosen (1957, repr 1991), in which chapters two and three cover seventeenth-century optics and the basis of the science of vision, and in *Theories of Vision from Al Kindi to Kepler* by David C. Lindberg (1976), in which Lindberg is extremely comprehensive. However, Lindberg & Nicholas H. Steneck dispute many of Ronchi’s claims, including the idea that during the medieval period optical illusions were beyond comprehension. Lindberg & Steneck argue that pre-Galilean philosophers were far more sophisticated in their thinking than Ronchi states (see David C. Lindberg & Nicholas Steneck, ‘The Sense of Vision and the Origins of Modern Science’ in *Science, Medicine and Society in the Renaissance* (London: Heinemann, 1972), pp. 29-45).

⁸⁶ David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago & London: Chicago University Press, 1976), p.12.

ray (the ray of light which leaves the surface), and the normal (a line perpendicular to the surface is imagined at the point of reflection) to the surface of the mirror – all lie in the same plane. When measured against the normal, the angle of reflection is equal to the angle of incidence.⁸⁷ The law of reflection holds not only for flat, shiny surfaces such as the mirror but also for rougher surfaces such as paper or tinfoil. The law of reflection holds true for all surfaces, whether the mirror is plane, concave or convex, as early modern mirrors could be. Reflection found in rough surfaces is referred to as ‘diffuse reflection’ whereas the reflection given by the plane mirror is called ‘specular reflection’. Reflection occurs only ‘at the boundary between two media’.⁸⁸ The law is expressed in the form of a diagram:



The Law of Reflection.⁸⁹

This law can be developed further to examine the way in which the light moves: the principle of least time or, Fermat’s Principle (1658). This theory, which has its roots in work produced by the Greek mathematician Hero of Alexandria, states that the

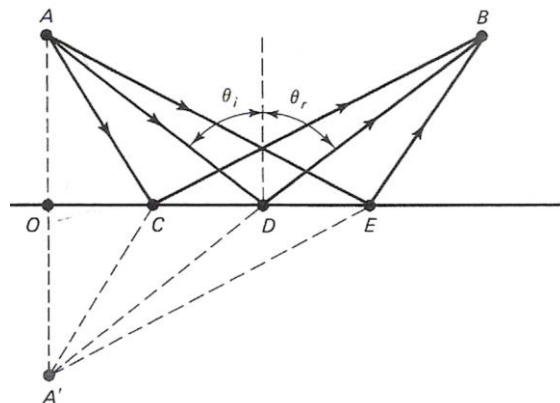
⁸⁷ Richard Fitzpatrick, University of Texas, Austin, *Electromagnetism and Optics: An Introductory Course* (2007), <<http://farside.ph.utexas.edu/teaching/316/lectures/node127.html>> (accessed 1 April 2009).

⁸⁸ Benjamin Crowell, *Optics* (2008), <http://www.lightandmatter.com/html_books/5op/> [accessed 1 April 2009] (p.14).

⁸⁹ Fitzpatrick, <<http://farside.ph.utexas.edu/teaching/316/lectures/node127.html>> [accessed 1 April 2009].

‘ray of light travelled the path of *least* time’ rather than taking the ‘shortest path’.⁹⁰

The diagram below illustrates this theorem:



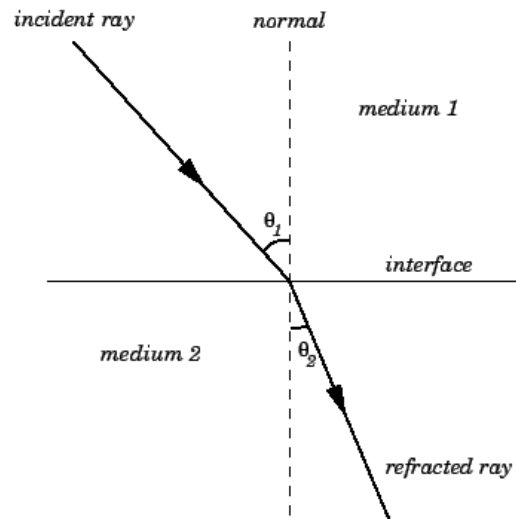
Fermat's theorem (principle of least time)⁹¹

This diagram shows three possible paths from A to B, the correct path being ADB, as the line that gives the shortest path to B is the one that lies on the straight line BA¹, and the angles of incidence and reflection on ADB are equal.

Fermat's principle accounts not only for light rays bouncing off mirrors but also light that travels through other media – refraction – and can be used to derive Snell's law (1621, published 1637). Refracted light is light that is bent upon passing through media of differing density, such as water and oil – when light travels through different media it moves at varying speeds. The diagram below illustrates that ‘the law of refraction predicts that a light-ray always deviates more towards the normal in the optically denser medium, i.e., the medium with the higher refractive index’ (Fitzpatrick).

⁹⁰ Frank L. Pedrotti & Leno S. Pedrotti, *Introduction to Optics* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1993), p.35

⁹¹ Pedrotti & Pedrotti, p.35.



The law of refraction (Snell's Law) ⁹²

This process is what Crowell refers to as ‘the fundamental physical phenomenon at work in the eye’ as the ‘light crosses a boundary between two media (such as air and the eye’s jelly) [Crowell, p.60]. These two related theories show a correlation between vision, light and reflection, bringing together the core concepts at work when we look in a mirror. Furthermore, aspects of these theories emerged from and were confirmed in the experiments and works of ancient philosophers, and medieval and early modern scholars and scientists.

Ancient Optics I

The eyes and vision are central to this thesis, since at the core of the project is the link I will draw between the dominant, early theories of vision and the importance, and impact, of these theories to the operation of perceptions of self. To return to Tomkiss’s *Lingua*, each sense must prove themselves with a show of their ‘objects’ and ‘houses’:

⁹² Fitzpatrick, < <http://farside.ph.utexas.edu/teaching/316/lectures/node128.html> > [accessed 1 April 2009].

VIS.

Vnder the fore-head of mount *Cephalon*,
That ouer-peeres the coast of *Microcosme*,
All in the shaddowe of two pleasant groues,
Stand my two mansion houses, both as round
As the cleare heauens, both twins as like each other
As starre to starre, which by the vulgar sort,
For their resplendent composition,
Are named the bright eyes of mount *Cephalon*:
With foure faire roomes those lodgings are contriued.⁹³

In this show of objects, ‘Lingua...sets out to reconfigure the hierarchy of bodily organization in *Microcosmus*’ but ‘she can exist only as a non-sense, as that which defies the logic of the body, community, and world’.⁹⁴ Visvs describes his ‘objects’ in detail: characterising the body as ‘microcosme’ and the eyes as ‘two mansion houses’, Visvs imbues the eyes with a sense of the heavenly, likening their perfect roundness to the heavens and describing their likeness for each other as alike as ‘starre to starre’ (see figure one, in which Jan Brueghel presents Visus in the foreground, as an allegory of sight, seated in a room over-flowing with visual objects, such as paintings, globes, a mirror, telescopes, and other scientific tools).⁹⁵ The association brings both scientific and architectural metaphors to the eyes, and he goes on to describe the anatomy of the eye:

With walls transparent of pure Christalline
This the soules mirroure and the bodies guide,
Loues Cabinet bright beacons of the Realme,
Casements of light quiuer of Cupid’s shafts:
Wherein I sit and immediately receiue,

⁹³ Tomkis, *Lingua*, EEBO image 27, G2^v.

⁹⁴ Carla Mazzio, ‘Sins of the Tongue in Early Modern England’, *Modern Language Studies* 28 (Autumn, 1998) 95-124, (p.106).

⁹⁵ See Mazzio for a short discussion on the tongue in *Lingua* and also Morris P. Tilley who notes the correspondences between Tomkis’s *Lingua* and Sir John Davies’s *Nosce Teipsum* (1599), in ‘The Comedy *Lingua* and Sir John Davies’s *Nosce Teipsum*’, *Modern Language Notes* 44 (January, 1929) 36-39.

The *species* of things corporeall,
Keeping continuall watch and centinell
Least forraine hurt inuade our *Microcosme*,⁹⁶

The language that Tomkis chooses here suggests a number of different philosophical and scientific influences. His use of the term ‘Christalline’, which presumably refers to the ‘christalline humour’ may indicate knowledge of Galen or Alhacen, while ‘species’ suggests an understanding of Bacon. The eyes keep watch for the ‘microcosme’, that is, the body, in order to prevent it from coming to any harm. These short extracts perhaps intimate the pervasive influence of philosophy and science on literature of the early modern period – Visvs’s description of the eye indicates not only an awareness of optical science, but also the close link between the eye, mirroring, and a sense of the internal – that is, the self. This mix of technology places the eye, the mirror, and the soul in the same context. This section will look at the key figures in the research and understanding of sight, perception and mirror imaging in antiquity, in order to uncover how the eye, the self and the mirror are related in optics and catoptrics.⁹⁷

Determining a specific starting point in the history of optics is troublesome. Although many sources cite Euclid’s *Optics* and *Catoptrics* (280 B.C.E) as the first study of optical laws, theories of vision and reflection had already been formulated in ancient Greek philosophy. The two prevailing formulations of vision were the extramission and the intromission theories, both of which I will examine in more detail in the following discussion. In the simplest terms, the extramission model held

⁹⁶ Tomkis, *Lingua*, EEBO image 27, G3^r.

⁹⁷ Gary Hatfield summarises the Platonic and Aristotelian theories of the senses that the seventeenth century ‘inherited’ (pp.954-961), and pays particular attention to vision and images (pp. 957-959) in Gary Hatfield, ‘The Cognitive Faculties’ in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, ii., ed. by Daniel Garber & Michael Ayers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 953-1002.

that light rays flowed outward from the eye towards the object, whereas the principal premise of intromission was that light rays entered the eye. Democritus (c.460-c.370 B.C.E) attempted to cover all manner of detail of the mechanisms of life, including perception, psychology and medicine. Perhaps most famous for his thoughts and theories on atoms, this philosopher's works include *On the Mind* and *On the Senses*. Democritus's theory of sight states that the soul is the principal instigator of the senses and 'perception occurs as a result of the impact on the soul-atoms, through the organs of sensation, of *eidola*' which are 'thin membranes shed from the surface of sensible objects'.⁹⁸ In this, the intromission theory, all objects are constantly shedding these thin images and perception occurs as a result of these 'atoms' combining with those of the soul.⁹⁹ Democritus's understanding of perception is described more fully in the works of Theophrastus where he describes the Democritean theory as follows:

He has sight occur by reflection, but he talks of reflection in a special way. The reflection does not take place immediately in the pupil; rather, the air between the eye and the seen object is imprinted when it is compressed by what is seen and what it sees (for there are always effluences coming off everything). Then this air, which is solid and has a different colour, is reflected in the eyes, which are moist. What is dense does not receive it, but what is moist lets it pass through. That is why moist eyes are better at seeing than hard eyes [...] for each thing best recognises what is akin to it.¹⁰⁰

Once the air has been 'imprinted' with the image of everything that is around it, the air carries the image and *reflects* it back to the eye. The air deals directly with the eye, giving its image to the eyeball, in a way that is not instantaneous. Images are not fed directly and quickly to the eye but instead must await the arrival of the image in the air, once the impression of the object has been inscribed upon the air, and so

⁹⁸ Paul Cartledge, *Democritus* (New York: Routledge, 1999), p.27.

⁹⁹ Cartledge, p.28.

¹⁰⁰ Cartledge, p.27-28.

the eye becomes the secondary receptor of the image of the object since it is the air that first receives its mark. That the image is ‘compressed’ before it enters and is allowed to pass through the eye accounts for the eye’s ability to take in the images of everything including very large objects which are far greater in size than the eye or the pupil. In this intromission formulation, the eye is passive and comes secondary to the process of the image being formed in the air. It is the physical shape and structure of the eyeball itself that controls what is admitted into the eye.

In Plato’s *Timaeus* (c. 360 B.C.E.) we find his theories of sight, mirrors, dreams and reflections. Plato’s supposition was that vision operated in the following way:

For they caused the pure fire within us, which is akin to that of day, to flow through the eyes in a smooth and dense stream; and they compressed the whole substance, and especially the centre, of the eyes, so that they occluded all other fire that was coarser and allowed only this pure kind of fire to filter through. So whenever the stream of vision is surrounded by mid-day light, it flows out until like, and coalescing therewith it forms one kindred substance along the path of the eyes’ vision, wheresoever the fire which streams from within collides with an obstructing object without. And this substance...distributes the motions of every object it touches, or whereby it is touched, throughout all the body even unto the Soul, and brings about that sensation which we now term ‘seeing’.¹⁰¹

Plato’s theory of vision appears to be a particularly physical experience, and is known as the extramission theory. The fiery visual stream that is emitted from the eyes clashes with the stream of light that comes from the object and when these meet, the object’s image is created in the soul and so vision occurs. Plato accounts for our lack of ability to see properly at night by arguing that ‘when the kindred fire vanishes into night’ the ‘inner fire is cut off...wherefore it leaves off seeing, and becomes also an inducement to sleep’.¹⁰² The brain and eyes seem to have very little

¹⁰¹ Plato, *Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus & Epistles* trans. by Rev. R. G. Bury (London: Heinemann, 1929), p.101-103.

¹⁰² Plato, *Timaeus*, p.103.

involvement in Plato's theories so that vision becomes an external process, occurring mostly outside of the body and yet seeming quite physical in the notion that the soul itself is struck by the images. Although this approach, which came to be named the 'extramission' theory, was contested, it held currency and popularity, through translations, throughout the Medieval period, and was still used during the Renaissance.

Plato's unusual approach to optics becomes apparent when he attempts to account for the reversals that appear to occur in a mirror:

And left appears as right, because contact takes place between opposite portions of the visual stream and opposite portions of the object, contrary to the regular mode of collision. Contrariwise, right appears as right and left as left whenever the fire changes sides on coalescing with the object wherewith it coalesces; and this occurs whenever the smooth surface of the mirrors...repels the right portion of the visual stream to the left and the left to the right.¹⁰³

Notably, Plato compares the processes involved in viewing a reflection as 'contrary to the regular mode of collision', indicating that to him the mirrored image or the act of viewing one's own mirror-likeness is not a 'normal' visual process; it is a separate action with its own laws, so that looking in the mirror is not akin to seeing any other object. Plato makes the distinction between object and image, reality and representation, and describes the differing distortions that take place when using both flat and concave mirrors. The types of mirror that would have been available to Plato would have been those of polished stone, metal or concave glass, all of which would have been small, and all of which would have offered murky, distorted reflections,

¹⁰³ *Timaeus*, p.105.

thus it is perhaps unsurprising that Plato separates the process of viewing a reflection from ‘normal’ sight.¹⁰⁴

Central to Plato’s extramission theory of vision is light: although Plato stops short of directly connecting the sun and the eye, he finds that ‘there’s no sense-organ which more closely resembles the sun...than the eye’.¹⁰⁵ The sun is ‘responsible for sight and is itself within the visible realm’.¹⁰⁶ Plato finds that light is essential, since without it our sight is deficient because when we view things ‘whose colours are no longer bathed in daylight, but in artificial light’, the eyes are ‘less effective and seem to be virtually blind’ but when we look at ‘things which are lit up by the sun, then [the eyes] see clearly’.¹⁰⁷ The eyes and light are interconnected and value is placed on light ‘because it links the sense of sight and the ability to be seen’, making it ‘the most valuable link there is’.¹⁰⁸ The connection between light and sight is crucial to the theory of vision. Plato was unable to recognise that light entered the eye and so remained fixed on the extramission theory whereby light was emitted *from* the eye.

Light similarly appears as a central focus in the works of Aristotle (384-322 B.C.E) when he examines the senses. In Book II of *De Anima (On the Soul)* Aristotle directly addresses what he perceives to be the errors of the works of Plato and others, and takes issue with Plato’s theory that a ‘fire’ issued forth from the eye. Aristotle begins by explaining that

light and transparency...are neither fire, nor in general any body, nor the emanation from any body (for in that case they would be a body of some

¹⁰⁴ In the *Republic*, Plato makes further notes on the important distinctions between reality and the image. He begins by attacking poetry on the basis that its images are not founded in reality, but in imagination, and he goes on to form his concept of the object, which is threefold, in the story of the couch and the table. I will discuss Plato’s tripartite structure of perception, from idea, to reproduction, to image, in more detail in Chapter Four.

¹⁰⁵ *Republic*, p.235.

¹⁰⁶ *Republic*, p.235.

¹⁰⁷ *Republic*, p.235.

¹⁰⁸ *Republic*, p.234.

kind themselves), but the presence of fire, or something of the kind in the transparency; for there cannot be two bodies in the same place at the same time.¹⁰⁹

Aristotle believed that the visibility of things was dependent upon colour, so that in using the term ‘transparent’ he intended to suggest ‘that which is seen, but not directly seen without qualification, but...owing to a colour from elsewhere’.¹¹⁰ This meant that nothing could be seen without light, since ‘the colour of each individual thing is seen in light’.¹¹¹ However, although Aristotle argued that there was no fire extending from the eye towards the fire that flows from objects, he still found that sight ‘must be affected by what comes between’ and so ‘there must be *something* in between’ since ‘if there were nothing...we should see nothing at all’.¹¹² Where Plato argued for a ‘fire’ in the eye, Aristotle in Book III claimed that ‘the pupil of the eye is composed of water...[but] fire is the medium of no perception’.¹¹³ In the closing paragraph of Book III, Aristotle’s reasoning for excluding fire from a sense such as sight becomes clear: an animal has sight whether it exists in air or in water, that is, in what is transparent and not of more solid mass, such as earth or fire.¹¹⁴

Aristotle’s intromission theory of vision was mediated by his ideas on the process of refraction.¹¹⁵ While Aristotle did not recognise the differing appearances of

¹⁰⁹ Aristotle, *On the Soul, Parva Naturalia, On Breath* trans. by W. S. Hett (London: Heinemann, 1935), p.105.

¹¹⁰ Aristotle, *On the Soul*, p.105.

¹¹¹ *On the Soul*, p.103.

¹¹² *On the Soul*, p.667.

¹¹³ *On the Soul*, p.143.

¹¹⁴ *On the Soul*, p.203. In *Sense and Sensibilia* Aristotle took issue with Plato’s theory of vision in *Timaeus*, posing the question ‘if vision occurred when light issued from the eye as from a lantern, why should not vision be equally possible in the dark?’, (*Sense and Sensibilia*, p.215). Aristotle’s recognition that objects such as fish scales or cat’s eyes have a luminescent glow, particularly so in the dark, formed the basis of his rejection of Plato’s theories and thus he followed Democritus’s idea that the eye was composed of water, not fire.

¹¹⁵ In Aristotle’s theory of the senses, the senses and the elements are interlinked, dependent upon one another, and through this, Aristotle developed a sketchy notion of the process of refraction. He begins with a discussion in which he argues that all the other senses are subservient to touch, and he notes that for survival, intelligent beings must ‘not only...perceive when in contact, but also from a

objects that are submersed in fluid, he found that objects were affected in different ways, dependent upon the medium in which they appeared. Finally, he used these examples alongside the process of reflection to continue his rejection of Plato's theory which holds that the eye produces a fire:

For that reason in connexion with the reflection of light it is better to suppose, not that the ray leaving the eye is reflected, but rather that the air is affected by the shape and colour, so long as it remains continuous. And it is continuous supposed that it is smooth; then the air in its turn moves the vision, just as if the impression on the wax had passed right through to the other side.¹¹⁶

Without explicitly identifying how the processes of reflection works, Aristotle made a significant departure from Plato's theory of vision and recognised that rays of light were affected by different media in important ways, noting that it is the 'air' or light ray that 'moves the vision'.

As with Plato, Aristotle too commented on the distinction between reality and replication. Extending the discussion of the imprint in the wax, Aristotle found that

On the general question of sensation one must lay down that sensation is the reception of the form of sensible objects without the matter, just as the wax receives the impression of the signet-ring without the iron or the gold, and receives the impression of the gold or bronze, but not as gold or bronze; so the sense is affected by each thing which has colour, or flavour, or sound; not in the sense in which each of them is so called, but in the sense that its character is of this kind, and in virtue of its form.¹¹⁷

Sight, then, was concerned with images and not matter, with form and not object.

Displaying an important shift from Plato and Democritus, a sense receives an image, is receptive to that image and submits to that image as far as is necessary without

distance' which happens only 'if [an animal] exercises its perceptive faculty through a medium in which the animal is affected, and is moved by the sensible object, and the sensible object by the medium', (*On the Soul*, p.197-199). He noted the differences between types of media, giving the example that 'if one were to dip something into wax, the movement would occur in the wax just so far as one dipped it' but 'stone would not move at all', whereas 'water would be affected to a great distance'. However, 'it is air that moves, acts, and is acted upon most' (*On the Soul*, p.199).

¹¹⁶ *On the Soul*, p.199.

¹¹⁷ *On the Soul*, p.137.

being able to take on the object itself. What is left is a copy, an ‘impression’ of the object which is its image rather than its reality, and that copy does not hold the *essential* qualities of the original object but rather the ‘form’ sensible objects. Although it was Aristotle’s opinion that sight was ‘the most highly developed sense’ and was superior for helping supply the body with its needs in life, hearing was given precedence over all the senses as it ‘makes the largest contribution to wisdom’ because ‘the spoken word, which is responsible for all instruction, is heard’.¹¹⁸

Euclid signals the shift from a philosophy of vision, to mathematical approach. Euclid (325BC-265BC) published two texts of immediate concern to this thesis: the *Optics* and *Catoptrics* (280 B.C.E). The *Catoptrics* ‘ascribed to Euclid was probably a compilation by Theon of Alexandria at the end of the fourth century AD’ and so ‘the *Catoptrics* of Hero of Alexandria is therefore our earliest extant work on the subject’.¹¹⁹ Although Euclid made important discoveries, he persisted in perpetuating the Platonic extramission conception of vision in which rays which emanated from the eye, a fact which he includes in his seven definitions and propositions in the *Optics*, the earliest surviving treatise on perspective:

Let it be assumed

1. That the rectilinear rays proceeding from the eye diverge indefinitely;
2. That the figure contained by a set of visual rays is a cone of which the vertex is at the eye and the base at the surface of the objects seen;
3. That those things are seen upon which visual rays fall and those things are not seen upon which visual rays do not fall;
4. That things seen under a larger angle appear larger, those under a smaller angle appear smaller, and those under equal angles appear equal;
5. That things seen by higher visual rays appear higher, and things seen by lower visual rays appear lower;

¹¹⁸*On Sense and Sensibilia*, p.213.

¹¹⁹ Morris R. Cohen & I.E. Drabkin, *A Source Book in Greek Science*, (New York & London: MacGraw-Hill Book Co., 1948), pp.261-262.

6. That, similarly, things seen by rays further to the right appear further to the right, and things seen by rays further to the left appear further to the left;
7. That things seen under more angles are seen more clearly.¹²⁰

In Euclid's theory, visual rays flowed *from* the eye and constructed a visual 'cone', the largest end of which being the site at which the perceptible object appeared. An object, to become visible, must come into contact with the visual rays. Lindberg notes that the 'rectilinearity of the rays' means that 'it is possible to employ the straight lines of a geometrical diagram to represent visual rays and thus transform optical problems into geometrical problems'.¹²¹ However, as Lindberg later states, it cannot be said that Euclid reduced optics to pure geometry since, as we have seen above, Euclid comments that rays proceed directly from the eye which brings to his geometrically slanted optics a flavour of Platonic philosophy.¹²²

Lucretius's (c.99-55 BCE) didactic poem *De Rerum Natura* (*The Nature of Things*, c.50 BCE) included an entire book devoted to the senses. Book IV of *De Rerum Natura*, Lucretius followed the core idea of Democritus's intromission theory of perception; that is, *eidola*, which Lucretius described as 'images of things' which are 'a sort of skin / Shed from the surfaces of objects, from the outer layer'.¹²³ Lucretius stated that the simple process of vision was accessible to all and, as with Aristotle and to a certain extent Plato, his theory of vision was focused upon the key notion of a 'likeness':

An object gives off likenesses from its exterior,
The flimsy shapes of things.
[...]
...there are images of things – a skin, or *bark*,
As we can call it, shed from objects, since it bears the same

¹²⁰ Euclid in Cohen & Drabkin, pp.257-258.

¹²¹ Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, p.12.

¹²² Lindberg, p.13.

¹²³ Lucretius, *The Nature of Things*, trans. by A. E. Stallings (London: Penguin, 2007), p. 107.

Form and likeness of whatever thing from which it came¹²⁴

Lucretius's description has a certain physicality in the sense of the 'skins' that come from objects. He compares the shedding of images from objects to the casting off of skins from insects such as cicadas, or the removal of the caul by calves at birth since, 'if skins peel and drop away before our eyes, / Why not thinner films?'.¹²⁵ The implication in this description is that the shedding of 'thinner films' by objects is a natural and necessary process, which means that the 'films' will 'retain the stamp of that thing whence they came'.¹²⁶ Thus, just as the wax imprinted by the ring in Aristotle will keep the original form, so too will the objects that shed their 'skins' to allow vision to occur. Lucretius moved away from Aristotle when he came to discuss what stimulates vision and, where Aristotle laid emphasis on light, Lucretius believed that that 'what caused sight / Is images, which nothing can be visible without'.¹²⁷ Lucretius argued that there is air between the object and our eyes that measures and indicates the distance of the object from us as 'all the air that lies / Between the object of origination and our eyes, / So all this air comes flowing through our eyeballs, and the wind / Rubs the edges of the pupil as it crosses in'.¹²⁸ The focus remained on the 'image' of the thing, which caused us to see as these 'images' came 'to meet our vision'.¹²⁹ Once again, the central focus of the mechanism of sight is the concept of image and likeness, that is, *not* reality. Whether in Democritus, Plato, Aristotle or Lucretius, it is not the actual object that comes to the individual but the 'impression' or 'image' of the thing.

¹²⁴ *De Rerum Natura*, p.107.

¹²⁵ *De Rerum Natura*, p.108.

¹²⁶ *De Rerum Natura*, p.108.

¹²⁷ *De Rerum Natura*, p.113.

¹²⁸ *De Rerum Natura*, p.113.

¹²⁹ *De Rerum Natura*, p.113.

On this point regarding images, Lucretius extended the discussion to cover what happens when an object is before the mirror. Lucretius explained the fact of reflection via a discussion of how images stream through substances such as glass but shatter on impact with an impermeable matter such as wood: the mirror, having a 'polished face' and being of a substance which is 'tightly knit' is 'ever mindful to guarantee its safety. Thus / It turns out that the likenesses flow back, from it, to us.'¹³⁰ Lucretius notes the transience and speed with which the mirror offers back an image finding that 'wherever we place / A mirror, whatever angle to an object it may face, / It gives a picture back that corresponds in form and hue'.¹³¹ That is to say, the mirror reflects back instantly which tells us, in Lucretius's terms, that images from objects are generated quickly and multiply so that appearances of objects are always available.

As with Plato, Lucretius made attempts to explain the various phenomena of the mirror, including why the image appears to reside 'inside' the mirror and how the mirror's reversal occurs. In the case of the first problem, Lucretius explains that

when a mirror's image is first cast off, as it flies
To our pupils, it pushes all the air between it and our eyes,
And makes us feel all this before we see the glass. But when
We see the looking-glass itself as well, instantly then,
The image that we cast ourselves arrives and hits the glass
And bouncing, strikes our eyes again, and rolls another mass
Of air in front of it, and makes us feel the air-blast sweep
Before our image: that's why it seems set in the glass so deep.¹³²

Lucretius placed the importance in the appearance of depth in the mirror on the physical movement of 'air' and 'images'. The image on the mirror bounces when it hits the glass which causes a movement of the air and this motion of the medium in

¹³⁰ *De Rerum Natura*, p.110.

¹³¹ *De Rerum Natura*, p.111.

¹³² *De Rerum Natura*, p.114-115.

which the image travels causes the sensation of space. As with Aristotle, these ideas seem to hint at an understanding of the effects differing media can have on light waves or, ‘air’, suggesting some form of awareness of refraction, yet illustrating that the theory was yet to be properly understood.

Lucretius also attempted to account for the reversals of the mirror in a similar way to Plato. It was Lucretius’s opinion that the reason in a mirror that the ‘body’s right-hand side appears on the left’ is that ‘when on-coming images collide with the flat plane of the mirror, they are not safely turned around’ but instead they ‘are dashed directly backwards and rebound’.¹³³ This means that ‘the eye, once on the right, is on the left now, and we find / The left eye on the right – they have switched places’.¹³⁴ Where Plato claimed that the reversal was because the ‘fire’ has been turned around upon impact with the glass, Lucretius argued for a direct rebound that pushes the ‘images’ in the opposite direction. Lucretius’s further investigations of mirrors reveal his awareness of the multiple distortions and effects that the mirror is capable of causing. He includes, for example, a discussion of the consequence of placing two mirrors in front of each other so that ‘any image can be handed from one mirror to another’ and they will create ‘as many as half-a-dozen images’.¹³⁵ Lucretius noted the mirror’s abilities to reveal that which may be hidden, using as an example a convoluted discrete path through the back of a house which, with the clever placement of mirrors, can be revealed and the image of it ‘led outside’.¹³⁶ Finally, he noticed that the convex mirror does not reverse left to right which, he supposes, it

¹³³ *De Rerum Natura*, p.115.

¹³⁴ *De Rerum Natura*, p.115.

¹³⁵ *De Rerum Natura*, p.115.

¹³⁶ *De Rerum Natura*, p.115.

because the mirror's image is 'tossed between the mirror's surfaces'.¹³⁷ The mirror in Lucretius becomes a tool of multiple uses: from unravelling the hidden mysteries of the convoluted corridor, to reversing the natural path of 'air' and multiplying images. The mirror is both mysterious in its ability to conduct reversals depending on its shape and yet capable of revealing the hidden and puzzling. In the chapters that follow, this thesis will consider the connections I make between the intromission and extramission theories and the sense of internal and external selves that can be experienced through a range of encounters with the mirror, whether that be through self-portraiture or simple mirror-gazing.

¹³⁷ *De Rerum Natura*, p.116. In his notes, the translator of the Penguin edition, A. E. Stallings feels that the mirror Lucretius talks about is a concave mirror and suggests that looking in a soup spoon will provide the same effect – i.e. that the image will appear upside down but right and left are not reversed. However, in the case of the concave mirror (or, indeed a soup spoon), there is a right to left reversal. It is in the bulging surface of the convex mirror that we find no right to left or top to bottom reversals (Stallings, p.249).



Figure one: Jan Brueghel, *The Sense of Sight* (1617), Museo del Prado, Madrid¹³⁸

¹³⁸ Jan Brueghel, *The Sense of Sight* (1617), Museo del Prado, Madrid, <http://www.wga.hu/>.

Ancient Optics II

The *Catoptrics* of Heron of Alexandria (c.10-70AD) is possibly the earliest surviving text on the topic of mirroring. In *Catoptrics* Heron offers a tripartite model of vision, dividing it into optics, dioptrics and catoptrics, and goes on to illuminate the many different ‘diverting spectacles’ that can be created with a mirror: mirrors that can ‘show the right side as the right side’ and ‘the left side as the left side’ [thus avoiding its expected reversals], mirrors that could be used to help us ‘see our own backs’ and ‘to see ourselves inverted, standing on our heads, with three eyes, and two noses’, and mirrors which can show our ‘features distorted, as if in intense grief’.¹³⁹ However, Heron was keen to note that mirrors are not merely for distraction and games but serve useful functions that thus make them a suitable topic for proper study.¹⁴⁰

Heron indicated in his text that he followed the extramission theory when he discussed why visual rays are reflected and why the angles of reflection are equal, saying that ‘our sight is directed in straight lines proceeding from the organ of vision’.¹⁴¹ Reasserting the fact that ‘our vision is directed along a straight line’, Heron sketched out a theory to account for the bouncing at right angles of visual rays on the mirror’s surface: firstly, that the mirror’s surface is polished is key since ‘before they are polished’ they can have ‘some porosities upon which the rays fall and so cannot be reflected’ and it is the mirror’s tightly constructed, shiny surface which means that the ‘rays that are emitted by us with great velocity...rebound’;

¹³⁹ Cohen & Drabkin, p.261-262. Cohen & Drabkin note that Hero’s use of ‘dioptrics’ is probably not used in our modern sense of the word, which denotes the analysis of refraction, and suppose that the term dioptrics may denote Hero’s work on an ‘instrument for taking sightings’ (Cohen & Drabkin, footnote 1, p. 262).

¹⁴⁰ Cohen & Drabkin, p.263.

¹⁴¹ Cohen & Drabkin, p.263.

secondly, ‘by a consideration of the speed of the incidence and the reflection’ Heron proves that ‘these rays are reflected at equal angles in the case of plane and spherical mirrors’, that is, that the angle of incidence is equal to the angle of reflection.¹⁴² Using mathematical proof it was Heron’s supposition that ‘of all incident rays [from a given point] reflected to a given point by plane and spherical mirrors the shortest are those that are reflected at equal angles; and if this is the case the reflection at equal angles is in conformity with reason’.¹⁴³ Heron’s approach to vision then followed Euclid’s methods of mathematics and geometry and indicated an agreement with Plato’s extramission theory.

Considered by some as ‘the greatest optician of antiquity’, Claudius Ptolemy (c.127-148AD) wrote the *Optica* in which he expanded upon the existing mathematical and geometrical works by Euclid.¹⁴⁴ As with those before him, Ptolemy produced a threefold structure for the study of mirrors:

1. objects seen in mirrors are seen in the direction of the visual ray which is reflected from the mirror to the object, depending on the position of the eye;
2. images in mirrors appear to be on the perpendicular drawn from the object to the surface of the mirror, and produced;
3. the position of the reflected ray, from the eye to the mirror and from the mirror to the object, is such that at each of the two parts containing the point of reflection and makes equal angles with the perpendicular to the mirror at that point.¹⁴⁵

It appears from this that Ptolemy too was a supporter of Plato’s extramission theory, since here he refers to the ‘ray’ as going ‘from the eye to the mirror’. Ptolemy examined the phenomenon of refraction and tabulated his results, finding that ‘the amount of refraction will be less when the glass is placed next to water’ since ‘the

¹⁴² Cohen & Drabkin, p.263-264.

¹⁴³ Cohen & Drabkin, p.264.

¹⁴⁴ Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, p.15.

¹⁴⁵ Cohen & Drabkin, p.268.

difference between angles of incidence and refraction in the passive of a visual ray from one of these bodies to the other is not large'.¹⁴⁶ Theories of optics were closely interwoven with anatomical observation.

In a move away from the strictly mathematical and geometrical analyses of vision, Galen's (129-200AD) treatise *On the function of the parts of the body* offered a detailed description of the physical anatomy of the eye and of the functions of the parts within the process of vision. In it he discussed the dissection of an eye and noted, during his examination, the various parts and the effects of dissection on them:

When the fluid has escaped...the cornea is superimposed upon another layer, of which the colour is the same as that of the "front view" of the eye [i.e. the iris] before you dissect the eye...Its central aperture [the pupil] is circular in many animals like in man...Within this aperture you can see the ice-like humour of the lens...but less hard than ice. You can see the grape-like layer [the posterior wall of the iris, which we call today *corpus ciliare* or *uvea*; from the Latin word *uva*, grape] is attached to and blended with the cornea only at the cornea scleral junction...To both again [i.e. iris and sclera] the lens attaches itself.¹⁴⁷

Galen's observations focus on the natural elements, comparing the humour of the lens to ice and the wall of the iris to a grape, emphasising nature's influence in defining the structures of the human body. Galen continued this most detailed of descriptions by identifying the optic nerves, the vitreous humour and the retina and by noting that the retina is the central aspect of vision:

As soon as the optic nerves reach the eyes they unfold and expand, surrounding the vitreous humour on all sides like a garment, and finally each optic nerve attaches itself to the crystalline body [of the lens] which is the essential organ of vision...The [optic] nerve spreads out and becomes shaped like a net...the humour which is covered by

¹⁴⁶ Cohen & Drabkin, p.277.

¹⁴⁷ Rudolph E. Siegel, *Galen on Sense Perception: his doctrines, observations and experiments on vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch and pain, and their historical sources* (Basel: S.Karger, 1970), p.43-44.

the net-like tunic...is called vitreous, because the consistency of its structure resembles molten glass and its tint is the same as that of clear glass...A delicate sheath envelopes the lens eternally...It is on this [i.e. the anterior capsule of the lens] that we observe our image, just as when we see it in a mirror, when we look into the eye of a person close to us'.¹⁴⁸

Galen's language evokes a man-made, fabricated object. The optic nerve is compared firstly to a 'garment', suggesting perhaps the fragility of the eye which must be enclosed within a protective 'garment'. The optic nerve, in Galenic terms, continues to be framed in terms which suggest its nature is non-organic, when it is 'shaped like a net', which conjures the image of an object formed to receive and catch whatever comes its way. The two metaphors of garment and net are combined when Galen describes the way in which the vitreous humour is covered by the 'net-like tunic', encapsulating these key themes of the man-made object, protective and so shaped as to permit the passage of light rays. The architecture of the eye is described in terms of the non-organic which seems at odds with its placement in the natural body.

A. Mark Smith argues that in building a 'physiological model of sensation' and 'lodging perception and mental functions in the brain' as well as offering a 'virtual physiological model of the brain', Galen 'made vision a paradigm of sensation by delineating a complete anatomical and physiological pathway through the eye'.¹⁴⁹ In producing these structured models Smith contends that Galen reduced the eye 'to a physical and physiological extension of the brain' and thus 'reduced vision...and sensation generally, to the same sort of act as conceiving'.¹⁵⁰ The Galenic model of vision then, removed the primacy of the sense of sight and apportioned higher status

¹⁴⁸ Siegel, p.44.

¹⁴⁹ A. Mark Smith, 'Getting the Big Picture in Perspectivist Optics', *Isis* 72 (Dec 1981), pp. 568-589, p.572-3

¹⁵⁰ Smith, p.573.

to the brain which was, once the eyes delivered images, the faculty that made sense of the information presented: that is, it represents a shift away from images imprinting themselves on the eye to the brain interpreting the world around it.

Although there existed anatomical and philosophical models of vision, sight also had a moral dimension. In Book ten of his *Confessions* (c.397-398AD), Augustine of Hippo (354-430AD) discusses memory and, briefly, sight.¹⁵¹ Augustine separates the ‘eyes which belong to [his] flesh’ from the ‘invisible eyes’ which he lifts to God.¹⁵² The corporeal light, which corresponds to the fleshly eyes, is not necessary to finding and following the correct spiritual path since the ‘one light’ is the light of God.¹⁵³ Furthermore, the ‘countless things’ that ‘men have added to the enticements of the eyes’ have ‘far exceeded the measure set by the necessity for the use of these things and their meaning in religion’: they have ‘pursued outwardly their own works, abandoning inwardly him by whom they were made and disfiguring that which they were made’.¹⁵⁴ The eyes of the body are prone to temptation and the power of the beautiful object, and this weakness makes humans easily distracted from what should be their true, inward calling. The separation of inward ‘eyes’ and outward ‘eyes’ is suggestive of a separation of soul and body, and of a form of self-conscious awareness. This spiritual dimension to ideas of vision will feature

¹⁵¹ In writing about what can affect the individual’s path towards spirituality, Augustine accounts for the ‘pleasure of the eyes, which belong to my flesh’ (Augustine, *The Confessions*, trans. by Phillip Burton (London: Everyman’s Library, 2001), p.246). In his discussion of the eyes, Augustine wishes that the ‘beautiful and varied shapes, bright and pleasant colours’ which his ‘eyes love’ should not capture his soul.¹⁵¹ Augustine’s understanding of these objects is framed in terms of a physical sense of touch that comes from the objects which touch him ‘throughout each day as I wake, and I am given no rest from them [...] for light herself, the queen of colours, instils herself in all that we see’ (*Confessions*, p.246). This conception of light and objects seems to correspond loosely to the theories of Democritus and Aristotle in that objects appear to touch Augustine – perhaps hinting at a belief in the Democritean ‘eidola’ and Aristotelian light which allows objects, and thus colours, to be seen.

¹⁵² *Confessions*, p.247.

¹⁵³ *Confessions*, p. 247.

¹⁵⁴ *Confessions*, p.247.

throughout this thesis, including in a discussion of ‘self’ in chapter two, and in chapter five’s discussion of John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*.

A fuller account of Augustine’s thoughts on sense perception is to be found in Book eleven of *De Trinitate (On the Trinity)*, 400-416AD, where he initially divided what happens when we see an object into three processes:

When we see a body we have to consider and to distinguish the following three things...: first, the object which we see...secondly the vision which was not there before we perceived the object that was presented to the sense; thirdly, the power that fixes the sense of sight on the object that is seen as long as it is seen namely, the attention of the mind.¹⁵⁵

This perceptive trinity combined to produce sight which, without the object cannot function for, Augustine claims, ‘there is no vision when the visible object is removed’.¹⁵⁶ Although Augustine separated out each of these qualities as necessary and yet independent factors of sight, he noted that for the human to perceive objects, he or she must possess the attribute of vision at all times for functioning organs of sense must be present in order for us to recognise the visible object when it appears before us, otherwise ‘there would be no difference between us and the blind during such times as we see nothing’ whether ‘in the darkness or when our eyes are closed’.¹⁵⁷

The ‘form of the body’ that is seen does not belong to the ‘nature of a living being’; the process of vision is a bodily function; but the soul’s ‘will’ which directs the senses and the body to remain fixed upon that object ‘is proper to the soul alone’, thus it is the soul which is the director of the organs, of the mind and the body, and which presides over all processes and images brought forward by the body.

¹⁵⁵ Augustine, *On the Trinity: Books 8-15*, trans. by Stephen McKenna & ed. by Gareth B. Matthews, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.62.

¹⁵⁶ *De Trinitate*, p.62.

¹⁵⁷ *De Trinitate*, p.62.

Augustine found that there were two ‘visions’; one was of perception and the other was of thought, and each of these were divided into a ‘trinity’, the latter of which relates to memory and imagination and thus to the soul’s ability to be led astray when it dwells too long on those images which are inappropriate.¹⁵⁸

Augustine’s concentration on the literal, physical ‘touch’ of light is an extension of the theories of Democritus, Plato and Aristotle, for whom the sense of touch was vital and who each believed that, in some way, touch was involved in the mechanisms of vision. Vasco Ronchi has (in the context of a discussion of seventeenth-century optics) noted the unusual nature of touch in a model of sight such as that proposed by Augustine:

Every alteration that is produced or received takes place as the result of a contact; all our perceptions are tactile, all our sense being a form of touch; hence, since the soul does not go forth from within us to touch external objects, these must come to touch the soul by passing through the senses.¹⁵⁹

Ronchi explains that the insistence upon the centrality of touch to all the senses was due to the fact that ancient theorists ‘refused to admit the possibility of *action at a distance*’ and so ‘some communication between object and sense organ was necessary’.¹⁶⁰

The two competing ancient theories of vision, either extramission which held that rays flowed out from the eye to meet rays emanated by objects, popularised by Plato and Euclid or intromission, favoured by Democritus, Aristotle and Lucretius, in which images travelled into the eye dominated until, the ‘stroke of genius’ offered in the works of Alhacen (965-1039),¹⁶¹ the eleventh-century Arabic scientist Ibn al-

¹⁵⁸ *De Trinitate*, p.79.

¹⁵⁹ Ronchi, p.24.

¹⁶⁰ Ronchi, p.25.

¹⁶¹ Ronchi, p.28.

Haytham who flourished in Egypt as was later known in the West as Alhacen (or, Alhazen).¹⁶² Alhacen's principal argument against prior theories of vision rested on the 'afterimage' which drew attention to the fact that when an individual looks directly at the sun he or she firstly, experiences pain and secondly, upon closing the eyes, can still see the image of the sun. The first of these points rejects the Platonic visual fire since bright light or 'fire' causes pain and thus cannot stream constantly from the eye; the second finding goes against Plato's idea that when the eyes close the 'fire' is extinguished and thus vision ceases.¹⁶³ Images of objects, then, entered the eye, with light flowing into the eye and not issuing from it. In his theory of vision, Alhacen 'successfully integrated the anatomical, physical, and mathematical approaches to sight', resulting in a more correct, more rounded understanding of optics.¹⁶⁴

Alhacen rejected the Platonic extramission theory of vision and adapted and modified the intromission theory to provide a new and, ultimately, more accurate model of sight. The principal alteration that Alhacen made to the intromission theory favoured by Democritus and Aristotle was to suppose that rather than the image of an object having to be 'compressed' before it could reach the eye, the object's 'tiny image could be propagated in a straight line and enter the pupil, wherever encountered, without any need to be reduced in transit' – images were not altered before entering the eye but presented to it in their original, minute form.¹⁶⁵ Alhacen's refusal of a Platonic theory of the eye as a 'closed', 'smooth' and 'close-textured'

¹⁶² The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography,
< <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/articleHL/1008?docPos=1&anchor=match> > [accessed 21 May 2009] (para 21 of 30).

¹⁶³ Ronchi, p.28.

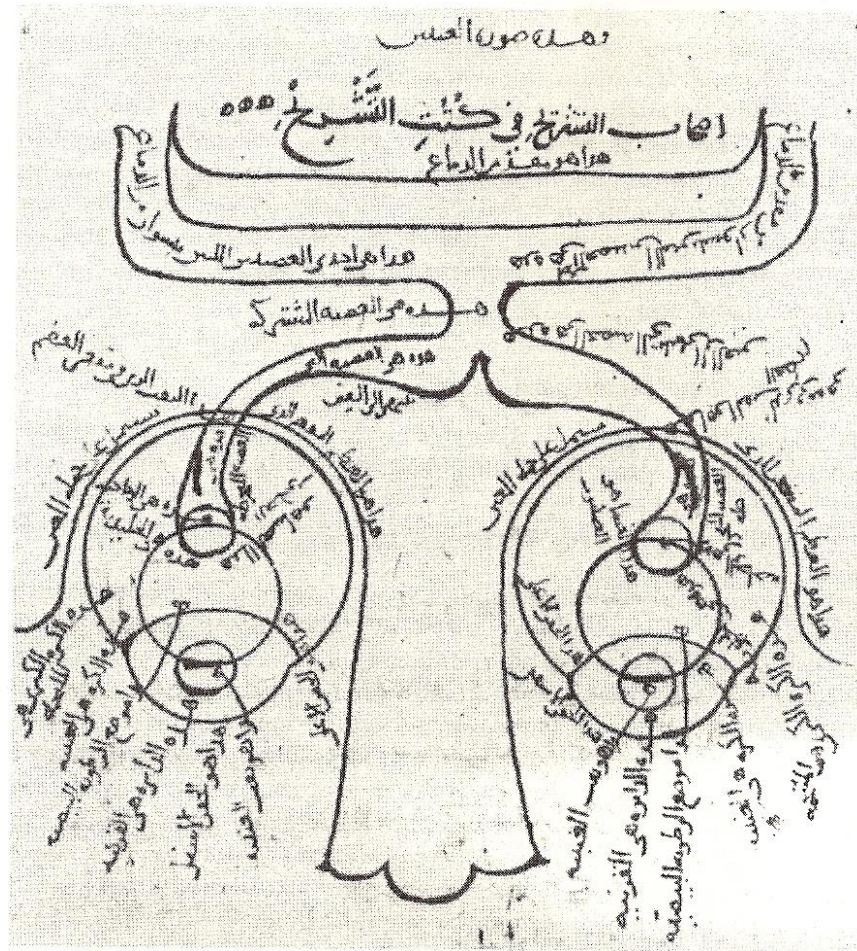
¹⁶⁴ Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, p.67.

¹⁶⁵ Ronchi, p.29.

organ is rooted in the anatomical, Galenic biology of the eye: Alhacen recognised the optic nerves, that they linked to the brain, that the pupil was an aperture and that the eye itself was enclosed by the transparent cornea. In his formulation of the structure of the eye, Alhacen finds that on the end of each optic nerve is an eye that consists of ‘four tunics and three humours’ and the first of these is the ‘consolidativa’ which contains the uvea, and in the uvea the pupil is placed ‘directly opposite the optic nerve’.¹⁶⁶ The ‘uvea’ in each eye contains the ‘glacial humour’ which is divided into two parts: firstly the ‘anterior part’ which is ‘somewhat dense’ and thus not particularly transparent and the ‘interior part’ which ‘has a transparency resembling that of glass’ – that is, the vitreous humour.¹⁶⁷ Although missing various aspects and somewhat incorrect, Alhacen’s architecture of the eyeball (see diagram below for illustration) has progressed significantly from all previous hypotheses and is much closer to our modern understanding.

¹⁶⁶ Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, p.67.

¹⁶⁷ Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, p.67.



Visual system according to Alhacen¹⁶⁸

Having established an improved biology of the eyeball, Alhacen's understanding of where sight occurs is similarly refined:

And we would say in the first place that sight occurs only by means of the glacial humour, whether sight takes places through forms coming from the visible object to the eye or in some other way. Sight does not occur through one of the other tunics in front of it, since those tunics are merely instruments of the glacial humour.¹⁶⁹

Although Alhacen makes no mention of the cornea or the lens, or the inversion of the image by the retina once it reaches the vitreous body, this description of vision is the most detailed and correct available to the period.

¹⁶⁸ Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, p.68.

¹⁶⁹ Edward Grant (ed), *A Source Book in Medieval Science* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974), p.399.

Medieval Optics

The years after the discoveries of Alhacen find philosophers, mathematicians and opticians lacking comparatively in progression and revelation, though two key figures who expressed a continuing interest in the disciplines of optics and catoptrics were Robert Grosseteste (c.1175-1253) and Roger Bacon (c.1214-1294).¹⁷⁰ Born into poverty in England, Grosseteste taught the liberal arts and was perhaps a scholar of theology in Paris, later spending approximately twenty years lecturing in theology at Oxford University.¹⁷¹ Grosseteste was prolific in his output of Greek translations, including commentaries on Aristotle, covering topics such as philosophy, natural philosophy, mathematics and theology.¹⁷² Alongside these interests, Grosseteste became embroiled in optical problems, approaching these from a more practical viewpoint than his predecessors and, for this reason, is credited with being the ‘first medieval writer to recognise and deal with...experimental verification in science’.¹⁷³ In *De Luce (On Light, 1215-1220)*, Grosseteste claims that the ‘first corporeal form’ which is the ‘more exalted’ and ‘of a nobler and more excellent essence’ than all other forms is light.¹⁷⁴ Light is for Grosseteste, as with Augustine, the principal ‘corporeal form’ because ‘a form that is in itself simple and without dimension’

¹⁷⁰ Edward Grant argues that it is ‘indisputable that modern science emerged in the seventeenth century in Western Europe and nowhere else’ and rejects the scholarship that claims the natural philosophy of the Medieval period did not contribute to this development, an argument that Grant attributes to Galileo and his dismissal of the value of natural. Grant notes that although aspects of Medieval study provided solid roots on which seventeenth century science grew, it was the translations of Greco-Arabic science which ‘transformed European intellectual life’ and made possible the ‘momentous events [and] the Scientific Revolution’ (See particularly chapter 8 of Edward Grant, *The Foundations of Modern Science in the Middle Ages: Their religious, institutional, and intellectual contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 168-206). See Steven Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp.65-117 on how “new” and “old” views of nature coexisted’.

¹⁷¹ James McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.xi-xii

¹⁷² McEvoy, p.xii.

¹⁷³ Colin M. Turbayne, ‘Grosseteste and an Ancient Optical Principal’, *Isis*, 50 (Dec, 1959), pp. 467-472, p.467.

¹⁷⁴ Robert Grosseteste, *On Light (De Luce)*, trans. by Claire C. Reidl (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1942), p.10.

could not ‘introduce dimension in every direction into matter...except by multiplying itself and diffusing itself instantaneously in every direction and thus extending matter in its own diffusion’.¹⁷⁵ It is ‘light that possesses the function of multiplying itself and diffusing itself instantaneously’ so that ‘corporeity...is...the agent...which introduces dimensions into matter in virtue of its participation in light.’¹⁷⁶ Grosseteste bestows upon light the utmost attention and importance, so that ‘light, by extending first into the form of a sphere’ and then ‘by rarefying its outermost parts to the highest degree’, forms ‘the first body...the firmament’ which is ‘perfect, because it has nothing in its composition but first matter and first form’.¹⁷⁷

Grosseteste holds that light is the highest body, divided into four ‘constituents’ which are ‘form, matter, composition and the composite’, and ‘form’ is the unifying factor amongst these since it is the simplest.¹⁷⁸ However, matter is ‘allotted the nature of duality’ due to its ‘twofold potency’ whereby it is susceptible to ‘impressions’ and receptive of them, and its ‘denseness’. Perhaps owing some inspiration to the works of Augustine, Grosseteste forms within ‘composition’ a ‘trinity’ of ‘informed matter’, ‘materialized form’ and ‘that which is distinctive to the composition’.¹⁷⁹

Grosseteste divided optics into three parts: vision, mirrors and lenses (that is, optics, catoptrics and dioptrics) and reserved the study of lenses for his fullest analysis. Grosseteste describes the effects of lenses and explains their mechanisms:

This part of optics, when well understood, shows us how we may make things a very long distance off appear as if placed very close, and large near things appear very small, and how we may make small

¹⁷⁵ *De Luce*, p.10.

¹⁷⁶ *De Luce*, p.10.

¹⁷⁷ *De Luce*, p.13.

¹⁷⁸ *De Luce*, p.17.

¹⁷⁹ *De Luce*, p.17.

things placed at a distance appear any size we want, so that it may be possible for us to read the smallest letters at incredible distances, or to count sand, or grains, or seeds, or any sort of minute objects. But how this wonder happens is explained as follows. The visual ray penetrating through several transparent media of different natures is refracted where they come together, and the parts of it existing in the different media are joined there at an angle. This is clear from the experiment which is set out in the book *De Speculis*: if something is put in a vessel and the observer takes up a position from which it cannot be seen, and then water is poured in, whatever was put in will then be seen.¹⁸⁰

Grosseteste illustrates the multiple uses of lenses, suitable not only for telescopes and spectacles, but also for microscopes, each of which were later fully developed. Grosseteste's knowledge of optical theory was rooted in the works of Aristotle, Euclid, Ptolemy, Avicenna and possibly Alkindi and Averröe, though he appears not to have been aware of Alhacen's work.¹⁸¹ Grosseteste's approach to optics appears to be mathematical, rather than philosophical, as he relies heavily on Euclid's *Optica* and *Catoptrica* when formulating his ideas on those topics. Following the theories of mathematicians and philosophers before him, Grosseteste created his own theories of optics, focusing on the importance of light and some experimentation. However, as important as his work on the rainbow, for example, was to become, Grosseteste did hold erroneous beliefs, following Plato's extramission theory to believe that in sight 'both its object and its power are light' whereby 'all coloured things...[are] illumined by 'fiery light', that is to say by the visual rays' meeting with colours' which are 'an effect of incorporated light'.¹⁸² This, coupled with an approach based more on mathematics than on the precise accuracy of experimentation, meant that while Grosseteste's approach was comprehensive and novel – Grosseteste is thought

¹⁸⁰ Grosseteste, *De Iride*, Crombie, p.119.

¹⁸¹ A. C. Crombie, *Robert Grosseteste and the Origins of Experimental Science 100-1700* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1953), p.116-7.

¹⁸² James McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), p.296

to have been the first to have combined experimental investigation with rational explanation – it was also in some ways flawed.¹⁸³

Roger Bacon (c.1214-1294), like Grosseteste, studied at universities in Oxford and Paris, later teaching in the arts faculty at Paris.¹⁸⁴ Bacon was the first scholar to gain a complete knowledge of the range of optical texts: he was familiar with Plato's *Timaeus*, Euclid's *Optica and Catoptrica*, Ptolemy's *Optica*, Alkindi's *De aspectibus*, Aristotle's *De anima* and *De sensu*, as well as the works of Galen, Alhacen and Grosseteste.¹⁸⁵ It was this depth and range of knowledge that allowed Bacon to teach 'Europeans how to think about light, vision, and the emanation of force.'¹⁸⁶ Bacon is often cited as the main proponent of experimental science, but Lindberg notes that there are important qualifications to this point: Bacon, Lindberg argues, had to 'steer a middle course between two equally dangerous extremes' which 'reflects...the dilemma of the thirteenth century'.¹⁸⁷ The dilemma was that the emerging disciplines of experimental science or 'secularized science' posed a threat to religious order and, while Bacon advances a number of theories on topics such as optics, mathematics and perspective, as well as celebrating the findings of philosophers before him, Bacon 'emphatically rejects the opinion that knowledge is valuable for its own sake'.¹⁸⁸ It was Bacon's opinion that 'the new learning could,

¹⁸³ Crombie, p.10.

¹⁸⁴ David C. Lindberg, *Roger Bacon and the Origins of Perspectiva in the Middle Ages: A Critical Edition and English Translation of Bacon's Perspectiva* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), p.xvii.

¹⁸⁵ David C. Lindberg, 'Roger Bacon on Light, Vision and the Universal Emanation of Force', Ed by Jeremiah Hackett, *Roger Bacon and the Sciences* (New York: Brill, 1997), p.243-244.

¹⁸⁶ Lindberg, 'Roger Bacon on Light', p.244.

¹⁸⁷ David C. Lindberg, 'Science as Handmaiden: Roger Bacon and the Patristic Tradition', *Isis* 78 (Dec, 1987), 518-536, (p.534).

¹⁸⁸ Lindberg, 'Science as Handmaiden', p.535.

despite various perils, be made to serve the faith and submit to its command', to support the patristic tradition.¹⁸⁹

Bacon appears to follow Platonic/Euclidian extramission theories in that he 'insists that the sense and the sense organs are not merely the recipients of species, but also sources of species' – that is, the eyes project images as well as accept an incoming flow of images.¹⁹⁰ Deviating from previous opinion, Bacon proposes that 'species' can travel along five possible paths, 'straight or direct, reflected, refracted, twisting and accidental' but that their preference is for straight lines unless their direction is interrupted by an object which will cause their flow to proceed in a different manner, such as in reflection.¹⁹¹ In the *Opus Majus*, Bacon spends Book V on optical science, covering the details of optics, parts of the mind and brain and with the eyes themselves. To Bacon optics is a 'very beautiful science', which is the 'flower of the whole of philosophy' since although other fields may be of more use, none other has such 'sweetness and beauty of utility'.¹⁹² Bacon finds that the root of vision is the 'optic', his term for the 'concave nerves causing vision' and which 'have their origin in the brain'.¹⁹³ In the brain resides the 'common sense' which 'judges concerning each particular sensation' because the brain cannot fully understand the totality of the sensation until it has been presented to the 'common

¹⁸⁹ Lindberg, 'Science as Handmaiden', p.535. Katherine H. Tachau pays particular attention to Bacon and notes that what was original about Bacon's approach was the 'great, synthetic explanatory scope of the theory he elaborated' but reminds us that Bacon's theory was 'riddled with difficulties as well as advantages' (see chapter one of Katherine H. Tachau, *Vision and Certitude in the Age of Ockham: Optics, Epistemology and the Foundations of Semantics 1250-1345* (Leiden & New York: E. J. Brill, 1988), pp. 3-26).

¹⁹⁰ Lindberg, 'Roger Bacon on Light', p.248.

¹⁹¹ Lindberg, 'Roger Bacon on Light', p.250-251.

¹⁹² Roger Bacon, *The Opus Majus of Roger Bacon* trans by Robert Belle Burke, 2 vols (New York: Russell & Russell, 1962), vol II, p.420.

¹⁹³ Bacon, *Opus Majus*, p.421.

sense'.¹⁹⁴ The faculty of sight, then, is capable of recognising only light and colour; it is the 'common sense' which translates these into recognisable images.¹⁹⁵ Key to Bacon's discussions of vision and sight is a study of the structure of the eye for, he feels, if the points of his theories are to be credible, the biology must be described. Counting Alhacen and Avicenna as principal authorities on the matter, Bacon makes his description of the eye:

there are two parts in the anterior cavity of the brain, which are called ventricles, or concavities, or cells. These ventricles cannot be organs of the common sense and of the imagination...for those faculties are arranged anteriorly and posteriorly while these ventricles are placed on the right and on the left...the entire brain cell can be divided into an anterior part and a posterior part...The anterior part [is the] place of the common sense [and] has a right and left, where are the two ventricles...From the pia matter...comes a double nerve...and these are the optic nerves...The two nerves...from the two directions right and left, meet...and after meeting again are divided. [...] The nerve that comes from the right goes to the left eye and the one from the left to the right eye, so that there is a direct extension of the nerves from their origin to the eyes [which is necessary because] vision always selects straight lines as far as possible.¹⁹⁶

Bacon's description seems to follow the basic outline given in Alhacen's diagram above; the language is purely anatomical and descriptive rather than comparative. His further description puts its emphasis on the natural strength of the eye which has 'three coats or membranes, and three humours, and a web like that of a spider'.¹⁹⁷ The eye has an 'opening in the middle of its own fore part' so that 'the impressions of light and colour and other visible things may be able to pass through the middle of the eye to the nerve coming from the brain', a description which puts the emphasis firmly on a mutual conjunction between eye and brain, a partnership which makes

¹⁹⁴ *Opus Majus*, p.421.

¹⁹⁵ *Opus Majus*, p.243.

¹⁹⁶ *Opus Majus*, p.430-32.

¹⁹⁷ *Opus Majus*, p.432.

vision possible and intelligible.¹⁹⁸ Bacon finds behind the ‘uva’ the presence in the eye of ‘veins, nerves and arteries’, which are termed ‘secundina’ because of their resemblance to after-birth; behind this is the cornea which is ‘like transparent horn’, and behind this the ‘consolidativa [or conjunctiva].¹⁹⁹ Bacon’s adherence to the works of Alhacen on the structure of the eye are clear here and he continues to recall the Arabic philosopher’s work as he describes in yet more detail the many parts of the eye; his description also appears similar to Galen’s though his word-choice reflects a more organic, natural organ. However, as noted earlier, as much as Bacon follows Alhacen’s theories, and appears to advance a formulation of vision that rejects the Platonic viewpoint, in the second chapter of his ‘seventh distinction’ of Book V, Bacon notes that ‘it is clear...that a species is produced by vision just as by other things’ which, he argues, is obvious because ‘the eye is seen by itself, as by means of a mirror, and can be seen by another’.²⁰⁰ Bacon reminds us that he is supported in this idea by illustrious predecessors, including Ptolemy, Alkindi, Euclid and Augustine.²⁰¹ On the point of reflection, although he agrees that the angle of incidence is equal to the angle of reflection, Bacon still differs from previous analysts such as Alhacen: instead of considering a literal rebounding of ‘rays’ or ‘species’, Bacon presumes that the ray is simply redirected, by its own force, along another path.²⁰²

¹⁹⁸ *Opus Majus*, p.433.

¹⁹⁹ *Opus Majus*, p.433.

²⁰⁰ *Opus Majus*, p.468.

²⁰¹ *Opus Majus*, p.468-9.

²⁰² Lindberg, ‘Roger Bacon on Light’, p.251.

Gary C. Hatfield and William Epstein observe that the impression of Alhacen's work was lasting, particularly that theory relating to the 'psychology of vision'.²⁰³ Bacon, Pecham and Witelo, whom Hatfield and Epstein consider to be Alhacen's principal adherents, agreed that vision is capable on its own of perceiving light and colour, whereas distance from the object to the individual, as well as all other matter, is detected by the perceptive faculties of the brain working in conjunction with the eye and the information it brings.²⁰⁴ This theory 'yielded a physical theory of abstraction' which was 'based on the model of a three-chambered brain within which the old faculties, transformed into 'internal senses'' were to be found.²⁰⁵ Within this formulation the 'common sense accepted the various sensory forms presented to it...and passed them...to the imaginations in coalesced perceptible form'; ultimately these 'forms' or 'sensible species' were later retained in the memory.²⁰⁶

Theories of vision were fluid, changing and often dependent upon the popularity and availability of particular translations from the Greek and Latin — the translations 'of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were over-whelmingly of scientific and philosophical works', while the 'humanities were scarcely represented'.²⁰⁷ They became, in the Medieval period, intertwined with the practice of experimentation. That the properties of lenses were well understood in theories of vision was evident. It was during the Medieval period that lenses were first put to effective use in the form of spectacles. The inventor, the location, and the precise date of the invention remain a mystery but, through an intensive investigation of the available materials,

²⁰³ Gary C. Hatfield & William Epstein, 'The Sensory Core and the Medieval Foundations of Early Modern Perceptual Theory', *Isis* 70 (Sept., 1979), pp. 363-384, p.371.

²⁰⁴ Hatfield & Epstein, p.371.

²⁰⁵ Smith, p.573.

²⁰⁶ Smith, p.573-4.

²⁰⁷ Edward Grant, *The Foundations of Modern Science in the Middle Ages: Their religious, institutional, and intellectual contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.24.

Vincent Illardi, in his most comprehensive study *Renaissance Vision: from Spectacles to Telescope*, has discovered that the first pair of spectacles, ‘two convex glass discs enclosed in metal or bone rims with handles centrally connected by a tight rivet so as to clamp the nostrils or be held before the eyes’ was invented c. 1286 in the vicinity of Pisa.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸ Vincent Illardi, *Renaissance Vision: from Spectacles to Telescopes* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2007), p.4.

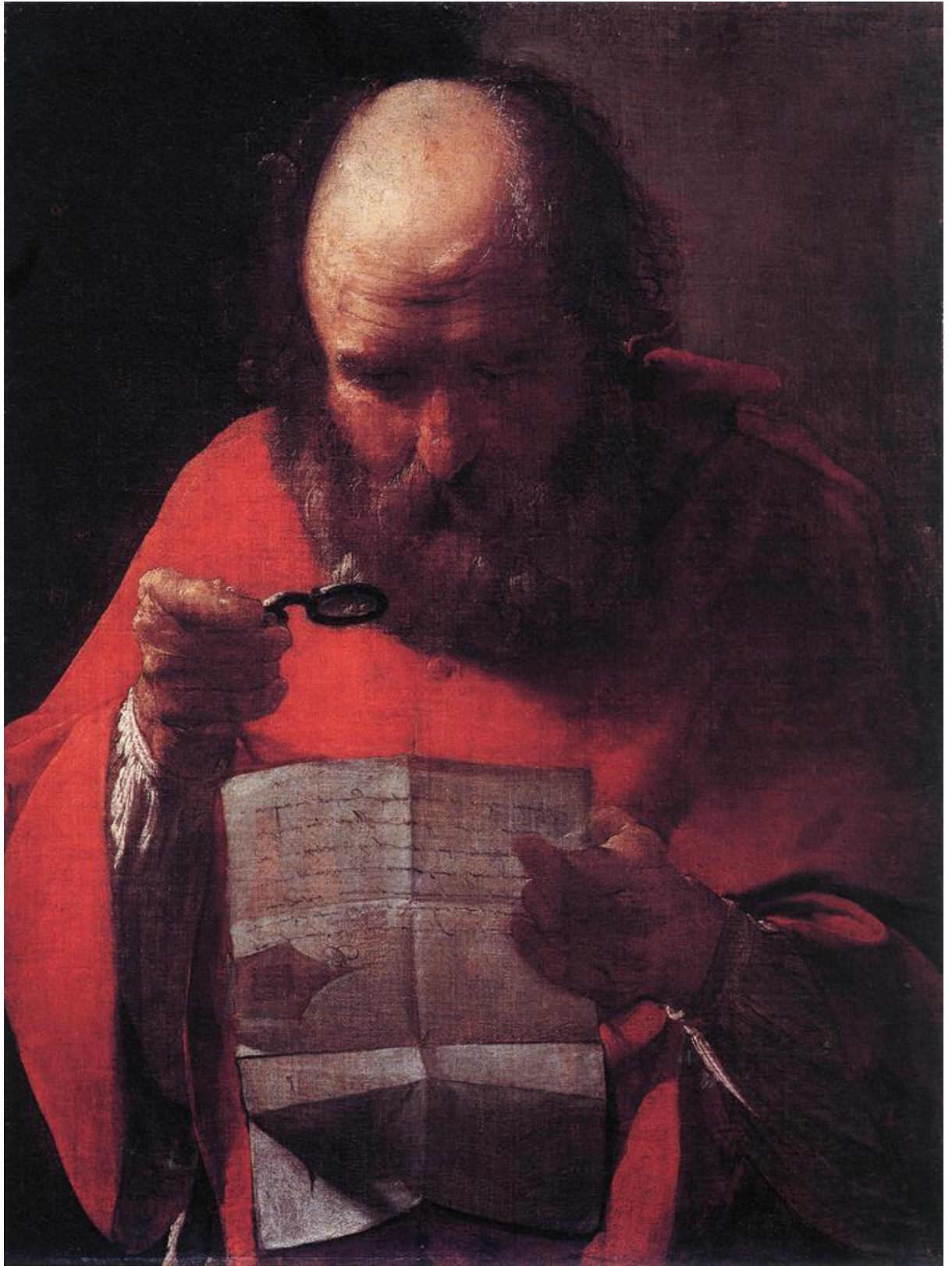


Figure two: Georges de La Tour, *Saint Jerome Reading* (1621-23)²⁰⁹

²⁰⁹ Georges de La Tour, *Saint Jerome Reading* (1621-23), *Web Gallery of Art*, <<http://www.wga.hu/index.html>> [accessed 20 May 2009].

Friar Giordano da Pisa appears to have been the first to witness the technology and its benefits and while it seems that the inventor will remain anonymous, credit is often given to Friar Alessandro della Spina who saw a pair of spectacles, learned to make them and thus shared the invention for the benefit of those in need.²¹⁰ While the precise details of the types of lenses used in these spectacles is unknown, it is thought that they would have been convex lenses, intended to correct long-sightedness, that is, the inability to correctly view objects at close proximity. The theory and experimentation exemplified in the works of Grosseteste and Bacon was being implemented for practical use, signalling a shift away from the pure mathematics, geometry and philosophy of the ancient opticians to the practical technologies explored in the Medieval and Renaissance periods. However, Ilardi rejects any notion of a connection between theory and invention, arguing that the ‘artisan’ was unlikely to be conversant with the ‘formidable intricacies’ of the circulating theories.²¹¹ Furthermore, even if the craftsman had been able to comprehend these documents, ‘his imagination would have been led in the wrong direction because medieval theory of vision was based on invalid premises’.²¹²

The broad scope of this chapter, covering the interlinked disciplines of optics and catoptrics from ancient philosophy through to medieval English experimental science, illustrates the range of influences available to the early modern period, and points to the continuing development of new and more precise ideas and theorems. Central to the mirror and to the theories of reflection is light and the eye: light and

²¹⁰ Ilardi, p.6.

²¹¹ Ilardi, p.28.

²¹² Ilardi, p.28. Ilardi argues that modern optical theory began with Johannes Kepler’s discoveries at the beginning of the seventeenth century. However, I would argue that although experimentation and theory did not always come together and offer the expected results, we should not exclude the theories of past scholars and philosophers, and the inaccurate theories would not necessarily have prevented an artisan from discovering the object.

vision are necessary conditions for the individual who wants to use the mirror. The inconsistencies and errors of the theories of optics and catoptrics do not detract from the significance of these discoveries. Rather, alongside the advancing mirror technologies, they attest to a drive towards knowledge and understanding. Each of the technologies discussed in this chapter allows for greater access to knowledge: the lens allows objects in the distance to be viewed from afar; spectacles supplement the visual powers of the human eye and allow failing sight to be, at least in part, restored; and mirrors allow the human subject the opportunity of self-examination as well as ways to see that are otherwise impossible without the use of the mirror.

The mirror, then, is considered an important and influential object. This chapter has demonstrated that optics and catoptrics are often considered together, and the changing theories and language used to describe sight and reflection come to have an impact, I argue, on ideas of reflections and the self. The mirror's meaning became synonymous with intrigue and mystery and, arguably, with a sense of self. It is this notion of self that is the focus of the next chapter.

Seeing and Seeming: reflecting the self

Omnis mundi creatura
Quasi liber et picture
Nobis est et speculum
Nostrae vitae, nostrae mortis
Nostril status, nostrae sortis
Fidele signaculum

[All creation is to us a book, a picture,
a mirror: a faithful signal of our life, our death,
our state, our fate.]²¹³

Self-knowledge, professed by Jacob Burckhardt to have emerged in the early modern period,²¹⁴ is often linked with the self-portrait and the mirror. Self-portraiture increased in popularity during the Renaissance period and ‘portraiture was becoming a viable method by which to display an individual’s collective and individual identity’.²¹⁵ Perhaps inevitably the growth in self-representation is often considered in Burckhardtian terms, where ‘both sides of human consciousness’ had, until the Medieval period, lain ‘dreaming or half awake beneath a common veil’.²¹⁶ Burckhardt claimed that, until that point, ‘man was conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, party, family or corporation’, that is, ‘only through some general category’.²¹⁷ For Burckhardt, this resulted in ‘the *subjective* side...assert[ing] itself with corresponding emphasis’ so that ‘man became a spiritual *individual*, and

²¹³ Alan of Lille, *De incarnatione Christi* trans. by Edward Peter Nolan, in *Now Through a Glass Darkly: Specular Images of Being and Knowing from Virgil to Chaucer* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), p.55.

²¹⁴ Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. by S. G. C. Middlemore (London: Penguin, 1990), p.99.

²¹⁵ Tarnya Cooper, ‘“Frail flesh, as in a glass”: the portrait as an immortal presence in early modern England and Wales’ in *Fashioning Identities in Renaissance Art*, ed. by Mary Rogers (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), p.197.

²¹⁶ Burckhardt, p.99.

²¹⁷ Burckhardt, p.99.

recognised himself as such'.²¹⁸ The Burckhardtian emergence from a generalised, uncertain 'dark ages' into a self-conscious, individually aware Renaissance has often been rejected in modern criticism, as has any notion of Renaissance 'selfhood', on grounds of a lack of evidence for what we think of as 'self'. Michael Hattaway finds that Burckhardt's schemata which categorizes experience in terms of "genius", "individuality" and 'secularization' may not fit the English experience'.²¹⁹ However, Rayna Kalas, who relies heavily upon Burckhardt's notion of the 'idea of the work of art' which allowed the work of art to 'saturate the structure of knowledge and culture', warns the reader to be wary of applying anachronistic notions of identity to the themes Burckhardt introduced, offering linguistic examples which demonstrate the differences which regularly occur between the early modern and modern understanding, in the definition of terms.²²⁰ It is imperative that potential anachronisms are avoided, and the next section of this chapter will begin to address this by examining the definitions of 'self' in order to attempt to trace the origins and first uses of the word.

My argument will follow that of Stephen Greenblatt when he claims that although 'identity' or 'self' did not first emerge in sixteenth-century England, there is a 'change in the intellectual, social, psychological, and aesthetic structures that govern the generation of identities', and this project aims to show that there was an 'intense individuality', influenced by the technologies of the mirror, that was one of the

²¹⁸ Burckhardt, p.99.

²¹⁹ Michael Hattaway (ed.), *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p.1.

²²⁰ Rayna Kalas, *Frame, Glass, Verse: The Technology of Poetic Invention in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2007), p.3, p.78.

‘legacies of the Renaissance’.²²¹ However, as Elizabeth Spiller notes, Greenblatt’s *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, ‘indebted’ to Burckhardt’s idea of the “complete man”, adheres ‘to largely male exemplars to illustrate his theme of ‘self-fashioning’, thus, while this chapter will focus mainly on male examples, the thesis will move away from Greenblatt’s approach by attending to aspects of women’s ‘self-fashioning’ in chapter four.²²² Departing from Burckhardt, John Martin contends that ‘it is no longer possible to base our analysis of the origins of individualism on the traditional humanistic assumptions that Burckhardt took as a given’, meaning that we are ‘no longer in the comfortable position of believing, as Burckhardt and many of his nineteenth-century contemporaries did, that the individual existed prior to history’. Instead, argues Martin, ‘individualism itself is a construction, that, indeed, the human self is in many ways nothing more than a fiction, and that it is above all what might be called the Renaissance representations of the self as an individual, expressive subject that require explanation’.²²³ This chapter takes representations of the self as subject as its core theme and explores the multiple models of selfhood, discussing ways of looking at and expressing the self, that emerge from the period. However, I would argue, as does Colin Morris, that while the meaning of the term ‘individual’ in the twelfth century was rooted in logic rather than human relations, the language of those living in the medieval period was still ‘rich in terms suited to express the ideas of self-discovery and self-exploration’.²²⁴ Morris describes self-

²²¹ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p.1, p.46.

²²² Elizabeth Spiller, *Science, Reading and Renaissance Literature: The Art of Making Knowledge, 1580-1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.61.

²²³ John Martin, ‘Inventing Sincerity, Refashioning Prudence: the Discovery of the Individual in Renaissance Europe’, in *The Renaissance in Europe: A Reader* ed. by Keith Whitlock, (Guildford: Biddles Ltd., 2000), pp.11-30, (p.12).

²²⁴ Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050-1200* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972; repr. 1991, 1995), p.64-65.

knowledge as one of the ‘dominant themes of the [medieval] age’, a ‘popular ideal’ that sat alongside the desire for self-expression and allowed us to ‘hear the authentic voice of the individual, speaking of his own desires and experiences’.²²⁵

Jonathan Sawday notes that the ‘culture of dissection’ which produces fragmented bodies ‘sits uneasily’ alongside the Burckhardtian view of the unified individual, and this chapter will illustrate that the ‘fragmented bodies’ of the early modern period are often divided into the external self and the internal self, and that mirrors and self-portraits are integral aspects of seeking to uncover, investigate or unify that self. The mirror, while often portrayed as the object of truth, is regularly framed in a dialogue of distrust and fakery.²²⁶

Locating Renaissance Selfhood

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (hereafter OED) definitions below illustrate that there are multiple meanings of self in operation throughout the period, suggesting that there were a number of different attempts to express or represent varying notions of selfhood. The sense of the division of the self into external and internal, which appears to be part of the means of expressing ‘self’ during this period, is exemplified in the entries for ‘self’ in the OED. Initially, the definitions of ‘self’ reveal that the sense of ‘self’ as we understand it today did not appear until the late 1600s. Amongst the meanings offered is the following, first used in 1674, which indicates a division that places ‘self’ as something which is internal, identified with the mind, rather than connected with the external body:

²²⁵ Morris, pp.66-67.

²²⁶ Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London & New York: Routledge, 1995), p.2.

Chiefly Philos. That which in a person is really and intrinsically he (in contradistinction to what is adventitious); the ego (often identified with the soul or mind as opposed to the body); a permanent subject of successive and varying states of consciousness.²²⁷

This definition, particularly recognisable to a twenty-first century audience, uses a vocabulary Freudian in its language. This sense of 'self' is first cited by Thomas Traherne (1636-1674) in 'Nature' (1674), when he speaks of a 'secret self I had enclosed within / that was not bounded with my Clothes or Skin / Or terminated with my sight'.²²⁸ The image here is of inward and outward, multiple selves that are and are not accessible: a 'secret self' not inhibited by the outward trappings of the flesh. The 'true' or 'real' self, however, is the internal one; the 'self' which is not physical, cannot be seen, and is often associated with the soul in a theological context. While Traherne's use focuses on the division between internal and external, the importance of flesh and outward appearance as separate from the internal self, the mutability and multiplicity of self is illustrated in another of the OED's definitions, which again comes towards the end of the Early Modern period:

What one is at a particular time or in a particular aspect or relation; one's nature, character, or (sometimes) physical constitution or appearance, considered as different at different times. Chiefly with qualifying adj., (one's) old, former, later self.²²⁹

This sense is first cited in John Dryden's (1631-1700) translation of Virgil's *Georgics*. In 'The Third Book of the Georgics' of 1697, Dryden's use of 'self' is illustrative of a sense of inwardness: 'In vain he burns...and in himself his former self requires'.²³⁰ Illustrative of the operation of multiple selves, this quote refers to a

²²⁷ *Oxford English Dictionary* <<http://www.oed.com/>>, accessed 24 May 2006.

²²⁸ Thomas Traherne, 'Nature' in *Poems, Centuries, and Three Thanksgivings*, ed. by Anne Ridler (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), l.19-21, p.33.

²²⁹ OED.

²³⁰ John Dryden, *The Works of John Dryden* ed. by Alan Roper (Berkeley & London: University of California Press, 1987), vol v, l. 159-160, pp.213-214.

former, perhaps younger self, which indicates that the speaker's current self has changed. This sense of the word accounts for the notion that a 'self' can change and can be a complex, fluctuating entity that differs throughout a person's lifetime. The examples from Dryden and Traherne begin to show that there was a developed, multi-layered sense of 'self' that could be used to convey a sense of the expressive subject. The sense of a multiplicity of 'selves' is represented in a third definition in the OED:

An assemblage of characteristics and dispositions which may be conceived as constituting one of various conflicting personalities within a human being. Better self: the better part of one's nature.²³¹

Edmund Spenser (c.1552-1599) uses the term 'self' in this sense in his *Amoretti* (1595) writing, 'And in myself, my inward selfe I mean, most liuely lyke behold your semblant trew'.²³² In this instance the division between inward and outward selves is clear. In this sonnet, the speaker urges the lady to abandon her mirror and instead devote herself to him where, having given up the pastime of self-contemplation that had misled her vision, she shall find her true self:

And were it not that through your cruelty,
with sorrow dimmed and deformd it were:
the goodly ymage of your visnomy,
clearer then christall would therein appere (xlv, 9-12).

Permeated by notions of dark and light, of clarity and cloudiness, which sets up binary oppositions informed by the faculty of sight, the divisions between inward and outward selves are drawn within the individual, rejecting the mirror as a source

²³¹ OED.

²³² Traherne, Thomas, 'Nature' in *Poems, Centuries, and Three Thanksgivings* ed. by Anne Ridler (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), xlv, 3

of any form of selfhood, since it ‘dimmed’, ‘deformed’ and ‘darkened his lady’s vision.

In each of these definitions there is a focus on a division between inward and outward selves, thus suggesting a multiplicity of ‘selves’ within the individual. The subtle differences between the descriptions indicate that, for Traherne, the true ‘self’ is solely inward and invisible, whereas for Dryden and Spenser, the depiction of self allows for the combination of both internal and external attributes which are united in their formation of ‘self’. In Spenser’s case, the search for authenticity cannot be conducted on the mirror’s surface and so, as with the other examples, the ‘true’ self resides within the individual. What each of these examples demonstrates is that the notion of ‘self’ was in use in literary works in England during the Renaissance, and that its use was varied, allowing writers of the period to express notions of selfhood in different ways. Key to this chapter is the repeated division of the ‘self’ into an external and an internal self which I will align with the two principal theories of vision – extramission and intromission.

As noted in the introduction, this chapter will follow Greenblatt’s assertion that identity did not emerge in sixteenth-century England, but that factors such as changes in intellectual, psychological or social structures influenced the creation of identities. This assumes, then, that individuality pre-dates the early modern period and, from Greenblatt’s discussion, that religion has little to do with ideas of selfhood. Certainly, each of the dictionary’s examples places the ‘self’ in a context that does not explicitly include religion. This suggests that, although a sense of self-mediated through devotional practice may have been prevalent in the early modern period, selfhood could also be conceived of outside of those constructs. That the OED’s first

citations of these definitions are either in the 1500s or the 1600s indicates that those terms were perhaps not in common usage prior to this. However, rather than assuming this to be evidence of a lack of selfhood before the Renaissance, this chapter will argue that there existed multiple modes of selfhood, operating alongside each other, and not necessarily completely independent of one another.

Michel Foucault links religion and selfhood, finding evidence of individuality or 'self-fashioning' in ancient and medieval cultures, indicating a rejection of Burckhardt's notion that individuality only properly emerged in the early modern period. Foucault's *Technologies of the Self* studies the ways in which the 'self' can be analysed. Foucault starts with the hermeneutics of technologies of the self in pagan and early Christian practice but takes care to distinguish the 'self' and the 'soul' since the interpretation of the self has 'been confused with theologies of the soul - concupiscence, sin and the fall from grace'.²³³ This thesis will follow this separation, only using 'soul' in the context of religious practice and not in terms of selfhood that is conceived of through other means, in which case the term 'self' shall be applied.

Foucault maps out the 'technologies' through which individuals develop self-knowledge: technologies of production; technologies of sign systems; technologies of power; and technologies of the self.²³⁴ Each of these 'technologies' involves 'certain modes of training and modification of individuals...acquiring certain skills but also...acquiring certain attitudes', which places selfhood as a self-conscious, deliberate process by which the individual practices the 'self' and rehearses

²³³ Michel Foucault, *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, ed. by L. H. Martin & P.H. Hutton (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), p.17.

²³⁴ Foucault, p.18.

individuality.²³⁵ It is the argument of this thesis that the mirror is one of these ‘technologies’ of the self and, in particular, that its own transition through technology allows for multiple modes of expressing and examining the self.

Foucault traces these notions of self and selfhood through history and finds in ancient Greek and Roman cultures, a premise of ‘care for the self’, aspects of which are discernable in the following quote from *The Imitation of Christ* (c. 1427) by Thomas à Kempis (c.1380-1471):

The spiritual man puts the care of his soul before all else; and whoever diligently attends to his own affairs is ready to keep silence about others. You will never become interior and devout unless you refrain from criticism of others, and pay attention to yourself.²³⁶

As with the examples from the dictionary, the central focus of attending to the self is interiority, here framed by spiritual devotion. Foucault aligns Kempis’s words with an ancient Greek practice called ‘epimelesthai sautou’, which he translates as ‘the concern with self’, ‘to be concerned, to take care of yourself’.²³⁷ ‘Care of the self’ and the Delphic principal ‘know thyself’ are separate but interdependent concepts. Once more these divisions of aspects of interiority, demonstrated in early medieval work, call into question assertions that early modern self-awareness is not truly self-reflective. Foucault develops his argument, noting autobiography as ‘one of the most ancient Western traditions’, and separating soul from self since ‘the soul cannot know itself except by looking at itself in a similar element, a mirror’.²³⁸ The soul is here rendered animate, capable of self-reflection, and compared to the looking glass: in order for the soul to look at itself, it, too, is separate from the mirror. This

²³⁵ Foucault, p.18.

²³⁶ Foucault, p.30.

²³⁷ Foucault, p.19.

²³⁸ Foucault, p. 27, p.25.

comparison portrays the soul as the passive recipient, accepting and showing only what falls before it, much like the eyeball in the intromission theory. As established in chapter one, there are two theories of vision that perpetuate throughout the Renaissance, one of which is the intromission theory, in which the form and image of an object travels into the eye. In Foucault, the soul appears to be characterised in the same way – the soul, characterised as akin to the passive, receptive mirror, is not actively fashioned. Instead, the soul is influenced and developed directly by what is around it, and it absorbs this and is created by it. It is the argument of this thesis that the division of ‘self’ into external and internal, as evidenced in the definitions and examples offered in the dictionary, is linked to the competing extramission and intromission theories of vision, and that this link has a significant impact on subjectivity.

In the light of Foucault’s comments, then, the tale of selfhood cast by Burckhardt, as that which ‘lay dreaming or half awake beneath a common veil’ until the Renaissance, must be recast in order to take account of other, earlier expressions of self. Augustine’s *Confessions* (AD397-398), which bears evidence of deep personal investigation, scouring the ‘soul’, illustrates the existence of self-enquiry before the early modern period, where the individual both conceived of and scrutinised identity, in this case against the norms of Christianity. However enmeshed in the doctrine of Christianity Augustine’s account of himself may be, it suggests a deeper understanding of ‘self’ than Burckhardt claimed existed:

Step by step, my thoughts moved on from the consideration of material things to the soul, which perceives things through the senses of the body, and then to the soul’s inner power, to which the bodily senses communicate external facts. Beyond this dumb animals cannot go. The

next stage is the power of reason, to which the facts communicated by the bodily senses are submitted for judgement.²³⁹

Many scholars researching selfhood throughout history automatically rule out ‘self-interrogation’ based on Christianity since it has been argued that selfhood mediated through Christ is not truly individual and personal. A. J. Piesse recognises the regular critical insistence that ‘the notion of self-interrogation in anything other than the religious sense flourishes across a range of disciplines only from the beginning of the sixteenth century’, while Roger Smith finds that ‘most modern people’ when thinking of categories of ‘self’ or ‘person’ ‘ignore the theological dimension’ which Smith describes as ‘badly ahistorical when projected back onto the seventeenth century’.²⁴⁰ Thus, critics argue for a ‘self-speaking subject’ which ‘flourishes across a range of disciplines only from the beginning of the sixteenth century’.²⁴¹ In this respect Piesse refers specifically to Greenblatt and Dollimore as having ‘substantially displace(d) earlier arguments that the Western European individual or self dates from around the twelfth century’.²⁴² Piesse refuses to rule out the role of religion in the sense of individuality, and does not accept the notion that selfhood emerged only in the Renaissance. As I noted earlier, Greenblatt’s seminal work, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, explored new ways of thinking about the self during the early modern period, and this thesis agrees with the argument that selfhood was culturally generated:

²³⁹ St. Augustine, *Confessions of a Sinner*, trans. by R. S. Pine-Coffin, (London: Penguin, 2004), p.61.

²⁴⁰ A. J. Piesse, ‘Identity’, in *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, ed. by Michael Hattaway, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p.634), Roger Smith, ‘Self-Reflection and the Self’ in *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present* (London & New York: Routledge, 1997), pp.49-57 (p.50).

²⁴¹ Piesse, p.634.

²⁴² Piesse, p.635.

I perceived that fashioning oneself and being fashioned by cultural institutions – family, religion, state – were inseparably intertwined. In all my texts and documents, there were, so far as I could tell, no moment of pure, unfettered subjectivity; indeed, the human subject itself began to seem remarkably unfree, the ideological product of the relations of power in a particular society.²⁴³

Selfhood in this context, then, loses any idea of the autonomous individuality that Burckhardt cultivated. The self that Greenblatt speaks of is a self generated by external forces of society, culture and politics. However, while I agree with Greenblatt's position on cultural change, I depart from his views on religion and the self, where he leaves no room for the possibility of individual freedom or interiority *within* the confines and constructs of society or religion. Thus, I argue that Renaissance selfhood in many cases lies necessarily in spiritual development.

Nancy Selleck's move away from the 'one-person' model of selfhood that focuses on subjectivity marks a consideration of an alternative viewpoint on the creation of the self in the early modern period. Selleck addresses the debate of early modern selfhood and refutes the position that characters such as Hamlet are precursors of our modern sense of self.²⁴⁴ Selleck instead investigates a distinctly different and yet no less valid Renaissance 'self' that relies upon an interchange with the 'other', where the 'other' becomes 'not merely the self's context but its source and its locus'.²⁴⁵ This chapter looks at other means by which 'other bodies and other perspectives fashion the self', based on the details offered in the OED's definitions which seem to suggest

²⁴³ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp.256-7.

²⁴⁴ Nancy Selleck, *The Interpersonal Idiom in Shakespeare, Donne, and Early Modern Culture* (Hampshire & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p.1. See also Katherine Eisaman Maus who explores the space between the external and the internal, and that which 'passes show' for Hamlet as he struggles to find ways to express his grief at his father's death, in *Inwardness and Theatre in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

²⁴⁵ Selleck, p.21.

multiple modes of selfhood, and varying ways of expressing the self.²⁴⁶ My thesis relates this notion of the ‘other’ to the concepts of ‘internal’ and ‘external’ offered in the OED, as the self-portraits discussed later in this chapter will exemplify. The ‘other’, either in the mirror or the self-portrait, is ‘external’ rather than ‘internal’, suggesting that what is external can become both ‘source’ and ‘locus’. In this formulation the internal and external selves are joined in a mutual relationship of exchange; a relationship which supports multiple means of fashioning the self. Thus, the comprehension of a Renaissance model of ‘selfhood’ must go ‘beyond the concept of subjectivity that dominates our critical discourse at present’.²⁴⁷ Furthermore, my argument expands and develops Selleck’s point that the ‘other’ is the locus for the self, by marrying it with the intromission theory of vision. The ‘other’ that Selleck describes as an external influence or factor in the development of identity is, I will argue, related to the object in the intromission theory. The object’s relationship to the body and the self here is similar to that of the ‘other’ as locus for selfhood.

The argument that I would like to advance falls in line with critics like Selleck and John Jeffries Martin, and my project emphasises the incorporation of the ‘other’, that is the ‘external’ into the ‘internal’, particularly through the device of the mirror or self-portrait. Martin specifically rejects Burckhardt’s self-determining individual and instead makes the point that ‘there were multiple models of identity in the Renaissance’ and that ‘if there was a constant in the Renaissance experience of identity, it had to do with different way of thinking about what we might call...the

²⁴⁶ Selleck, p.3.

²⁴⁷ Selleck, p.3.

relation of the internal to the external self'.²⁴⁸ The mirror, situated in the gap between the internal and the external, provides a method by which the external may mediate the internal — that is, the image of the outer self. The looking-glass was an object that captured the imagination of a Renaissance that welcomed the technological processes which produced yet better mirrors. Herbert Grabes' extensive survey of the many 'mirror-titles' in texts of the period attests to the myriad functions and meanings a mirror could hold.²⁴⁹

This chapter will illustrate that the mirror can become the central tool in the moment of self-discovery, since there existed multiple senses of 'self' which were not restricted to the 'generic' religious sense of self for which Debora Shuger argues. While Piesse claims that the developments in culture altered perception and changed self-perception, Shuger analyses and challenges this idea, recognising that the mirror may have 'both registered and elicited a new awareness of individual identity...and a new reflexive self-consciousness'.²⁵⁰ However, in her argument, Shuger rejects this possibility on the basis that Renaissance mirrors do not function on the level of self-reflexivity, but rather reflect a 'generic self' (and by that Shuger means a religious self which is mediated through God) and states that very few Renaissance mirrors (real or metaphorical) are used as a 'paradigm for reflexive self-consciousness'.²⁵¹ Thus, where Piesse argues that the influence of culture, technology and societal change is inherent to an individual's sense of self, Shuger rejects this sense of the generic as related to self-consciousness.

²⁴⁸ John Jeffries Martin, *Myths of Renaissance Individualism* (Hampshire & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.7.

²⁴⁹ See Herbert Grabes, *The Mutable Glass: Mirror-imagery in titles and texts of the Middle Ages and English Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

²⁵⁰ Debora Shuger, 'The "I" of the Beholder: Renaissance Mirrors and the Reflexive Mind', in *Renaissance Culture and the Everyday* ed. by Patricia Fumerton & Simon Hunt (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 21-41 (p.22).

²⁵¹ Shuger, p.31.

I would like to align the theory that selfhood was multiplicitous, both in terms of understanding it and expressing it, with the fluctuating, developing theories of vision, which shifted and switched between extramission and intromission. Each of these different approaches alters the viewpoint of the individual, thus altering their subject-object perception. As discussed in chapter one, in the extramission theory, the focus is singular. The rays emitted come from the single being and are directed outward only at the object that the individual chooses to 'see'. The interaction between individual and object comes from the person who looks upon the 'other'. In the case of the intromission model of vision, the process of seeing is much more interactive: the object, that is, the 'other', constantly produces images (or eidola) of itself and presents them to the eyes, where both vision and comprehension are instigated. This description of sight seems to have something in common with Selleck's assertion that the 'other' becomes the context, source and locus for the self. The locus of the internal *is* the external, particularly so in the case of self-knowledge, where, with the help of a mirror, the light rays are bounced back to the viewer, thus revealing the body's outer shell. This association of selfhood with visual theory helps account for the fluctuations throughout the Medieval and Renaissance periods in notions of selfhood and, through this idea, we can trace links between selfhood, vision and devotional practice.

The early modern self is not a unified, homogenous whole, but is instead divided, the external and the internal interacting with the 'other'. The mirror and the self-portrait can mediate between the external and the internal, their images providing an

‘other’ for the individual.²⁵² David Hockney feels that painters must have been fascinated by the effects of concave and convex mirrors, which allowed bodies and rooms to be revealed in their entirety on small reflective surfaces and feels certain that the use of these mirrors in paintings and the simultaneously increasing incidence of ‘greater individuality’ cannot be coincidence.²⁵³ The sections that follow will draw out the relation of visual theory to notions of self, as well as illustrating the ways in which artists made use of mirrors and mirroring to examine the dichotomy between external and internal.

Sensing, Seeing and Spirituality

Michael Camille argues that the fundamental shift from extramission to intromission which emphasized ‘the human subject, or the soul, as the affective subject of cognition’ dramatically affected subjectivity in the Medieval period.²⁵⁴ This, he claims, comes as a result of reversing the extramission theory where the rays flow from subject to object, to produce the intromission theory ‘making the trajectory one that went from object to subject’.²⁵⁵ This movement bears influence on religion by ‘constructing new modes of subjectivity and human identity’ so that ‘God’s body enter[ed] into the theater of sensations’ where Christ ‘not only showed his wounds

²⁵² Jacques Lacan refers to the ‘mirror stage’ as a ‘drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation’ and which ‘manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of fantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality...’ (Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection* trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1977), p.4. I will discuss the Lacanian mirror-moment more fully in chapter five.

²⁵³ David Hockney, *Secret Knowledge: Rediscovering the Lost Techniques of the Old Masters* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001), p.79.

²⁵⁴ Michael Camille, ‘Before the Gaze: The Internal Senses and Late Medieval Practices of Seeing’, in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw*, ed. by Robert S. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp.197-223 (p.204).

²⁵⁵ Camille, p.206.

but returned the viewer's gaze'.²⁵⁶ In this way 'the intromission model took the emphasis away from vision' and placed it on 'the power of images themselves, whose eyes, as in cult statues and devotional images, could stare back'.²⁵⁷

However, where Camille focuses on the import of the intromission theory, the extramission theory was still both popular and endorsed by theoreticians such as Bacon and Grosseteste, and had been intertwined with spirituality. Prior to the Medieval period, in Augustine's model of divine vision, the eyes of the body sent out rays to reach the object which, when they met, produced an image on the soul. Here the onus is on the individual, the rays physically flowing from the subject and touching the object, and the focus is fixed firmly on the processes of vision. This relates to Augustine's 'inward eye' of divine illumination since 'the object and the viewer are both essential to an activity in which the attention of the human being has been consciously concentrated and trained...the initiative remains with the viewer'.²⁵⁸ Camille argues that in pictorial representation Christ's body was available to the viewer and his eyes stared back, giving a sense of gritty corporeality to the human interaction with devotional images. Margaret Miles, on the other hand, applying Augustine's own extramission-based theory of devotion, notes that 'the focused and intensified longing of the eye of the mind reaches out' so that it can 'touch God'.²⁵⁹ This equally physical method of interchange with God concentrates on the individual who actively seeks out spirituality, thus 'spiritual vision ultimately includes seeing with the eyes of the body'.²⁶⁰ Camille's and Miles's arguments

²⁵⁶ Camille, p.207.

²⁵⁷ Camille, p.207.

²⁵⁸ Margaret Miles, 'Vision: The Eye of the Body and the Eye of the Mind in Saint Augustine's "De Trinitate" and "Confessions"', *The Journal of Religion*, 63 (April, 1983), 125-142 (p.130).

²⁵⁹ Miles, p.134.

²⁶⁰ Miles, p.139.

illustrate the centrality to religion of the competing discourses of vision and while both emphasize a fleshly divine exchange, each mode of vision redirects the path of vision, from object to subject and from subject to object. In the mirror, as well as the self-portrait, this visual exchange is at the core of their ability to participate in modes of self-understanding and self-representation. The mirror permits the individual the opportunity to be both subject and object, as its reflective surface redirects the visual flow.

Theories of vision extended their reach into religious culture as well as artistic endeavour, the principal theoretical oppositions of the extramission and intromission models entering into discourses of religion. The involvement of visual theory in devotional practice expanded to include visual phenomena such as visions and transubstantiation, illustrating the depth of impact that optical theory had. The wax metaphor which Aristotle used to describe the way that the likeness of an object is impressed upon the eye and the brain became particularly popular in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as wax seals were ‘*the major medium of pictorial self-representation*’ during this period.²⁶¹

The mirror held its place amongst this network of visual metaphor and optical theory and, during the medieval period, was a major metaphor for visibility in religious, civic and educational contexts. The mirror became a religious metaphor signifying inner spirituality, served as a metaphor for conduct manuals which issued instructions on how individuals should conduct themselves in society or at court, and provided a suitable trope to describe all-encompassing encyclopedic volumes of

²⁶¹ Camille, p.210. Camille offers a fuller account of the importance of Aristotle’s wax metaphor to the medieval period, arguing that it is central to medieval theories of vision. Camille notes that the ‘language of imprinting’ is ‘fundamental to medieval concepts of generation and creation’, and also covers the description of memory as an imprint or wax impression (Camille, p.210).

information. Grabes' extensive work on the mirror-metaphor provides a comprehensive list of the diverse applications of the mirror during the medieval and early modern periods. In his inventory of mirror connotations Grabes includes, amongst a great many others, the water mirror, the glass mirror, mirrors of stone, metal and crystal, the eye as mirror, God as mirror, heavenly bodies, man as mirror, the soul, mind and heart, thought, emotions, memory, moral sense, purity, the self, perfection and imperfection, past and future, deception and transformation.²⁶² The link that Camille finds between the mirror and wax seal metaphors is that 'the mind is described as perceiving through a process of representation'.²⁶³ This presents the process of seeing and being seen as a wholly physical and bodily experience, involving not just the eyes but also the mind, the brain and the soul.

At the centre of the mirror and wax seal metaphors that were both popular and repeated through the medieval and early modern periods is the notion of perception as 'representation'. As indicated by the inclusive list of potential mirror-meanings that Grabes collates, perception, truth, deception and 'making' sit at the heart of the mirror metaphor, working with and against each other in a variety of situations. While the examples offered by Camille and Miles show a unity of vision and Christ, as a result of the search for divine truth, Stuart Clark argues that during this period 'vision came to be characterized by uncertainty and unreliability' so that 'access to visual reality could no longer be guaranteed'.²⁶⁴ Instability is inherent in the metaphors of wax impressions and the mirror. While Aristotle's impressed wax

²⁶² Grabes complete and thorough catalogue of categories of mirrors and meanings is found in the 'Notes' section of his text, in which he lists all the instances in literature in which the mirror is used as a metaphor - see Herbert Grabes, *The Mutable Glass: Mirror-Imagery in Titles and Texts of the Middle Ages and English Renaissance*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 330-350.

²⁶³ Camille, pp.210-211.

²⁶⁴ Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.2.

produced an image of the object, it was a copy, a version, a simulacra. It was a likeness of the original, but was neither the original nor an exact copy of it. Similarly, the mimetic qualities of the mirror meant that it replicated only what was placed before it, at any given moment, this transience ensuring that any copy reflected briefly in the mirror could not be construed as reality. Clark explains that, in this ‘ocularcentric’ era, ‘late medieval piety invested heavily in the sense of sight’ so that devotion was characterized by a ‘tactile quality’.²⁶⁵ However, later this was to be rejected, ‘spiritual belief being incompatible with the indulging of the senses’ and so pre-Reformation churches aimed to ‘replace eye-service with ear-service’.²⁶⁶

Chapter one discussed Plato’s theory of vision and reflection, and revealed his misgivings about the reliability of the body’s visual apparatus, and this distrust continues throughout his other works. Miles, in a theory-based discussion of language and images, argues that in the *Phaedrus*, Plato contrasts the painted image with the printed word and concludes that ‘just as the painted image is “an image of an image”, so the printed word is “a kind of image” of living speech.’²⁶⁷ Plato’s own description of this process is as follows:

...for the creatures of painting stand *like* living beings, but if one asks them a question, they preserve a solemn silence. And so it is written with words; you might *think* they spoke as if they had intelligence, but if you question them, wishing to know about their sayings, they always say one and the same thing.²⁶⁸

Plato’s speech here is permeated with a sense of appearance as opposed to reality, the paintings stand before us *like* they were alive, says Plato, reminding us that these

²⁶⁵ Clark, p.161.

²⁶⁶ Clark, p.161.

²⁶⁷ Margaret R. Miles, *Image as Insight: Visual Understanding in Western Christianity and Secular Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), p.140.

²⁶⁸ Plato, *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus* ed. by Harold North Fowler (London: Heinemann, 1933), p.565, my italics.

creations are images, imitations of the real. They cannot, however, be real. Words, also, are inert: they simply *seem* because they are unable to participate actively in any dialogue of the intellect. These inanimate objects can offer meanings, but are only part of a process of knowledge. Miles argues that Platonic theory, which held that the object that clashed with the visual ray and engaged with the soul to produce in it an image, formed the basis for spiritual knowledge:

The role of vision is to concentrate, through the stimulus of the beautiful image, the *energeia*, the intellectual and somatic intensity of *eros* which is a necessary precondition of learning. Then education – language – must intervene to articulate the inferences of what has until now been a strong but undefined perception.²⁶⁹

This translates to devotion in that ‘natural objects, created by God, reflect and give witness of their Creator’ and ‘the strongest and most direct “image of God” is human being, created in God’s image’.²⁷⁰ In this formulation of vision as a portal for knowledge, the image is placed before the word – it is the image that captures the eye and delights and motivates the soul. However, the image, in this construction, is the ‘precondition’ of learning; necessary, but subordinate to language which must ‘intervene’ and define what the eyes have perceived. The eye brings to the mind the sources of learning and thereafter both the eye and its images become secondary in the processes of knowledge.

The combination of devotion and self-representation, the ‘printed word’ and the ‘painted image’, can be found in the *Hortus Deliciarum (Garden of Delights)*, 1176-1196, produced by the abbess of Hohenbourg in Alsace, Herrade von Landsberg. The *Hortus Deliciarum* was ‘the first extensive encyclopedia written for women in the

²⁶⁹ Miles, p.142.

²⁷⁰ Miles, p.142.

West...composed primarily during the years 1170-1196'.²⁷¹ The manuscript, now lost, was illuminated and included an illustration of Herrade with her nuns. Caroline Walker Bynum notes that 'the iconographic tradition appropriated by Herrade or her artist collaborators was...Eastern and Greek rather than Western'.²⁷² The illumination is an image that Liana De Girolami Cheney, Alicia Craig Faxon, and Kathleen Lucey Russo refer to as a 'self-portrait'.²⁷³



Figure three: Herrade von Landsberg, illumination from *Hortus Deliciarum* (1160-70)²⁷⁴

The group portrait shows Herrade with her sisters: each nun has mostly indistinguishable features so that, aside from some variations in the colours of their

²⁷¹ Prudence Allen, *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution 750 BC-AD 1250* (Montreal & London: Eden Press, 1985), p.315.

²⁷² Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p.117.

²⁷³ Liana De Girolami Cheney, Alicia Craig Faxon, & Kathleen Lucey Russo, *Self-Portraits by Women Painters* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), p.21.

²⁷⁴ Herrade von Landsberg, illumination from *Hortus Deliciarum* (1160-70), <http://bacm.creditmutuel.fr/HORTUS_DELICARUM.html> [accessed 3 June 2009].

habits and their names inscribed above their heads, each woman appears to be no different to next one. Herrade stands over them all, hers being the only figure revealed in full length, but still her features appear indistinguishable from those of the other nuns. In a nunnery, any sense of individuality would be greatly reduced since the nuns' commitment to the convent and to God would involve the complete removal of all personal items such as jewellery and make-up, so that every woman is the same. However, perhaps the only differentiating factor that cannot be removed from the nuns is their physical features and attributes; the facial features of each woman *must* be different but in Herrade's portrait, even the artist does not depict herself as distinct from the others. Only in her standing, full-length position, perhaps a marker of her status as abbess, does Herrade differentiate herself. This early illumination illustrates that even if this can be considered a self-portrait, all concepts of individuation are null and void. Cheney *et. al.* state that the import of such an image is that 'the text defines the image of the self, while the imago remains an icon'.²⁷⁵ The image of the nuns is purely iconographical, showing that the image of the self, of the body, is not enough to form identity. Instead, it is the words inscribed alongside the portrait that truly define them. The text in the image consists of the names of each nun and the message on the scroll held up by Herrade, which reads:

Herrade, who through the grace of God is abbess of the church on the Hohenburg, here addresses the sweet maidens of Christ. I was thinking of your happiness when like a bee guided by the inspiring God I drew from many flowers of sacred and philosophic writing this book called the Garden of Delights: and I have put it together into a sweet honeycomb. Therefore, you must diligently seek your salvation in it and strengthen your weary spirit with its sweet honey drops.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁵ Cheney *et. al.*, p.20.

²⁷⁶ Cheney *et. al.*, p.20.

Herrade associates herself and her nuns with bees and, in turn with honey and honeycomb, demonstrating ‘her knowledge of Christian iconography and medieval bestiaries’.²⁷⁷ She dedicates her book to God, referencing in its title the Garden of Eden and presenting it as a guide for the faltering Christian whose ‘weary spirit’ may find revival between its pages. The text of Herrade’s illumination depicts the ‘image of the self’ in an abstract manner, cloaked in religious simile, revealing Herrade as ‘like a bee’ - that is to say, as one member of a swarm. While this portrait does not possess the traditional characteristics of a self-portrait, such as individuation or personal detail, it does exhibit the desire to replicate the self and does mark out Herrade as different from her sisters; she is the leader, the ‘queen bee’, illustrating her own devotion to God and her elevated position amongst the nuns. Martin Jay examines the theme of ‘specular sameness’, finding that ‘the Latin *speculation*...contained within it the same root as *speculum* and *specular*, which designate mirroring’.²⁷⁸ In this context, instead of ‘implying the distance between subject and object, the specular tradition...tended to collapse them’.²⁷⁹ Herrade’s portrait removes the sense of a division between subject and object. None of the eyes in this image look out to address the viewer – they are all directed inward – signifying a refusal to be made object. Their contemplation is spiritual and thus individuation is irrelevant – any sense of self is tethered to a spiritual union with God. The nuns, united in their service to God, illustrate a removal of subject-object divisions. This sense of ‘self’, which lacks a notion of autonomous identity and is

²⁷⁷ Cheney et. al., p.20.

²⁷⁸ Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p.31.

²⁷⁹ Jay, p.31.

rooted firmly in devotional practice, will sit in stark contrast to the later visual expressions of selfhood that I will discuss in this chapter.

This division of subject and object can be further analysed in the notions of vision throughout the medieval period. At the centre of discussions of body and soul are the senses: intertwined with flesh and sin, and with inner purity, the senses provide the locus for an examination of the medieval relationship of subject and object with body and flesh. Suzannah Biernoff notes that the ‘distinction between body and flesh in Medieval thought is often a tenuous one’ but that it is related to the ‘*embodied* eye’s dual relationship to reason and pleasure’.²⁸⁰ The eye is the passageway, its location making it particularly subject to the pleasures of the flesh and vital to the mind’s judgement and reason. Sensation, during the medieval period, could lead the body to become ‘submerged in the flesh rather than anchored to spirituality or intellection’.²⁸¹ The potential for boundary collapse rests with the body’s senses, which are the ‘gates’ of the body and mind.²⁸² Framing the memory in architectural terms, Elizabeth Sears gives it two ‘gates’, sight and hearing.²⁸³ To each of these gates is a ‘path’ – ‘*painture* and *parole*, pictures serving the eye and words the ear’.²⁸⁴ Sears notes the import of this structural formation of the senses:

it implies that the organs of sense, like the portals of a dwelling, were designed to a purpose: the eyes to see and the ears to hear, each organ constructed to as to admit a particular object.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁰ Suzannah Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment in the Middle Ages* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p.17.

²⁸¹ Biernoff, p.18.

²⁸² Elizabeth Sears, ‘Sensory Perception and its Metaphors in the Time of Richard of Fournival’ in *Medicine and the Five Senses* ed. by W. F. Bynum & Roy Porter, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) pp.17-39 (p.19).

²⁸³ Sears, p.17.

²⁸⁴ Sears, p.18.

²⁸⁵ Sears, p.20.

The comparison of senses to ‘portals’ invokes a language of architecture which, applied to the body, figures the body as the *built* environment in which the ‘portals’ allow for entry or access to the body. This, in turn, implies a sense of the ‘made’, calling to mind that God *made* man in his own image. The senses seem to be so constructed so as to properly serve the body and its needs. However, when the senses alone are not enough to provide the body with correct or accurate information, or are in some way deficient, science had provided the individual with a number of tools which could be used to assist the senses – tools such as lenses or mirrors.

The definitions and translations of Sir Thomas Elyot (c.1490–1546) record a sense of fascination or amazement with the object that is the mirror. Elyot, who had interests in science and medicine, published his medical treatise *A Castell of Health* in 1536 and followed it with his popular Latin-English *Dictionary* (1538), which translates ‘miror, -aris, -ari’ as ‘to meruayle’ (to marvel).²⁸⁶ Perhaps more intriguing and revealing in Elyot’s ‘dictionary’ is the list of words that unveils the technologies available: for example, ‘speculum is defined simply as ‘lookynge glass’ but Elyot includes ‘specularia’ the Latin term for spectacles, ‘spectrum’, meaning ‘any ymage or figure in a man’s ymagynation’ and finally ‘specularis’ used to indicate ‘any thyng whereby a manne may see the better’.²⁸⁷ These objects permit improved sensory data to be sent to the body and serve as a form of prosthetic which supplements the powers of the senses. Within Elyot’s definitions of the mirror, the spectacles and the persona, we find the sense of wonder intertwined with the concepts of imitation and fakery. As a tool, the mirror provided the individual with

²⁸⁶ Sir Thomas Elyot, *Dictionary* (1538), all text from *Early English Books Online* (EEBO), image 84, right page.

²⁸⁷ Sir Thomas Elyot, *Dictionary of syr Thomas Eliot knight* (London, 1538) EEBO, Aa^r, image no 146 [accessed 3 March 2008].

the opportunity to examine the self, to scrutinize the body in a practical way, but also in a spiritual sense.

In his *Dictionary* Elyot defines 'persona' as 'a vysour lyke to a mans face, also person or personage, amonge dyvynes and late philosophers: sometimes the qualitie of a man'.²⁸⁸ Here we find an image of fakery, of a mask, of fabrication of the 'real' person or face. Elyot's definition describes something more than facial fakery however, since his understanding of persona extends to 'a person or personage': there are other markers of an individual which can be imitated. Elyot moves closer to a modern definition of self when he extends his explanation to include 'sometime the qualitie of a man'. The indication that this is a rare usage restricted to divines and philosophers, suggests that this is not the sense usually drawn from the term by most Renaissance individuals. Connotations of forgery and questionable authenticity seem not to apply to this aspect of the definition. Rather, 'the quality' of the man seems to hint at the essence of the man, something that cannot be imitated through the use of a 'vysor'. The Early Modern 'person' - a term that, in the light of such definitions seems more applicable than 'self' - is related to disguise and the knowing and obvious copying of external attributes.

²⁸⁸ Elyot, EEBO, image 106, left page.



Figure four: Lubin Baugin, *The Five Senses* (1630), Musée du Louvre, Paris²⁸⁹

²⁸⁹ Lubin Baugin, *The Five Senses* (1630), Musée du Louvre, Paris, *Web Gallery of Art*, <<http://www.wga.hu/html/b/baugin/chessboa.html>> [accessed 22 May 2009].

Partaking of a literary and artistic tradition of the depiction of the senses, Lubin Baugin's painting *The Five Senses* (1630) uses a still life to portray sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste. While chapter one indicated that philosophers and mathematicians examining optics often distrusted the mirror as they were aware of its capacity to create illusions and trick the eye, this painting demonstrates the mirror's alternative function as a device of ultimate truth. This chapter has argued that ideas of vision, notions of selfhood, and religion are linked to each other - Baugin's painting will demonstrate how these themes can be brought together pictorially, and how they relate to each other.

The simple arrangement of the objects across the canvas illustrates an intricate blend of the senses with spirituality. The ten items in this painting - sheet music, mandolin, playing cards, velvet purse, pearl, loaf of bread, glass of wine, chequer board, vase of flowers, and a mirror - are representative of the senses, though some are privileged over others. The composition of the painting divides the objects into two groups, those in the foreground and those in the background, whereby the objects to the rear of the painting indicate the nobler senses. The mandolin, symbolising the faculty of hearing, is face down, obscuring the book of musical notation upon which it rests thus rejecting the transience of simple musical entertainment. The stacked deck of cards, chequer board and bulging purse represent the folly of games and gambling, each object indicative of the materiality of such pursuits. These objects, foregrounded to suggest their accessibility, and demonstrative of unwholesome pleasures, stand in front of the loaf of bread and goblet of wine. These two simple items, appealing to the sense of taste, encapsulate the Eucharist, symbolising the body and blood of Christ. The religious connotation

of these items is carried over to the vase which contains three flowers, perhaps representative of the trinity. Finally, in the corner of the painting is the mirror, dark and unreflective. The mirror, the man-made object that supplements the sight and allows the introspective individual to contemplate the self, indicates not solipsistic self-analysis but spiritual contemplation. Its murky surface directs its viewer to the Pauline instruction: ‘For now we see through a glasse, darkely; but then shal we see face to face. Now I know in parte; but then shal I knowe even as I am knowen’.²⁹⁰ St. Paul’s words are considered particularly difficult to translate. The use of ‘through’ has often led critics to suppose that the ‘glass’ St. Paul invokes is a clear pane of glass, a window;²⁹¹ however, in I Corinthians in the Vulgate, the word ‘speculum’ is used, that is, a mirror.²⁹² The glass is a mirror and the use of ‘through’ indicates that the mirror is the medium by which the individual must analyse the religious self. Herbert Grabes refers to this ‘indirect knowledge of God’, arguing that this knowledge ‘is based on the fact that the mirror-image is ontologically reduced’ and that ‘it is only in this way that we can bear the sight of the Divine’, something which he compares to our avoidance of ruining our eyesight by looking directly at the sun, and instead viewing it in the reflection of a body of water.²⁹³ Baugin’s mirror thus represents the contemplative mirror of the subject seeking true spiritual knowledge,

²⁹⁰ *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1969), I Corinthians, 13:12, p.81. Note at ‘now we see’ which reads ‘the mysteries of God’ - now we see (the mysteries of God) through a glasse, darkly.

²⁹¹ For example, Debora Shuger argues that ‘one looks through rather than at’ some mirrors, including the Pauline mirror, which is treated as a window rather than as a mirror – see Debora Shuger, ‘The “I” of the Beholder: Renaissance Mirrors and the Reflexive Mind’ in *Renaissance Culture and the Everyday* ed. by Patricia Fumerton & Simon Hunt (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp.21-41 (pp.30-31).

²⁹² ‘Videmus nunc per **speculum** in ænigmate : tunc autem facie ad faciem. Nunc cognosco ex parte : tunc autem cognoscam sicut et cognitus sum’. *Biblia Sacra juxta Vulgatam Clementinam* 1598 [2005], M. Tweedale (ed.). <<http://vulsearch.sf.net/html>> [accessed 24 March 2008]

²⁹³ Herbert Grabes, *The Mutable Glass: Mirror-Imagery in Titles and Texts of the Middle Ages and English Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p.111.

and rejects the use of the man-made object that encourages the sins of vanity and pride.²⁹⁴

While the mirror in the painting casts no reflection, the glass vase containing the flowers does — the water and glass reflects back the black and white squares of the chequer board.²⁹⁵ Baugin's vase with its reflective water indicates the sense of sight by harking back to Aristotelian theories of vision, which argued that the very fabric of the eye was composed of water. However, the vase represents more than the sense of sight since its scented flowers indicate the sense of smell and the delicate leaves and stems emphasize the physicality of the object that can be touched. The vase unites a trinity of senses to mirror the trinity represented in its three carnations.

Baugin's painting offers a thorough investigation of the senses, each item in the still life connoting one of the senses and offering moral guidance. At the centre of this image is the sense of religious devotion, mediated via the senses and thus the body. The senses must be carefully managed since they are often prone to weaknesses, easily tempted by the transient indulgences of life. At the core of the image is the sense of sight, depicted twice, once in the mirror and once in the

²⁹⁴ Charles McCracken discusses the seventeenth-century attempts at understanding the soul and summarises the work of Saint Thomas Aquinas's work which links the senses with knowledge of the soul, noting 'the scholastic doctrine that there is nothing in the intellect...that does not come by way of the senses (*nihil est intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu*) that continued into seventeenth-century thinking (p.796). McCracken concludes, via Aquinas's philosophy, that 'the first objects of our knowledge...are corporeal things that stimulate our sense organs' so that only once we know a physical thing, can the intellect 'reflect on *itself* and inquire into its own nature' (p.797). See Charles McCracken, 'Knowledge of the Soul' in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), i, pp. 796-832.

²⁹⁵ Louise Vinge's monograph, *The Five Senses: Studies in a Literary Tradition*, offers a comprehensive study of the five senses that indicates their importance throughout the era, beginning with classical science and ethics and spending three chapters investigating their uses and representation in literature from the Medieval to the Renaissance period. See chapters two and three of Louise Vinge, *The Five Senses: Studies in a Literary Tradition* (Sweden: Acta, 1975), pp.47-103. Phineas Fletcher's *The Purple Island* (1633), for example, is one such text that makes use of the senses and the body's anatomy. In the poem, Fletcher characterises the human body as an island, and in particular describes the various parts of the eye such as the Chrystalline lens, the cornea, the optic nerve and the retina, showing that such precise detail had filtered through to literary works.

reflection in the vase, so that vision becomes the primary means of devotion. The mirror in this image is presented as the object of truth.

The five senses became thematic in medieval and early modern art and offered different modes of depiction for each sense.²⁹⁶ One way of representing the senses pictorially arose from the Latin translation of Aristotle's *Parva naturalia* as 'Aristotle's text required that each Sense should be depicted as a human figure acting in a charade by holding a significant object'.²⁹⁷ The mirror is the obvious attribute of sight; hearing is indicated by a musical instrument; flowers for smell, fruits suggest taste and a harp, the strings of which must be plucked, connote the sense of touch.²⁹⁸ The mirror and sight were linked, optically and graphically, their association having emerged from ancient theories of vision. However, the choice of the untrustworthy, manipulable mirror perhaps indicates the suspicious attitude of the Church towards the senses, particularly that of vision. The senses were subject to temptation – Augustine drew a distinction between the 'eyes of the flesh' and the inward eyes, noting the body's tendency towards weakness. Thus he promoted the importance of the 'invisible eyes' which should be directed towards spirituality over the corporeal eyes which are imperfect.

Furthermore, religious uses of the mirror offered it not only as a place to examine oneself but also positioned it in relation to the exemplar – that is, the individual as a

²⁹⁶ Carl Nordenfalk notes that there are 'scattered instances [of the theme of the five senses] in Romanesque art' but the emergence of the senses properly occurs from the thirteenth century onwards - see Carl Nordenfalk, 'The Five Senses in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 48 (1985), 1-22 (p.1). Helen Solterer discusses the issue of the senses in relation to women and reading, and comments that whereas the five senses were originally represented by men interacting with or holding the symbol of a sense, 'by the fifteenth century, the well-known discourse on the five senses was so thoroughly feminized that each sense had become, iconographically, a woman' - see Helen Solterer, 'Seeing, Hearing, Tasting Woman: Medieval Senses of Reading', *Comparative Literature*, 46 (Spring, 1994), 129-145 (p.130).

²⁹⁷ Nordenfalk, p.2.

²⁹⁸ Nordenfalk, p.2.

mirror, who serves to reflect divinity. This notion that an individual might serve as a mirror is one that is represented in *The Book of Margery Kempe*. Julian Yates finds that ‘Christ transforms Margery into a mirror that reflects not the faces or the lives of those who look into it, but which represents the divine’.²⁹⁹ The individual as divine referent and mirror illuminates the problems of the mirror:

The central paradox of mystical experience [is] namely that “the secret is characterized as a something that *is* without *appearing*. But, by that very fact, it is dangerously close to the lie or fiction, that is, to what *appears* without *being*. That which purports to conceal could turn out to be no more than a simulacrum”.³⁰⁰

This is the puzzle of the mirror and it is this paradox that, in part, leads the mirror to become such a rich metaphor for both truth and deception. That which exists in the most transitory manner, which exists without being rooted in tangible actuality, can signify both ultimate truth and fabrication. Mirrors take their place at the centre of a culture of growing optical distrust.

Mirroring the External

The desire for self-representation is arguably at its most intense in self-portraiture. Christopher Braider examines the destructive force of painting the self when he argues that ‘to paint is to indulge a monstrous appetite (both the painter’s and the beholder’s) that would destroy us if gazed on directly, undisguised by heroic

²⁹⁹ Julian Yates, ‘Mystic Self: Margery Kempe and the Mirror of Narrative’ *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 26 (1995), 75-93 (p.75)

<<http://repositories.cdlib.org/cmrs/comitatus/vol26/iss1/art5>> [accessed 3 June 2009] (para. 2)

³⁰⁰ Yates quoting Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*, trans. by Michael B. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p.98 (Certeau’s italics).

displacement'.³⁰¹ This sees the painter frozen in a Medusa-like state when confronted with the true self in the act of painting but this can never happen since the act of self-portraiture immediately removes the painter from that self, just as Narcissus found himself 'frozen' at the moment of realisation. In attempting to locate the 'self', the painter (and the introspective individual) is at once dissociated and distanced from it. The act of depiction, the act of self-fashioning using the 'technologies of the self' creates an 'other' and it is only in this manner that we can discover the self.³⁰² The soul becomes a living thing capable of knowing itself, while the body is the outer casing, used by the individual to represent part of the self, whether it is through choice of clothing or facial expression: here, inward and outward work together to become a homogenous whole.

The opposing qualities of internal and external are interwoven, as seen in each of the dictionary examples examined at the beginning of this chapter, and I argue that they should be considered in conjunction with the extramission and intromission theories of vision. On one hand, the shift from extramission to intromission emphasized the 'subject', as the trajectory flowed from object to subject. Reversing the visual flow from the seeing subject to the object which is seen, which produces its own image, and flows towards the subject, removes the emphasis from the individual who sees and reinforces the power of images. However, on the other hand, the extramission theory was already popular and remained so throughout much of the medieval period. In this, the object and viewer are both essential to the act of

³⁰¹ Christopher Braider, 'The Fountain of Narcissus: The Invention of Subjectivity and the Pauline Ontology of Art in Caravaggio and Rembrandt', *Comparative Literature* 50 (Autumn, 1998), 286-315, (p.297).

³⁰² I have taken the term 'technologies of the self' from Michel Foucault who argues that the 'self is not clothing, tools or possessions...It is to be found in the principal which uses these tools, a principal not of the body but of the soul' – see Foucault, p.25.

seeing, though the onus lies with the individual whose focus must engage with the object before it. Furthermore, with this theory of vision comes a particularly physical idea of vision, wherein the rays projected from the body reach out and touch the object. The two paintings that I will discuss in this section demonstrate interplay between these themes of external and internal, and invoke ideas of the theories of vision.

Repeatedly bound in a dialogue of selfhood, authenticity and identity, the external and internal are yoked together in a selection of the art of the period. The mirror, ‘a device fashioned to serve the sense of sight’, is given a prominent position in Parmigianino’s *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* (1524) and Jan van Eyck’s *Arnolfini Marriage* of 1434.³⁰³ Parmigianino’s painting shows the mirror by inference in the shape of the portrait, its ovoid form recalling a popular style of looking-glass, and in the dysmorphic representation of the sitter-artist. The distortions, obvious in the portrait, remind the viewer that the bulging surface of the convex mirror both increases and decreases the proportions of the objects placed before it, giving a malformed and inaccurate image of anything it reflects. This self-portrait, presented as something of a showcase for the artist’s talents, professes a singular interest in the self and the display of not only the man but of his talents and his genius. The choice of a convex mirror when a flat, plane mirror could have been procured for the purpose, demonstrates Parmigianino’s willingness to avail himself of the differing, accessible technologies and to use this opportunity to his advantage — portraying himself in a distorting mirror would have been a greater challenge and therefore, to potential patrons, a more impressive feat. The painting, which is not

³⁰³ Sears, p.35.

created on a flat canvas but on a curved wooden surface, recalls the form of the convex mirror and also the shape of the eyeball. Parmigianino's image forces the viewer to think about the object of the mirror, and to consider the processes of seeing, both of which work to illustrate the tricks and effects that can be generated to alter how the eye sees. Parmigianino collapses the divide between subject and object, since he at once creates himself as both, with the use of the mirror in conjunction with the form of the self-portrait.

Joanna Woods-Marsden states that the genre of 'autonomous' self-portraiture was 'invented in fifteenth – and developed in sixteenth-century – Italy.'³⁰⁴ Woods-Marsden goes on to stipulate that her definition of 'self-portrait' means the 'isolated self as both subject and object'.³⁰⁵ Parmigianino's painting is an example of a self-portrait in these terms.

³⁰⁴ Joanna Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture: The Visual Construction of Identity and the Social Status of the Artist* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1998), p.1

³⁰⁵ Woods-Marsden, p.1.

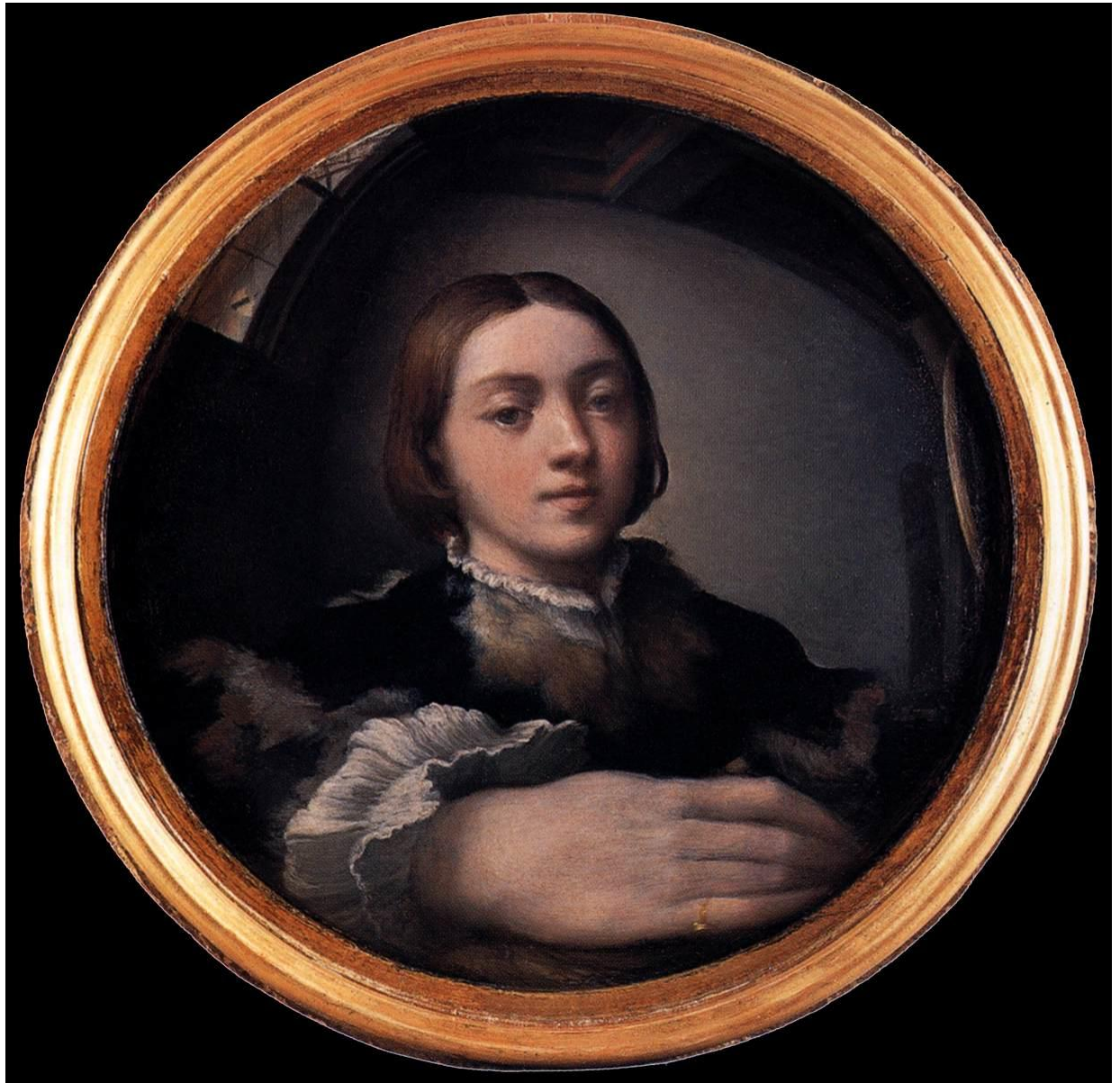


Figure five: Parmigianino, *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* (1524),
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna³⁰⁶

Painting himself in this way, Parmigianino offers a starting point for this examination of the interplay of mirrors and reflections in the dialogue between reality and illusion offered in self-portraits of the early modern period.

In his self-portrait we can see that Parmigianino works in, as Giorgio Vasari terms it, the style of the ‘modern age...in which the effortless facility of his brush enabled

³⁰⁶ Parmigianino, *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* (1524), Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna *Web Gallery of Art*, <<http://www.wga.hu/index1.html>> [accessed 30 May 2009].

him to depict smiling faces', producing work 'in which the very pulses seem to beat'.³⁰⁷ The 'new style' encouraged painters so that they 'endeavoured to compose their pictures with greater regard for real appearances'.³⁰⁸ Parmigianino follows nature so studiously as to replicate the distortions made by the mirror. He appears to peer downwards into his mirror, gazing at himself as the unfortunate Narcissus might have done as he looked into the pool. In using the mirror and presenting himself as looking into it, Parmigianino offers himself as sitter and artist, creator and subject – the mirror allows him the opportunity to generate the 'other'. In his self-portrait, as in the extramission theory, the object and the viewer are both essential to the act of seeing. Parmigianino forces the visual flow outwards and away from himself by first, looking out at the object of the mirror, which generates a 'copy' of him, and then by transferring that image to the surface of his painting, thus creating a new object. At this point Parmigianino becomes both subject and object for the viewers of the image, having successfully created an 'other'.

The use of a convex mirror is quite deliberate since, painting in 1542, Parmigianino would have been aware of the flat mirrors already in use by artists such as Albrecht Dürer in his works of 1505 and 1521. In choosing a convex mirror, the artist set himself the task of not merely representing himself but of depicting his self and the distortions the mirror made upon his body and surroundings. Parmigianino dominates the pictorial space, his large hand thrust into the immediate foreground and his surroundings dwindling away into the background. Woods-Marsden argues that Parmigianino restricts the 'major distortions...to the background architecture'

³⁰⁷ Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, in Eric Fernie, *Art History and its Methods: a critical anthology* (New York: Phaidon, 1995; repr. 2003), p.41.

³⁰⁸ Vasari, in Fernie, p.38.

which is 'in turn restricted to the periphery of the tondo'.³⁰⁹ However, I would argue that rather than it being a deliberate act by the artist to limit the areas and items around him, Parmigianino has taken great care to replicate the effects of the convex mirror. The distortions, which immediately signal the unreality of the image, simultaneously represent the reality: the painting is a faithful reproduction of what appears in the mirror. The actual mirror itself is not represented in the painting as a physical object but as an external object it is again drawn into the interior of the portrait, explicit at the same time as it is absent, calling attention to its capacity to distort and yet represent exactly what appears before it. Parmigianino has indulged in very little self-fashioning: his appearance is modest but exhibits signifiers of wealth in the fur trim of his coat and gold jewellery. Instead, Parmigianino uses the mirror with its distortions to enlarge himself, to create a focus on the most important aspect of the self-portrait, himself and his hand, inflated by the mirror's concavity. This portrait offers him as the skilled artist, the capabilities he possesses inherent in the portrayal of the distortions and attention drawn to the creator and his tool, the hand. Just as the pool into which Narcissus stares is real and not real, imitating but simultaneously indicating its unreality, so Parmigianino uses the convex mirror. Although Woods-Marsden argues that the portrait of the 'youth admiring his own beauty can be said to resemble Narcissus', it seems that a key difference separates the two young men; self-knowledge.³¹⁰ Narcissus did not understand his reflection and thus know himself until it was too late, but Parmigianino chooses to represent himself in a particular way, using the mirror as his tool. Grabes reminds us that the root of the 'twin phenomena' of the 'true' mirror and the 'deceiving' mirror 'lies in

³⁰⁹ Woods-Marsden, p.134.

³¹⁰ Woods-Marsden, p.136.

the striving after true knowledge, especially of a personal kind'.³¹¹ It is this duality that Parmigianino's portrait straddles as he faithfully reproduces precisely the distortions of the curved mirror.

The convex mirror used in Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Marriage* is far smaller and less obtrusive, but yet is in many ways central to the portrait.

³¹¹ Grabes, p.105.



Figure six: Jan van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Marriage* (1434), National Gallery, London³¹²

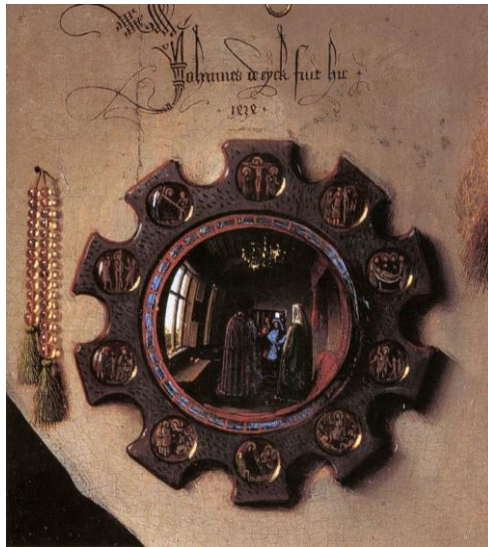
³¹² Jan van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Marriage* (1434), National Gallery, London on *Web Gallery of Art*, <<http://www.wga.hu/index1.html>> [accessed 30 May 2009].

Arthur Kinney argues that in *The Arnolfini Marriage* by Jan Van Eyck ‘it is possible that the mirror on the back wall’ of the portrait ‘reflects the painter...pulling the viewer into the painterly frame’ thus ‘making external objects also internal subjects.’³¹³ The mirror, placed approximately in the centre of the portrait, above the joined hands of the couple undergoing the process of union, presents a third person intimately involved in the process of their matrimony, the artist. The placement of the mirror, directly above the clasped hands of the couple, is indicative not only of the external but also of the significance of the external figure. As the joined hands play a central role in the marriage ceremony, so the artist figures prominently, through the tool of the mirror, in creating the iconic image of their wedding day. Sabine Melchior-Bonnet figures the convex mirror as like ‘the eye of God over the world’ seeing ‘what cannot be seen by the spectator’.³¹⁴ Here, then, through the device of the mirror, representing internally that which is external becomes entirely possible and plausible and, once more, the mirror can be viewed as an eye. Furthermore the painter, traditionally a faceless name inscribed at the bottom of the work of art, generates through the mirror a recognizable, defined identity – whereas Herrade and her sisters were all alike, except in name, van Eyck is able to move beyond this and create a more defined identity for himself. As Melchior-Bonnet maintains, ‘the invisible emerges from the visible’ so that the mirror becomes ‘both microscope and telescope, calling forth another reality within the closed space of the work’.³¹⁵

³¹³ Arthur F. Kinney, *Shakespeare's Webs: Networks of Meaning in Renaissance Drama* (New York & London: Routledge, 2004), p.6.

³¹⁴ Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History* trans. by Katherine H. Jewett (New York & London: Routledge, 2002), p.122.

³¹⁵ Melchior-Bonnet, p.122.



Jan van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Marriage* (detail)

Hockney, in his *Secret Knowledge*, claims to be ‘certain’ that Jan van Eyck ‘knew about mirrors and lenses’ because he depicted them in his work at a time when ‘painters and mirror-makers were both members of the same guild’.³¹⁶ Jan van Eyck’s mirror revealed the unseeable, showing the viewer that which was outside the space which the painting depicted, offering ‘another reality’ in which the external objects become internal to the image. The mirror becomes for Jan van Eyck another kind of eye, another way of seeing that which is otherwise invisible or beyond the eye’s power to see. That the mirror can be viewed as an eye, calls attention once more to the role of vision in the process of seeing, understanding, and creating identity. The mirror-eye produces an ‘other’, bringing the external into the internal, much like the extramission theory, where the external image of the object is brought into the body via the process of seeing.

To Parmigianino, the looking-glass is a tool to be exploited for his own ends, to illustrate his skill in replicating its distorted view of the world placed before it. In each case the mirror provides opportunities for the viewer to see differently and in

³¹⁶ Hockney, p.72.

different dimensions, supported by the developments in perspective which centred attention on seeing how the eye sees and representing this as faithfully as possible. Here, then, in these two examples, we see the mirror as the central object which brings together the themes of the internal and external, with the idea of the eye and vision.

Mirroring the Internal

In the previous section, the examples from Parmigianino and van Eyck illustrated the ways that the artists used the mirror to call attention to the external, and to draw it into the internal space of the painting. Inherent to the production of both the above paintings is the introduction of perspective techniques, which emerged during the medieval and early modern period and brought a new sense of realism to paintings, and new ways to represent the internal and the external.³¹⁷ Just as perspectival ordering divides up and sections the canvas, so dissection and anatomical drawings created in the human body new depths and dimensions – an example of this this can be found in anatomical drawings of the same period. These images tended to illustrate both the external and the internal – the outer flesh of the body, as well as its bones, musculature and organs – in the same drawing. However, while the mirror in van Eyck's image made the external internal to the painting, anatomical studies reverse this and make the internal visible by putting on display that which is normally impossible to see.

³¹⁷ Kalas notes that during the sixteenth century “perspective” referred both to a set of geometrical techniques for rendering three-dimensional space onto a two-dimensional surface, and to optical instruments such as lenses, mirrors, and panes of glass’ – see p.136-138 in Kalas, *Frame, Glass, Verse*.



Berengarius, *Commentaria* (1521)

Jonathan Sawday refers to the above anatomical image from Berengarius's *Commentaria* of 1521 as an example of 'self-dissection'.³¹⁸ The effect of self-dissection or 'self-demonstration' is that 'it redirects the gaze, underlining the disturbing conjunction of a living body and an opened interior'.³¹⁹ This image, unlike the images found in, for example, in Andreas Vesalius' *De humani corporis fabrica* (1543), contains little of the detailed physiological interior. However, according to Sawday, this is unimportant since the image 'symbolized not anatomical knowledge

³¹⁸ Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London & New York, 1995), p.118.

³¹⁹ Sawday, p.118.

of the body-interior, but philosophical and religious knowledge of the interior of the whole' or the 'scripturally complete individual'.³²⁰ The individual must 'pursue out of its own will' the 'scrutiny of the human frame' in order to 'follow the example of Christ offering his own heart'.³²¹ This joint presentation of interior and exterior, contextualised in a dialogue of personal exploration in pursuit of Christ, strengthens the notion of self-knowledge, religious or personal, as related to the concepts of internal and external that we explored in the dictionary definitions, and their examples, in the introduction to this chapter. The definitions from Traherne and Spenser, in particular, referred to an internal self that could not be seen but which must be understood. Each example, by specifying the internal, automatically references the external self. They divide inward and outward selves and illustrate a sustained search for authenticity that is not to be found in the external, but instead through the examination of the self.

The sense of perspective, which opened up and ordered spaces in a logical fashion was key to great changes in architecture and painting, and so becomes useful to this discussion. Perspective is a method by which the artist will deconstruct and divide up the space of the painting in order to create an organised, realistic space. In his discussion of perspective, Martin Jay notes that 'the rapid and positive reception of the new technique [of perspective] was abetted by the late medieval metaphysics of vision (as summarised in chapter one) with its positive evaluation of divine radiation. The Latin word *perspective* was a synonym for optics itself', thus we see the centrality of this thesis's key topics, the eye and vision, to the whole enterprise of

³²⁰ Sawday, p.118.

³²¹ Sawday, p.118.

perspective.³²² Two figures key to the understanding of the creation of logical pictorial space and to developing depth perception, were Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446) and Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472). These two central figures based their calculations on Euclidian mathematics and united art with science to successfully theorize art and organise pictorial space.³²³ Brunelleschi was, states Martin Kemp, the inventor of linear perspective.³²⁴ However, we are reminded that it is important to consider the historical circumstances and conditions upon which Brunelleschi's discovery rested. Citing Giotto (c.1267-1337) as the 'natural' place to begin to evaluate a departure in art from the previous style, Kemp finds that Giotto's work 'bears witness to a sustained, orderly and deeply pondered attention to the representation of figures and space'.³²⁵ Giotto's work illustrated that he had 'moved towards an increasingly perspectival system [and] his paintings show that he had long since formulated and obeyed general rules'.³²⁶ Kemp summarises these rules:

Those lines and planes situated above eye-level should appear to incline downwards as they move away from the spectator; those below eye-level should incline upwards; those to the left should incline inwards to the right; those to the right should incline inwards to the left; there should be some sense of the horizontal division and the vertical division which mark the boundaries between the zones; and along those divisions the lines should be inclined little if at all.³²⁷

What is important to this chapter, and to the thesis as a whole, is that the position of the eye is key here, as proper representation of space and depth requires the lines of the painting to be positioned accordingly, adhering to rules that define their

³²² Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley & London: University of California Press, 1994), p.53.

³²³ Alison Thorne, *Vision and Rhetoric in Shakespeare: Looking Through Language* (London: Macmillan, 2000), p.32.

³²⁴ Martin Kemp, *The Science of Art: Optical Themes in Western Art from Brunelleschi to Seurat* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1990), p.9.

³²⁵ Kemp, p.9.

³²⁶ Kemp, p.9.

³²⁷ Kemp, p.9.

placement in line with what the eye will interpret. Once more, the eye is at the centre of pictorial representation – the eye governs the shape and structure of the image. Perspective marks the point at which the science of the eye and the science of vision crosses into the practices of painting during this period and, while the developing mirrors throughout the Renaissance produced clearer, more realistic images of the individual, so the perspectively ordered painting produced a more realistic view of whatever was before the artist.

Alberti proposed a theory of painting in which

the picture surface should be construed as a transparent vertical plan through the visual pyramid, the apex of which lies in the artist's eye and its base in the object seen, while its sides are formed by the visual rays extending in straight lines between them. By tracing the outline made by these rays in their passage through the intersection, it was thus possible to produce a correctly projected image of the object.³²⁸

In approaching the surface of the painting in this fashion, 'the whole of the depicted space was subjugated to the geometrical laws of vision' so that the picture was 'transformed into an 'open window' for the viewer to 'look out at the world of extension beyond'.³²⁹ Jay, however, figures this 'open window' as a 'mirror intersecting one pyramid, which then reflected that pyramid's apex back in the other direction'.³³⁰ The 'beholder [is] now the privileged centre of perspectival vision', thus the viewer of the painting takes the position of the artist whose canvas, like a mirror, reflects back whatever appeared before it.³³¹ The mirror is linked once more to science, maths, art and vision. This connection between science and art, between maths and painting, a connection that I will continue to draw throughout the course of this thesis, meant that 'perspective provided the basis for an illustrative tool which

³²⁸ Thorne, p.33.

³²⁹ Thorne, p.33.

³³⁰ Jay, p.54.

³³¹ Jay, p.56.

left no branch of applied science untouched'.³³² 'Separate from the painter' (the internal) 'and the viewer' (the external), 'the visual field in perspectival paintings' can be figured as the 'other' through which the internal and external are mediated.³³³ The painter's 'science' 'is locked into the intellectual and philosophical developments in a complex and creative manner'.³³⁴

Kemp characterises perspective as 'a new citizen in an adopted country – naturalised to a degree, but still speaking with a foreign accent', to indicate the shifting traditions and practices across Europe, and to distinguish the impact of these techniques on artists of different nationalities.³³⁵ Thus, for Dürer, 'trained in Germany to make angular wood-cuts in a late Gothic tradition, [perspective] came as more of a "revelation"'.³³⁶ Linking vision and perspective, Kemp notes that 'perspective seems to have been regarded as a form of magic, a kind of visual alchemy which transformed the base materials of art into visionary experience', a description that closely resembles Renaissance opinion of the mirror.³³⁷

David Summers, in a discussion of discussion of Platonic and Lucretian philosophy, addresses these links between sense and judgement:

The eyes simply see what they see, and that is the foundation of our knowledge. The eye does not form opinions about what is seen, that instead is done by reason, and it is here that endless error arises. Even what we know to be false, we know because of what we are told by sense.³³⁸

³³² Kemp, p.53.

³³³ Jay, p.58.

³³⁴ Kemp, p.53.

³³⁵ Kemp, p.53.

³³⁶ Kemp, p.53.

³³⁷ Kemp, p.53.

³³⁸ David Summers, *The Judgement of Sense: Renaissance Naturalism and the Rise of Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.45.

Summers describes the eye as an unresisting organ, as in the intromission theory, which is subject to the images that flow through it, but which has little interaction with them. This description also meshes with the concept of the mirror, as shown in chapter one, in which it is the passive receptor of transient images, the creator of illusion, and as such must be mediated by the viewer. Summers yokes together the Platonic rejection of the validity of painterly works with the notion of the fallacies of sight, and incorporates a sense of superficiality and illusion, which unites them both. However, the eye as the passive recipient is only the case in one theory of vision – in the other, the extramission, the eye is the active participant and so, while I agree with Summers's approach, I expand and develop a more inclusive approach to the eye which accounts for the multiple approaches to vision that were in operation during the Renaissance.

In *On Reflection* Jonathan Miller approaches the mirror as a tool that is *not* of paramount importance to self-discovery. Miller compares the revelation offered by the mirror with that found in the telescope: the latter revealed 'unknown aspects of the natural world' but the mirror is not an object essential to us to 'familiarise [ourselves] with the existence of the human face'.³³⁹ What the mirror offers to us is an experience of ourselves that is entirely different to the 'knowledge that we gain' by 'virtue of *inhabiting*' our bodies.³⁴⁰ While I agree that we cannot be so certain as to classify the mirror as the key object in the endeavour to understand the self, I argue that the early modern 'crystal' looking-glass offered the individual a view of themselves they would never have experienced before – the dull glass, obsidian and metal mirrors that were in circulation prior to the development of the new, clear glass

³³⁹ Jonathan Miller, *On Reflection* (London: National Gallery Publications Ltd., 1998), p.176.

³⁴⁰ Miller, p.176.

mirrors would have offered an indistinct, perhaps distorted reflection. Furthermore, the older forms and newer forms of mirrors – ranging from small, distorting concave mirrors to larger flat mirrors – were still in circulation at the same time, offering the individual a number of different ways to experience themselves. What Jay, Kemp, Summers and Miller impress upon us is the importance of the eye and its role in the painter's work of seeing, dividing and understanding space, and replicating as carefully as possible that which appears before them. In producing the self-portrait, accuracy becomes extremely important and the mirror allows us to see the 'subtle details by which people identify us'.³⁴¹ It is this sense of detail gained by self-scrutiny that marks out the self-portraits of Albrecht Dürer.

Dürer, prolific in his output not only of woodcuts and painted portraits but also of self-portraits, produced many self-images, both drawings and paintings, which chronicle his body in its various stages throughout his life.³⁴² The first image he made of himself was a silverpoint sketch drawn in 1484 when he was just thirteen years old and Miller states that it is 'sometimes claimed to be the first explicit example of self-portraiture'.³⁴³

³⁴¹ Miller, p.176.

³⁴² For the purposes of this discussion I will concentrate on the selection of drawings and sketches that Dürer produced. Besides the images I discuss here, Dürer painted several self-portraits: *Self-Portrait at 22* (1493); *Self-Portrait at 26* (1498); *Self-Portrait in a Fur Collar* (1500); and a pencil drawing, *Self-Portrait as the Man of Sorrows* (1522).

³⁴³ Miller, p.177.



Figure seven: Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait at 13* (1484), Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna³⁴⁴

³⁴⁴ Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait at 13* (1484), Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna, *Web Gallery of Art*, <<http://www.wga.hu/index1.html>> [accessed 30 May 2009].

The drawing bears the inscription ‘This I drew, using a mirror; it is my own likeness, in the year 1484, when I was still a child’.³⁴⁵ The inscription would appear to have been added after the drawing was made, indicated by the use of the past tense ‘drew’ and the description of himself ‘when [he] was still a child’. This brings to the image a sense of looking back and of categorising the self, a sense of which is apparent in Dürer’s repeat self-portraits which catalogue him throughout various stages and ages in his life. I would argue that this is an example of the dictionary definition that described ‘self’ as ‘what one is at a particular time or in a particular aspect’. Dürer adds the note at the top of the page at a later date, indicating that he has paused to look back and record a former self. His use of the past tense in ‘drew’ and ‘when I was still a child’ denotes his progression to adulthood, and emphasises his awareness of himself as different. His inscription references multiple stages of selfhood, the image and words joining to show one layer of self, as a means of identifying the child as a version of himself.

The portrait indicates a precocious level of skill in a young child who was later to train in goldsmithing. The drawing depicts the child from a side-view, with long hair, a loose garment of clothing, and a small hat. The young Dürer is pointing to the right of the picture with one hand whilst the other hand is concealed. His eyes appear to look in the same direction as the pointing finger. The portrait is clear, confident and detailed and it is the first example of Dürer’s interest in the self. In the description, Dürer refers to the image as his ‘own likeness’, immediately signalling the sketch as something ‘like’ himself, similar to himself, and therefore *not* himself, not real. The representation is a copy of the original and by drawing attention to this

³⁴⁵ Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p.43.

with the word ‘likeness’ Dürer suggests or hints at the fact that the portrait might not be precise or correct in every way. I would argue that various aspects of portraiture and self-portraiture, as exemplified in this sketch, illustrate Greenblatt’s key statement that in the 1500s ‘there appears to be an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process’.³⁴⁶ This sense of identity can be traced back to the words of St. Paul, discussed earlier in this chapter. Edward Peter Nolan, addressing the mystery and ambiguity of the verse, argues that the verse itself places us ‘at the frontier between being and knowing’.³⁴⁷

To return to Dürer’s sketch, there is little self-fashioning apparent in this self-portrait. We find that he conceals one of his hands – it might be assumed that this is the hand with which he made the drawing and that it does not feature in the picture since he was using it at the time. Although the missing hand is suggestive of his craft as artist, and an indication of having used a mirror to create a self-portrait, there is no other marker of the trade and the hidden hand is an attempt at a complete removal of all evidence. The child’s clothes are plain and simple and there is no background in which to situate the young sitter-artist. This lack of either decorative feature or background context acts to foreground the child in the moment of self-depiction: by eschewing other details and favouring his own form as the complete subject matter for the drawing, the young Dürer depicts himself as an individual, a being complete in and of himself, with no reliance on needless excess details. Albrecht Dürer is the sole focus of this early drawing. However, what Dürer produces here is an external self – the image is devoid of any indication of

³⁴⁶ Greenblatt, p.2.

³⁴⁷ Nolan, Edward Peter, *Now Through a Glass Darkly: Specular Images of Being and Knowing from Virgil to Chaucer* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), pp.1-2.

interiority. Unlike Parmigianino, there is no mirror, nor any obvious reference to it – though, that it is a self-portrait suggests that a mirror would have been used. He does not engage with the viewer, and he concentrates on the exterior details, such as the folds in the tunic he wears, the strands of his hair, and his hat. Portraying himself in a simple fashion, and later adding an uncomplicated note at the top of the sketch, Dürer uses these external features to create himself.

This singular focus on the self, both interior and exterior, continues throughout Dürer's work, although some of his paintings show him dressed formally and situated with various symbols. Where the thirteen-year-old Dürer does not direct his look at the audience of the sketch, the young man in *Self-Portrait with a Bandage* (c.1491-1492) casts his gaze upon the viewers.



Figure eight: Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait with a Bandage* (c.1491-1492), Graphische Sammlung der Universitätsbibliothek, Erlangen³⁴⁸

Once again, the portrait is done from the side but this time the angle is slight and Dürer's face is turned towards the viewer. His hair is still long and loose, as in the depiction of him at thirteen, and what is referred to as a bandage passes a

³⁴⁸ Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait with a Bandage* (1491-1492), Graphische Sammlung der Universitätsbibliothek, Erlangen, *Web Gallery of Art*, <<http://www.wga.hu/index1.html>> [accessed 30 May 2009].

resemblance to the cap he wears in his first sketch. Dürer's hand is held up to his face, apparently supporting his head in this pose, and partially obscuring his right eye. Miller notes that this image is not intended to suggest the artist in the process of self-imaging, since the hand he would have drawn with is the hand that supports his head.³⁴⁹ Here, his face is quite heavily shaded, particularly over the left eye, and the facial expression is somewhat blank; he seems to frown slightly. Dürer's eyes stare out at the viewer, the gaze appearing melancholic. Dürer's eyes and pose offer us a link to his sense of interiority. The eyes stare out and engage with the viewer but, at the same time, they are partly concealed. The heavy shading on one eye, and the hand that disguises part of the other, work to protect him from the stare of the onlooker. His pose uses external cues such as the head propped up by the hand, the blank stare, and the pouting lips, to suggest a sense of misery, thus denoting his internal state. This combination of external cues and inferred emotions of the interior work together to form a self for Dürer.

This choice of pose might suggest misery or perhaps pain: it is also very similar to his 1514 woodcut, entitled *Melancholia I* in which the subject is viewed from the side and holds a hand up to the face. Alistair Smith notes Dürer's 'depth of interest in antique biography and theories of personality' and considers *Melancholia I* 'one of the most complex and subtle characterisations of a psychic state ever made'.³⁵⁰ Smith goes on to argue that some of Dürer's other works indicate his knowledge of the four humours and, if this is the case then perhaps this early drawing is indeed indicative of Dürer's mood and his desire to convey that visually. Clark describes melancholia as 'an affliction of the imagination' that 'completely disrupted the

³⁴⁹ Miller, p.187.

³⁵⁰ Alastair Smith, 'Dürer as a Portraitist', in *Essays on Dürer* ed. by C. R. Dodwell (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1973), p.68.

image-processing that went on there’, the result of which was ‘severe sensory delusion’.³⁵¹ Clark locates melancholia within the discourse of vision, claiming that it was, on a conceptual level, a ‘contributor...to the de-rationalization of sight.’³⁵²

There is, however, another possibility. In this sketch of Dürer the foregrounding and connection of head and hand is perhaps representative of the two principal aspects of painting. According to Vasari in 1568, the mind and the hand were equally important in the act of creating – the mind contained the imagination, the hand the ability to craft it. Leonardo and Michelangelo both believed that the mind was most important in this exchange for, without the intellect, the hand would be powerless to create.³⁵³ Thus, potentially Dürer is indicating his inner state of mind through his pose and facial expression. He suggests a dual focus of genius and aptitude by foregrounding both the hand and head — he appears to code both concepts in his sketch. Whichever it is, Dürer’s direct gaze appeals to the viewer and engages him or her actively in his apparent misery. The partial concealment of his right eye slightly obscures it so that the spectator does not get a complete view. This patchy obscuring of his eye might suggest that while Dürer is encouraging his viewer to engage with his melancholia, he will not allow his inner thoughts to become completely public – the ‘windows into his soul’ are partly covered and thus, in this somewhat confessional portrait, provide him a morsel of privacy, or inwardness. What ‘occupies [Dürer] is...the anatomy of tensions and relations that attend the activity of looking and representing’.³⁵⁴ This can be related to contemporary theories of vision – that he shields his eyes in order to protect him from any further intrusion,

³⁵¹ Clark, p.5.

³⁵² Clark, p.5.

³⁵³ Woods-Marsden, Joanna, ‘Collective Identity/Individual Identity’ in *Fashioning Identities in Renaissance Art*, ed by Mary Rogers, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), p.1.

³⁵⁴ Koerner, p.5.

to ensure the private does not become completely private, seems to indicate that the eyes are the point of entry, as in the intromission theory. Thus, in order to protect himself from the inward flow of other images and gazes, he must take preventative action, represented in the shading on the right eye, and the partial concealment of the left.

The dilemma of self-knowledge, that the eye cannot see itself but in a mirror, is explained by Nolan when he concludes his discussion of Augustine's *De Trinitate* and the *Confessions*:

For us to follow the Delphic imperative, for the eye to truly know itself, it must see itself. And Augustine articulates...the tedious, universal truth of that particular epistemology: "for eyes can never see themselves except in looking glasses" (*De Trinitate*, 10.3). And although mirrors are never adequate to the project of knowing ourselves, the project appears incapable without them.³⁵⁵

The mirror then is the central essential element of the puzzle of understanding ourselves and, in pursuing a series of self-portraits, the mirror and the painting are the primary means by which Dürer attempts to resolve this dilemma. What Nolan draws attention to is the continued association of vision, mirrors and selfhood, each intrinsic to the process of the other. As we have seen in both Augustine and Foucault, is that without the mirror, the eye can never see itself and therefore cannot know itself. In particular, this struggle is perhaps what Dürer represents in *Self-Portrait with a Bandage*: inherent in the self-portrait is the mirror's use, since without the mirror, the self-imaging could not take place. In an apparent continued fascination with the self, Dürer proceeded to portray himself repeatedly, and this chapter will continue to discuss these works in chronological order, as this logical

³⁵⁵ Nolan, p.80.

approach demonstrates the sequence of changes in his approach to representing himself. In 1505, Dürer continues his self-examination in his drawing *Self Portrait in the Nude*.

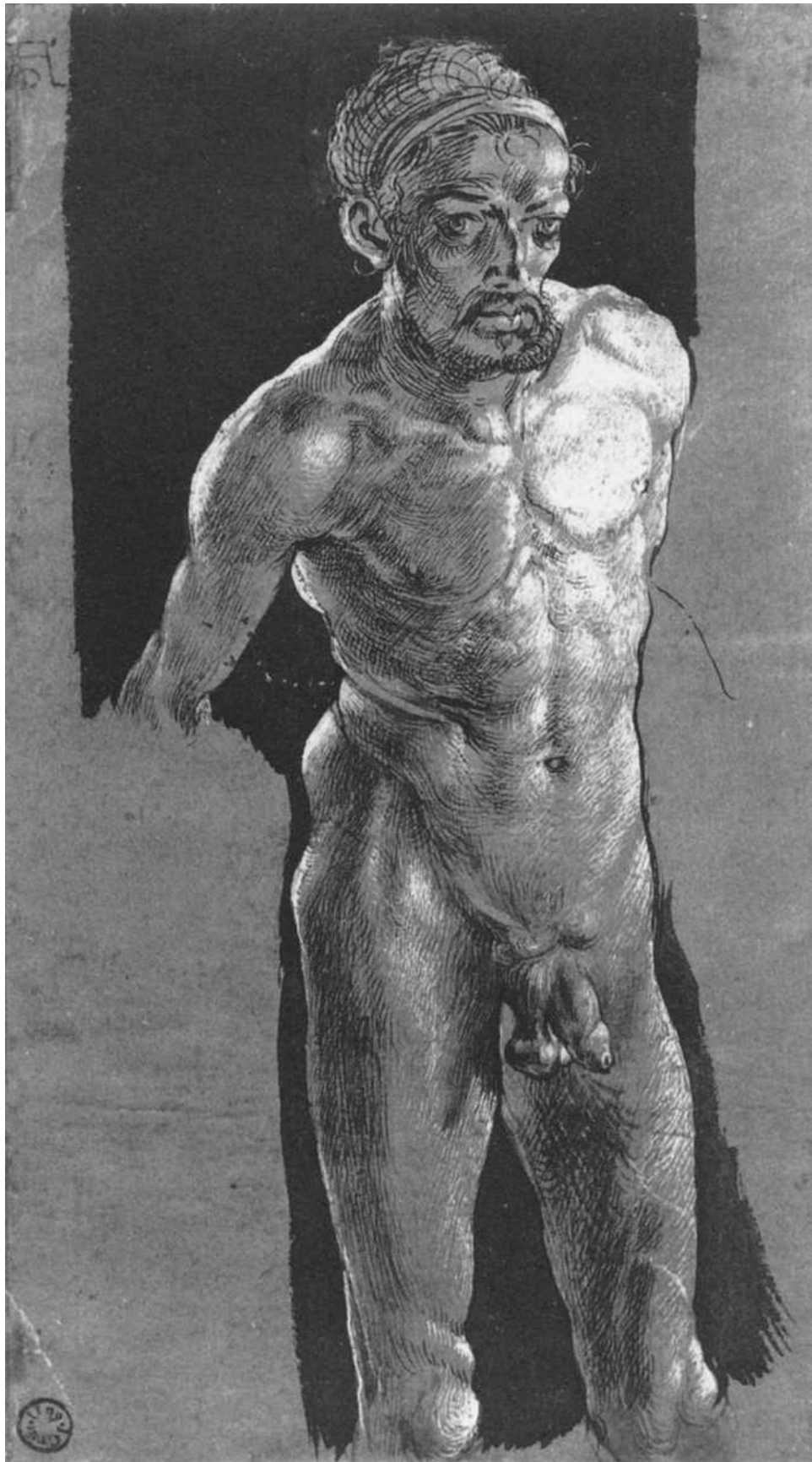


Figure nine: Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait in the Nude* (1505), Kunstsammlung, Weimar³⁵⁶

³⁵⁶ Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait in the Nude* (1505), Kunstsammlung, Weimar, *Web Gallery of Art*, <<http://www.wga.hu/index1.html>> [accessed 1 June 2009].

Smith claims that Dürer's 'concentration upon the head...speaks of his obsessive interest in his own emotions.'³⁵⁷ However, only *Self Portrait with a Bandage* focuses solely on the head. *Self Portrait in the Nude* was the first full-length portrait the artist produced, detailing his body from his head down to his knees. In the drawing, Dürer leans forward towards the mirror he must have used. His hair is tied back and both hands are absent from the picture. Behind the artist is a thick panel of black shading which appears to be a rough, loose brush-stroke used to suggest background. What is notable in this image is the lack of any form of self-fashioning. Naked, Dürer has none of the markers of identity which would work towards presenting a specific image of him. For example, he presents himself in an entirely neutral background, that denotes neither luxury nor poverty; similarly he has no clothing from which clues about his personality or social standing may be drawn. Here, he is not framed by a story told by objects or clothing. Ultimately, the complete lack of self-fashioning in this image means that it appeals to the viewer to look at Dürer and see the man – not the painter or the social figure. However, its function is dual – it allows Dürer to examine himself – he appears, in the image, to be entirely caught up in the act of capturing himself, gazing at himself, perhaps in a search to know himself. Again, Dürer addresses the viewer but his gaze here is not one of misery but of apparent curiosity. The drawing appears to be a clear and concerted effort at reproducing the self, his form. The body is very detailed in terms of the muscular definition and shading, and the focus and intensity of his stare indicate his direct address to himself in the mirror. Here the curiosity and nonchalance of his previous drawings are shunned in favour of a more obvious narcissism, illustrating his

³⁵⁷ Smith, p.72.

deepening interest in himself and the urge to examine and reproduce himself in new ways. In this image, the external trappings of self-fashioning, such as clothing and background details, are shunned in order to attempt to allow for a deeper study of himself.

In his drawings, Dürer continues to produce sketches which illustrate more of his body. In 1521 he produces what appears to be a rather functional portrait.



Figure ten: Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait* (1521), Kunsthalle, Bremen³⁵⁸

³⁵⁸ Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait* (1521), Kunsthalle, Bremen, *Web Gallery of Art*, <<http://www.wga.hu/index1.html>> [accessed 30 May 2009].

Self Portrait shows Dürer again from the side, with his long hair loose and his finger pointing to an area on his abdomen, around which he has drawn a circle. He is naked but for a piece of fabric placed over his pubic area. In this portrait the mirror and its reflection serve as a tool not only for the artist but also for the doctor. Inscribed along the top of the drawing are the words ‘I am pointing to it with my finger: that is where it hurts’. Dürer’s skill as artist allows him to produce this detailed and specific work for his practitioner – we must assume that he was for some reason unable to attend in person. However, while the detail of this image seems to be aimed specifically at the doctor, the rest of the image is devoid of detail once more. Whereas Dürer’s previous portraits illustrate that he goes to great effort to depict his face and hair with care, here they hardly receive more than a cursory outline. This reinforces the idea that this image is not focused on the details of the exterior, and instead is concerned with pointing to the interior.

Jonathan Sawday discusses this portrait in his essay ‘Self and Selfhood in the Seventeenth Century’, arguing that Dürer subjects his body to a ‘ruthless, almost scientific examination’ to consider the ‘distorting effects of illness on his own body’.³⁵⁹ Sawday views this portrait as an example of ‘autopsia’ and finds that Christ’s ‘gesture of proof’ appears ‘in shadowy form’ in the shape of the wounded flesh to which Dürer points. This evidence illustrates that the artist has ‘reinscribed the wound of the spear in Christ’s side at the crucifixion on to his own body’ which can be understood as a ‘generalised mediation on Christ’s passion’.³⁶⁰ Furthermore, Sawday argues that the area to which Dürer points is his spleen, signalling the artist’s

³⁵⁹ Jonathan Sawday, ‘Self and Selfhood in the Seventeenth Century’ in *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present* (London & New York: Routledge, 1997) pp.29-48 (p.39).

³⁶⁰ Sawday, p.39-40.

representation of the melancholy.³⁶¹ However if we take into account the reversal of the mirror, then it would appear that Dürer points to his liver, the site of all four of the humours. In this way, Dürer's portrait may link together the external physical body and its internal organs, as well as other markers of the interior, such as the emotions implicated by humoral disturbance or balance. This reversal also makes the sketch reminiscent of, for example, Caravaggio's *Doubting Thomas* (c. 1602-3) in which Thomas leans towards Christ, prodding and peering into the wound Jesus received on the cross.³⁶² The focus of this image is the sense of interiority, to which Dürer gestures with his finger, pointing at the seat of the humours to suggest the emotional interior, rather than simply the physical internal organs of the body. This sketch exhibits a growing, continuing interest in the self and in finding ways to express a self that is not simply composed of external, material goods and objects.

Simply the volume of self portraits, both in drawings and in paintings, that Dürer produced, indicates at the very least an elevated interest in the self, in self examination and scrutiny and in portraying the self for public consumption. In all cases a mirror must have been used and, given the lack of distortions, we must assume that Dürer worked with flat mirrors. With the possible exception of one drawing, Dürer has in his portraits no trace of the act of painting or drawing, no markers of creation. The only hint visible in the portraits is the missing or hidden hands that occur more often in the drawings than in his paintings, and this lack works to eschew his status as artist and creator. Thus, the 'making' is only obliquely suggested, never explicitly indicated. In all of Dürer's drawings he depicts himself without background, elaborate detail, clothing or attributes: the images simply show

³⁶¹ Sawday, p.43.

³⁶² See Sawday, pp.32-38.

the man. The absence of detail represents an active refusal to self-fashion, since in his painted portraits Dürer creates quite lavish images of himself. At the centre of Dürer's self-portraits is himself. Thus, if Dürer does not fashion a self, he certainly conducts a thorough examination of himself, of his body and his face. But is this an 'inborn narcissism' or merely a response to the developments during this period in mirror technology which afforded the artist better opportunities to draw and study a readily available model?³⁶³

This chapter begins to illustrate the range of modes of 'self' or 'selfhood' that operated during the early modern period. In shifting the conception of self away from Burckhardt's idea of the individually aware subjectivity that, he claimed, emerged during the Renaissance, and by moving away from the claim that religion prevented any true sense of independent individuality, I have illustrated that there was a particular focus on the contrast between the 'external' and the 'internal' self. Whether this was demonstrated either within or outside a dialogue of devotion, a clear division between external and internal selves is in operation – a division that can be related to the extramission and intromission theories of vision which existed alongside this sense of self. The mirror, or the self-portrait, becomes the mediator between the internal and the external, mirroring the 'other', which provides the locus for the self.

However, although it seems possible for an individual to seek individuality either within or outside of the constructs of religion, and that the mirror can often be the appropriate tool to do so, the mirror was also considered as a tool not for self-exploration but of vanity and pride, as seen in Grien's *Three Ages of the Woman and*

³⁶³ Smith, p.71.

the Death (figure 13) and Velazquez's *Rokeby Venus* (figure 16) for example. There is a move away from the notion of the mystery it often evokes and towards a sense of fear. Chapter three will explore these 'exemplary' mirror-texts, illustrating the restrictions placed upon notions of the mirror as a source of self-discovery.



Figure eleven: Caravaggio, *Narcissus* (1598-99) Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Rome³⁶⁴

‘it is not vain-glory for a man and his glass to confer
in his own chambers’³⁶⁵

³⁶⁴ Caravaggio, *Narcissus* (1598-99) Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Rome, *Web Gallery of Art*, <<http://www.wga.hu/index1.html>> [accessed 11 July 2008].

³⁶⁵ William Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, IV.i.2287.

The myth of Narcissus, in which a beautiful young man dies from self-love, invokes notions of the mirror and self-love. As we saw in the introduction to this thesis, in Ovid's version of the story the unsuspecting Narcissus is tricked by the reflection in the pool which mirrors himself.³⁶⁶ Such is the appearance of reality in its reflection, he is 'smitten by the sight of the beautiful form he sees' and 'unwittingly he desires himself' as he becomes 'excited by the very illusion that deceived his eyes'.³⁶⁷ The watery 'mirror', which dazzles him with the beautiful figure represented in it, confuses Narcissus - the illusion of reality is so intense that Narcissus repeatedly reaches out to touch the boy he finds there. Narcissus encapsulates the 'othering' of the self, illustrating the division and separation of the self, a key theme of this thesis. During the early modern period Narcissus's story was held up as an example and warning. The moral tone of the message meant that the image of Narcissus gazing in his 'mirror' came to represent the dangers of vanity and self-love. As I noted in my introduction, Debora Shuger claims in her essay that during the Renaissance references to mirrors are 'very odd'.³⁶⁸ These mirrors are odd because, according to Shuger, they have no relation to any sense of self-consciousness. Instead, Renaissance mirrors simply present, she argues, 'an exemplary image' or a

³⁶⁶ Louise Vinge finds that Ovid's story is the most comprehensive of classical literature, since it details his entire life, from birth, to death, to funeral. This wealth of detail and extensive number of motifs makes Ovid's version, for Vinge, 'the incomparably most important source for the theme'. See Louise Vinge, *The Narcissus Theme in Western European Literature up to the Early 19th Century* (Lund: Gleerups, 1967), p.11, and see pp.1-40 for a comprehensive discussion of the Narcissus them in classical literature, and chapters 6, 7, and 8, discuss this theme in allegory, handbooks and poetry of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

³⁶⁷ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. by Frank Justus Miller, Vol I (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1961), p.155.

³⁶⁸ Debora Shuger, 'The "I" of the Beholder: Renaissance Mirrors and the Reflexive Mind' in *Renaissance Culture and the Everyday* ed. by Patricia Fumerton & Simon Hunt (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 21-41 (p.22).

‘theological commonplace’.³⁶⁹ These reflections are a ‘generic self’, in that they are not reflecting or representing a specific individual or any particular self. This chapter will argue against Shuger’s characterisation of the exemplary mirror as an object that reflects only the ‘generic’ and thus has no place in a dialogue of selfhood. The following sections will analyse texts such as Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and *Richard II*, alongside Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* and examples of exemplary mirrors from contemporary printed texts, in order to argue that there are in fact many different ways in which the exemplary mirror can operate. The exemplary mirror is not restricted, and can work to create both a general ‘self’ and a much more personal, introspective ‘self’.

Throughout Ovid’s version of the myth, the emphasis for the error is with sight, as he ‘gazes on that false image with eyes that cannot look their fill and through his own eyes perishes’.³⁷⁰ Ovid’s Latin reveals where the thrust of the myth lies, when he uses words like ‘simulacra’, ‘spectat’, ‘lumine’, ‘oculus’, ‘visae’, and ‘imagine’ – Narcissus’s eyes have an insatiable appetite for the image they find before them, such that, even after death, ‘he kept on gazing on his image in the Stygian pool’.³⁷¹ In the end, the image of Narcissus’s beauty and his subsequent death have made him ‘suitable as a symbol of the emptiness of temporal, perishable beauty’ so that ‘a *vanitas* motif may be said to have been read into the theme’.³⁷² However, alongside this, is the motif of pride and self-love which, by the Renaissance, is firmly entangled with the exemplary image of Narcissus, as Arthur Golding illustrates in his description of Narcissus’s story in the epistle to his translation of Ovid (1567):

³⁶⁹ Shuger, p.22.

³⁷⁰ Ovid, p.155.

³⁷¹ Ovid, p.158.

³⁷² Vinge, p.41.

Narcissus is of scornfulness and pryde a myrror cleere,
Where bewties fading vanitie most playnly may appeere³⁷³

Here, Narcissus is himself a mirror, a clear example who illustrates the behaviour and fate of those who indulge in ‘scornfulness and pryde’, and this theme is also seen in Alciato’s *Book of Emblems* (1531):



Because your figure pleased you too much, Narcissus, it was changed into a flower, a plant of known senselessness. Self-love is the withering and destruction of natural power which brings and has brought ruin to many learned men, who having thrown away the method of the ancients seek new doctrines and pass on nothing but their own fantasies.³⁷⁴

³⁷³ Golding, Arthur, *The Fifteen Books of Ovid's Metamorphoses, 1567: The first translation into English*, trans & ed. by B. F., 2002, 1.106.

³⁷⁴ Andrea Alciato, *Book of Emblems*, (1531), Emblem 69, ‘Self-Love’
<<http://www.mun.ca/alciato/e069.html>> [accessed 02 March 2009].

Alciato's *Book of Emblems* was edition divided into sections - virtues and vices - and, under 'pride' comes emblem 69, 'self-love' (above). The epigram emphasises Narcissus's failing but then takes a slightly different turn, moving beyond a simple expression against the sins of pride and vanity. The argument of this epigram is aimed at those engaged in 'the intellectual life' – Narcissus's self-absorption and subsequent transformation are to be taken as 'symbolic of this life', so that the flower is the representation of 'the decay and ruin of genius'.³⁷⁵ Self-love causes the destruction of the natural powers and, when the perceptive faculties are misdirected, the intellectual faculties are blinded. Pride and vanity is thus neatly combined with a loss of knowledge, not only self-knowledge, but established intellectual knowledge. Later on, this chapter will further investigate this link between knowledge and the exemplary mirror, by examining the connections between light and darkness, and knowledge and exemplary mirrors in extracts from *The Faerie Queene* and a speech from *Love's Labour's Lost*.

Narcissus is in love with the reflection which he does not recognise as himself and, once he realises that it is himself, he wishes himself dead – 'he still loves what he sees, not because it represents himself, but because it is beautiful'.³⁷⁶ Thus, while Narcissus's story is about deception and self-awareness, he becomes an exemplary mirror whose fate represents a warning against vanity.³⁷⁷ Narcissus's mirror is bi-

³⁷⁵ Vinge, p.141.

³⁷⁶ Vinge, p.17.

³⁷⁷ Herbert Grabes notes that 'the element of vanity or foolish pride in narcissism was frequently present in moralizing or ironizing contexts' (Grabes, p.135). Furthermore, he finds that 'the corrupting self-absorption of Narcissus led some early writers to detect not simply personal vanity in his behaviour but rather *vanitas*, or excessive absorption in worldly things' - see chapter seven of *The Mutable Glass: mirror-imagery in titles and texts of the Middle Ages and English Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp.131-144. Grabes qualifies these statements by arguing that 'Narcissus's absorption in gazing at his reflection' has been 'traditionally interpreted as an expression of destructive self-love' and of 'pride as revealed in the rejection of Echo, and of a fascination with unreality' and 'transience' (Grabes, p.153).

directional in its visual flow, the gaze is exchanged only between Narcissus and the reflection. Narcissus is entirely unaware of anything else around him and is concerned only with the reflection which stares back at him, because it is his own reflection, and although his connection with the mirror is based on his misunderstanding of its substance, only he can interact with it.³⁷⁸ As an exemplar, Narcissus is held up as an explicit and uncomplicated representation of sins such as pride, vanity and self-love. The exemplary mirror encourages the individual to engage with its image on a personal level, at which point he or she must attempt to locate or reposition his or her own self in relation to the example. The mirror is the locus for the search for self, and it allows the viewer to look at both themselves *and* the example. Addressing this problem of locating and perceiving the ‘self’ in myth, Edward P. Nolan suggests that ‘in each mythic configuration, the encounter of each figure with the desired Other involves the problem of partial knowledge and significant failure’.³⁷⁹ In placing the themes of self-love and identity within a framework of failure, loss and individuation, the Narcissus myth underlines the part played by visual trickery and optical deception in tracing and finding identity in the Renaissance. The trick of the mirror has led Narcissus to his death, but optical deception can also allow for the individual to find or make an identity. As I established in chapters one and two, mirrors can distort, reflect identical copies of whatever is placed before them, and can trick the eye. Parmigianino and Jan van Eyck, for example, showed ways that the distorting mirror can be used to create an identity; but often in literary and artistic representations, particularly those including

³⁷⁸ Narcissus’s reflection, or mirror, is exemplary only for those external to his situation who thus understand that the reflection he sees is himself, and who therefore read the symbol as vanity and pride.

³⁷⁹ Edward P. Nolan, *Now Through a Glass Darkly: Specular Images of Being and Knowing* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990) p. 3.

figures from myth, the encounter with the mirror leads to a loss of self or, indeed, a complete failure to locate or comprehend it.

Narcissus's story tells us about deception but it also explores the recurring dichotomy of internal and external inherent in mirrors and reflections, a theme that we will find repeated throughout the exemplary mirrors examined in this chapter. Earlier, in chapter two, we saw Parmigianino explore this dichotomy in its literal sense, recalling the shape and effects of the literal object that was physically outside the painting's scope. Jan van Eyck's mirror, internal to the painting, has a reflection that draws that which is external – that is, the artist – into the painting, again illustrating an exploration of the division of external and internal that is literal and not philosophical. Dürer, however, examines the dichotomy of internal and external in the philosophical sense, by attempting to explore and express his inner self in his art. This sense of inwardness is, arguably, impossible to show, as we will see later in this chapter in a discussion of a passage from *Hamlet*. In Narcissus's tale, we find these approaches blended, as both the literal sense and the philosophical sense of the external and internal are at work. In the literal sense, the pool is internal in its geography: the uninhabited area is undisturbed, as 'neither bird nor beast nor falling bough ever ruffled', and the pool is enclosed by grass that 'grew all around its edge' and 'a coppice that would never suffer the sun to warm the spot'.³⁸⁰ The pool is on the inside of a circle of trees which protect it from the external, and it is here that Narcissus discovers his love. When he finds his lover is out of reach, he is distraught and exclaims that 'by a thin barrier of water we are kept apart': his 'partner' is internal to the pool, secreted within its water, silently mimicking his gestures.³⁸¹

³⁸⁰ Ovid, p.153.

³⁸¹ Ovid, p.157.

Once Narcissus realises the trick of the water, he cannot reconcile the reflection with himself, exclaiming ‘Oh, that I might be parted from my own body!’.³⁸² This ‘mirror-pool’ ‘provokes a peculiarly destructive form of self-knowledge by allowing Narcissus to see that he is looking at an *imago*’.³⁸³ We see that, before his realisation ‘Narcissus does not love his reflection’, for he has ‘not come to know that it is a reflection’, and he ‘does not love himself in what he sees for he does know that it represents himself’.³⁸⁴ In contemplating his death, he continues to consider his reflection as an ‘other’, realising that ‘we two shall die together in one breath’.³⁸⁵ His realisation comes too late but the notion of ‘othering’ the self is key to self-fashioning since ‘any achieved identity always contains within itself the signs of its own subversion or loss’.³⁸⁶ The image that Narcissus sees is completely separate and detached from him; it is an unreachable, disparate being with whom he can only connect through the powers of vision. Until Narcissus realises the reality of the reflection, he does not truly understand himself and thus to properly achieve his identity he must suffer the loss of his beloved ‘other’. In Narcissus’s reflection, the key ‘signs of loss’ are in the lack of any independence or individuation: the reflection does only what Narcissus does and its silence is a marker of the inversion of the real.

In the Renaissance, the story of Narcissus and the images of his fate, are indicative of his status as an exemplary mirror. He stands as an example of self-love,

³⁸² Ovid, p.157.

³⁸³ Lynn Enterline, *The Tears of Narcissus: Melancholia and Masculinity in Early Modern Writing* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995), p.1. Enterline notes that Narcissus’s fate is a theme which is revisited repeatedly since it ‘deeply affects’ the discourses of literature and psychoanalysis, and many moments of self-reflection return to Narcissus’s episode of self-love (see Enterline’s introduction, pp.1-38. The argument of Enterline’s book centres on a ‘mutually disruptive relationship between narcissism and melancholia’ (Enterline, p.2).

³⁸⁴ Vinge, p.16.

³⁸⁵ Ovid, p.157.

³⁸⁶ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p.9.

vanity and pride, and indicates the errors and failings of vision, and his journey from love, to self-love, to death, is tied up with ideas of knowledge and loss of knowledge, whether personal or intellectual. Vision is central to this episode: Narcissus sees the object that is reflected but does not understand that it is a reflection of himself – the visual process is not fully complete because, crucially, comprehension is lacking, and so he falls into the trap of self-love. Narcissus and his story are an exemplary mirror which point to an examination of self, an examination that can be personal, moral or religious. These themes and ideas are to be found amongst the many exemplary mirrors of the period, as this next section will show.

The Exemplary Mirror

Ovid's version of Narcissus's story, along with Golding's translation and Alciato's emblem, is just one form of exemplary mirror. Herbert Grabes' seminal work *The Mutable Glass: Mirror-imagery in titles and texts of the Middle Ages and English Renaissance* explores comprehensively the multiple meanings applied to the mirror in the early modern period, covering a vast number of exemplary texts from the period. He notes that the 'various properties of mirrors' were 'frequently the chief stimulus for employing the mirror-metaphor', and includes the 'false or flatt'ring' glass, which makes the individual appear more attractive, the 'true' or 'pure' mirror, which is 'closely associated with...knowledge of the Divine', the tarnished or darkened mirror which is 'an expression of a lack of moral integrity...relating to knowledge of the Divine', and the brittleness of the mirror which was used to signal

transience.³⁸⁷ The mirror-metaphor, however, has yet more uses and Grabes describes instances in which ‘man, or specifically another human being’ is reflected in the mirror, and examples are frequent in literature which ‘can offer us a mirror-image of human existence’.³⁸⁸ These mirror-metaphors, he tells us, ‘invariably possess a moral and didactic shading’, a point which this chapter will trace through the different texts.³⁸⁹ The mirror-metaphor, contrary to Shuger’s view, operates in range of different applications, and could provide an example (moral, or otherwise) for the individual looking at it. In each of these cases, the mirror does not directly reflect back the image before it, points elsewhere or reflects an exemplary image from which the individual may learn something – that is, the mirror shows something ‘other’. Just as Narcissus initially perceived the reflection facing him, and thus responded to it, as if it were an ‘other’, so these mirrors present an other to which the individual can react. Exemplary mirrors could be true, flattering, or false, could express moral values, proximity to God and could teach, directing the gaze towards the intended example. Unlike Grabes, Shuger argues that these are the only functions the Renaissance mirror can perform, a point that this chapter will work against.

As noted in the introduction to this thesis and chapter, Shuger argues that the ‘object viewed in the mirror is almost never the self’ as the ‘viewer sees a great many things in Renaissance mirrors but not, as a rule, his or her self’.³⁹⁰ In many cases, Shuger’s analysis is correct: ‘Mirror texts’ were a Renaissance commonplace, with

³⁸⁷ Herbert Grabes, *The Mutable Glass: Mirror-imagery in titles and texts of the Middle Ages and English Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp.104-105. See chapter five for a complete discussion of the implications and uses of each of these types of mirrors as well as a discussion of the differences between the real object before the mirror and its reflection (Grabes, pp.104-111).

³⁸⁸ Grabes, p.116.

³⁸⁹ Grabes, p.116.

³⁹⁰ Shuger, p.22.

conduct manuals forming the core of these pamphlets and books. Such texts regularly contained ‘mirror’, ‘speculum’ and ‘looking-glass’ or ‘glasse’ in the title to emphasise the nature of the content which was intended to guide and instruct the reader.³⁹¹ For example, *The mirror of allegiance, or a looking-glasse for the English, wherein they may reade their duty towards God and their king* (1647) by A Learned Reader of the Lawes, William Baldwin’s well-known *The Mirour for Magistrates* (1559), or *A trewe mirrour or glase wherein we maye beholde the wofull state of thys our realme of England* (1556) by Laurence Saunders. The genre of the conduct manual was particularly popular and part of a well-established tradition, as John Gillingham notes when he describes ‘early modern manuals of manners’, such as *Facetus*, which were often ‘set texts in English schools’ by ‘1300 and remained in use until...the 1520s’.³⁹² Such didactic texts were ‘all set in a simple easily memorisable verse form’ and although they were ‘interspersed with moral exhortations to piety and humility’ often ‘the precepts are largely practical and technical’.³⁹³ The messages, or morals, of these types of texts were generalised and impersonal and they simply urged the individual towards appropriate and socially acceptable norms of self-improvement. These mirrors were not literal – however, as with the physical mirror of Narcissus’s story, these metaphorical mirrors are related

³⁹¹ In gathering a survey of the printed texts available on *Early English Books Online*, looking at these four ‘mirror-terms’, I have found that in the 1400s the most commonly used term in ‘mirror-titles’ was ‘speculum’, during the 1500s it was ‘mirror’ and in the 1600s it was ‘looking-glass’. Although it is tempting to assume that ‘speculum’ was only popular during the 1400s due to the common usage of Latin, ‘speculum’ remained in use during the 1500s and 1600s. In fact, ‘speculum’ was more commonly used in those periods than ‘looking-glass’ and ‘glass’ respectively. Additionally, terms such as ‘looking-glass’ and ‘glass’ may not have been in use during the 1400s due to the lack of technical progress in glass mirror-manufacture.

³⁹² John Gillingham, ‘From Civilitas to Civility: Codes of Manners in Medieval and Early Modern England’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 12 (2002), 267-289 (p.268, 271).

³⁹³ Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.27.

to knowledge, understanding and learning, their text offering guidance in order for individuals to improve themselves.

Other, more specific mirror-texts involved the discussion of the poor or the good example, by which the reader might mediate their own behaviour. In *A looking-glasse for a drunkard or a drunkard defined* (1652) the anonymous author offers a single-page warning against the perils of over-indulgence in alcohol. The text's form, with its definition followed by its list of examples and cross-citations, seems to assume the form of a dictionary definition. The 'Lexicons of Early Modern English' website collects a wide range of early modern 'dictionaries', including *The Discription of Britayne* (1480), *The Interpretation of the Names of the Gods and Goddesses* (1498) and *The Expositions of the Terms of the Law of England* (c.1525).³⁹⁴ These titles illustrate the range of words used to describe the types of texts that are today thought of as 'dictionaries' and suggests the varied use of words such as 'discription' and 'exposition' to describe definitions and explanations, such as we find in *A looking-glasse for a drunkard or a drunkard defined*, warning against the risks of drunkenness. The anonymously authored mirror-text is carefully ordered, containing a definition and then a description of drunkenness and its problems, followed by a list of biblical examples which show the result of drunken excess:

³⁹⁴ The Lexicons of Early Modern English, <<http://leme.library.utoronto.ca/>> [accessed 9 September 2009].



A Looking-Glasse for a Drunkard, Or a DRUNKARD Defined.

In which Description is plainly shewed the filthy abominable sin of Drunkenness proved by many places of Scripture; How through Drunkenness many have been punished, others threatened and admonished, very needful to be set up in every house, for the Information of the Judgement, and the Reformation of the lives of those men and women, who take pleasure in the sin of Drunkenness, the common sin of these times.

The Definition of a Drunkard.

A Drunkard is the annoyance of Modesty; The trouble of Civility; The spoil of Wealth; The destruction of Reason. He is the Brewers Agent; The Alehouse Benefactor; The Beggars Companion; The Constables trouble. He is his Wives woe, His Childrens sorrow; His Neighbours scoffs; His own shame. In summe, a Tubbe of Swill; A spirit of sleep; A Picture of a Beast; A Monster of a man.

The Evils attending Drunkenness hurtful to the Soule and Body.

Drunkenness confounds the Memory, dulls the Understanding, distempers the Body, defacech the Beauty, hurts the Minde; It inflames the Blood; It ingenders unnatural Thirst, a stinking Breath, redness of the Eyes, It diminisheth strength; It brings Woes, Sorrows, Wounds without cause, corrupteth the Blood, drowneth the Spirits; It enricheth the Carcasse with Surfeits, turneth Blood into Water, turnes Reason to Poyson; It causeth vomiting and filthynesse. By excessive drinking comes Dropsies, Consumptions, and cold Diseases, with untimely Deaths. Many by drinking Healths to others, leave none to themselves. Drunkenness is a flattering Devil, a sweet Poyson, a delightfull sin, which who so hath in himself, hath not himself; And he that useth it, is not himself in the Concrete, but sinfulness it self in the Abstract, being a voluntary Devil, the common Shame of Nature, and the prodigious Disgrace of Mankind.

Examples laid down in Scripture, shewing how Drunkenness made some fall by the Sword, Others became Murderers, Others being drunk were murdered, betrayed; Incest committed, many destroyed in the midst of their in-sporting, &c.

- The Amalekites lay scattered on the earth, so that David slew them, 1 Sam. 30. 16.
- Ammons heart was merry, so that Abshaloms Servants slew him, 2 Sam. 28. 29.
- Benhadad with fifty two other Kings, were by Israel overcome, 1 Kings 20. 16. &c.
- Belshazzars countenance fell down, and the Medes took his Kingdom, Dan. 5. 31.
- David useth means to move Uriah to cover his sin committed, 2 Sam. 11. 13.
- Elah was by his Servant Conspiring against him, murdered, 1 Kings 16. 9, 10.
- Gaal with his Brethren against Abimelech Conspired, Judg. 9. 26, 27.
- Herod in his drunken Banquet caused John to be beheaded, Mat. 14. 10.
- The Israelites drank till they were thirsty. Hell was prepared for them, Isa. 5. 12, 14.
- Lots Daughters lay with their Father, two cursed Nations came of them, Gen. 19. 31.
- Noah was uncovered in his Tent, and discovered by his Sonne, Gen. 9. 21, 22.
- Nabals heart was merry, and suddenly died within him, 1 Sam. 25. 36, 37.
- The Philistines sporting with Samson, were by the fall of an Houe flaine, Judg. 16. 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.
- Priests and Prophets stumble in Judgement, and faile by Wison, Isa. 28. 7.
- The Corinthians profained the Lords Supper by their immoderate drinking before, 1 Cor. 11. 21.

These forementioned places of Scriptures and Examples, prove plainly the evil Consequence of Drunkenness. Now follow Threatnings and Exhortations to Drunkards.

Threatnings.

Wo to them that rise up early in the Morning to follow strong drink, that continue till night, the wine inflaming them, Ila. 5. 11. Wo to them that are mighty to drink Wine, and to men of strength, mingling strong drinks, which causeth men to erre, and to go out of the way, being swallowed up with wine and strong drink, Ila. 5. 22. chap. 28. 7, 8, &c. Awke now ye Drunkards, weep and bowle all ye drinkers of Wine, because of the new Wine, for it shall be pulled from your mouth, Joel 1. 5. &c.

Exhortations.

The Drunkard shall come to Poverty, Rags shall be his clothing, Prov. 23. 21. Wine is a mocker, and strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise, Prov. 20. 1. Remember Christs Admonition, Take heed of Drunkenness, Luke 21. 34. Forget not Pauls and Solomons Counsel, 1 Cor. 5. 11. Prov. 23. 20. Company not with Drunkards, &c. And know that no Drunkard shall inherit the Kingdom of heaven, 1 Cor. 6. 10, 11. Therefore be not drunken with Wine, wherein is Excesse, but be filled with the Spirit, Eph. 5. 18.

July. 12

London, Imprinted for J. D. and are to be sold by George Wilford in little Brittain neer the Hospitall gate. 1652.

Anon, A looking-glasse for a drunkard or a drunkard defined, 1652³⁹⁵

³⁹⁵ Anon, A looking-glasse for a drunkard or a drunkard defined, (London, 1652), EEBO, document image 1 [accessed 9 September 2009].

Divided into small sections which explain the importance of avoiding drinking too much alcohol, the 'looking-glasse' is a 'description' in which is 'plainly shewed' the 'sin of Drunkenesse', as explicated in scripture. The mirror, in this instance, 'describes' and 'shows' the reader the dangers so that the mirror becomes the illustrative example, functioning in precisely the way that Shuger claims is the only purpose of the mirror during this period – as didactic moralism. The 'reflection' found in this 'mirror' is held up as an example that defines the topic at hand and offers explanatory examples which provide 'Information of the Judgement' to reform those who enjoy the sin of drunkenness.³⁹⁶ This textual mirror serves to reflect both visually, with its emblematic images engraved round the edges of the page, and metaphorically, offering an example and warning against the dangers of excess, which 'hurts the Minde', 'enricheth the Carcasse with Surfets' and is a 'flattering Devil'.³⁹⁷ Furnishing its text with examples of murder, betrayal and incest as given in the Bible, the author leaves his reader in no doubt as to the potential dangers of consuming excessive amounts of alcohol. This 'mirror' functions by listing the dangers and supporting this with selections from the Bible. The author concludes with more lists of 'threats' and 'exhortations' which give yet more instances of the perils of drinking from the Bible. The text serves as a warning and an example for the reader; it is a generic exemplary mirror that *shows* what will happen should the individual choose the path of alcoholic excess.

This emphasis on the example and on showing the reader specific flaws, sins, vices and their consequences, runs throughout a range of 'mirror-texts' which uses negative examples. In William Rankins' *A Mirrovr of Monsters* (1587) the focus is

³⁹⁶ Anon, EEBO, document image 1.

³⁹⁷ Anon, EEBO, document image 1.

on the *dangers* of ‘show’. Rankins’s text addresses the ‘manifold vices’ and ‘spotted enormities’ that are the result of the ‘infectious sight of Playes’ in what Janet Clare calls ‘an eccentric polemic about the corrupting power of the stage’ in which the players are accused of ‘sacrilege and blasphemy’.³⁹⁸ Here, just as in Narcissus’s story, sight is the focus of danger both literally and metaphorically, and the genre of theatre is endowed with the power to corrupt vision, in what becomes the ‘most fully developed analogy of the Devil’s Chapel – with papal images’ being compared to the theatre.³⁹⁹ Rankins is particularly concerned with pride, and notes that players ‘colour their vanitie with humanitie...because vnder colour of humanitie, they present nothing but prodigious vanitie’.⁴⁰⁰ The risk for the individual viewing a play is that he or she will be unable to properly understand the true nature of vanity, when it is cloaked by ‘humanitie’ – that is, ‘the condition, quality, or fact of being human’ – and thus may appear acceptable.⁴⁰¹ Rankins expands his thoughts on pride and ‘lecherie’, for which he uses the character of Luxuria:

Amongst y^e rest to make hir séeme more amiable to hir best beloued shée painted hir faire face w^t spots of shadowed modestie: not fro~ *Apelles* shop, whose colours are cou~terfeit, nor yet from *Zeuxes* famous in portratures. But sent from *Proserpina* wife to *Pluto*. A welwisher to this wedlocke: better coulours then *Psyches* carried to *Venus* quicklie decaied, but these last longer then they should. After shée had hanged at hir eares manie costlie faouours of follie farre set

³⁹⁸ William Rankins, *A Mirrovr of Monsters*, (London: 1587), *Early English Books Online*, document image 1 [accessed 9 September 2009]; Janet Clare, ‘Marlowe’s Theatre of Cruelty’ in *Constructing Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by James Allan Downie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) pp.74-88, (p.86).

³⁹⁹ M. C. Bradbrook, ‘Romance, Farewell! *The Tempest*’ in *The Tempest: Critical Essays* ed. by Patrick M. Murphy (New York: Routledge, 2001) pp.190-199 (p.199). Conversely, Sir Philip Sidney makes a case for the usefulness of the theatre arguing that when the sinful and vile is represented on stage, it is a suitable illustration of undesirable behaviour ‘so as it is impossible that any beholder can be content to be such a one’ (Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry* ed. by Geoffrey Shepherd, (Manchester & New York: Manchester Universisty Press, 1989) p.98). Stuart Clark provides a detailed account of medieval and early modern moralist’s opinions on the eye as inherently dangerous in his first chapter, ‘Species’ (Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp.9-38).

⁴⁰⁰ Rankins, image 3, Fol.2^r.

⁴⁰¹ OED, <<http://dictionary.oed.com>>.

from the Indians of *Anglia*, [Note: Wherein is noted the pride that is caused by plaiers, the beholders framing themselues to their leude life.] she embrodered hir haire with embossed brouches of beastlie desire, then gazing in hir glasse of vaine glorie, shée concluded as fine as may be.⁴⁰²

Here Rankins draws upon the stories of Apelles and Zeuxes, Greek painters celebrated in antiquity for the illusion of realism in their works, to illuminate the themes of the ‘counterfeit’ and the fake, since the lady has to paint on the ‘spots of shadowed modestie’. However, the implication is that her choice of ‘colours’ for painting her face is yet worse than this, since they are compared in quality to those used by Venus, a goddess classically associated with eroticism and vanity. The theme of painting is apparent throughout the entire paragraph, with Rankins using terms such as ‘shadowed’, ‘painted’, ‘portraitures’, ‘coulours’, ‘beholders’ and ‘framing’. All of these words are set within a framework of sin, shame, vanity and pride, and associated with fakery and the counterfeit, placing the creative arts in a negative light, and Rankins concludes this section by noting that Luxuria ‘seemed vnto hir selfe a second *Narcissus*’.⁴⁰³ Perhaps a telling comment for this chapter in the discussion of the relation of the mirror to works of art, comes in Leon Battista Alberti’s *On Painting (De Pictura, 1435)* where he describes the significance to painting of Narcissus’s mirror-moment:

I say among my friends that Narcissus who was changed into a flower, according to the poets, was the inventor of painting. Since painting is already the flower of every art, the story of Narcissus is most to the point. What else can you call a painting but a similar embracing with art of what is presented on the surface of the water in the fountain.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰² Rankins, image 5, Fol.4^r.

⁴⁰³ Rankins, image 6, Fol.4^v.

⁴⁰⁴ Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting* trans. by John R. Spencer (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1956), p. 64.

Narcissus embraced his reflection totally, and he became lost in it to the exclusion of all else, including the basic essentials of life such as food and water. Similarly, the artist becomes obsessed by the painting and its subject, indulging in it entirely until it reaches completion. Furthermore, the story of Narcissus relates the complexities of the 'mirror' which reflects for the viewer that which appears before it. The young man who looked into the pool could not comprehend the mirroring of the water's surface and so his eyes were fooled by the mysterious phenomenon. Alberti compares the mirror and the surface of the painting with one another, relating their abilities to 'embrace' art: the mirror is closely related to painting, placing the mirror as an object that is more than the passive reflector. Instead, the mirror becomes active participant in the pursuit of self. In the 'artistic representation of Narcissus beside the spring...the illusion is doubled' and the 'reflection becomes a picture within the picture'.⁴⁰⁵ This, then, becomes a much richer and more complex example of an engagement with the mirror than Shuger images in her essay. Charles Carman, discussing this passage in Alberti, finds that 'generally the tendency has been to take [Alberti's] passage literally, therefore implying that painting was born of an existential crisis of self love' which, he argues 'serves the interests that see a modern anthropocentric tendency manifest in Renaissance naturalism', such as Shuger seeks to find.⁴⁰⁶ Summing up, Carman explains, 'It is not the image in the fountain [i.e. Narcissus's reflection] that is meant as the purpose of the painting's reflection of

⁴⁰⁵ Vinge, p.41.

⁴⁰⁶ Charles Carman puts emphasis on the act of transformation rather than invention – the flower is an emblem of beauty and transformation, and the artist or viewer sees the painting not through simple, unaided vision, but through art (Carman, p.40). See Charles Carman, 'Meanings of Perspective in the Renaissance: Tensions and Resolution' in the forthcoming *Renaissance Theories of Vision*, ed. by John Hendrix & Charles Carman (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), pp.33-49.

life'.⁴⁰⁷ Instead, 'it is the transformation, the metamorphosis that is recognized as essential to fulfil the search for meaning—a meaning that is found in the literal and metaphorical beauty of the flower'.⁴⁰⁸ Where Shuger argues that the Renaissance mirror offers only a 'generic' meaning which is not individuated or personal to the reader/viewer, and cannot indicate self, the examples in the following sections of this chapter will go beyond this to show that exemplary mirror directs the individual towards self-examination and that the 'transformation' is 'recognised as essential' in the 'search for meaning'.

Rankins's text presents an image that provides an example for the reader, as well as a warning for them to 'judge that know and meaner to admonish themselves by the Mirroure'.⁴⁰⁹ This exemplary mirror is, like *A looking glass for a drunkard*, offering a generalised moral message, one that does not provide the viewer with any form of reflection of themselves. However, this does not mean that a sense of 'self' is excluded from it - the mirror encourages the viewer to examine themselves, to analyse their own state, and it is a means of self-regulation and punishment, in which is provided the example by which each individual may learn to judge and to mediate the self. Therefore, even in these types of exemplary mirror, which offer what Shuger would term a 'generic' self, the individual self is invoked and must be engaged with.

As these two examples illustrate, the exemplary mirror can work in different ways. The anonymously authored text uses the bad behaviour of the drunkard as an example that should warn people of the dangers of alcohol. The message of this text is unambiguous and easy to comprehend. Rankins's piece, on the other hand, argues

⁴⁰⁷ Carman, p.40.

⁴⁰⁸ Carman, p.40.

⁴⁰⁹ Rankins, document image 8, 6^v.

that plays, which offer negative attributes throughout course of their entertainment, can be considered more difficult, as it is more challenging for the audience to separate the enjoyment of plays from the message encoded in the behaviours they portray. The play is entertaining, and the playgoers are shown ‘humanitie’ rather than explicit danger or error. These examples have in common the fact that they both show a mirror that demonstrates a generic self, in the sense that Shuger argues. More than this, though, they both connote an individual self upon which the learning or moral must be conferred. In invoking the individual, they both move beyond Shuger’s generic image. Shuger spends a paragraph listing mirrors that ‘have nothing to do with self-consciousness’, however, there are yet other types of exemplary mirror; mirrors in which the individual self is not merely implied but explicitly invoked.⁴¹⁰

Multiple Mirrors: transience and permanence

The exemplary mirror may take many different forms and, as we have seen, often points to the ‘other’ as the example for the individual – the drunkard is offered up as that ‘other’ whose failings are plain to see, as is their cause, and Rankins points to the players and their craft as the example of fakery and vanity, offering the ‘other’ as evidence of his point. Shuger does not see the exemplary mirror as in any way connected to self-consciousness, considers the two mutually exclusive of each other, and finds any sense of ‘self’ mediated through these exemplary mirrors to be ‘generic’.⁴¹¹ However, I argue that throughout the period there is a range of mirrors that are not simply generic exemplary glasses. Furthermore I contend that, although

⁴¹⁰ Shuger, p.22.

⁴¹¹ Shuger, p.26.

some Renaissance ‘mirrors’ regularly show an exemplar which is not the reflection of the face before it, they do not preclude personal contemplation. While the (often) negative ‘mirrors’, such as Rankins’s and that offered by the anonymous author of *A Looking-glasse for a Drunkard* point to a conventional ‘other’, the exemplary mirror can be applied even more directly to the individual, offering a very personal ‘other’ by which to examine the self. Michael Drayton’s ‘Amour 14’ from *Ideas Mirrour* (1594) illustrates how the ‘mirror’ can reflect an ‘other’ that is specifically relevant to the sonnet’s speaker:

Looking into the glasse of my youths miseries,
I see the ugly face of my deformed cares,
With withered browes, all wrinckled with dispaire,
That for my mis-spent youth the tears fel from my eyes.
Then in these teares, the mirrors of these eyes,
Thy fayrest youth and Beauty doe I see,
Imprinted in my teares by looking still on thee:
Thus midst a thousand woes, ten thousand ioyes arise.
Yet in these ioyes, the shadowes of my good,
In this fayre limmed ground as white as snow,
Paynted the blackest Image of my woe,
With murthering hands imbrud in my own blood,
And in thys image [...] darke clowdy eyes,
My life, my youth, my loue, I heere Anatomize.⁴¹²

Both mirrors in this short poem are metaphorical rather than literal or physical. However, this reflection is not the form of ‘generic’ face that we saw in the examples from Rankins and the anonymous writer. Although the image reflected in the first mirror of Drayton’s sonnet is not the speaker as he appears at that moment, he nevertheless looks at his ‘self’. Drayton’s speaker looks back at his life and gazes upon his youth; an ‘other’ who serves as an exemplary image of himself. Drayton’s title for the collection of the poems, *Ideas Mirrour*, reveals a play-on-words that may

⁴¹² Drayton, Michael, ‘Amour 14’, *Ideas Mirror* (London: 1594), EEBO, image 10, [accessed 23 May 2008].

allude to the poet's sentiments regarding his own abilities for poetic invention and expression. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term 'idea' as

In Platonic philosophy: A supposed eternally existing pattern or archetype of any class of things, of which the individual things in the class are imperfect copies, and from which they derive their existence.⁴¹³

Thus, if Drayton is drawing upon Plato's philosophy in choosing 'ideas' as part of his title, this suggests that he draws attention to the fact that his 'ideas' are not new, but instead represent a set of already established ideas and within this anything that he attempts to add are 'imperfect copies', just as the mirror's reflection shows only a two dimensional copy of the three dimensional object placed before it. Like the object reflected in the mirror, the ideas he brings to the topics he covers in his set of poems 'derive their existence' from the 'existing pattern' of 'any class of things'.

Having signalled his exploration of established ideas, Drayton addresses the theme of age and represents neither youth nor old age in a positive light – his speaker describes the 'misery' of his youth, and how it seems to him to be 'ugly' and 'deformed', using bodily terms to describe his past state. He appears to regret his youthful behaviour and looks upon it with sorrow, weeping over the lost years. His memory, his mind becomes his 'glasse' and allows him this retrospective gaze. – this exemplary mirror is, unlike those of Rankins and the anonymous author, specifically relevant and personal to this speaker. These memories prompt such tumultuous emotions that he begins to weep over his mis-spent youth and this, in turn, produces another mirror: 'Then in these teares, the mirrors of these eyes, / Thy fayrest youth and beauty doe I see' (L.5-6). These secondary mirrors, produced by the emotional import of what he viewed in the mirror of his mind, become 'the mirrors' of his eyes

⁴¹³ *The Oxford English Dictionary*, < <http://www.oed.com> > [accessed 16 November 2009].

– quite the opposite to the ‘generic’ mirror that Shuger describes. Taking up the metaphor of courtly love which places true love reflected in the eyes of the lover, this teary outward mirror that the inward mirror of his mind prompts, reflects back his lover’s beauty and so reminds him of the joy she brought him.

There is a sense of the physical added to the reflections of the tears, in the use of ‘imprinted’ which suggests that the image is physically impressed in his tears. Drayton relies on further connotations which strengthen the image of the past, using ‘limmed’ (depicted), ‘paynted’ (produced a picture) and ‘imbrud’ (to stain, dye), all of which go towards colouring in the representation of his past. These terms create the image of a picture, something physical that has been created, and can be looked upon. However, while each of these adds a sense of permanence to the speaker’s representation of his past, they simultaneously hint at their own origins. Unlike the ‘mirrors’ of the anonymous author and Rankins, which draw their examples from external resources, such as the playhouse, Drayton’s mirror is generated from the memory of the speaker – a self-created exemplary glass.

As much as his own youth brings him misery when reflected upon, gazing at his lover brings him pleasure. However, though her image gives him enjoyment, entwined with her image is his own rage and misery, which overshadows the purity of her beauty, so that the mirror is likened to ‘darke and cloudy eyes’ (L.13). Finally, the speaker proclaims ‘my life, my youth, my love, I heere Anatomize’ (L.14). Using the two mirrors created in and by his body, both the internal mirror of his mind and the external mirror of his tears, he begins to look inward, to contemplate his past self. His use of the term ‘anatomize’ brings to the metaphor a notion of scientific precision, of ordered and specific analysis, but also of death. Due

to a lack of the equipment that would allow an internal examination on a living individual, for a Renaissance anatomical study to take place the subject was often deceased⁴¹⁴: this is how the speaker comes to view his past, his youth and his young self.⁴¹⁵ Drayton's speaker indulges in a solipsistic journey through his past, contemplating his self, assessing and analysing his behaviour. The anatomical dissection of his 'self' illustrates an awareness of self, as a twenty-first century reader might categorise it, and a willingness to pause and gaze inward to examine that self. The purpose of the image found in the sonnet is to serve not only as an example or warning, but also to offer a moment for reflection – personal, introspective self-reflection. As Arthur F. Kinney suggests, 'the restless self-image [is] mirroring' the 'fluctuating, mutable state of mind', as it shifts between senses of permanence and transience.⁴¹⁶ This mirror can function as the 'generic' exemplary mirror that Shuger claims is the mainstay of Renaissance mirroring, but beyond that, it also serves as a very personal, intimate mirror for the individual who sees a version of themselves, rather than any generalised other.

While Drayton's poem illustrates how an exemplary mirror can, in fact, be personal and can be directed inwards, demonstrating the flexibility of the early modern exemplary mirror to provide both generalised and unique images for self-reflection and improvement, an opposing instance of the exemplary mirror is that which comes in the individual who is offered as a role model. Shakespeare

⁴¹⁴ Jonathan Sawday discusses the early methods of acquiring bodies for examination, in which 'some Europeans looked to the marginal members of their own societies', such as 'the criminal, the poor, the insane, suicides, orphans' as 'potential "material" upon which they could legitimately practise their own researches and investigations into the human form' (Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the human body in Renaissance culture* (London & New York: Routledge, 1995), p.3).

⁴¹⁵ Interestingly, Sawday notes that the attributes of the figure of *Anatomia* were the mirror and the knife, a figure that Sawday describes as the 'reductive deity of division' and links to the story of Perseus and Medusa, in which Medusa 'stands for the fear of interiority' (Sawday, p. 3).

⁴¹⁶ Arthur F. Kinney, *Shakespeare's Webs: Networks of Meaning in Renaissance Drama* (New York & London: Routledge, 2004), p.34.

addresses this notion of outward ‘fashioning’ in the character of Hamlet who, as a prince, is a ‘generic’ mirror for his subjects - his traits and values are often prescribed and dictated by his position in society. Ophelia expresses her distress at Hamlet’s mental state following his soliloquy:

O, what a noble mind is here o’erthrown!
...The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
Th’observed of all observers quite quite down (III.i.150-155).⁴¹⁷

Ophelia exclaims that Hamlet is a ‘glass’ and a ‘mould’, indicating his status as an exemplary form through and by which others shape themselves. The fragile glass suggests the transience of the object, while the ‘mould’ indicates a sturdier, more well-used form that bespeaks its permanence. Those around Hamlet ‘fashion’ themselves by his example, imposing the rational order of Hamlet’s princely demeanour upon themselves.⁴¹⁸ Ophelia’s insistence on Hamlet as a ‘mould’ and ‘glass’ sits in direct opposition to Hamlet’s argument, immediately prior to Ophelia’s statement, about truth and beauty: ‘I have heard of your paintings well enough God / hath given you one face and you make yourselves / another (III.i.144-146). Hamlet’s principal objection is to the ‘making’ of the other self: the ‘made’ self is beauty, the ‘real’ self is truth. Honesty cannot ‘translate’ beauty into something that is still palpable, still ‘real’, it merely creates the ‘fake’ since ‘the world of perception is...regarded as deeply suspect’ due to its ‘association with opaque or deceptive appearances’.⁴¹⁹ Thus, any representation (as Hamlet later goes on to argue) is a

⁴¹⁷ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. by Harold Jenkins, (Surrey: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1997) p.284.

⁴¹⁸ The OED defines the verb ‘to fashion’ as ‘to give a specified shape to; to model according to, after, or like (something); to form into (the shape of something); to shape into or to (something)’. Tindale uses it in this sense in 1526 as does Shakespeare in *Much Ado About Nothing* in 1599: “Fashioning them [the Hotblouds] like Pharaoes souldiours” (III. iii. 142). < <http://dictionary.oed.com/>>.

⁴¹⁹ Alison Thorne, *Vision and Rhetoric in Shakespeare: Looking Through Language* (London: Macmillan, 2000) p.111.

counterfeit, an 'other' and Hamlet fails to realize that, as a 'glass' and 'mould', this mirrored self is just as fake as the face that women paint for themselves. For Hamlet 'personal identity turns out to be not a fact, but an act of faith...others (including those unreliable informants, the senses) tell us who we are'.⁴²⁰ As much as Hamlet's status as 'glass' and 'mould' defines him as the traditional exemplary glass that Shuger finds in her essay, he objects to this form of self-fashioning, which he sees as fake. His objections to the formulation of external selves again reveals that a significant understanding of a sense of self is at work.

These opposing instances of exemplary mirrors from Drayton and Shakespeare, one internal, one external, illuminate the mutability of the mirror metaphor and begin to illustrate just how variable the exemplary mirror can become. Furthermore, they show how each writer takes advantage of the particular attributes of the mirror's properties, as well as the potential for the exemplary mirror to take its place within a dialogue of forms of early modern selfhood. The texts of Rankins and the Anonymous author conform largely to Shuger's 'generic' model, in that they both point to an 'other' - their 'mirrors' do not reflect the face of the person in front of them. However, implicit in these mirrors is the need for the individual to examine his or her self against the example. The example is provided to offer warning and/or moral lessons, but also exists to prompt self-improvement. Drayton's mirror is exemplary *and* it is personal since it reflects back the individual before it, rather than a generic 'other'. Drayton's image is still an 'other', retaining the exemplariness of the mirror.

⁴²⁰ Barry Weller, 'Identity and Representation in Shakespeare', *ELH* 49 (Summer, 1982), 339-362 (p.347).

While Shuger claims that the ‘Renaissance self lacks reflexivity, self-consciousness and individuation’, the moments between Hamlet and Ophelia indicate them to be explicitly aware of the nature of and process of exemplary mirroring. Hamlet illustrates in his speech to Ophelia his familiarity with the use of the ‘other’ as the exemplary self. Hamlet and Ophelia’s discussions of the exemplary self are not informed by ‘theological commonplaces’ and do not lack self-reflexivity. Instead, they reveal an exploration of a tradition of self and self-expression.⁴²¹

⁴²¹ Shuger, p.35.



Figure twelve: David Bailly, *Self-Portrait with Vanitas Symbols*, 1651, Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden⁴²²

Darkness and Light: Knowledge and Ignorance

⁴²² David Bailly, *Self-Portrait with Vanitas Symbols*, (1651), Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden, *Web Gallery of Art*, < <http://www.wga.hu/index1.html> > [accessed 10 September 2009].

David Bailly's self-portrait of 1651 signals its interest in the moral lesson that the painted image can present with the inclusion of fresh flowers, bubbles, wine, skull, and the inscription from Proverbs on the note at the bottom right of the image, which reads 'Vanitas vanitatum et omnia vanitas' – 'Vanity, vanity – all is vanity'. The image initially appears to be a rather straight-forward moral example, such as we saw in the texts by Rankins and the Anonymous author, and recalls the classical link between vanity and death in Narcissus's story. Each of the objects presented, considered alongside the two self-portraits of Bailly – the depiction of the young artist whose gaze addresses that of the viewer, and the old man depicted in the image he holds up – are 'difficult to understand as anything other than a traditional statement of man's mortality'.⁴²³ Discussing the vanitas genre, popularised by figures like Bailly, Julie V. Hansen notes that 'incorporated into still-life compositions, skulls, bones, hourglasses, extinguished candles, and other motifs were meant to suggest the vanity of earthly things and man's fragility in the face of death and decay'.⁴²⁴ However, Eric Jan Sluijter argues that to view the painting as a simple moral lesson is too reductive an approach and certainly I argue that the painting has multiple layers of meaning which connote beyond moralism.⁴²⁵ Bailly produces multiple versions of himself, viewing his younger self in a similar way to

⁴²³ Eddy de Jong, 'Painted Words in Dutch Art of the Seventeenth Century', in *History of Concepts: comparative perspectives* ed. by Iain Hampsher-Monk, Karin Tilmans & Frank van Vree (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998) pp.167-190 (p.168).

⁴²⁴ Julie V. Hansen, 'Resurrecting Death: Anatomical Art in the Cabinet of Dr. Frederik Ruysch' in *The Art Bulletin*, 78, (Dec., 1996), 663-679 (p.668).

⁴²⁵ Eric Jan Sluijter, 'The Painter's Pride: The Art of Capturing Transience in Self-Portraits from Asaac von Swanenburgh to David Bailly' in *Modelling the Individual: biography and portrait in the Renaissance* ed. by K. A. E. Enkel (Amsterdam: Rodopi B. V. Editions, 1998) pp.197-196. Celeste Brusati argues that Bailly's image 'assembles his life and work into a collection of finely crafted objects, many of which have ties to his life' and 'all of which testify in their execution and display to the artist's self-conscious recrafting of them in paint' – see Celeste Brusati, *Artifice and Illusion: the art and writing of Samuel van Hoogstraten* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995), p.155.

Drayton. Furthermore, Bailly is actively self-fashioning and, like Hamlet and Ophelia, is aware of the 'made' self and the examples or lessons it can offer.

However, Svetlana Alpers argues that the image's emblems of mortality are intended to refer not to the individual but to the painting itself which means, Jong tells us, that 'the artist recognises only secondarily that his creation is subject to transience'.⁴²⁶ Sluijter builds on this by noting that Bailly's presentation of both versions of himself, which dominates the pictorial space, 'demonstrates that painting...can also copy the products of other pictorial arts' which is 'impossible the other way round'.⁴²⁷ Bailly, therefore, 'proves that painting is capable of displaying *everything* visible as if it were all there before one's eyes'.⁴²⁸ The mirror, too, is capable of replicating whatever is placed before it, including people, products, and arts – the concave mirror, in particular, can present an entire room in miniature, duplicating everything in its scope in a way that is impossible for the individual on their own. More than this, however, Bailly's image reminds us that the artist can represent objects and individuals however he or she pleases. Shuger argues that the Renaissance individual rarely sees their own self reflected in the mirror and therefore concludes that Renaissance mirroring can have no relation to selfhood, because the images they reflect are exemplary. However, Bailly's self-portrait demonstrates a keen awareness of creating and representing himself as the painting shows a self-conscious arrangement of items and even multiple representations of himself. The dominant image of Bailly presents a youthful image of the artist as he appeared

⁴²⁶ Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing; Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century*, (London: John Murray Publishers, 1983), p.107. See pp.103-109 of Alpers's discussion of Bailly, in which she argues that 'the crafting of art and of self is presented as a seamless whole'. Jong, p.168-169 – Jong indicates that he does not entirely agree with this account and argues for a more inclusive reading of the portrait.

⁴²⁷ Sluijter, p.187.

⁴²⁸ Sluijter, p.187.

approximately forty years before the painting was created: the emphasis in this part of the image is on artifice and ‘optical illusion’.⁴²⁹ This image can be seen to encapsulate the paradoxes inherent in the presentation of the exemplary individual, since encoded within the moral message of the transience of the worldly existence of man is the notion that the individual who creates a ‘self’, such as the artist, can present *any* self: the ‘exemplary self’ need not have any particular correspondence to the actual individual. Although Bailly presents images specific to himself, the exemplary mirrors of Rankins and the anonymous author do not refer to a particular person, and yet they still retain their moral message. Within the moral or exemplary ‘mirror’ is a reminder that these images can be constructed and can portray the themes of forgery, illusion and transience, mimicking the properties of the mirror, and recalling Narcissus’s tale.

In the previous sections, we have seen that while the story of Narcissus became an emblematic example of the dangers of the sins of pride and vanity, themes we find repeated in Bailly’s image, it was also linked, as Alciato’s emblem showed, to the loss of knowledge, both intellectual and personal. In Narcissus’s case, it was his failure to see and understand properly that prevented him from knowing the truth of his situation. His knowledge was limited, in part, by his vision – and Alciato’s emblem demonstrates a shift from the theme of Narcissus’s self-love and loss of self-knowledge, to the withering, through vanity, of established, accepted knowledge which has been passed down from the ancients. Spenser also draws parallels between vision and knowledge, though relates them differently, often offering darkness and ignorance as their oppositions. Shuger’s essay does not take account of

⁴²⁹ Sluijter, p.189-189. Sluijter explains that the full-size image of Bailly is the image of the artist ‘as he looked some forty years earlier’ and the small portrait of him is ‘a self-portrait made when he was about 58 years old’ which was ‘copied for this painting almost ten years later’ (p.188-189).

the ways in which the exemplary mirror illuminates the relationship between self-fashioning and transience. Intertwined with these ‘mirrors’ is the theme of sight and knowledge, which neither Grabes nor Shuger examines but which this chapter will explore in examples from Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* and Shakespeare’s *Love’s Labour’s Lost*.

The Faerie Queene is positioned as an exemplary mirror in the opening letter to Sir Walter Raleigh where Spenser sets out his aims and ambitions for his poem, many of which are not reflected in the text. Spenser tells his reader that ‘the generall end therefore of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline’.⁴³⁰ Spenser’s expectation in the opening letter to Raleigh is that he will provide just such a text as he will ‘labour to pourtraict in Arthure...the image of a braue knight, perfected in the twelve priuate morall vertues, as Aristotle hath deuised’.⁴³¹ Here, then, Spenser’s terminology is of a visual display – in his poem his principal character will offer an ‘image’ and ‘pourtraict’ which will reflect the ‘morall vertues’ and provide the example by which a gentleman may ‘fashion’ himself. Michael Schoenfeldt addresses the concept of identity within this statement, arguing that

identity is achieved not, as we might imagine, in the discovery of a hidden self buried deep beneath the encrustations and inauthenticities of civility; rather it is achieved through discipline, through the forceful imposition of rational order on energies that tend naturally to the twin poles of tyranny and anarchy.⁴³²

Thus, in Spenser’s ‘pourtraict’, the ‘labour’ he must undertake to produce the ‘image’ of the gentleman by which others may fashion themselves is, according to

⁴³⁰ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. by Thomas P. Roche (London: Penguin, 1987), p.15.

⁴³¹ Spenser, p.15.

⁴³² Michael Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: physiology and inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.73.

Schoenfeldt, an entirely necessary and natural part of the process of creating identity. Schoenfeldt argues here that identity is ‘achieved’ but the term ‘created’ seems more appropriate in this case since identity is ‘made’ by the ‘forceful imposition’ of energies.

Spenser’s opening letter to *The Faerie Queene* describes his book as a ‘continued Allegory or darke conceit’, which he admits may be problematic for those readers who prefer to ‘have good discipline deliuered plainly in way of precepts, or sermoned at large...then thus cloudily enwrapped in Allegoricall deuises’.⁴³³ This exemplary ‘mirror’ must be unravelled, paralleling that of Narcissus in that, like the boy’s mirrored self, the ‘reflection’ that Spenser describes has to be understood, processed, and made sense of in order to unravel its mystery, or message – a resolution at which Narcissus never arrived, until it was too late. Spenser intends his reader to strive for the meaning in his text, constructing it as the ‘other’, so that it should be more difficult to comprehend, and his references to it as ‘darke’ and ‘cloudy’ are evocative of the words of St. Paul in I Corinthians when he says ‘For now we see through a glasse darkely: but then shal we se face to face. Now I knowe in parte: but then shal I knowe euen as I am knowen’.⁴³⁴ The ‘cloudily enwrapped...deuices’ of Spenser’s ‘sermon’ seem to echo these words, perhaps drawing a parallel between the plainly delivered sermon Spenser shuns and the difficult path towards moral and spiritual knowledge. Louise Gilbert Freeman argues that *The Faerie Queene* follows the tradition of ‘non finito’ in fourteenth century visual arts and that ‘at the moral level the poet brings to his work a sense of spiritual imperfection, a sense of man’s wanting nature that distances him from the sight of

⁴³³ Spenser, p.15-16.

⁴³⁴ *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition* (Massachussets: Hendrickson, 1969), I Corinthians, 13:12, p.81.

God'.⁴³⁵ Continuing her discussion of the form of *The Faerie Queene*, Freeman comments that

all allegory operates by relating two incongruous terms (the abstract and the physical, the ideal and the material) and by attempting to understand one term as mediated by the other...Because it substitutes a system of signs for an imagined vision of totality, the allegorical image is necessarily incomplete.⁴³⁶

Allegory becomes like the mirror, momentarily fusing the real and the imagined, mediating between the two, but never wholly reconciling them, leaving instead a space that requires the continual negotiation of the spectator. Furthermore, Freeman's description of allegory is reminiscent of the theory of the monarch's two bodies – the real physical body, the body natural, and the abstract ethereal body that constitutes the body politic. The queen's two bodies come to be like the mirror, similar to the allegory that Spenser figures as the 'cloudy' mirror. The spectator is an active participant; even when a mirror is a generalised exemplary glass, it still requires interpretation by the viewer, as St. Paul directed.

The Pauline direction towards self-examination, expressed through the trope of light and darkness, figured in terms of the positive and the negative, of knowledge and ignorance, and of vision and blindness, is not an uncommon one. It can be found in the printed texts of the period, such as *The Optick Glasse of Humors* (1607), a text which is representative of exemplary mirroring. In it, Thomas Walkington discusses the control of the healthy body and frames it in terms of light and darkness, relating these binary opposites to self-knowledge, linking together the themes expected of an exemplary mirror. Writing in terms similar to those of St. Paul and Spenser,

⁴³⁵ Louise Gilbert Freeman, 'Vision, Metamorphosis, and the Poetics of Allegory in the *Mutabilitie Cantos*, *SEL*, 45 (Winter, 2005), 65-93 (p.67).

⁴³⁶ Freeman, p.67.

Walkington claims that ‘he that is incanoped and intrenched in this darksome misty cloud of ignorance...hath no true lampe of discretion, as a polestar to direct the shippe of his life by...’.⁴³⁷ The imagery of light, darkness, direction and self-fashioning, self-knowledge is the explicit marker of knowledge and unawareness. Self-awareness is to be valued according to Walkington, who argues, ‘of what hie esteeme and prizelesse value this rare selfeknowledge is & ever was, it is very conspicuous and apparent unto the dimmest apprehension of all’ and, again, darkness is aligned with ignorance.⁴³⁸ The OED notes that ‘optical glass’ or ‘optic’ glass ‘refers to astronomy or to glass that allows a clearer view of far away things. Walkington’s ‘optick’ glass allows the reader an improved perspective, a view of things that are not normally easily perceptible, and so too, the exemplary mirror often provides just this – an insight that presents the viewer with information not easily accessible to them.

To return to Spenser, we find that he, too, weaves light into his exemplary mirror. Throughout *The Faerie Queene* Spenser uses mirror-imagery to project his meaning, often focusing on the mirror’s physical properties and its required interactions with sight and vision, with the eyes and light – a necessary precondition for vision and for the mirror experience. In book one, the fourth proem uses the mirror as a metaphor of praise and exemplariness:

And with them eke, o Godesse heuenly bright
Mirrour of grace and Maiestie diuine
Great Lady of the greatest Isle, whose light
Like Phoebus lampe throughout the world doth shine,
Shed thy faire beames into my feeble eyne,
And raise my thoughts too humble and too vile,
To thinke of that true glorious type of thine,
The argument of mine afflicted stile:

⁴³⁷ Thomas Walkington, *The optick glasse of humors* (London, 1607), EEBO, image 14, left page.

⁴³⁸ Walkington, EEBO, image 14, left page.

The which to heare, vouchsafe, o dearest dred a-while⁴³⁹

Spenser uses his closing stanza to praise the Faerie Queene, terming her the ‘mirroure of grace and Maiestie diuine’. The narrator begs the queen, whose light shines out from within her and bathes the world around her, to ‘shed’ her ‘faire beames into [his] feeble eyne’ so that he might improve himself. He positions himself as the lowly subject but also as the empty vessel, awaiting the penetration of the holy light, and capable of accepting into his eyes, the external light, following the intromission optical theory. This builds on chapter two’s argument that linked changes in selfhood with the competing visual theories. In that chapter, extracts from Foucault, Selleck and Camille all discussed the reversal of the subject-object trajectory, which resulted in the flow moving from object to subject in the same way that the visual flow in the intromission theory moved from the object, to the subject. Spenser’s narrator is the receptive vessel into which the divine light flows, he is her majesty’s subject and freely, willingly accepts her light. His lack of agency ensures he is entirely passive, as the eye is in the intromission theory.

Optical theory can be found to influence the text in other ways. Lisa Dickson further examines the potential influence of contemporary advances in geometry, suggesting that Spenser follows a model of linear perspective ‘positioning Queen Elizabeth in this singular vantage point’ and ‘identifying her sovereign presence as that which literally makes sense as the necessary precondition of the poet’s work and being’.⁴⁴⁰ The trope of perspective bears its meaning upon not only Elizabeth and her

⁴³⁹ Spenser, 1.proem4.

⁴⁴⁰ Lisa Dickson, ‘The Prince of Rays: Spectacular Invisibility in Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*, *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 12 (September, 2006), 1.1-31 (2)
<http://purl.oclc.org/emls/12-2/dickprin.htm>.

position as monarch, but on Spenser's didactic text. Using the scientific theories around him, Spenser draws on the multiple meanings afforded him and uses vision, light and perspective to place his Faerie Queene as the ultimate exemplary mirror. The light, shone from the queene into the subject's eyes, will 'raise [his] thoughts', thus illustrating the link between light and knowledge. The queen, as mirror, brings light to her subjects, and with that offers knowledge to those who are receptive to her light. This form of exemplary mirroring seems considerably more sophisticated than Shuger's reductive account indicates – that Spenser uses and adapts vision, light and perspective to create his exemplary mirror, suggests that the exemplary mirror is a manipulable tool.

In the above proem, the Queen is the 'mirroure' of grace, the ultimate exemplary figure by which her subjects may shape themselves and from whom they should learn. Spenser also focuses on the use of light, when he says that the Queen shines her light 'like Phoebus lampe': Phoebus, whose name calls to mind his powers as sun-god, but also of truth and prophecy, brings further connotations.⁴⁴¹ The use of Phoebus calls to mind his mother, Leto, the goddess of dark nights, thus partnering the opposing qualities of light and dark and so making connections between light and knowledge in a manner similar to Walkington's approach.⁴⁴² Thus, the light that emanates from the Queen is the brightest light possible – as bright as the sun – and so the light is shed into the eyes – the eyes are the mediator, accepting the light into the body. The eyes of the person who seeks knowledge or truth are penetrated by the bright light and then blinded by it.

⁴⁴¹ See the entry for Apollo in Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* (London: Penguin, 1960 repr 1992), pp.76-82. In particular, it is noteworthy that Apollo is said to have 'preached moderations in all things' and that the phrase "'know thyself' [was] always on his lips' (p.79).

⁴⁴² See Graves's entry on Leto, pp.55-58.

Spenser's verses, filled with references to light and sight, linking together these motifs with themes of knowledge and understanding, seem to have their partial mirror in a passage from *Love's Labour's Lost*:

As, painfully to pore upon a book
To seek the light of truth: while truth the while
Doth falsely blind the eyesight of his look:
Light seeking light doth light of light beguile:
So, ere you find where light in darkness lies,
Your light grows dark by losing of your eyes.
Study me how to please the eye indeed,
By fixing it upon a fairer eye,
Who dazzling it so, that eye shall be his heed,
And giving him light that it was blinded by. (I.i.72)⁴⁴³

In this speech we find Berowne associating truth with light and with learning and education, in a similar fashion to Spenser's faerie queene. However, this light can be blinding as it 'doth blind the eyesight of his look' so that the 'light' of truth is 'beguiling'; it is enchanting and almost deceptive. When the individual open to truth, to understanding, meets truth, the effect is the dazzling bright light which can blind. Books will bring truth, illumination, and blinding light but, if you stop looking and stop trying to learn and to seek the truth, 'your light grows dark by losing of your eyes'. To search for knowledge and truth is a problem – it is difficult and, reminiscent of St. Paul's insistence that we 'see through a glass darkly', and Spenser's insistence on wrapping his moral tale in 'cloudy...devices' and 'darke conceit', Shakespeare here calls on the traditions which place the search for truth as a journey of difficulty and eventual reward. However, placing these two passages alongside each other highlights this focus on light as intertwined with knowledge and the visual. The themes we see played out in Narcissus's story, as translated by

⁴⁴³ William Shakespeare, *Love's Labour's Lost*, ed. by H.R. Woudhuysen, (London: Thomson Learning, 1998, 2001).

Golding, find their match in Spenser's and Shakespeare's word-choice for their own instances of exemplary mirroring. Exemplary mirroring, then, draws its inspiration from a range of different sources, moral and religious – as illustrated in Bailly's self-portrait - in order to portray and tease out the connections it intends to make between knowledge, understanding, light and mirroring.

The Exemplary Individual: The Mirroring of the Faerie Queene and Hamlet



Figure thirteen: Hans Baldung Grien, *Three Ages of the Woman and the Death*, (1510) Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴⁴ Hans Baldung Grien, *Three Ages of the Woman and the Death*, (1510), Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, *Web Gallery of Art*, <<http://www.wga.hu/index1.html>> [accessed 10 September 2009].

Hans Baldung Grien's *Three Ages of the Woman and the Death* of 1510 can be read as an exemplary image: the young woman gazes, Narcissus-like, into the mirror whilst death lurks behind her with an hourglass, highlighting the key themes of transience, vanity, human frailty, and death that appeared in Bailly's image.⁴⁴⁵ The older woman with one hand supports the young woman's mirror and with the other hand attempts to ward off the advances of death upon her. Meanwhile, the young woman and death are linked by the long piece of fabric that is intertwined in their arms. The painting depicts the generations from child to youth, to old age and death, with youth and her mirror taking the central role. The young woman is both encouraged (by the old woman) to enjoy gazing at and thus celebrating her beauty, and warned (by death) of its ephemeral nature. This image, then, seems to look backwards and forwards simultaneously, as it encapsulates the sense of youth, old age and death, and depicts a sense of time in much the same way as Drayton's verse. Baldung's image 'reads the life course as a process of natural degradation of the flesh' and the hourglass stands as the 'semiotic fulcrum of the painting, the focal point at which the splendour and the ruin of the flesh', the 'force of seduction and the horror of degeneration converge', and in this we see the exemplary image that reflects on and directly engages with the self.⁴⁴⁶

This vanitas image, which follows the woman through generations, foretelling a life that involves the natural and eventual decline and decay of the body, reminds the

⁴⁴⁵ Rose Marie Hagen & Rainer Hagen argue in *What Great Paintings Say: Old Masters in Detail* that the theme of the *Three Ages* 'has remained the object of speculation ever since' and casts doubt on the interpretation of this image as a 'Venus' symbolising the allegory of vanity. Hagen & Hagen, note that the child is out of place in a 'vanity' image and that Death's use of the hourglass appears more a 'gentle reminder' than a true emblem of beauty's transience. See Rose Marie Hagen & Rainer Hagen, *What Great Paintings Say: Old Masters in Detail* (Köln: Taschen, 2001), pp.110-115.

⁴⁴⁶ Silvana Seidel Menchi, 'The Girl and the Hourglass: Periodization of Women's Lives in Western Preindustrial Societies' in *Time, Space, and Women's Lives in Early Modern Europe* ed. by Anne Jacobson Schutte, Thomas Kuehn & Silvana Seidel Menchi (Kirkville: Truman State University Press, 2001), pp.41-76 (p.57).

viewer of the different stages of life, past, present and future. Baldung's image does not show a particularly personal journey, but instead offers a general warning against the dangers of vanity and self-love of the sort that falls in line with Shuger's argument. However, with further examples from Spenser and Shakespeare, this section will build on the exemplary mirror that Drayton examines in his poem. Moving beyond Shuger's argument once more, the examples will show how the sense of looking back or displaying the past provides the specific, personal example from which the individual may self-examine and learn. The exemplary mirror not only provides the exemplar or moral for the individual, but also implicitly directs the individuals to contemplate the example and to improve themselves accordingly.

Baldung's image offers the traditional emblems of vanity – the mirror, the naked young woman transfixed by it – and places these alongside their related symbols, transience and death, and Spenser, too, takes up these ideas in *The Faerie Queene* to generate the negative exemplary mirror which serves to warn:

So proud she shyned in her Princely state,
Looking to heauen; for earth she did disdayne,
And sitting high; for lowly she did hate:
Lo vnderneath her scornfull feete, was layne
A dreadfull Dragon with an hideous trayne,
And in her hand she held a mirrhour bright,
Wherein her face she often vewed fayne,
And in her selfe-lou'd semblance tooke delight;
For she was wondrous fair, as any liuing wight (i.iv.10)

In Lucifera's 'sinfull house of Pride', which contains all of the sins (in the form of Lucifera's advisers) - idleness, gluttony, lechery, avarice, envy and wrath - and where visual excess means that the 'mayden' Queen's 'bright beautie did assay / To dim the brightness of her glorious throne, / And enuying her self, that too exceeding shone' (i.iv.8), the bright mirror is emblematic of self-love and vanity. The use of

the word 'wondrous' links to the Latin word for the mirror 'mirari' which means to 'wonder at', yoking together the sense of wonder with the looking glass, while 'semblance' reminds the reader that the self reflected in the mirror is not a 'real' self, but a likeness. Lucifera is presented as a warning against pride and its associated sins, and acts as a contrast to Elizabeth who is the positive exemplary mirror. Dickson, commenting on 'spectacular invisibility' in the poem, argues that

On the one hand, Elizabeth is protected by absent presence: she is the surface in which grave and divine majesty are reflected and are made visible, but she, herself, is elided except as a condition of that visibility.⁴⁴⁷

Elizabeth is the positive example, her 'surface' connoting her 'divine majesty' while she is simultaneously 'absently' implied by comparison to Lucifera's sinfulness.

The queen, already established as an exemplary mirror in her associations with light and knowledge, and by contrast to Lucifera, projects exemplariness through the sense of lineage: this kind of mirror looks backward and traces a lineage, thus producing an image, a likeness of a quite different kind. Through this metaphor, the Faerie Queene's court is portrayed as an historical ideal, rather than simply as a standalone entity shaped entirely by Elizabeth – that is, Elizabeth's realm, and queenship comes with a long history, and many past associations, so that it is clear that Elizabeth is not the sole influence and creator. Elizabeth Heale comments that 'through repeated British/Tudor genealogies, Spenser traces the Tudor ancestry' in *The Faerie Queene*. These 'genealogies place the Tudor dynasty at the culmination of a providential plan unfolding through history, with Gloriana's Court as its

⁴⁴⁷ Dickson, p.7.

idealized mirror'.⁴⁴⁸ Heale comments that Elizabeth's court is the perfect mirror for the Tudor dynasty as idealized in Spenser and this places the mirror as a non-literal, metaphorical object which reveals history, genetics and genealogy. Spenser explicitly refers to his text and queen as a mirror for all and in this, he follows an already established tradition in which a text or an individual is posited as the example for others. This type of 'mirror' does not present the negative example, as seen in the Narcissus myth, and the example from Rankins. Rather, the queen is offered as a positive exemplar, her virtues and attributes laid out and praised liberally, so that her subjects might appreciate her greatness.

In book two, this sense of the lineage or dynasty is examined when Spenser returns in the fourth proem to the concept of the text itself as a mirror:

Of Faerie lond yet if he more inquire,
By certaine signes here set in sundry place
He may it find; ne let him then admire,
But yield his sence to be too blunt and bace,
That no'te without an hound fine footing trace.
And thou, O fairest Princesse vnder sky,
In this faire mirrhour maist behold thy face,
And thine own realmes in lond of Faery,
And in this antique Image thy great auncestry.⁴⁴⁹

Here the mirror reflects both the face of the 'princesse' as well as her kingdom. That the mirror can provide the individual with a method by which to view ancestry, is intriguing, and seems to offer a development of Drayton's mirror of the past. The suggestion here, of the Queen's 'antique Image' showing her ancestry, may imply

⁴⁴⁸ Elizabeth Heale, *The Faerie Queene: A Reader's Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.12.

⁴⁴⁹ Spenser, ii.proem4.

her divine right as God's chosen monarch.⁴⁵⁰ When discussing proems three and four of Book two, Stephen Greenblatt suggests that proem three figures *The Faerie Queene* as hovering 'on the brink of asserting its status as a newfound land' but that 'by invoking the gaze of royal power' this is undermined in proem four, above, where

In an instant the 'other world' has been transformed into a mirror; the queen turns her gaze upon a shining sphere hitherto hidden from view and sees her own face, her own realms, her own ancestry. That which threatens to exist independent of religious and secular ideology, that is, what we believe...is revealed to be the ideal image of that ideology...iconoclasm gives way to appropriation, violence to colonization.⁴⁵¹

Thus, Greenblatt concludes, 'the 'other world' becomes mirror becomes aesthetic image' so that 'this transformation of the poem from a thing discovered to a thing made...is completed with the poet's turn from 'vaunt' to apology.⁴⁵² Unlike Drayton's mirror which reflects his own past, the faerie queene's mirror reflects her ancestry which, while it is personal to her, is a more generalised, less personal sense of self than Drayton's mirror.

However, it may also relate to the traces of ancestry to be found in the face of the viewer – such an example is found in Shakespeare's sonnet number three:

Look in thy glass, and tell the face thou viewest
Now is the time that face should form another,
Whose fresh repair if now thou renewest,
Thou dost beguile the world, unbless some mother.
For where is she so fair whose unneared womb

⁴⁵⁰ Patrick Collinson notes that 'only the principle of the queen's two bodies preserved the Elizabethan panegyrist from blatant blasphemy' (Patrick Collinson, *Elizabethan Essays* (London: Hambledon, 1994), p.93). Also, see Marie Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), and Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957) for a full discussion of the concept of the body natural and the body politic.

⁴⁵¹ Stephen Greenblatt, 'To Fashion a Gentleman: Spenser and the Destruction of the Bower of Bliss', *Critical Essays on Edmund Spenser*, ed. by Suzuki Mihoko (London: Prentice Hall, 1996) p.113.

⁴⁵² Greenblatt, p.113.

Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?
 Or who is he so fond will be the tomb
 Of his self-love, to stop posterity?
 Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
 Calls back the lovely April of her prime;
 So thou through windows of thine age shalt see,
 Despite of wrinkles, this thy golden time.
 But if thou live rememb'rd not to be,
 Die single, and thine image dies with thee.⁴⁵³

Where Spenser claims that in the 'antique image' that the queene will see in the mirror, her ancestry can be found, Shakespeare's speaker similarly encourages the young man to look at himself in the mirror and at his mother as a mirror, so 'thou through windows of thine age shalt see'. The sonnet appears to have a 'bizarre' sense of 'infatuation', and repeatedly urges a young man to have a child, wrapping up the sense of lineage with that of beauty.⁴⁵⁴ This mirror is the 'exemplum' to the young man, suggesting the benefits of procreation.⁴⁵⁵ Shakespeare's use of the exemplary mirror is quite opposite to Spenser's, in that Shakespeare's intense focus on self-love and vanity is ironically focused towards indulging the egotism and pride. There is little sense of the moral lesson for this individual, who is directed towards absorbing self-admiration.

The trope appears, then, another method of connoting through the mirror a combination of vanity and posterity, and this sense of a link between the heavenly and the earthly, is emphasised further in book two in the description of the attributes

⁴⁵³ William Shakespeare, *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, ed. by Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson & David Scott Kastan, (London: Thomson Learning, 2001), 'Sonnet, III', p.18.

⁴⁵⁴ Lucy Sullivan offers close readings of the sonnets, and in these categorises sonnets 1-19 under the heading 'Preserving Beauty'. Sullivan claims that the 'torrent of passionate persuasion' and the 'conviction of the pressure of time' both 'bespeak personal loss' which 'makes sense of the urgency which the first seventeen of Shakespeare's sonnets express'. See Lucy Sullivan, *Shakespeare's Shattered Youth: laming or elixir?* (Windsor, Australia: Windrush Press, 2009), p.6-15.

⁴⁵⁵ Rayna Kalas, in examining the hourglass of sonnet 126, notes that it could be argued that the 'glass' of sonnet three also invokes the hourglass in the lines 'thou art thy mother's glass and she in thee / calls back the lovely April of her prime (1.9-10). See Rayna Kalas, 'Fickle Glass' in *A Companion to Shakespeare's Sonnets* ed. by Michael Schoenfeldt (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), p.274.

of Belphoebe, describing her as ‘so glorious mirrhour of celestiall grace, / And soueraine monument of mortall vowes’ (ii.iii.25), noting the quality of the divinely chosen to reflect back heavenly glory upon the earth and her subjects. These mirrors are both, contrary to Shuger’s argument of what can be found in the exemplary looking-glass, ‘a formally self-reflexive mirror and a window onto historical reality’.⁴⁵⁶

The multiple representations of Elizabeth, of the Faerie Queene, illustrate the personas or ‘selves’ available to the monarch. In proem five of Book three, Spenser unites the myriad figures of Elizabeth:

But let that same delitious Poet lend
A little leaue vnto a rusticke Muse
To sing his mistresse prayse, and let him mend,
If ought amis her liking may abuse:
Ne let his fairest Cynthia refuse,
In mirrours more then one her selfe to see,
But either Gloriana let her chuse,
Or in Belphoebe fashioned to bee:
In th’one her rule, in th’other her rare chastitee.⁴⁵⁷

Combining the connotations of Cynthia, power and chastity, with the purity of the huntress as embodied in Belphoebe, merging these multiple images to offer Elizabeth ‘mirrours more then one her selfe to see’. These ‘mirrors’ reflect not Elizabeth but exemplary images, depicting the appropriate model for Elizabeth so that she is at once making herself and being made, so that The Faerie Queene is a ‘mediating mirror’ for the Faerie Queene herself.⁴⁵⁸ Walker describes Spenser’s rendering of Elizabeth as a ‘triple vision’, reminding us of Baldung Grien’s three versions of the woman. In this triple vision, we find the queen as she is popularly represented by

⁴⁵⁶ Kalas, p.274.

⁴⁵⁷ Spenser, iii.proem.5.

⁴⁵⁸ Julia M. Walker, *Medusa’s Mirrors: Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton and the Metamorphosis of the Female Self* (New Jersey & London: Associated University Presses, 1998), p.71.

sixteenth-century artists and writers; the queen as she wishes to be seen in relation to her own self-constructed image; the queen as a woman who is also a ruler in a society that genders political power exclusively male, a society that provides no models for the selfhood of powerful women.⁴⁵⁹

In book six, the book of courtesy, the mirror's function changes significantly. In previous books the sense of doubleness that is present in the notion of mirroring and coupled with the concept of the Queen's two bodies, is represented as positive but in the fifth proem of book six, the mirror comes to be associated with fakery:

But in the triall of true curtestie
Its now so farre from that, which then it was,
That it indeed is nought but forgerie,
Fashion'd to please the eies of them, that pas,
Which see not perfect things but in a glas:
Yet is that glasse so gay, that it can blynd
The wisest sight, to thinke gold that is bras.
But vertues seat is deepe within the mynd,
And not in outward shows, but inward thoughts defynd.⁴⁶⁰

Here Spenser's choice of 'forgerie' and 'fashioned' is indicative of the false, and the 'made', where the mirror becomes a place in which to seek truth. This 'truth' however, cannot be found in the looking-glass since what it projects is not real but it can 'blynd / The wisest sight, to thinke gold that is bras'. In this proem the mirror represents danger and it is exposed as a tool of deceit, an object of which the individual must be wary. Where in previous books the mirror was a place to find ancestry, beauty and positive example, now it has become representative of inauthenticity and trickery so powerful it can fool even the 'wisest sight'. However, the closing two lines point to a link to earlier notions of virtue when it concludes that 'vertues seat is deepe within the mynd, / And not in outward shows, but inward

⁴⁵⁹ Walker, p.71.

⁴⁶⁰ Spenser, vi.proem5.

thoughts defynd'. Here the speaker notes that the individual can resist the temptations of the false mirror which shows you whatever you wish to see. The gentle reminder of the final two lines prompts the reader to recall their morals, ignore outward impressions and attend to the inner thoughts, illustrating again that the exemplary mirror does more than simply point to the example and its message – the exemplary mirror can encourage self-reflection. Spenser's conflicting uses of mirrors, some offering positive examples, whilst this one offers the negative, illustrates Spenser's ability to make careful, measured use of the varying forms of exemplary mirror available to him. It also encourages the individual to exercise caution when looking into the mirror, and to shy away from being fooled by outward appearances and impressions. This mirror, like the positive examples, encourages the individual to look inwards.

Spenser uses the mirror-metaphor in other ways in *The Faerie Queene*. Several of the ways that he uses it seem to suggest outward reflection where the image is cast out so that the emphasis lies not with looking in the mirror but with the image it projects. In the Mutabilitie Cantos, there is one such example which relates the emergence of Nature.

That some doe say was so by skill deuized,
To hide the terror of her vuncouth hew,
From mortall eyes that should be sore agrized;
For that her face did like a Lion shew,
That eye of wight could not indure to view:
But others tell that it so beauteous was,
And round about such beames of splendor threw,
That it the Sunne a thousand times did pass,
Ne could be seene, but like an image in a glass.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁶¹ Spenser, Mutabilitie Cantos, vii.6.

Just as the Faerie Queen's beauty and purity shine out from her, so the brightness of the beauty of Nature's face radiates a dazzling light that exceeds the sun's power.

David Lee Miller comments that

In centering his artistic vision on Elizabeth, whose various names point outward to the sixteenth century's far-reaching reinscription of the received 'text' of English monarchy, Spenser opens his poesis to the forces of contemporary history. Elizabeth is Gloriana, and she in turn is the ideal form of the poem itself: the Fairy Queen is The Faerie Queene, a vision of perfection pursued along parallel lines by Arthur and the reader.⁴⁶²

Elizabeth's image 'points outward', like the exemplary mirror, pointing to the 'other' that is the 'ideal form' presented in the queen. The brightness prevents the direct gaze and so the image must be viewed by reflection, as in a mirror. Britomart's mirror-moment in book three has a similar theme:

But weenedst thou what wight thee ouerthrew,
Much greater griefe and shamefuller regret
For thy hard fortune then thou wouldst renew,
That of a single damzell thou wert met
On equall plaine, and there so hard best;
Euen the famous Britomart it was,
Whom straunge aduventure did from Britaine fet,
To seek her loue (loue farre sought alas,)
Whose image she had seene in Venus looking glas.⁴⁶³

When Britomart looks into the mirror of the Goddess of Love, it is not herself that she sees reflected back, but that of her desired lover. Again the image is one of indirectness and the suggestion is that a mirror does not reflect the real but rather the desired. The mirror becomes in many ways a trope of blindness which affects sight negatively, unless it is balanced by moral virtues. The mirror of vanity and pride

⁴⁶² David Lee Miller, 'Spenser's Poetics: The Poem's Two Bodies' in *Critical Essays on Edmund Spenser*, ed. by Suzuki Mihoko (London: Prentice Hall, 1996), p.62.

⁴⁶³ Spenser, iii.i.8.

causes the individual to become self-obsessed, consumed with outward appearances and unable to see and attend to the inner needs of morals.

Spenser, then, uses a number of different mirror-metaphors to transcribe his exemplary model of morals. In *The Faerie Queene* we find the exemplary mirror which regularly figures the Queen as the model of moral guidance; the mirror of self-love and vanity; the mirror as reflective of history or ancestry; the mirror of Petrarchan love; and the mirror as representative of fakery and doubleness. Spenser's emphasis on his text as the looking-glass – 'in this mirrhour' – aligns his own text with the multiple printed mirror-texts of the period, with mirror-titles finding popularity throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in particular. This vogue for the text as a mirror, whether in title or in form and content, can be traced throughout Shakespeare's works. In particular, in *The Rape of Lucrece*, we find a close correlation with Spenser's text as 'mirrhour': 'For princes are the glass, the school, the book, / Where subjects' eyes do learn, do read, do look'.⁴⁶⁴ Just as Ophelia declares Hamlet the 'glass of fashion', and Spenser describes his text and his monarch as the 'mirrhour' for ordinary citizens to learn from, so here the prince is the looking-glass, and text, the object and subject through which subjectivity is 'made', constructed, learned and imposed upon the individual.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶⁴ Shakespeare, 'The Rape of Lucrece', stanza 88.

⁴⁶⁵ Examples of the mirror as the exemplary individual can be found elsewhere in Shakespeare's works: In *King Henry VI: II* Oxford describes John of Gaunt, commenting that his 'wisdom was a mirror to the wisest (III.iii) and *King Henry VI: II* Talbot refers to Salisbury as a 'mirror for all martial men' (I.iv). In two further history plays, the mirror metaphor is used again to indicate an exemplary glass:

All the youth of England are on fire [...] Following the mirror of all Christian kings (Henry V, Prologue to Act 2)
and in *Henry VIII*

This duke as much

They love and dote on; call him bounteous Buckingham, The mirror of all courtesy (II.i).

Shakespeare and Seeming

The exemplary mirrors we have seen thus far, offer the traditional emblems in mirror discourse - vanity, self-love, transience and death, pointing to the outward example, and suggesting inwardness (a sense of self and self-knowledge), implying it and directing individuals towards it, encouraging them to engage with it. This section shows examples from *Hamlet* and *Richard II* which illustrate their explicit engagement in inwardness, something which Shuger argues against but which these examples confirm. Where previously the exemplary mirror implied the notion of inwardness or seeking the self, such as those examples seen in Drayton, Shakespeare's sonnet, or the exemplary mirrors of Rankins and the anonymous author, here we find Richard and Hamlet explicitly using the external image to investigate and express the inward. In *Richard II*, in a moment of dire personal crisis, Richard decides that there is only one way to discern his state: 'Let it command a mirror hither straight, / that it may show me what a face I have / Since it is bankrupt of his majesty.'⁴⁶⁶ The mirror is brought to him and he examines himself:

Give me that glass, and therein will I read.
No deeper wrinkles yet? Hath sorrow struck
So many blows upon this face of mine
And made no deeper wounds? O flatt'ring glass,
Like to my followers in prosperity,
Thou dost beguile me. Was this the face
That every day under his household roof
Did keep ten thousand men? Was this the face
That like the sun did make beholders wink?

...

A brittle glory shineth in this face;
As brittle as the glory is the face,
[Dashes the glass against the ground]
For there it is, crack'd in an hundred shivers.

⁴⁶⁶ Shakespeare, *Richard II*, IV.i.276-289.

Richard seeks evidence of his situation in the mirror. He states that his face is ‘bankrupt of his majesty’ and so his face and ‘the king’ seem quite separate – Richard recognises his exemplary monarchical ‘other’, realising that it is usually reflected in his face. His separation of physicality from kingliness may suggest the notion of the king’s two bodies: the actual body natural and the spiritual body that forms the body politic. To Richard, these essential regal elements now seem quite detached and the absence of the magisterial glow should be all too apparent in the mirror. Yet, it is not. His ‘bankrupt’ face should show the emptiness of him, it should illustrate the mark of his Kingly collapse, but when he looks in the mirror, he finds he has nothing to show for this change. There is no evidence of the stresses and strains, no mark upon his face. He expects to find more wrinkles, more scars, more proof of the trauma he has suffered. He feels that the mirror ‘beguiles’ him, it deceives him. It does not show him what he expects to see. It is merely a specular illusion and he cannot trust its reflection. His opinion of what his face ought to look like compared with what it appears to look like in the mirror, poses the question of ‘reality’ versus ‘imagined reality’, the latter appearing to have more authority. Richard expects the mirror to present his imagined reality – the mirror should reflect his inner turmoil and show the injuries his pride has sustained, but for Richard it does not. The dilemma of that which ‘passes show’ for Richard’s is that when he commands a mirror be brought to him, it is because he expects to find his internal struggle wrought in his features, the marks of his distress upon his face.⁴⁶⁷ The mirror of Richard’s face is no longer exemplary – he does not find the visage of a king, and neither does he find the countenance of a distressed monarch. Richard here

⁴⁶⁷ Shakespeare, *Richard II*, IV.i..

marks out the external exemplary mirror of his kingliness, and distinguishes it from his internal self, which he hopes can also be found on the surface of the mirror, shown upon his face. However, he finds nothing, illustrating that while the exemplary mirror can allude to the internal, and invoke it, it cannot display it. The disparity between truth and reality is also made apparent in *The Winter's Tale* where Leontes remarks of those 'making practised smiles, / As in a looking glass' which reminds us that the mirror as a bearer of truth is highly unstable since it enables the individual to 'fashion', to 'make' a self. It is associated directly with the counterfeit, and is a primary aid in 'fashioning a gentleman'.⁴⁶⁸

As we saw in the previous sections, Spenser's Queen's body becomes the example, providing a guide for others to aspire to, and signalling her association with a number of attributes. However, none of these connotations tells us anything personal about the Queen – they are all conventional images chosen to portray particular meanings. Hamlet explores the problems inherent in these types of exemplary mirror, addressing the issue of 'seeming' in an attempt to explain why the 'customary suits of solemn black' are not capable of revealing or describing his true feelings of grief:

Seems, madam?...I know not seems.
Tis not alone my inky cloak good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspirations of forc'd breath,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,
That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,
For they are actions that a man might play;
But I have that within that passes show,
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁸ Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, I.ii.19-20.

⁴⁶⁹ Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, I.ii.77-86.

Hamlet rejects the notion of ‘seeming’, of appearance. His outward appearance, his behaviours and clothing cannot be taken to mean anything. These things are conventional markers, understood by society, as signs of grief.⁴⁷⁰ However, none of these can properly project the truth of the situation. These are culturally decided markers – they can be acted, played, and therefore cannot truly represent the inner turmoil of the bereaved. Using ‘seem’ three times in the speech, Hamlet reminds us of the ambiguity of the outward, of what it presented to us. What is internal cannot truly be displayed for the viewer to witness – it ‘passes show’. The internal cannot be revealed to anyone but the person who experiences it. This suggests that interiority is personal, entirely individual, and something that is incapable of being translated into any sensible images or words. Emotions are the untranslatable ‘invisible’ individual entity – they are that which cannot be acted, nor even accurately described without relying on existing linguistic convention. Hamlet’s principal concern, John Russell argues, is that ‘terrible disjunction between the smooth surface of social behaviour and the rapacious depths of private intent’, a disjunction which Russell claims Hamlet rejects so that ‘in his instance, outward behaviour will be as a glass leading directly and without distortion to the inward man himself’.⁴⁷¹ Although I agree that Hamlet separates out ‘seeming’ and ‘true’ inwardness, I would argue that, rather than his behaviour creating a ‘mirror’ for the inner man, the source of Hamlet’s distress in this instance actually stems directly from this disjunction – a disjunction which prevents him from showing ‘that within’, that ‘which passes show’. We have seen that Hamlet stands as an exemplary mirror,

⁴⁷⁰ John Russell argues that in Hamlet’s actions here, ‘no hypocritical discordance exists between his surface show and his deep, abiding impulse. As he is in himself, thus does he reveal himself to others’ (John Russell, *Hamlet and Narcissus* (London: Associated University Presses, 1995) p.174.

⁴⁷¹ Russell, p.175.

and while his discussion with Ophelia shows that he understands the deliberate formation of other selves, the passage above reveals that Hamlet is conscious of the fact that the exemplary mirror cannot reveal true inwardness.

Hamlet makes a clear delineation between what is 'real' and what is 'show'. The outward, the external, can always be created with clothing, behaviours, expressions, that which can be 'made', and that can be taken to have or to hold specific meanings. However, these can only 'seem' because their meanings are culturally decided and so impose those connotations. These are 'trappings' and 'suits'. The outward is false, fake and made. The behaviours of the players are, in part, a tool of deceit – since they are 'suits' which can be put on where necessary. Outward shows are not trustworthy or valued – the innermost thoughts are the truth which must be given full attention.

However, despite this, later on Hamlet is determined to show Gertrude the 'inmost part' of her. In this exchange, the mirror takes on a slightly less literal function:

Ham: Come, come, and sit you down, you shall not budge.
You go not till I set you up a glass
Where you may see the inmost part of you
Gert: What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me? (III.iv.17-20)

The Queen does not assume that Hamlet is literally about to fetch her an actual mirror in which to view herself. Instead, she appears to assume his comment refers to a metaphorical mirror and fears for her life – that she does not expect a literal mirror demonstrates the import and mutability of the mirror-metaphor. It begins to demonstrate Hamlet's developing theory of self, since he has already argued that he has 'that within that passes show', experienced emotions that a man cannot play, and

that women paint themselves another face, thus obscuring truth in favour of beauty. Rather than present his mother with a literal mirror and expect her to find some inner truth within, Hamlet uses mirroring as a technique to appeal to the visual, to the senses, and to her own sense of self. Immediately before Hamlet offers Gertrude the mirror, he mirrors his mother's speech patterns:

Gert: Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

Ham: Mother, you have my father much offended.

Gert: Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

Ham: Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue (II.iv.8-11)

Here Hamlet mimics his mother's speech patterns but reverses the meaning to turn the conversation back against her. Hamlet then summons his mother to be seated, repeating her 'come, come' and he promises she shall not leave until he has shown her self to her. When she fears Hamlet will kill her she cries out for help at which point Hamlet kills Polonius. She does not yet understand the mirror and so, having stabbed Polonius, Hamlet continues on his undertaking to reveal to his mother her inner self, showing her two portraits:

Ham: Look upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers
[...] Have you eyes?
...Ha, have you eyes? (III.iv.54-55, 65, 67).

The portrait, considered to be the faithful recording for posterity of the individual, is here marked out as the 'counterfeit'. As depicted by Bailly in his self-portrait, neither the mirror nor the painter can accurately show the true 'self' of the individual. Hamlet then appeals to the visual, imploring Gertrude to see, to gaze upon the reality of what is before her. Finally, building on this plea to sight, Hamlet

builds by entreating Gertrude to pay attention to her senses, all of them, and allow them to work together so that she will 'see' truly.

Ham: What devil was't
That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sense
Could not so mope (III.iv.78-81).

Having made his appeal to the problems of the mirror as a vehicle for personal truth, to the purely mimetic qualities of the paintings, Hamlet finally pleads with Gertrude's senses, repeatedly demanding 'have you eyes?'. Hamlet feels Gertrude must surely have been tricked at blind-man's buff and her sight, her perceptions, have been compromised. Gertrude fails to sense and to judge what is before her and finally Hamlet's beseeching speeches bring Gertrude to self-awareness:

Gert: O Hamlet, speak no more.
Thou turnst my eyes into my very soul
And there I see such black and grained spots (III.iv.89-91).

Hamlet's persistent attempts to force Gertrude to see the truth of the matter, of her self and her behaviour, finally prompt a fully and proper inner vision; Gertrude has been forced to look not out, at portraits, mirrors and other such 'made' images, but to look inward, at her self, at her stained soul. Although Alex Aronson applies his comment to Don John's intentions in *Much Ado About Nothing*, it seems pertinent to Gertrude's predicament:

Sight must be replaced by insight, and imaginative awareness must serve as a necessary substitute for the ocular proof if truth is to be established.⁴⁷²

⁴⁷² Alex Aronson, 'Shakespeare and the Ocular Proof', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 21 (Autumn, 1970) 411-429 (p.413).

Vision then, the eyes, are the true foundation: the mirror can be distorted and altered, the paintings offer a counterfeit mediated by the artist and the sitter, but the senses, finely tuned and followed closely, can guide the individual to proper vision and to an understanding of the self.

Hamlet, having earlier proved himself conversant in the theory of exemplary mirroring, takes his moment with Gertrude as an opportunity to make use of the moral mirror. Hamlet uses the paintings as exemplary mirrors in order to force Gertrude's sense of inwardness, and her conscience. Hamlet uses the outward image to force the inward moment.

Spenser's proem five of book six pulls together the key themes surrounding the exemplary mirror, associating virtue with inwardness, reflections with the fake, and danger with the external. Virtue is not an attribute which may be displayed in the outward but which resides in the innermost recesses of the mind. There is much that is pleasing to the eye, which is 'fashion'd' knowingly to delight, but this must be approached with care if the individual is to avoid the pitfalls of such falseness and retain their inner virtue. The stanza which immediately follows this one returns to using the mirror as a positive emblem:

But where shall I in all Antiquity
So faire a patterne finde, where may be seene
The goodly praise of Princely curtesie,
As in your selfe, O souraine Lady Queene,
In whose pure minde, as in a mirrour sheene,
It shoves, and with her brightnesse doth inflame
The eyes of all, which thereon fixed beene;
But meriteth indeede an higher name:
Yet so from low to high vplifted is your name⁴⁷³

⁴⁷³ Spenser, vi.proem6.

The narrator, having realised that he must look inward for moral guidance, struggles to imagine a better example than his Queen. Reconfiguring the metaphor of the mirror, the language returns to focus on previously implied terms, emphasizing purity, brightness and the exemplary image. Keeping the attention on the theme of inwardness and moral virtue, the attribute of purity becomes associated with the mirror, perhaps recalling the 'speculum sine macula' or, the 'mirror without stain', and guiding the reader away from the mirror that fools, tricks and blinds the viewer who cannot or will not construe its reflection. The mirror here is the exemplary mirror, the 'glass of fashion' as Ophelia terms it and there are many such examples to be found throughout Shakespeare's works.

The exemplary mirror is used in a range of different ways, offering both positive and negative examples. As Shuger argues, it can be a generic example, pointing to an emblematic image that represents a particular vice or virtue. However, it can also be specific, pointing to a particular period in an individual's life, for example their past, lineage or heritage. The exemplary mirror, in these forms, encourages the viewer to look at the example and reflect on their own self, and how they measure up by comparison. However, although the exemplary mirror clearly *does* have an involvement with self and self-knowledge, it is unable to express or display the interior, or internal self.

Multiplying the Gaze

The exemplary mirror's reflection is often aimed at many people, yet, its moral lesson is unambiguous and clear, and it encourages the individual to look inwards, to look at themselves and at the example. It must not be considered in the same terms as an ordinary, plane mirror into which the viewer looks and sees a reflection. Rather than the individual looking in the mirror to find their own reflection, the exemplary mirror intends to show the image of an 'other', which points the individual in the direction of self-assessment. However, the mirror's capacity to replicate affords the viewer multiple viewpoints and, while the mirror was used in the Renaissance as an exemplary metaphor, its powers to multiply were also put to artistic and literary use. The mirror, depending on where it is situated, angled, or how many mirrors are placed opposite each other, can radically change the viewpoint of the beholder. For example, when one mirror is placed opposite another, the image in it will be reflected recursively; when a mirror is angled, the reflection can exclude or include certain aspects of the view before it, thus redirecting the gaze according to the positioning of the mirror. This multi-directional reflection was not, then, aimed at a singular 'other' or viewpoint, and this allowed for alternative modes of self that were less driven by external factors and pressures.

This chapter will concentrate on women's use of the mirror, analysing how women manage its metaphorical implications which often place them as subordinate,

and subject to the power of the male gaze. Women must use the mirror to negotiate the gaze and create a 'self'. I will compare these to the self-portrait of Johannes Gump in which he takes advantage of the features of the mirror in order to challenge ideas about truth, reality, and simulacra in relation to self, and Sir John Davies's *Nosce Teipsum* which further examines notions of mirroring as related to selfhood. I argue that this contrast, set in comparison to the women's portraits, will show that the male artist is more free to engage in a dialogue with the mirror and notions of representation since he is largely unencumbered by the negative associations of the mirror with pride and vanity. Female artists who represent themselves are hampered by the mirror's classic, symbolic associations with women which regularly portrays them in an unfavourable light.

The mirror allows the individual to see in new and different ways: it deflects the gaze, redirects it and can sometimes block the gaze. In the case of the exemplary mirror, it (and its message) was often directed specifically at women, with warnings against vanity and sinfulness: Thomas Salter's *A mirrhor mete for all mothers, matrones, and maidens, intituled the Mirrhor of Modestie* (1579), Robert Greene's *Mamillia, A mirrour or looking-glasse for the ladies of Englande* (1583), *My ladies looking glasse* (1616) by Barnabe Riche, Richard Brathwaite's *The English Gentlewoman* (1631), *A looking-glasse for women, or, A spie for pride: shewing the unlawfulness of any outward adorning* by T. H. (1644) or *A looking-glasse for good vvomen, held forth by way of counsell and advice to such of that sex and quality* written in 1645 by John Brinsley. The majority of these texts offered guidance to young women in how best to dress themselves, fix their hair and make-up, and to

conduct themselves in society.⁴⁷⁴ The typical ‘mirror text’ directed at a female readership used the mirror as a metaphor: the mirror is the place where the woman will find her example, not her flawed real self. The mirror that is used to produce multiple images, or is angled to redirect the gaze, transformed from its associations with pride and vanity, simultaneously allowed women to circumvent the male gaze, which flowed freely upon them, and allowed them to gaze back.

The changing landscape of Renaissance mirror technology may have played its part in the ways in which the early modern individuals began to see, and to see themselves. Certainly, the reflections offered in small convex or concave mirrors were very different to those seen in larger flat glass mirrors – as Rayna Kalas notes, ‘the material composition of the mirror, be it steel or glass, was a matter of significance to the mirror metaphor’ and the ‘attention in Renaissance texts to the material specificity of the metaphor is a response to innovations in glassmaking, specifically the innovation of the crystal glass’.⁴⁷⁵ This potential shift is reflected in Lucien Febvre’s comment that

The sixteenth century did not see first: it heard and smelled, it sniffed the air and caught sounds. It was only later, as the seventeenth century was approaching, that it seriously and actively became engaged in geometry, focusing attention on the world of forms with Kepler (1571-1630) and Desargues of Lyons (1593-1662). It was then that *vision* was unleashed in the world of science as it was in the world of physical sensations, and the world of beauty as well.⁴⁷⁶

While Febvre argues that the sixteenth century was not entirely involved in the problems of vision until much later, I argue that that the impact of the growing

⁴⁷⁴ All authors and dates of these texts are quoted as in Early English Books Online (EEBO). Some titles have been shortened where appropriate.

⁴⁷⁵ Kalas, p.106. Kalas claims that ‘innovations in glassmaking seem to have revealed...a synthesis of technical and poetic invention across a wide range of discourses’ (p.107).

⁴⁷⁶ Lucien Febvre, *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century: The Religion of Rabelais*, trans. by Beatrice Gottlieb (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), p.432.

number of experiments, solutions and discoveries cannot be ignored and may go some way towards producing an environment and language of vision that was rapidly developing long before the late sixteenth century.⁴⁷⁷ In chapter one, we saw images by Jan Brueghel (1617, figure one) and Georges de La Tour (1621, figure two) which showed spectacles in the first and a range of optical instruments including a mirror and telescope in the second, and in chapter two Thomas Elyot's *Dictionary* of 1538 yielded such examples as 'specularia', to mean spectacles, and 'specularis', referring to a tool to aid vision During the seventeenth century. Chapter two also discussed perspective, the very foundation of which is vision, which was being developed and used by artists such as Brunelleschi and Alberti in the 1400s. These examples indicate a period far more intrigued and aware of vision than Febvre's account would suggest. Later, Johannes Kepler presented the correct description of how spectacles functioned (1604),⁴⁷⁸ Hans Lippershey fashioned an early form of the telescope (1608); Galileo Galilei used this telescope to survey the stars of the night sky (1609); Pierre de Fermat's principle of least time was published (1622); Snell's law was published by Descartes (1637); and Isaac Newton's *Opticks* (1704) appeared. The reach of visual theory can only have been extended and confirmed by these advances

⁴⁷⁷ David Lindberg claims that artists, specifically, were interested in 'visual theory in original and creative ways' but often 'rarely deviated from the fundamentals of medieval theory' so that 'the traditional framework...remained basically intact until early in the seventeenth century' - see Lindberg's eighth chapter 'Artists and Anatomists of the Renaissance', pp.147-177 in David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press).

⁴⁷⁸ Lindberg argues that Kepler's solution was not revolutionary but rather emerges from the medieval tradition: 'his theory of vision was not anticipated by medieval scholars; nor did he formulate his theory out of reaction of, or as a repudiation of, the medieval achievement'. Instead, 'Kepler presented a new solution (but not a new kind of solution) to a medieval problem, defined some six hundred years earlier by Alhacen (Lindberg, p.208). However, Vasco Ronchi has entire chapter entitled 'The Basis of Seventeenth Century Optics' which positions the works of the Medieval period as a necessary and useful base on which the optics of the seventeenth century is founded - see pp.24-66 in Vasco Ronchi, *Optics: The Science of Vision* (New York: Dover, 1991).

so that the ‘world of forms’ became ever more engaging and intriguing to artists and writers of the period.

While Febvre cites Kepler’s later interests in geometry as a starting point for ocularcentrism, it seems that there was, during the sixteenth and seventeenth century, a range of different discoveries and developments in mirror and glass technology, as well as a better understanding of how these worked and could be used. This combination, considered in conjunction with the examples this thesis has presented so far, seems to have led to a particularly intense focus on seeing during this period – not only on looking, but on different ways to see, unusual angles, viewpoints and methods of seeing and altering what it was possible to see. However, I argue that though the technologies and theories were constantly developing, the mirror continued to be framed in a dialogue of sin, death, vanity and pride, and is regularly combined with themes and language that recall the words of St. Paul.

This chapter will concentrate on the different ways of seeing and the means of influencing vision that the mirror offers, examining the connection between technology and the arts and showing how these mechanisms both limit and allow for methods of self-representation. Medusa’s story elucidates a number of ideas that are of importance to the themes of women’s mirroring and mirror manipulation that inform this chapter. Central to the myth and to Medusa’s fate are the indirect gaze, which allows for her defeat as it alters the trajectory of her deathly gaze, and the negotiation of the duplication that the mirror offers. Medusa’s story is centred on *not* seeing and *not* looking, both of which permit the survival of those who meet her and manage to avoid her deathly gaze. As women artists produce ‘copies’ of themselves by means of self-portrait, they become the mediators between the real and the fake, a

position that allows them the opportunity to alter the gaze to which they find themselves subject. The female artist who wishes to portray herself must also follow the same path as Medusa in order to navigate the gaze.



Figure fourteen: Francesco Maffei, *Perseus Cuts the Medusa's Head Off* (c.1650), Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice⁴⁷⁹

Medusa and the Gaze

⁴⁷⁹ Francesco Maffei, *Perseus Cuts the Medusa's Head Off* (c.1650), Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, *Web Gallery of Art*, < <http://www.wga.hu/index1.html> > [accessed 22 May 2009].

The mirror's power to negate and destroy the power of the original object or person placed before it is played out in the tale of Medusa.⁴⁸⁰ In Ovid's retelling Perseus battles the snake-haired Gorgon on the instruction that he must kill her. Armed with sword and shield Perseus negotiates this difficult task by using the shield as his mirror.⁴⁸¹ Unable to look directly at her, Perseus looks at the reflection in his shield and directs his sword accordingly. For both Perseus and Medusa the mirror allows for her slaughter. The image of Medusa is concerned with *not* looking since her dangerous gaze prevents onlookers from observing her directly, and the mirror that the shield provides allows the viewer to divert the Gorgon's stare.

Francesco Maffei's portrayal of the moment at which Perseus cut off Medusa's head illustrates the importance of both looking and not looking, seeing and not seeing. In his painting, none of the participants looks at any of the others – each person's gaze is directed away into the pictorial space. The only character who sees is Medusa, for whom seeing is the fatal blow that Perseus forces with the use of the mirror, while Perseus looks at the reflection in order to see how best to direct his sword.

Tobin Siebers examines the complexities of the mirror and Medusa's gaze, arguing that

⁴⁸⁰ We have already seen the mirror's destructive and lethal powers in Ovid –in the tale of Narcissus where the mirror-pool became the cause and site of his death.

⁴⁸¹ The story of Medusa is extremely popular and has been written and re-written many times over. The Gorgon appears in Homer's *The Iliad* (c.750-725 B.C.E) where, in book 5, Athena prepares herself for battle by claiming Medusa's power and, in book 11, Agamemnon uses the image of Medusa as he readies himself. She features frequently in texts of the medieval and early modern period – for example, in Dante Alighieri's *Inferno* (c.1310-1314), Petrarch's *Rime Sparse*, no 197 (c.1327-1374), Christine de Pizan's *The Book of the City of Ladies* of 1405, 'Perseus, or War' in *The Wisdom of the Ancients* (1609) by Francis Bacon, and 'The Statue of Medusa' (1616) by William Drummond. See *The Medusa Reader*, ed. by Marjorie Garber and Nancy J. Vickers (New York & London: Routledge, 2003) in which Garber and Vickers give comprehensive coverage of the versions of the Medusa myth from Homer to Versace.

The mirror of Medusa...both represents and transforms the monstrous Gorgon. On one hand, the mirror of Medusa duplicates the Gorgon. On the other hand, the mirror seems to distort Medusa's image, turning her reflection against her. The mirror of Medusa always produces a baffling symmetry; baffling because the mirror image of Medusa, which should signify her multiplication and preservation, signifies instead the uncanny harbinger of her death...The mirror of Medusa, it seems, portrays the Gorgon as narcissistic.⁴⁸²

The mirror of Medusa is 'baffling' perhaps because self-replication is expected to preserve the self but, in Medusa's case, it signals her own untimely death, so that she becomes emblematic of the dangers of mirroring the self. Just as Narcissus came to know himself in the 'mirror' of the water, so does Medusa and, for each of them, the faithful reflection of their gaze is fatal. To replicate the self and greet the self face-to-face represents the ultimate risk to the individual. The mirror again mediates between the real (the fatal gaze of the gorgon) and the safe (her mirror image). The 'mirror' renders Medusa suitable for viewing, removing the dangers associated with looking at her. Perseus uses the mirror to force a conquest and conclude the battle – the mirror is the only means by which he can overcome the power of Medusa's gaze and place her as the object. By using the shield as his mirror, Perseus forces Medusa to 'join the spectators [of] herself'.⁴⁸³ The shield, as a mirror, is ultimately ineffective since it is incapable of providing a true or clear reflection and it is this fact that allows Perseus to look safely at the Gorgon. In a discussion of Queen Elizabeth in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, Julia M. Walker notes that 'Spenser...gives us an epic that is closer to a steel than a crystal glass. Like the shield of Perseus, however, the text itself is a mediating mirror. As we look into the mirror of the text, we may see a reflection of the queen as she looks; but what we see

⁴⁸² Tobin Siebers, *The Mirror of Medusa* (New Zealand: Cyber Editions, 2000), p.41.

⁴⁸³ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 1972), p.50.

is not the image that meets Elizabeth's eyes, nor can we meet the direct force of her glance even as we look into the same mirrors'.⁴⁸⁴ What Walker picks out here is the separation between what Perseus sees and what Medusa sees – to Perseus the 'mirror' that his shield becomes is simply the facilitator to the task at hand; but what Medusa sees is the full horror of her transformation into a Gorgon, her new self.

Just as the Gorgon's mirror both duplicates her and turns her reflection against her, so women artists must work against falling into this trap. The mirror is, for Medusa, the mediator between the real and the reflection. In Medusa's case, this mirror proves fatal but for female painters, this space between the real and the 'copy' may offer a means of negotiating the gaze to which they are often subjected, as in the act of creating a self-portrait, they have complete control over the creation of the 'copy'. The woman can mediate between the reality of herself, and the simulacra she creates.

The notion of the indirect reflection becomes, however, a useful concept for the woman and her mirror. As we have seen, the trick to Perseus's heroic slaying of Medusa is to view her indirectly, by way of reflection in his shield. The mirror's surface reflects back an image which is safe and which negates the powerful properties of the Gorgon's stare. In this case, Perseus negotiates Medusa's reversal of the male gaze via indirect reflection. Whereas men are usually free to gaze upon the body of the woman, Medusa cannot be looked at and instead she controls the 'look'. Only the 'mirror' can harness and neutralize the power of her eyes. Thus the indirect look, such as Perseus's, can alter the norms of the gaze.

⁴⁸⁴ Julia M. Walker, *Medusa's Mirrors: Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, and the Metamorphosis of the Female Self* (Cranbury, NJ & London: Associated University Presses), p.70).

Commonly men gaze at women; the woman is made subject and object. However, these women are often painted looking at themselves in the mirror. As Berger points out, this labelling of the woman with looking-glass as 'vanity' both condemns the female and simultaneously makes her join the viewers of herself.⁴⁸⁵ Furthermore, the mirror can be a means for the woman to direct her gaze at herself, privately. If the mirror is angled appropriately to exclude the [male] viewer from her mirror-moment then the woman leaves her body free to be subjected to the gaze while simultaneously making herself unavailable. The mirror, then is allied with the eye – it affords these women the opportunity of solitude, an opportunity to avoid prying eyes and to reverse the norms of the gaze, so that the woman might control the look. The mirror which Medusa faces provides the reflection which defeats her power and renders her subject to the male gaze once more. The mirror in this case becomes a tool for subordination, forcing the female to submit to the male's power.

The predominant themes in literature produced for women were warning, instruction and direction. As Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus observe, from the 'pulpit and the printing press, Renaissance Englishwomen were enjoined to avoid contentious discourse and persuaded that silence enhanced their femininity.⁴⁸⁶ Not only was this a problem for women in every-day life as it limited virtually every aspect of their behaviour and modes of expression, but it problematised the nature of any work women chose to produce. Women often had no option but to create their art of literature within the constraints imposed by a patriarchal society. The works of female artists such as Sofonisba Anguissola,

⁴⁸⁵ Berger, p.433.

⁴⁸⁶ Katherine Usher Henderson & Barbara F. McManus, *Half Humankind: Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Women in England 1540-1640* (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), p.54.

considered within this context, illustrate that ‘what was a fundamental problem for the Renaissance female artist’ was ‘the differentiation of herself as artist (the subject position) from her self as trope and theme for the male artist (the object position).⁴⁸⁷

Mirroring the Gaze

Medusa’s story is just one of the myths and stories in which the mirror has negative connotations and dire consequences. The problem of the mirror for the woman appears to emerge, in part, from its classical associations with pride and vanity which are presumed to be largely female qualities. Elements of Medusa’s story can be found in the literature of the period and, while John Donne’s poetry often appears to represent the woman merely as an object of male desire, in ‘A Valediction of my Name, in the Window’ we find an exploration which celebrates the gaze of the woman on himself.

‘A Valediction of my Name, in the Window’ sees Donne’s speaker bidding farewell to a woman as he must travel. Having etched his name on the glass of her window, he can now only hope that she will look at it and remember him, keep him in her heart. There is nothing explicit in the poem to tell the reader that this woman is the speaker’s lover, partner or wife: indeed, the love could be entirely unrequited or unnoticed as yet.⁴⁸⁸ However, the poem does detail a deep and intense love for the woman, and a sense of his complete devotion to her.

⁴⁸⁷ Mary D. Garrard, ‘Here’s Looking at Me: Sofonisba Anguissola and the Problem of the Woman Artist’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 47 (1994) 556-622 (p.556).

⁴⁸⁸ It has been argued that the woman in ‘A Valediction of my Name’ could be his wife, Ann More, and this “‘Amor Vincit Omnia’: Donne and the Limits of Ambiguity”, David Novarr argues that the repeated use of ‘more’ could suggest Ann More as the woman addressed. See David Novarr, “‘Amor Vincit Omnia’: Donne and the Limits of Ambiguity”, *The Modern Language Review* 82 (1987) 286-292 (p.288).

In the opening stanza Donne's speaker proclaims his act of permanence, etching his name on the window. This act, he claims, 'doth contribute my firmness to this glass' (l.2).⁴⁸⁹ That his name is now embedded in the fabric of the glass gives him both confirmation of his existence and a sense of fixity in the world. This concern with creating a sense of permanence is a key issue in this chapter's focus on how the mirror contributes to creating versions of the self. Donne's speaker's attempt at trapping his sense of self on the surface of the glass finds its parallel in Medusa's story: when her image is captured on the surface of the mirror, it allows for her demise. Similarly, the poem's speaker finds that creating a stable, enduring self is difficult. The substance he has chosen to mark his place upon is both transparent and extremely fragile, indicating that even this sense of permanence is limited and troubled. In fact, the only way that his statement will truly have value is if his lady looks upon it:

Thine eye will give it price enough, to mock
The diamonds of either rock (l.5-6).

Once she sees it, looks at it, then it will truly have a lasting impression, beyond the delicate and vulnerable object upon which it has been etched. Donne's poem centres on the very fabric of the glass and, using its specific properties to convey his message, he engages with the technology, turning it into the central poetic conceit that drives the poem. The technology of the material that is both transparent and reflective is Donne's principal concern which highlights that Shuger's account, as discussed in chapter three, is too reductive and that the scope for mirroring is therefore far greater than her essay suggests.

⁴⁸⁹ John Donne, *The Complete English Poems* ed. by A. J. Smith (London: Penguin, 1996), p.87.

Having created an image of himself on the glass, in the shape of his name, he then focuses in the second stanza on sight and seeing. He compares himself to a pane of glass “‘Tis much that glass should be / As all-confession, and through-shine as I’ (l.7-8), concentrating on the clarity and transparency of the window in order to convey the purity and intensity of his unconcealed emotion. The suggestion is that the glass can hope to be as ‘all-confession’ as he is – he will hide nothing and reveal to her everything of himself. However, he suggests that in the glass she doesn’t see him but only her own reflection, “‘Tis more that it shows thee to thee / And clear reflects thee to thine eye’ (l.9-10). This can be undone by ‘love’s magic’ where she sees him and he *is* her (Here you see me, and I am you (l.12). The speaker creates his self image in his own idea of how it should appear to others, but this is not how it is perceived. Again, we see a struggle that is particular to the dilemma created in any attempt to generate self in a visual sense – other viewers can and will interpret it differently, or simply not see it at all. This problem is, as I shall show in the next section, part of the challenge faced by female artists who make attempts at their own image production.

The poem’s focus on permanence is continued throughout, with stanza three arguing that ‘no one point, nor dash’ of his name ‘The showers and tempests can outwash’ (l.13, l.15), and stanzas four and five focusing on the effects of passing time on his ‘ruinous anatomy’. He figures the etched name as a memento mori of his body and, in a verse that combines anatomical with architectural imagery, places the woman as the centre of himself, indicating that only with her does he truly survive, live, grow and learn.

Then, as all my souls be
Emparadised in you, (in whom alone

I understand, and grow and see,
The rafters of my body, bone
Being still with you, the muscle, sinew, and vein,
Which tile this house, will come again. (l.25-30)

The language of stanza five is particularly physical and anatomical, combining 'body', 'bone', 'sinew' and 'vein', with 'rafters', 'tile', and 'house'. His body will be restructured with her and will transform from the 'ragged body...ruinous anatomy' of the previous stanza. The use of 'emparadised' combined with the closing phrase of 'will come again' connotes a sense of the resurrection, while the lines 'Emparadised in you, (in whom alone / I understand, and grow, and see' (l.26-27) gives the sense of a man made in God's image who lives his life through God's teachings. Thus, Donne's speaker elevates the woman to the God-like figure in whom he finds salvation.

Later stanzas lament the inadequacy of the situation; 'But glass and lines must be / No means our firm substantial love to keep' (l.61-62), and remind the lady that when he scratched his name into the glass 'When love and grief their exaltation had, / No door 'gainst this name's influence shut' (l.38-39). His act of etching his name was carried out at the absolute peak of his emotions and therefore, while he is away, looking upon his name will make her 'As much more loving, as more sad' (l.40). The poem is centred around the sight of his name on the window. He urges the woman to look at it and uses the reflective and transparent qualities of the glass, and combines this with the power of vision, without which his task is fruitless. Ultimately, 'the window becomes a visual symbol of their unity'.⁴⁹⁰ This poem pays attention to the role of the gaze which, in the speaker's case, is vital. Without the

⁴⁹⁰ G. R. Wilson, Jr., 'The Interplay of Perception and Reflection: Mirror Imagery in Donne's Poetry', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 9 (1969), 107-121 (p.117).

lady gazing upon his name etched in the glass, he no longer exists and all sense of permanence is lost. As with the Medusa, if the power of the gaze is removed, then death will follow.

In this poem the gaze is specifically directed between the woman and his name. N. H. Keeble argues that the inscribed name is evidence of the speaker's intense privacy as he 'scratched something on a pane of glass...not, as in Puttenham, in 'a place of common resort' for 'euery man' to see but in a private house and for one person's eyes'.⁴⁹¹ The gaze here is intended to be that of the lady looking upon the symbol of her lover. The male speaker encourages and begs the woman to direct her gaze towards his representation of himself, in order that she sees in it the intensity of his love and devotion for her. The intensity of it is increased by his choice of material – rather than use ink on paper, which could easily be destroyed as these are disposable items, the speaker has used diamond on glass to create an indestructible record for posterity. His inscription cannot be removed or altered and will last as long as the pane of glass is not shattered. 'A Valediction of my Name' is an example of the 'lyric poem spoken by a man to articulate and integrate the woman's point of view' in which the reflective, fragile and transparent properties of glass are explored and employed to direct the gaze.⁴⁹²

While female artists will face the same problems as Donne's speaker in their search for a sense of legitimacy and permanence of self, there are yet more challenges associated with self-imaging; primarily, the largely negative connotations that accompany the use of the mirror. James Shirley's (1596-1666) short poem 'To a

⁴⁹¹ N. H. Keeble, 'To "Build in Sonnets Pretty Rooms?": Donne and the Renaissance Love Lyric' in *Donne and the Resources of Kind* ed. by A.D Cousins & Damian Grace (New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002), pp. 71-86 (p.75).

⁴⁹² Ilona Bell, 'The Role of the Lady in Donne's Songs and Sonnets', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 23 (1983) 113-129 (p.123).

Lady Upon a Looking-Glass Sent' (1646) concentrates on the mirror's association with self-love and pride: its speaker advises the young lady on the appropriate use for the mirror that has been gifted to her.⁴⁹³ He tells her that the mirror will 'present your beauty to your eye' (l.2), perhaps suggesting that until now she was unaware of her physical beauty. She is urged to consider this beauty as something that can be used to help her better herself and the speaker warns her against allowing the mirror to generate pride: 'think that face was meant / to dress another by' (l.4). Instead, the mirror is a tool for comparison – the viewer must use the mirror to determine whether or not her 'inward beauty' matches with her 'outward grace'. She must endeavour to make herself 'fair in soule as well as face' (l.10). Acknowledging the potential for vanity, the speaker points to the mirror's alternative uses: it is not just for gazing at one's own beauty but can be a practical tool for self-improvement. The mirror is not something to be feared but it is an object that can offer the woman assistance in finding her inner self and matching it to her external beauty. The mirror is the tool for showing the inward self so that the woman who gazes upon her soul can beautify herself so that she is as inwardly perfect as she is outwardly so.

The didactic theme of Shirley's poem encompasses, in part, the sense of trepidation surrounding women and mirrors. The woman requires proper direction in order for her to make appropriate use of the mirror and thus avoid its potential pitfalls. Without this instruction, the woman will fall victim to the sins of vanity, pride and self-love. A woman's most intimate moment, alone with her mirror, is interrupted. She may not gaze on herself without guidance, and thus even her personal, private sphere is not her own. As Donne's and Shirley's poems illustrate,

⁴⁹³ James Shirley, 'To A Lady Upon a Looking-Glass Sent' in *Ben Jonson and the Cavalier Poets*, ed. by Hugh Maclean (New York: Norton, 1974), p.193.

the creation of self is fraught with difficulties, particularly so for women, who have to manage and negotiate a series of negative emblems and associations. The regularly developing and advancing mirror technology was not enough to push forward new meanings, metaphors and emblems. While technology allowed writers and artists new ways of exploring themselves and the world around them, the mirror-metaphors they used rarely altered.

Sofonisba Anguissola, daughter of Amilcare Anguissola, was afforded the opportunity of ‘training in humanist studies’, alongside her five similarly talented sisters – they studied topics such as Latin, music and painting.⁴⁹⁴ Anguissola’s father paid for additional professional painting lessons with the Mannerist painter Bernadino Campi and Anguissola later produced a number of works for Philip II of Spain.⁴⁹⁵ In the self-portrait the boundaries between subject and object naturally collapse: an early self-portrait by Anguissola, *Self-Portrait* of 1554, demonstrates these key issues.

⁴⁹⁴ Jo Eldridge Carney, *Renaissance and Reformation 1500-1620* (Connecticut & London: Greenwood Press, 2001), p.14.

⁴⁹⁵ Carney, p.14-15. Julia K. Dabbs describes Anguissola as ‘undoubtedly the most documented and celebrated woman artist of the early modern period’ and notes that ‘her fame was first proclaimed by Giorgio Vasari in his 1568 edition of *Le Vite de’ più eccellenti pittori* even though...[her] career was in its early stages’ (Julia K. Dabbs, *Life Stories of Women Artists, 1550-1800* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), p.107).



Figure fifteen: Sofonisba Anguissola, *Self-Portrait* (1554), Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

Anguissola presents her self but if she is ‘self-fashioning’, her image is not created by means of objects, by presenting wealth or grandeur; the lack of adornment, rather, focuses the viewer’s attention on Sofonisba herself, as the single most important aspect of the portrait.⁴⁹⁶ Her demure appearance shows a careful attempt not to appear showy – she appears ‘pious and decorous’ as society advises.⁴⁹⁷ Her appearance is in accordance with the recommendations to be found in conduct texts such as *The English Gentlewoman* (1631) by Richard Brathwaite. Brathwaite argues that clothing is nothing more than a practical necessity, essential for the human being after Adam and Eve sinned and ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. This sin left all humans subsequently vulnerable to the elements and therefore clothing became necessary but, ‘to glory then in these necessities is to glory in sinne.’⁴⁹⁸ For a woman to have pride in her appearance, in her clothes and in fashions, is to revel in the sins of Adam and Eve. Brathwaite picks at the flimsy fashions of contemporary society:

Was apparell first intended for keeping in naturall heat and keeping out accidentall cold? How comes it then that you wear these thinne Cobweb attires which can neither preserve heat nor repell cold. Of what incurable cold would these Butterfly-habits possess, the wearer were pride sensible of her selfe?...No necessity, but mere vanity’.⁴⁹⁹

Anguissola’s self-portrait shows her dressed appropriately by Brathwaite’s standards as she is covered against the elements to the neck and wrist in plain, practical clothing. Garrard suggests, however, that this is not purely for the purposes of

⁴⁹⁶ Sofonisba Anguissola, *Self-Portrait* (1554), Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, *Web Gallery of Art*, < <http://www.wga.hu/index1.html> > [accessed 22 May 2009].

⁴⁹⁷ Fredrika H. Jacobs notes that the ‘prescriptives for the ideal *gentil-donna* [were] set forth in an ever-increasing number of sixteenth century texts’ including Giovan Giorgio Trissino’s *I Ritratti* (1524), Lodovico Dolce’s *Della institution delle donne* (1554), and Domenico Bruni’s *Difesi delle donne* (1559) – Fredrika H. Jacobs, ‘Woman’s Capacity to Create: The Unusual Case of Sofonisba Anguissola’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 47 (1994) 74-101 (p.75).

⁴⁹⁸ Richard Brathwaite, *The English Gentlewoman* (London, 1631), EEBO, image 25, p.3 [accessed 7 March 2008].

⁴⁹⁹ Brathwaite, image 25, 26, p.3-4.

necessity, for appearing as a proper gentlewoman. Instead, Anguissola is making a deliberate effort at minimising her femininity, at seeking a ‘safe position between “not woman” and “like a man”’, her black clothing, a colour more frequently worn by men, and her lack of adornment to supporting this theory.⁵⁰⁰ In this way, Anguissola manages her image, carefully negotiating herself a space in a society, in a working environment that did not readily admit women – Anguissola ‘transformed the limitations imposed upon her as a woman into an opportunity’.⁵⁰¹ Anguissola’s self-portrait demonstrates ways for a woman to express herself, but also illustrates that the woman who creates a portrait of herself must adhere to a number of societal rules which direct her in the appropriateness of her appearance. More than the simple creation and exploration of the self, the woman’s self-portrait concerns wider issues of her position in society and of the female artist’s place in the early modern environment. In presenting herself to be looked upon, the female artist who painted herself had to negotiate a male-dominated system of looking:

The gaze, then a metaphor for worldliness and virility, made of Renaissance woman an object of public discourse, exposed to scrutiny and framed by the parameters of propriety, display and ‘impression management’. Put simply, why else paint a woman except as an object of display within male discourse?⁵⁰²

As Cheney reminds us ‘humanism...was long in liberating the ‘man-feminine’ from her subordinate status’ and Anguissola uses the ‘outward’ to represent an appropriate ‘inward’.⁵⁰³ In her hand Anguissola holds a small book, the text of which reads,

⁵⁰⁰ Garrard, p.586.

⁵⁰¹ Carney, p.15.

⁵⁰² Patricia Simons, ‘Women in Frames: The Gaze, the Eye, the Profile in Renaissance Portraiture’, *History Workshop*, 25 (1988) 4-30 (p.8).

⁵⁰³ Liana De Girolami Cheney, Alicia Craig Faxon & Kathleen Lucey Russo (eds.), *Self-Portraits by Women Painters* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000) p.28.

‘Sophonisba Anguissola virgo seipsam fecit, 1554’.⁵⁰⁴ Having presented herself in modest attire against a plain background, she uses the text of the book to declare her status as ‘virgo’ – maiden – which may be a ‘conscious reference to the famous woman painter of antiquity called...Marcia by Boccaccio.’⁵⁰⁵ Anguissola’s overall image in her self-portrait is ‘highly determined, constrained and serious, unadorned and stern’ but she has a ‘very impressive gaze...in which humility and self-confidence combine’ to form ‘a distinctive artistic-professional self-image’.⁵⁰⁶

In order to present this image of herself, Anguissola has negotiated a number of potential difficulties that the female will encounter in any interaction with the mirror. The mirror, in writings with mirror-titles, was alternately portrayed as an object of revilement and an object of (potential) glory. In *The Mirrhor of modestie* (1579) by Thomas Salter, the author instructs that there are two types of mirror: one is a ‘Christall Mirrhor...by whiche Maidens now adaies, dooe onely take delight daiely to tricke and trime their tresses’ (the literal mirror), and the other is ‘made of an other maner of matter, and is of mucche more worthe then any Christall Mirrhor’ (the metaphorical or exemplary mirror).⁵⁰⁷ For the woman, the literal mirror is fraught with dangers, and is associated with sin and pride, whereas the metaphorical mirror, often exemplary in flavour and therefore safe, reflects not the individual woman but the ideal at which she should aim. It is the second mirror that is of interest to Salter and to his female reader: ‘for as the one teacheth how to attire the outward bodie, so

⁵⁰⁴ Sylvia Ferino-Pagden & Maria Kusche, *Sophonisba Anguissola: Renaissance Woman* (Washington, D.C.: National Museum of Women in the Arts, 1995), p.19.

⁵⁰⁵ Ferino-Pagden & Kusche, p.18.

⁵⁰⁶ Ferino-Pagden & Kusche, p.18.

⁵⁰⁷ Thomas Salter, *The Mirrhor of modestie* (London, 1579), image 6, right page, image 7, left page [accessed 4 April 2008].

the other guideth to garnishe the inwarde mynde'.⁵⁰⁸ The young woman must be taught how to be virtuous and pure or she will easily fall into pride and sinfulness.⁵⁰⁹ Salter argues that woman need not be taught to read for if she can 'reade and vnderstande the Christian Poetes' she will 'also reade the Lasciuious bookes of Ouide...and of their wicked adulteries and abhominable Fornications'.⁵¹⁰ Women were aligned with 'carnality, weakness and nature, with 'womanishness', while the male was associated with 'spirituality, strength, and mind or reason'.⁵¹¹

Stubbes also comments on the adornment of the female body:

For what a dotage is it (saith hee) to chau~ge thy naturall face which God hath made thee, for a painted one which thou hast made thy self.⁵¹²

One of the key ways for a woman to alter her appearance, through the 'dying and colouring of faces with artificiall colours...is most offensiue to God', and clothing is similarly frowned upon since Stubbes proclaims that it is 'vnpossible to take away pride, except sumptuouse apparell be taken away'.⁵¹³ Stubbes categorises pride and apparel as 'two collaterall Cosins, apparell, and Pride (the Mother and Daughter) which can 'hardlie be dyuorced from the other, without the destructio~ of them

⁵⁰⁸ Salter, image 7, left page.

⁵⁰⁹ Kate Aughterson finds that 'most of the texts were not actually addressed to women, but to men who had responsibility for women, whether as fathers, husbands or brothers' and that 'conduct literature...had a booming market share in early modern England' (p.67). However, Aughterson argues that 'even if filtered through the reading of men', most conduct literature is 'addressed ultimately to women' (p.67). She finds that conduct literature is 'exhortative, claiming certain rules for the public and private behaviour of women' and that 'the content of the exhortation is structure around certain characteristics, described as ideal feminine virtues: chastity, obedience, humility and silence' (p.67). However, while 'it is safe to argue that conduct literature shows us how and what women were asked to be, it does not...tell us what they were' (p.68). Aughterson finds two images of women emerging – the 'picture of women in need of counselling, instructing and leading' and 'accounts of active and successful women struggling with both this ideology and other economic, social and political troubles' (p.69). See *Renaissance Woman: A Sourcebook: Constructions of Femininity in England*, ed. by Kate Aughterson (London & New York: Routledge, 1995). Particularly, see the introduction to chapter three, 'Conduct', pp.67-69.

⁵¹⁰ Salter, image 16, left page.

⁵¹¹ Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (London: Pan Books, 1985) p.63.

⁵¹² Stubbes, image 44, left page.

⁵¹³ Stubbes, image 44, right page.

both'.⁵¹⁴ Hamlet pauses to address this situation with Ophelia, when he discusses truth, love and beauty with her saying, 'I have heard of your paintings well enough, / God hath given you one face, and you make yourself another'.⁵¹⁵ The distinction is drawn between the real and the forged but the suggestion, as with Stubbes, is that it is sinful for her to paint herself, to make herself more beautiful. Ultimately, Hamlet returns to his original point that "'tis not alone [his] inky cloak... that can denote [him] truly', when he claims that the external cannot fully express the internal. The demoniacal portrayal of the adornment of the female via clothes, hairstyles and make-up, begins to hint at the problems facing the female artist; unable to express herself on a personal level, how could she begin to fashion herself on canvas?

The image of 'womanishness' was expressed in the paintings produced of goddesses such as Venus, the goddess of love but also of sexual desire. This woman, born of the sea and not of a union between man and woman, or god and goddess, is the epitome of the fetishised female body.⁵¹⁶ The woman is generally considered the 'object', the 'trope and theme for the male artist and *The Toilet of Venus* (1647-51, hereafter *The Rokeby Venus*) by Velázquez demonstrates the depiction of the woman as object, her body presented to be lusted after and gazed upon.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁴ Stubbes, image 28, right page. It is worth noting that the writings of authors like Stubbes and Salter, in which women are advised to be disinterested in appearance and sumptuous clothing and accessories appears to conflict with ideas of rank, which would suggest that higher ranking women should have expensive, well-made lavish clothing.

⁵¹⁵ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. by Harold Jenkins, (Surrey: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1997), III.i.142-144.

⁵¹⁶ Andrew Dalby, *The Story of Venus* (London: The British Museum Press, 2005) p.43

⁵¹⁷ Garrard, p.556.



Figure sixteen: Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez, *The Toilet of Venus (Rokeby Venus)*, (1647-51), National Gallery, London.

Velázquez's *Venus* presents her back to the viewer, as she lies on her bed facing Cupid and her mirror. Her curves are sensuous, her body fleshy and tantalisingly close to the (presumably male) viewer, she gazes at herself in the mirror and her sumptuous surroundings are reflective of the reputation of the goddess of love.⁵¹⁸ Initially it may appear as if the woman in this painting holds the power: she has chosen to adopt a position in which her back faces the viewer, so that the most intimate parts of her body are hidden from the viewer. Cupid holds the looking-glass before her, mirroring her gaze, so that she can look at herself, thus locking the viewer out of this private moment. The male viewer, then, is left with only his imagination to create what he wants to see. However, although Venus has control over her body as she chooses her pose and therefore chooses what she wants to reveal or conceal, Cupid also has control: he has the power to display whichever part of Venus's body he wishes as the mirror is in his hands. Cupid's participation harnesses and makes 'safe' the sexual power Venus has. Her potentially transgressive and dangerous female body is hidden from prying eyes and the portrait becomes erotic – and therefore acceptable – rather than sexually explicit and unacceptable. Velázquez's painting is illustrative of a power struggle between men and women.

⁵¹⁸ Diego Rodriguez de Silva y Velázquez, *The Toilet of Venus (Rokeby Venus)*, (1647-51), National Gallery, London, *Web Gallery of Art* < <http://www.wga.hu/index1.html> > [accessed 22 May 2009]. The mirror also appears in Velázquez's *Las Meninas* of 1656 (Museo del Prado, Madrid), which depicts the infanta surrounded by her entourage, and includes what appears to be a mirror reflecting the images of the upper bodies of the King and Queen. The King and Queen seems to be standing in a position which is roughly approximate to where the viewer would stand, and Velázquez also includes himself in the image, holding a palette and brush, standing near a large canvas on an easel. The mirror image has caused much speculation. Once again, the 'mirror' in the image is the source of debate and, just as in *The Rokeby Venus* perspective, angling, viewpoint and reality are the points at stake. When a viewer sees this image of the 'mirror' on the wall 'the firm ground of pictorial realism begins to slip away from us' because of one of the 'other puzzling aspects of the picture: the eyes of six of the principal characters of the picture, as well as the eyes in the mirror, are all focused at a point outside the picture, the point at which we, the observers, stand'. This painting, then, is about 'two things, one of which lies outside the picture and the other of which is invisible' (see John R. Searle, "'Las Meninas' and the Paradoxes of Pictorial Representation', *Critical Inquiry*, 6 (1980), 477-488 (p.480)).

Central to this power struggle is the mirror and its reflection, as much debate surrounds the positioning of the mirror in front of the Venus. Velázquez has painted in the mirror a reflection of her face, a somewhat sketchy and indistinct rendering of her features, which appears to look out of the painting to address the viewer. However, some critics have suggested alternative readings of what should be reflected in the mirror, given its position and angle. Andreas Prater addresses this debate:

...Velázquez was aware of the fundamental laws of optics. Precisely because he veils the exact spatial position of the mirror, all attempts to prove that it ought to show her pudenda are obsolete.⁵¹⁹

It seems, however, that the reverse of this statement must be true: it is precisely the spatial ambiguity of the mirror's position that warrants attention and prompts investigation as to what the mirror could or should reflect. The viewer must, of course, accept that Velázquez was conversant with the 'fundamental laws of optics' and therefore I propose that he deliberately *chose* to paint her face as the reflection, whether or not this was the true reflection. Jonathan Brown discusses the painting's controversial reflection:

Velázquez heightens the charged eroticism of the painting...he shows the back of the figure in its entirety, but reveals the front only partially in the mirror. However, he deftly avoids excessive immodesty by arbitrarily altering the mirror image. Had he followed the laws of reflection the mirror would have revealed another part of the anatomy than the face. These qualities produce the impression of a private room...into which a fortunate person has been admitted and granted a rare opportunity to gratify his senses.⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁹ Andreas Prater, *Venus at her Mirror: Velázquez and the Art of Nude Painting* (London & New York: Prestel, 2002) p.24.

⁵²⁰ Jonathan Brown, *Velázquez: Painter and Courtier* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1986) p.182

Brown coyly avoids referring exactly to the portion of the body that he feels the mirror should reveal. Instead he hints that it should reveal ‘another part of the anatomy’.⁵²¹ Certainly the qualities of the painting do suggest a deeply intimate moment but perhaps not quite in the way that Brown suggests. Rather than this ‘fortunate’ person being ‘granted a rare opportunity to gratify his senses’, it seems that the person is really quite unfortunate as although he has been admitted into this ‘private room’, he cannot see anything but the back of the nude woman. Even in the mirror nothing is revealed to him, least of all the part of the ‘anatomy’ which *could* be visible, given the possible position of the mirror. It seems the ‘fortunate person’ has been admitted and then purposely denied the titillating scenes he had hoped for.

John Shearman also analyses this ambiguity closely:

[the mirror’s] inclination has been calculated, with the result that Venus is thought to be studying her own genitals, and it is satisfying – not for prudish reasons – to know that this somewhat reductive account is not true. Velázquez, intentionally or accidentally, has not given us the geometrical information that would allow such a calculation to be made. In particular, the perspective of the mirror eludes us because we cannot see its bottom edge, and since we do not know whether it is square or rectangular, we cannot judge its foreshortening. Furthermore, there is no clue to its inclination to be found in the way Cupid holds the frame because the two hands are placed one on top of the other, as if the turned it on a hinge.⁵²²

It is precisely because of this lack of specific ‘geometrical information’ that we should not attempt to draw a solid conclusion either way. That Velázquez has left this ambiguity leads us necessarily to a tenuous and difficult interpretation of the portrait and what its mirror reflection should contain. It also suggests that perhaps Velázquez fully intended the ambiguity and speculation in order to further heighten

⁵²¹ Brown, p.182.

⁵²² John Shearman, *Only Connect: Art and the Spectator in the Italian Renaissance* (Washington DC: Princeton University Press, 1998) p.227-228.

the eroticism of the portrait. Shearman claims that Venus is ‘thought to be studying her own genitals’: in any interpretation of the painting, this is a precarious suggestion since close examination of the geometry of the scene reveals that the pubic area appears to be blocked largely by the bed clothes and, in any case, her position on the bed is not conducive to such examination.

Venus, the opposite of the Virgin Mary, represents all that is sinful and dangerous about the female and her body. Aside from women such as the Virgin Mary and Venus, the figure of the woman, from the Medieval to the Mannerist period, received mixed portrayal.⁵²³ Boccaccio’s *De mulieribus claris* (*Noble and Famous Women*), dated c. 1361-62, brought together the biographies of some one hundred and six women, including the stories of women such as Eve, Medusa and Venus. However, ‘though Boccaccio had expressed revolutionary ideas for his time, he had still viewed women as subservient to men’.⁵²⁴ Instead, it was in Castiglione’s *The Courtier* (1528) that the woman progressed from nonentity to ‘nobil donna’ where Castiglione frames the woman as ‘a lady of the court...a learned patron of the arts who could participate in intellectual debates, and read and write in Latin and Greek’ so that women were placed ‘on an equal intellectual level [to men]’.⁵²⁵ However, there is a considerable gap between this movement from subservience to equality: Boccaccio’s *Noble and Famous Women* was published in 1361-61, whereas *The Courtier* was first published in 1528 (translated into English by Sir Thomas Hoby in 1561), and so ‘the Renaissance notion of woman depended on the ancient perception and definition of *femina* as ‘inferior male’ and ‘this long-lived notion of female

⁵²³ Cheney et al., divide the Renaissance ‘style’ into the 1400s to the 1500s. The 1500s are then divided into ‘High Renaissance (1500-1520) and Mannerism (1520-95)’(Cheney et al., p.27).

⁵²⁴ Cheney et al., p.42.

⁵²⁵ Cheney et al., p.42.

inferiority continued'.⁵²⁶ Plato's formulation of women as a species created by the rebirth into femininity of the weakest men was to continue throughout the Renaissance and, combined with a religious framework which rested on the sins of Eve against mankind, forms a network of meanings and symbols that demonised the woman and her body.⁵²⁷ The female body was, in particular, a site of deviance:

If a good woman's essence was an obedient body, then the very sexuality of that body suggested possible means of deviant behaviour through the excessive demands of female sexuality.⁵²⁸

Anguissola, in choosing to represent herself, was forced to negotiate this dialogue of sin, reproach, fear and weakness, in order to place herself in society both as woman and artist. The mirror in her painting is implied, not shown, absent from the pictorial space but implicit in the self-portrait and, as such, has no bearing on the depiction. The mirror in the portrait of Venus, however, is central and its reflection creates both ambiguity and eroticism, hinting at the inward and hiding much of the outward. It is difficult to discern even if Venus is staring at herself in the mirror since her gaze appears to be directed elsewhere and the mirror's reflection is too sketchy to be definite. Velázquez avoids the Bakhtinian 'grotesquery' of the female body by presenting the viewer with her back and using the mirror's reflection to further conceal those aspects of her body that make Venus dangerously sensual and erotic; though the *Rokeby Venus* is still reminiscent of the carnivalesque Bakhtinian body that is rich, overflowing, bulging and physical.⁵²⁹

⁵²⁶ Cheney et al., p. 27.

⁵²⁷ Plato, *Timaeus and Critias* trans. by Desmond Lee (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965 [1977]) p.122

⁵²⁸ Irene Burgess, "The Wreck of Order" in *Early Modern Women's Drama*, *Early Modern Literary Studies* 6 (2001) 6.1-24 <<http://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/06-3/burgwrec.htm>>.

⁵²⁹ Pam Morris, *The Bakhtin Reader* (London: Arnold, 1994) p.226.

The mirror presents particular problems for the woman; problems which are due, at least in part, to its classical associations with the sins of pride and vanity, and with the figure of Venus. The woman's experience with her mirror therefore has certain limitations set upon it, as illustrated in Shirley's short poem – a woman must make use of the mirror to improve herself in deeper and more spiritual ways, *not* for fixing her hair or make-up. Anguissola's self-portrait demonstrates the ways in which a female artist can negotiate certain societal norms in order to produce an image of herself: she presents herself to be looked at, dressed appropriately, holding a prayer book, but she stares back therefore returning and perhaps challenging the viewer's gaze on her. Similarly, the image of Venus centres on the gaze and the ways for her to negotiate that gaze, so that through a series of ambiguities she avoids being entirely objectified. Velázquez's image in particular takes advantage of the attributes of the plane mirror – the position and angle of the mirror are a crucial part of what is presented to the viewer, what is revealed of the woman. In the examples from Donne and Velázquez, particularly, we find the explicit use of mirror and glass technology, turned to the poet's and the painter's advantage, while Salter's clear division between the two types of 'mirrors' illustrates an awareness of the mirror's multiple uses and meanings, as well as alerting us to a particular mirror-technology, that of the crystal mirror which was prized for its improved clarity. Here, then, we see the intersection of technology with literature and art. In the examples from Donne and Velázquez we find two differing approaches. Donne uses the properties of the glass to celebrate his love for the woman, and the glass functions as the centerpiece of the poem as its properties support his key themes of permanence and his enduring love. In Donne's poem, he makes use of the physical object,

concentrating on how the glass is fragile yet durable, transparent and yet reflective. Velázquez, however, pays attention to what can be accomplished using the reflective surface of the mirror, rather than the actual glass itself. In *The Rokeby Venus* the aim of the image is to manipulate vision and redirect the natural flow of the gaze. These two approaches move beyond the exemplary mirrors that chapter three explored, which had a singular goal of the moral lesson. The examples of Donne and Velázquez engage with the science of vision and the physical properties of glass, and make uses of the technologies and theories in a way that illustrates the vast applications of the mirror and its potential to function in a wide range of ways.

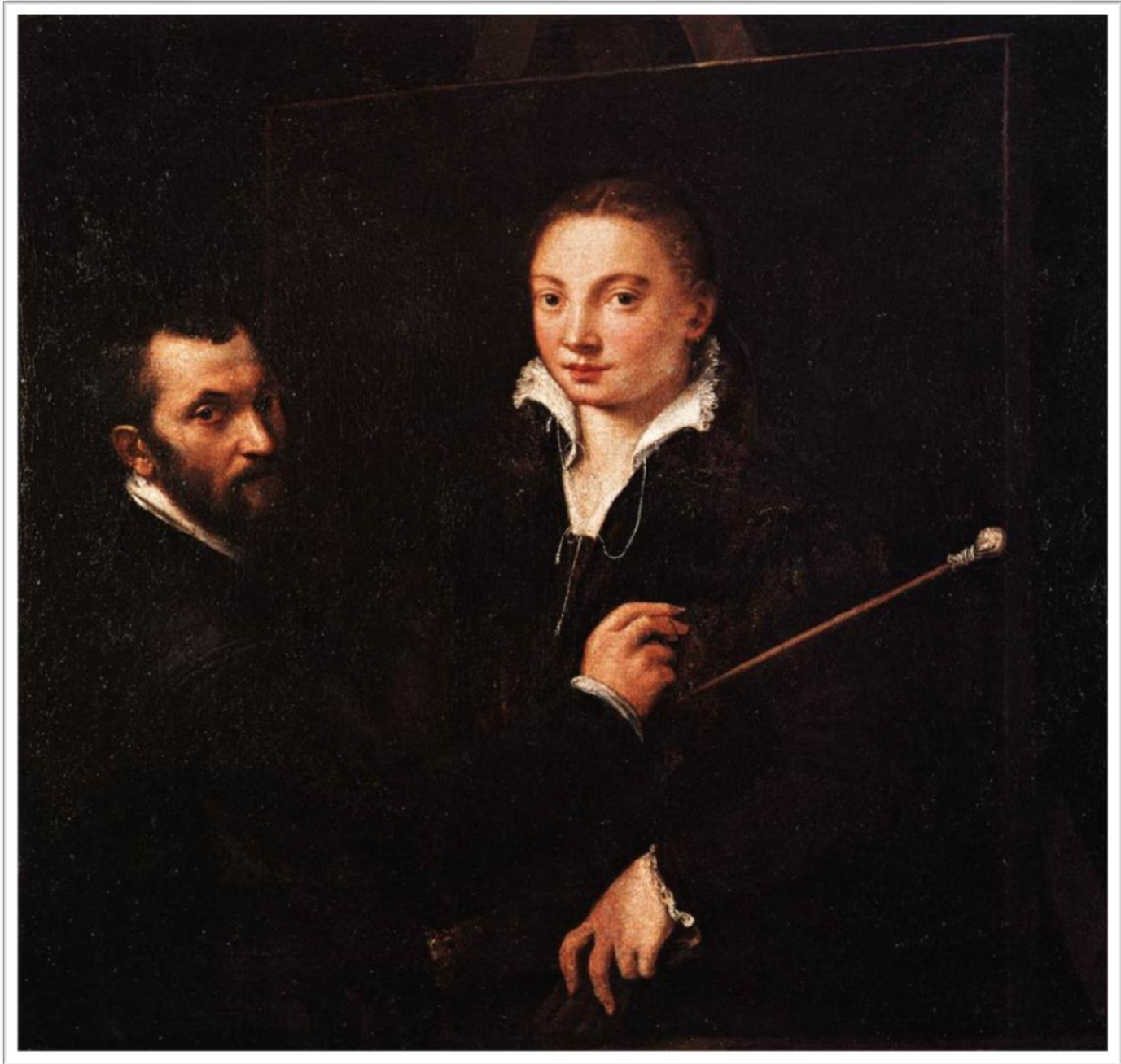


Figure seventeen: Sofonisba Anguissola, Bernadino Campi Painting Sofonisba Anguissola (1557-79) Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, < <http://www.wga.hu/index1.html> >

Negotiating the Gaze: Painting and Power

Given the warnings detailing the dangers for women gazing at themselves in the mirror, such as those seen in Salter, the female self-portrait becomes yet more intriguing. The examples of chapter three established the problems of the mirror, and the ways in which the exemplary mirror characterised looking in the mirror as sinful, while the extracts from Salter and Stubbes in this chapter have reinforced the fact that these issues prevent a woman gazing in the mirror freely. In the images we have seen so far, Venus was forced to redirect the gaze in order to protect herself, and Anguissola had to negotiate a number of social expectations in order to create a self-portrait. Another example by Anguissola, *Bernadino Campi Painting the Portrait of Sofonisba* (1550), illustrates her approach to depicting the art of painting, her skill, and herself, in which she uses the social expectations as a tool in her self-imaging.

In this image, the mirror is only implied: obvious from the fact that Anguissola has depicted herself, there is no trace of the object in the painting. In fact, Anguissola's painting at first appears not to be a self-portrait at all since it includes a participant rather than focusing solely on the artist. Anguissola paints herself being painted by her master: her image, as represented on the canvas on the easel, is considerably larger than Campi, who paints her. It is Anguissola who fills much of the pictorial space, as her master stands by her side. The artist then, pushes herself forward, foregrounding her abilities over those of her master and presenting herself through the trope of the painting that is in fact a self-portrait.⁵³⁰ By presenting

⁵³⁰ John T. Paoletti & Gary M. Radke argue that this painting is a 'wry commentary on the very structures of artistic production (a story within the story, to speak speak, that points to male construction of female form), as well as a witty reference to the standard imagery of St. Luke painting the Virgin' – *Art in Renaissance Italy*, ed. by John T. Paoletti & Gary M. Radke (London: Laurence King, 1997), p.16.

herself alongside a master, she aligns herself with the skills and talents of an artist, though by including Campi in her self portrait, Anguissola ‘seems self-effacing’ and it ‘has the effect of cancelling or concealing her own pride and ambition.’⁵³¹ Garrard offers this interpretation as ‘an elaborate deferential conceit’ which Anguissola uses as a ‘kind of disguise’ in which she ‘distinctly one-ups Campi’.⁵³² While this may be the case, it seems that the woman must carefully negotiate the area of self-portraiture: Anguissola did not directly portray herself but drew upon her relationship with Campi to offer herself as a female artist of skill. This style of portraiture allows Anguissola to displace the male gaze and subordinate its power over the female body: Campi looks at her for practical reasons in order to produce an accurate portrait. Anguissola stares out from the painting, ‘rivet[ing] the viewer, making the outsider complicit in deconstructing the teacher-pupil relationship’ and the ‘inscribing of male authority on the body of the female’.⁵³³ Where Venus had to use her pose, her body, and the mirror to deflect the penetrative male gaze, the self-portrait allows women painters more control over their appearance so that rarely do they depict themselves as object of eroticism or lust.

As Felicity Edholm describes, there are problems of perception that a woman must overcome in order to portray herself:

Women are....constructed, in part at least, by the gaze, by others. Women in Western culture are always aware of being looked at, they are the object of the look, and the look is essentially male. Women therefore experience their own bodies and faces from outside as well as from within – a woman must continually survey herself. A woman has, then a

⁵³¹ Garrard, p.560.

⁵³² Garrard, p.561-2.

⁵³³ Paoletti & Radke, p.16.

split relation to her body and her face; she is both inside and outside, both self and other'.⁵³⁴

This suggests that the very process involved in creating a self-portrait is problematic for the woman artist. In a period when the mirror is, for the woman, enmeshed in symbols of pride, vanity, excess and shame, the very act of looking at herself is sinful. It seems that, for the early modern woman, the examination of the self is bound up with particular problems. Such is the import of the imagery and symbolism surrounding the mirror that any woman holding a mirror is, to Stubbes, carrying with her, the 'deuills spectacles' which 'allure vs to pride, & co~sequently to destructio~ for euer'.⁵³⁵ Certainly, the mirror is associated with Venus, whose negative associations make her a poor example for women: the women whose tables were 'littered with combs, perfume, and cosmetic vases and jars and 'similar tools of Venus'...were in fact not ladies' and 'the association of the mirror with courtesans and with Venus has antique roots', claims Cathy Santore.⁵³⁶ A woman holding a mirror already had established, negative connotations, and the female artist must negotiate these associations if she wishes to portray herself. It seems prudent, for example, to exclude the mirror altogether, as Anguissola does. The woman who makes a self-portrait must also steer a path through society's guidelines and expectations of women. Artemisia Gentileschi, in *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting* (1535-40), depicts herself allegorically, a trope that avoids her being directly associated with the idea of self-imaging.

⁵³⁴ Felicity Edholm, 'Beyond the Mirror: Women's Self-Portraits' in *Imagining Women: Cultural Representations and Gender* ed. by Francis Bonner, Lizbeth Goodman, Richard Allen, Linda Janes, & Catherine King (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995) p.135.

⁵³⁵ Phillip Stubbes, *The anatomie of abuses* (London, 1583), EEBO image 52, left page [accessed 4 April 2008].

⁵³⁶ Cathy Santore, 'The tools of Venus', *Renaissance Studies* 11 (1997) 179-207 (p.179).

Artemisia Gentileschi was the daughter of Orazio Gentileschi, one of the Caravaggisti, and she was ‘one of the first female Italian artist[s] determined to compete with the male artists of her time’.⁵³⁷ Her paintings often draw on mythological and mythical themes and are characterised by ‘Caravaggesque realism’ and chiaroscuro, a technique which utilises light and dark to create a particularly dramatic style.⁵³⁸

⁵³⁷ Carney, p.159.

⁵³⁸ Carney, p.159.

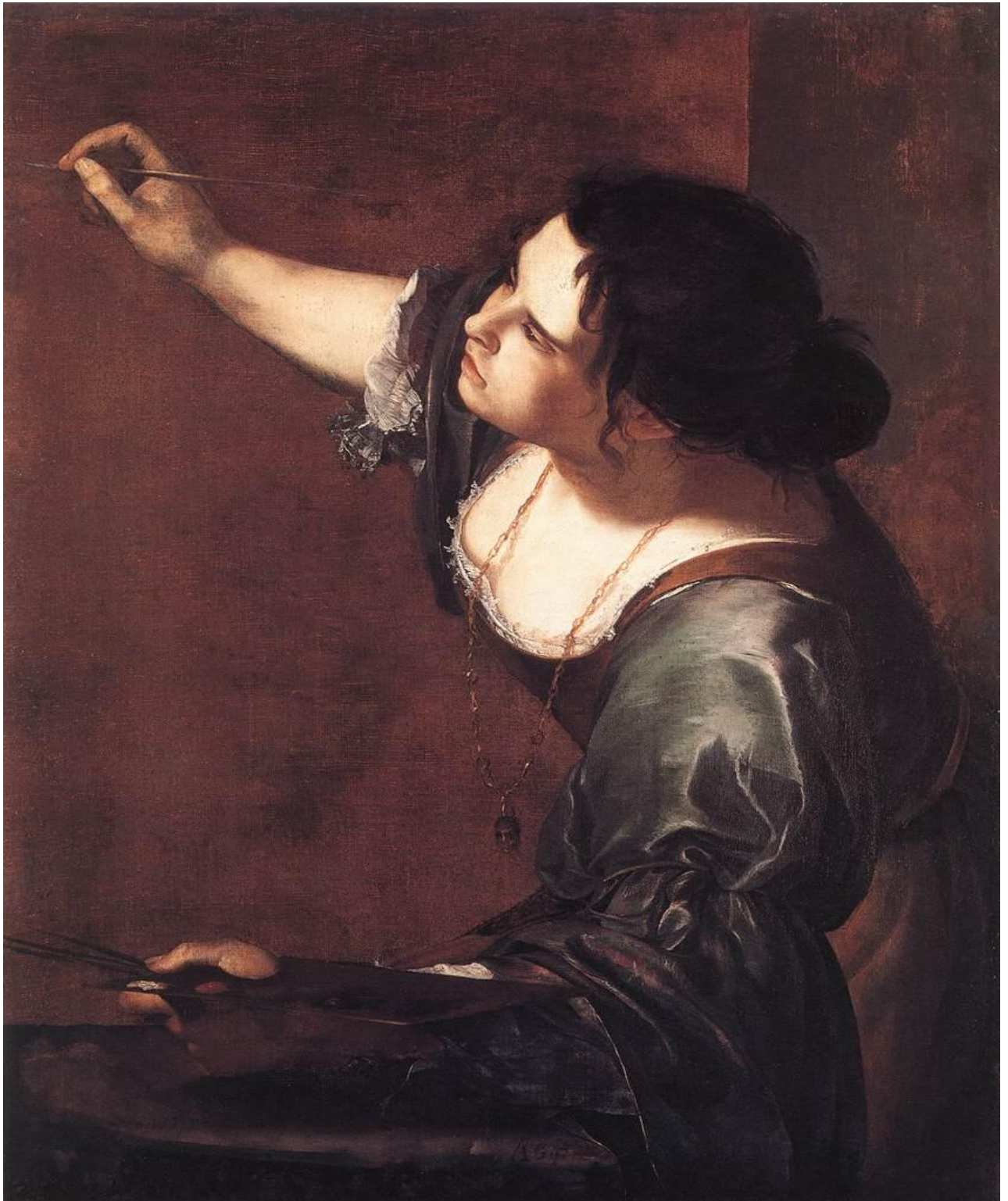


Figure eighteen: Artemisia Gentileschi, *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting* (1630), Royal Collection, Windsor⁵³⁹

⁵³⁹ Artemisia Gentileschi, *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting* (1630) Royal Collection, Windsor, *Web Gallery of Art* < <http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/g/gentiles/artemisi> > [accessed 22 May 2009].

A lavishly dressed Gentileschi adorned with pieces of jewellery, leans into the pictorial space, her low neck-line revealing an expanse of cleavage. Gentileschi presents herself in the midst of artistic creation, her hair flicking out of her haphazard bun and her sleeves bunched up around her elbows. Her hands are occupied with the tools of her trade, the brushes and palette, and her awkward pose shows her in the act of painting. As her intent gaze suggests, the purpose of this painting seems to be to focus on the act of creation, rather than the artist herself. Gentileschi, by presenting herself as in the midst of action, not looking at a mirror or at the viewer, avoids the male gaze and therefore its dominating force; Gentileschi, as the allegory of painting, is neither passive nor accepting of the gaze. Just as in Anguissola's portrait, Gentileschi presents her self indirectly, via the trope of allegory. In creating this side-view of herself, it is most likely that Gentileschi used 'two mirrors, placed at nearly right angles', a technique that would be more difficult to execute than a traditional frontal self-portrait and this may have been a deliberate act on Gentileschi's part, offered to 'demonstrate her virtuosity in creating a complex picture'.⁵⁴⁰

Gentileschi, in choosing to paint herself as an allegory, thus elides the traditional issues, for women, of subject and object.⁵⁴¹ Judith W Mann argues that it is obvious that 'Artemisia did think about her anomalous role as a female painter in a male profession' and that 'she would recognise a strictly female opportunity to fuse her own image and that of the profession of painting (traditionally portrayed as a female figure)'. R. Ward Bissell also considers that the *Allegory of Painting* 'presented

⁵⁴⁰ Mann, p.57.

⁵⁴¹ See Judith W Mann, 'The Myth of Artemisia as Chameleon: A New Look at the London *Allegory of Painting*' in *Artemisia Gentileschi: Taking Stock*, ed. by Judith W. Mann (Belgium: Brepols, 2005), pp.51-77 (p.55).

Artemisia with an opportunity not afforded male painters: to feature her self, in all her recognisability, as the personifications, and to cement this connection with a fully and prominent signature'.⁵⁴² However, Bissell feels that Gentileschi did not accomplish this – 'in type the female is more Polyhymnia than Artemisia, and the modest initials "A.G.F." on the right hand corner of the tabletop are threatened by shadow'. Instead, claims Bissell, 'what Gentileschi has done is to vitalize an abstract construct, and through a dazzling technique, to acclaim her mastery as *La Pittura's* sister'.⁵⁴³ It seems, then, that Gentileschi's self-portrait is successful in allowing her to avoid the typical restraints imposed upon women, and avoiding the themes often associated with women, mirrors and self-image. However, the painting's success is limited in that it fails to truly move beyond the expectations and constraints that women face. Anguissola both create images of themselves, they both use tropes to escape the fact of their self-imaging, but they both do so within the boundaries set for them. For example, Anguissola's first image portrays her demurely dressed holding a prayer book, signifiers that meet with social expectation; while the image of herself painting her master, and Gentileschi's allegorical self-portrait both play with notions of self-representation but do so in a way that does not threaten social order. Ultimately, the female has little social power and while these artists gain leverage from the opportunities available to them, there is little they can do to escape the constraints imposed upon them.

Demonstrating virtuosity through the means of self-imaging is a theme that is seen throughout the works of Clara Peeters (1589-1657) whose *Self-Portrait with Still-Life* (c. 1610) demonstrates a different approach to the genre of the self-portrait.

⁵⁴² R. Ward Bissell, *Artemisia Gentileschi and the Authority of Art* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), pp.65-69.

⁵⁴³ Ward Bissell, pp.65-69.



Figure nineteen: Clara Peeters, *Self-Portrait with Still-Life* (c. 1610)⁵⁴⁴

544 Clara Peeters, *Self-Portrait with Still-Life* (c. 1610), location unknown
<<http://www.csupomona.edu/~plin/women/peeters.html>> [accessed 22 May 2009].

Clara Peeters's personal life remains largely unknown: she was perhaps the daughter of Jan Peeters, and a Clara Peeters was married to Hendrick Joosen in 1639, but there is nothing to definitively link the painter to these events.⁵⁴⁵ What is certain, however, is that when the genre of still life painting was emerging, Clara Peeters played a 'formative role in its development'.⁵⁴⁶

Striking for its plethora of objects scattered around the sitter-artist, Peeters's painting shows her seated at a table holding a compact mirror in one hand and with money, gold and jewels all around her. Peeters herself is elaborately dressed, bedecked with jewels; she wears two bracelets, a string of pearls and a pearl headdress. The chair upon which she sits is just as elaborately fashioned as her clothes, the wood of the back appearing delicately and intricately turned. The immediate assumption, on first glimpsing this portrait, is that Peeters is quite shamelessly self-fashioning and ignoring the warnings offered by writers such as Stubbes. All around her are objects of beauty, possessions suggestive of wealth – on the table on which she leans there is a selection of gold and silver coins, various pieces of jewellery decorated with gems and set in gold, and two large decorative pieces also apparently made of gold. Behind these objects is a vase of flowers, one stem of which appears wilted and dying. However, though Peeters leans her body towards these objects, she turns her head away from it all and gazes off into the distance. Her body is interestingly positioned – her torso faces towards the table of riches, one arm and hand reaches in the direction of the items; her other hand holds a compact mirror up towards the opposite side of the canvas, facing away from the luxury pieces and turned in approximately the same direction as her head. Perhaps

⁵⁴⁵ Delia Gaze (ed.), *Women Artists*, 2 Vols (London & Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1997), II, p.1080.

⁵⁴⁶ Gaze, p.1081.

this may indicate the separation between heart and mind, or passions and will – her heart is drawn towards the expensive pieces, towards the trinkets which connote luxury and bestow upon her an image of wealth, but her head turns away from this suggesting her mind’s awareness that these are just belongings and therefore can hold no true import upon her character. The turned head, directed away from the pieces of gold and jewellery could indicate that such objects are simply material, whereas the mirror held out in her hand can offer the user an insight into the true self – the individual is not made up of effects, rather the ‘self’ is made up of more than this, of something internal. The constructed identity which Peeters adopts by positioning herself amongst a variety of objects reminds the viewer of the potential for fakery and the counterfeit, of the use of ‘possessions’ to create the desired ‘persona’. The emphasis of the portrait may be that the objects with which an individual surrounds him or her self can be used to create *a* self, but that this may not necessarily be *the* self, as we saw in Bailly’s self-portrait in chapter three (see figure twelve). However, more than this ‘mere self-promotion’, the self-portrait reminds the viewer that ‘it is the unique ability of the artist to overcome the transience of fragile flowers, of earthly wealth...by fixing them, triumphant against the ravages of time, in paint’.⁵⁴⁷

Peeters regularly used the trick of reflection in her paintings, often depicting herself in the reflective surfaces given in the metal goblets or glass vessels she

⁵⁴⁷ Gaze, p.1083.

painted.⁵⁴⁸ These tiny reflections ‘constitute an unusual kind of self-portrait’ since they are ‘scarcely visible except under close scrutiny’ and they ‘incorporate the working artist right into the still-life scenes she depicts’.⁵⁴⁹ Gaze claims that Peeters’s use of this device appears to be a means of placing herself within a ‘heritage’ inhabited by Jan van Eyck, ‘claiming a place for herself within it’, however, Peeters was ‘among the first painters to integrate such self-portraiture into the realm of still life’.⁵⁵⁰

The mirror in Peeters’s portrait may function as a motif, an instruction to encourage self-analysis, rather than simply indulging in material wealth. That is to say, that objects can only define a person in part – the scene surrounding Peeters suggests opulence and wealth, but that she is turned away from them is suggestive of the fact that she cannot be described solely by objects. As the extract from *Hamlet* in chapter three illustrated, it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to demonstrate ‘that within which passes show’. Simultaneously however, as she directs the viewer to turn away from materiality, Peeters presents herself as a woman of status: she is clearly wealthy (if we assume these things to be her belongings), given the spread of expensive items around her and the clothing she wears. She offers an image of herself as artist and moneyed gentlewoman, giving herself standing and showing her talents as an accomplished artist. Furthermore, the multiple self-portraits found in Peeters’s other paintings appear to be ‘silently but perseveringly insisting that we

⁵⁴⁸ This ability to recreate miniature self-portraits in a number of shiny surfaces within her still life paintings is considered a particular skill of Peeters’s – additionally, she reproduced the effects of reflected light on surfaces such as ‘gilt bronze, German stoneware, Chinese porcelain, wheels of cheese, curls of butter, wet fish, feathers and glass’ and it appears, from the dating of her paintings, that she was particularly precocious since her dated works span from 1607 – 1621, meaning that her first image appeared just 13 years after her birth - see Ann Sutherland Harris, *Seventeenth-Century Art and Architecture* (London: Laurence King, 2005), p.187-188.

⁵⁴⁹ Gaze, p.1081.

⁵⁵⁰ Gaze, p.1081.

cannot overlook the young woman who wields the brush'.⁵⁵¹ So, as much as Peeters offers in her self-portrait the message of the mirror as a motif for true self-worth, suggesting that the individual should turn away from material goods, she simultaneously portrays herself surrounded by wealth thus presenting herself as a woman of social standing, based on the objects at her table.

Johannes Gump: *Self Portrait*

This chapter has looked exclusively at examples of women and mirrors, and female self-portraiture. Medusa's story places the mirror as the mediator between the real (often dangerous) and the imaginary (often safer), and the mirror redirects the trajectory of the gaze. Anguissola, Gentileschi and Peeters manage their self-imaging by adhering to certain societal expectations, focusing on the imprecisions of the mirror and choosing to play on its potential ambiguities, in order to develop particular meanings and develop particular strategies of empowerment. For the woman, the mirror is an object that must be handled carefully but that can offer her the opportunity to create a space for herself, creating her own likeness.

This section will consider, by direct contrast, a self-portrait by a male artist, Johannes Gump. Whereas the female artists in the previous sections of this chapter were able to create likenesses of themselves via careful negotiation of social expectations and the mirror's emblematic associations, Gump's self-portrait knowingly and explicitly exploits the technology available and questions the very notion of generation a likeness. Jonathan Sawday notes the import of the term 'likeness' arguing that 'the creation of a 'likeness' represented the core of the

⁵⁵¹ Gaze, p.1081.

mimetic arts of poetry, painting or sculpture'.⁵⁵² Certainly the reflection of Medusa in Perseus's shield offers him the non-threatening 'likeness' which allows him to slay her, indicating the unreality of the likeness: the reflection is like Medusa but lacks some of her most distinctive attributes. In this we are reminded of Plato's discussion of the imitative arts - Book X of Plato's *Republic* argues that 'that kind of art [i.e. poetry] seems to be a corruption of the mind of all listeners' who do not 'possess as an antidote a knowledge of its real nature'.⁵⁵³ Plato attacks poetry on the basis that it is removed from reality since 'that kind of art seems to be a corruption of the mind of all listeners' who do not 'possess as an antidote a knowledge of its real nature'.⁵⁵⁴ In addition to this separation of reality and idea, Plato makes further comments on his theory of vision, and about the important distinctions between reality and the image. In Plato there are, according to the story of the couch and the table, three conceptions of the object: the idea of the thing (God's idea); the form of object itself in the world; and the image or representation of the thing. In this only God is the 'real author...its true and natural begetter' since 'it is by and in nature that he has made this and all other things'.⁵⁵⁵ In this logic, the carpenter produces 'only some particular couch' that 'resembles real being but is not that' and the painter 'makes an appearance' of the object, so that both of them create 'the appearance of [things] but not the reality and the truth'.⁵⁵⁶ Thus the painter is 'the imitator of the thing which those others produce and the term 'imitator' is applied to 'the producer

⁵⁵² Jonathan Sawday, *Engines of the Imagination: Renaissance Culture and the Rise of the Machine* (London & New York: Routledge, 2007), p.179.

⁵⁵³ Plato, *The Republic*, trans. by Paul Shorey, vol ii (London: Heinemann, 1935), p.419.

⁵⁵⁴ Plato, *The Republic*, trans. by Paul Shorey, vol ii (London: Heinemann, 1935), p.419

⁵⁵⁵ Plato, *Republic*, p.429.

⁵⁵⁶ *Republic*, p.425.

of the product three removes from nature'.⁵⁵⁷ Plato's discussion creates a three-fold structure of perception, from idea, to reproduction, to image, and this section will examine the ways in which such a tripartite structure was reconstructed, using the mirror, in the work of Johannes Gump and Sir John Davies. This sits in opposition with the experiences of the Anguissola, Gentileschi and Peeters. While they struggled to find the appropriate means and structures for their self-portraits, none of them had the opportunity to make such explicit and knowing examinations of self-representation and its implications as we find in Gump's image.

The very nature of the mirror ensures its status as a primary tool for mimesis, self-scrutiny, and replicating the self. M. H. Abrams's comments on the relation of the mirror to the arts:

A picture...while itself is a work of art, was a useful adjunct to the mirror for clarifying the less obvious mimetic quality of an art like poetry, which reflects the visible world indirectly, by the significance of its words.⁵⁵⁸

The mirror, obviously mimetic, is supplemented by the painting. Painting, alongside poetry, could be considered less straightforwardly representational due, in part, to each art requiring an author. While the mirror passively reflects whatever is placed before it, the artist has the capacity to be far more selective and creative, so that the finished article may bear a less startling resemblance than that seen in the mirror. However, this notion of a selective mimesis has been disputed as 'classic and neo-classic defenders of art alike solve the problem by claiming that poetry imitates not the actual'; instead it copies 'selected matters, qualities, tendencies, or forms, which

⁵⁵⁷ *Republic*, p.429.

⁵⁵⁸ M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953 [1971]), p.33.

are within or behind the actual'.⁵⁵⁹ Furthermore, Dr. Johnson claimed that the mirror must be selective, for reasons of morality, because 'it is necessary 'to distinguish those parts of nature which are most proper for imitation''.⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁹ Abrams, p.35.

⁵⁶⁰ Abrams, p.36.



Figure twenty: Johannes Gump, *Self-Portrait* (1646), Private Collection⁵⁶¹

⁵⁶¹ There are two versions of Gump's *Self-Portrait*, both of 1646. The image to which I refer is currently in a private collection, the location of which is unknown. However, it can be viewed freely here:

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Johannes_gump.jpg [accessed 7 July 2009]. The other version can be found in the collections at the Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Johannes Gump, an Austrian artist about whom very little is known, painted himself in 1646 and approached the task of the self-portrait from another angle. The artist produced a painting of himself which shows him standing in the centre of the composition, in the moment of creation, with a self-portrait in progress to the right and the mirror bearing his reflection to his left. This composition, with its sense of immediacy, challenges the traditional single viewpoint of the self-portrait. The viewer, voyeur to the moment of creation, has three views of Gump, viewing him simultaneously from behind, from the side in the mirror, and from the side in the portrait, the angles of his body appearing slightly different in the mirror and in the painting on which he works. In these three versions, Gump presents his 'real' self, represented by the central figure, his reflected self in the mirror, and his painted self on the easel. Gump's self-portrait embodies Alberti's impression of painting as an 'embracing with art of what is presented on the surface of the water'.⁵⁶² In using this composition, Gump highlights the possibility of the multiple viewpoints that a mirror is capable of generating, and combines this with the unreality of the vision presented to the viewer. The trope of the painting is that the 'real' Gump is still merely a painting, a creation. Gump's portrait negotiates reflection and copy, highlighting the increasing distance from reality that each 'counterfeit' or representation of himself makes. In so doing, 'the painter reflects on the nature of illusion' and suggests 'the precariousness and uncertainty of the real'.⁵⁶³

This problem of the illusory, of the 'uncertainty of the real', is teased out by Frederick Goldin, who considers them from a Platonic and Neoplatonic standpoint.

⁵⁶² Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting* trans. by John R. Spencer (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1956), p. 64.

⁵⁶³ Melchior-Bonnet, p.168.

Suggesting that because the mirror is a real object it has the ‘capacity of matter to receive the image of ideal forms’, Goldin claims that through this it is possible to

consider both the matter and form together. The mirror awakens our consciousness of the idea by translating it into sensible images. It shows us an image of eternal beauty...But that image is fleeting, it has no substance; and we must learn how to leave the mirror behind and to love a being that is invisible and immutable.⁵⁶⁴

Gumpp’s portrait, showing his multiple selves, speaks of a similar transience of images, selves and reflections, illustrating various ways of ‘translating’ the self ‘into sensible images’. Vision is manipulated and misled and, as the two pairs of eyes peering out of the painting remind us, human sight is drawn into the imaginary as much as to the real. When Plato investigated the mirror in *Timaeus* he concluded that ‘specular illusion [is] the lowest degree of knowledge because it lacks the tangible reality of the image’, and it is this idea of illusion and reality that Gumpp’s image investigates.⁵⁶⁵ As I noted in chapter one, for Plato the mirror’s value as a source of self-knowledge was highly dubious since the mirror was not to be trusted to provide an authentic reflection. To Plato the phenomenon of the reflection is ‘contrary to the regular mode of collision’, thus, the mirror does not present the object as it appears in reality: the mirror is not a normal visual experience.⁵⁶⁶ What, then, does this say of the self-portrait, a form reliant on the mirror? Gumpp’s image, using both the mirror and the self-portrait within the same image to create a *mise en abyme*, shows subtly the inconsistencies between the mediums of the mirror and the self-portrait.

⁵⁶⁴ Frederick Goldin, *The Mirror of Narcissus in the Courtly Love Lyric* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 4–5.

⁵⁶⁵ Melchior-Bonnet, p.104.

⁵⁶⁶ Plato, *Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus & Epistles* trans. by Rev. R. G. Bury (London: Heinemann, 1929), p.105.

Gumpp's image has much to tell us about the idea of difference. The most obvious distinction between the three representations of the artist is the difference between the tones and colours in the mirror's reflection and the image on the canvas to the right. The image in the mirror seems both brighter and clearer than that of the portrait and the tones of the colours in the mirror seem to match more closely those of the central Gumpp. In the painted image however the colours have a more sepia or dulled appearance, highlighting the distance from reality of the self-portrait and pointing to the interception of the imagination of the painter who, unlike the passively reflective mirror, actively interprets the image before him. Each object or process interferes with the proximity to reality. Gumpp's portrait is a reminder to its viewer that the self-portrait is, like Plato's mirror, not a 'normal' visual experience and must not be trusted. Each stage of removal from the original illustrates disparities between chosen image, reflected image, and imagined image, so the mirror image of Gumpp is presented as more 'true', more 'real' than the self-portrait. Gumpp's self-portrait challenges appearances and subverts the expectations of reality in portraiture so that, as Stephen Greenblatt suggests, 'any achieved identity always contains within itself the signs of its own subversion or loss'.⁵⁶⁷ Gumpp capitalises on the functions of the mirror and uses this to his own advantage challenging the viewer's assumptions about the real, the painted and the mirrored.

The Mirror in *Nosce Teipsum*

The mirror, whether literal or metaphorical, whether for prediction or guidance, inspired the creative imagination of English writers such as Sir John Davies. Davies

⁵⁶⁷ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 9.

was not only a poet; after studying law at Oxford, he had a successful legal career. He was also elected as an MP and was eventually appointed Attorney General for Ireland in 1606. He gained considerable favour with Elizabeth I and James VI & I—James rewarded Davies with a knighthood—and is best known for his poems *Orchestra* (1594) and *Nosce Teipsum* (1599). ‘Of Humane Knowledge’ in *Nosce Teipsum* explicates his theory of the soul using tropes of vision and the mirror.

As we saw earlier in this chapter, it is Febvre’s argument that vision was not a serious topic of interest until the seventeenth century was approaching. Until then, he claims, the sixteenth century was not actively engaged with the vision. However, I argue that this is not the case and certainly, in *Vanities of the Eye*, Stuart Clark reminds us that in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe, a ‘kind of ocularcentrism was already prevalent...[which gave] the eyes priority over the other senses’. Davies’ long poem presses the importance of the Delphic principle ‘know thyself’, incorporating the mirror, the eye, and vision into its narrative of self-knowledge.⁵⁶⁸ Beginning with the errors of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Davies guides his reader through the dangers of a life without self-knowledge. In the first instance, when Adam and Eve were free of sin, ‘their reasons eye was sharpe, and cleere’ so that they ‘Could have approach’t the *eternal light* as neere’.⁵⁶⁹ Adam and Eve are close to God because in them, their ‘reasons eye’ is acute. However, once they taste the fruit of the tree they ‘give *Passion* eyes, made *Reason* blind’, so that ‘then grew *Reason* darke, that she no more / Could the fair Formes of *Truth*, and *Good* discern’ (l.28, 33-34). Through the metaphors of sight, Davies locates the human ‘*desire to learne*’ (l.35) and concludes that we ‘still tast of the fruit forbid’

⁵⁶⁸ Clark, p.9.

⁵⁶⁹ Sir John Davies, ed. by Kreuger, *Nosce Teipsum, The Poems of Sir John Davies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 6, L. 9, 11.

when ‘In bookes prophane, we seek for knowledge hid’ (l.38, 40). From this, Davies constructs the difficulties that this distance from clear reason presents to the individual:

What can we know? or what can we discern?
When Error chokes the windowes of the mind;
The diverse forms of things how can we learne,
That have bene ever from our birth-day blind? (l.57–60).

Here again, the concept of knowledge is constructed through the metaphors of vision, referring to glass (and its clarity), as well as to blindness which, compared with the sharpness of reason’s vision in Adam and Eve, distances the individual in his or her relationship with God.⁵⁷⁰ Davies’ principal instruction to the reader is that if we wish to gain access to knowledge, we must first know ourselves. Invoking the words of St. Paul in I Corinthians, ‘For now we see through a glasse, darkely; but then shal we see face to face. Now I know in parte; but then shal I knowe even as I am knowen’,⁵⁷¹

Nosce Teipsum explains the omnipotence of God:

All in him selfe as in a glasse he sees,
For from him, by him, through him all things bee;
His sight is not discursive by degrees,
But seeing the whole each single part doth see (l.761–764).

St. Paul’s words are here echoed by Davies. Davies’ interpretation suggests that the glass is a mirror and the use of ‘through’ indicates that the mirror is the medium by which the individual must analyse the religious self in order to progress towards the

⁵⁷⁰ The glass vessel and the ‘speculum sine macula’ were symbols often used to connote the Virgin Mary. Rubymaya Jaeck-Woodgate explains that the mirror, in its religious context, is commonly used to ‘imagine the relationship between God and creation’ and, particularly, ‘the notions of man as the imperfect image of God, and Christ as the exemplar of mankind’ (Rubymaya Jaeck-Woodgate, ‘Jacopo de Varagine’s Virgin Mary as the ‘Mirror without Blemish’, *Australian Journal of Theology*, 10 (2007), p. 3.

⁵⁷¹ *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition* (Massachussetts: Hendrickson, 1969), I Corinthians, 13:12, p.81. Note at ‘now we see’ which reads ‘the mysteries of God’ – thus, ‘For now we see (the mysteries of God) through a glasse, darkely; but then shal we see face to face. Now I know in parte; but then shal I knowe even as I am knowen’ through a glasse, darkly’.

'eternal light'. The sense of omnipotence suggested in St. Paul's words is conveyed in Davies' verse through the use of 'discursive' which, following the OED, quotes the above lines of Davies, is illustrative of 'passing from premises to conclusion, opposite to *intuitively*'.⁵⁷² For Davies, 'His' sight is *not* discursive; rather than knowing in part, through logic, 'He' knows holistically, intuitively, 'seeing the whole' and so comprehending the parts. To know ourselves takes effort because, in Davies' Platonic logic, we are not biologically created in a way that makes self-knowledge easy:

Is it because the minde is like the eye,
(Through which it gathers knowledge by degrees)
Whose rayes reflect not, but spread outwardly,
Not seeing it selfe, when other things it sees? (l.105–108)

Davies compares the mind and the eye: both, he feels, 'gather' information, incrementally, absorbing 'knowledge' in a piecemeal fashion. In this way, neither the eye nor the mind offer an immediate contribution to knowledge, since the flow of information is external, not internal. Here, Davies judges that the eye and the mind do not 'reflect', they cannot examine themselves since they can only absorb information. As we found in my first chapter, Plato's extramission theory of vision states that the light flows outwards from the eye to meet the object before it, so that

whenever the stream of vision is surrounded by mid-day light, it flows out until like, and coalescing therewith it forms one kindred substance along the path of the eyes' vision, wheresoever the fire which streams from within collides with an obstructing object without.⁵⁷³

⁵⁷² *The Oxford English Dictionary*, <<http://dictionary.oed.com/>> [accessed 3 March 2007].

⁵⁷³ Plato, *Timaeus*, p.101-103.

Following Plato, Davies too suggests that the eye is not the method by which the individual may study and know the self. Rather, the mind has the properties of a mirror:

...for the minde can backward cast
Upon herself her understanding light;
But she is so corrupt, and so defac't,
As her owne image doth her selfe affright (l.109–12).

The mind, for Davies, has the ability to throw back a reflection to the viewer and put light on a subject in a way that vision cannot; however, the 'mind' is as dimmed and stained, as corrupt as the soul. Nature has placed the eyes on the front of the face, making inward vision via the mechanisms of sight an impossibility—we must utilise the properties of the mind to glimpse the stained soul.⁵⁷⁴ This 'mirror' is the bearer of truth for, in the next stanza Davies relates the tale of Io who was turned into a cow:

As is the fable of that Ladie faire,
Which for her lust was turned into a Cow;
When thirstie to a streame she did repaire,
And saw her selfe transformed she wist not how

At first she startles, then she stands amaz'd,
At last with terror she from thence doth flie;
And loathes the watrie glasse...
And shuns it still, though she for thirst do die (l.113–116).

Io was, before she visited the water, unaware of her physical transformation—without a mirror she cannot know herself. Such is the horror of the truth of her situation, that she would rather die than re-approach the water to satisfy her thirst.

⁵⁷⁴ Ernest B. Gilman discusses the writings of Francis Quarles in which Quarles 'distinguishes between the "soul's two Eyes", the eye of faith being more clear sighted than the eye of reason...But both these inner sources of vision are surer guides than the eye of sense fixed on the objects on which it feeds: "Gaze not in Beauty too much, lest it blast thee; nor too long lest it blind thee...If thou like it, it deceives thee"' (Gilman, p. 65, Quarles, *Enchyridion* (London, 1641) bk. 3, p. 9 in *Complete Works*, 1:31). See Ernest B. Gilman, 'Word and Image in Quarles' *Emblemes*' in *The Language of Images* ed. by W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp.59-84.

Her sins, all too apparent in her bodily appearance, can be avoided if she refuses to look at herself in the mirror. Her mind's 'mirror' is 'defac't', so frightened by the truth that she decides to 'make' an imaginary 'self, ignoring the water-mirror's truth. Through this her mind's inward 'mirror' and inner truth is obscured and dimmed by the more palatable counterfeit 'self' she creates for herself.

The concept and power of the mind's eye was exploited by Shakespeare since when events occur offstage, 'playgoers are stimulated to use their mind's eye, their substitute way of seeing as a substitute way of knowing': so Io reverses this in order to attempt to blot out what she knows of herself, her true self.⁵⁷⁵ Rather than the 'stimulation of cognition by imagined sight' which, Arthur Kinney explains, occurs when viewers *cannot* know, Io *can know* and thus makes a deliberate attempt to disengage 'cognition' and replace it with a more comforting 'imagined sight'.

Reason takes precedence over all other faculties and it is most affected by the sins of the individual. Reason, given the sense of sight, finds its vision darkened by sin and it becomes damaged and weakened, subject to the dangers of the passions. Davies Christianises Plato's formulation of vision to account for the difficulties inherent in self-knowledge, citing the story of Io as an illustration of our natural aversion to the horrible truth uncovered when we finally examine our self. In all of this, the mind is key, a receptacle for the information that the eyes bring into the body, a mirror for the soul so that 'she' might better understand herself.

⁵⁷⁵ Arthur Kinney, *Shakespeare and Cognition Aristotle's Legacy and Shakespearean Drama* (New York & London: Routledge, 2006), p.16.

Tripartite Structures

Gump's self-portrait shows three views of himself—reality, mirror and copy.⁵⁷⁶ Similarly Davies creates a tripartite structure when referring to God when he 'looks on Adam as a *roote* or *well* / And on his heires as *branches* and as *streames* (l. 765–766). Here, God is origin, Adam is 'root' and Eve is 'branch', making a clear demarcation between origin (or perhaps seed), foundation (or root), and offshoot (or branch): each time the distance from 'reality' increases. Philip Stubbes in his *Anatomie of Abuses* (1583) applies this structure to the creation of Adam and Eve, noting that God 'made man after his own likeness, & similitude, geuing him a woman, made of a ribbe of his own body'.⁵⁷⁷ So, just as the roots of the tree generate life from earth, so Adam was made and Eve, growing out of Adam's body, becomes most removed from the image of God, from the origin.

This section will conclude the chapter with a brief discussion of the incidence of tripartite structures and how they occur in the works of Gump and Davies. Ritamary Bradley, exploring the use of 'speculum' in mirror-titles of medieval texts, examines the idea of the tripartite structure in scripture and finds it intertwined with both vision

⁵⁷⁶ Robert H. Ray, in his 'dictionary' of Marvell, includes an entry for 'tripartite soul' which he describes as 'a concept inherited from Scholastic philosophy and Aristotle that was still alluded to in Marvell's time. The "soul" many times was assumed actually to consist of three souls or three parts of the soul. The vegetative soul is possessed by plants, animals, and humans, and it is responsible for grown and reproduction. The sensitive soul is possessed by animals and humans, and it is responsible for the functioning of the five sense. The rational soul is possessed by humans, and it is responsible for reason, understanding, and free will. This third soul distinguishes humans from plants and animals, places humanity just below the angels and God in the hierarchy of creatures, and makes humans potentially angelic and godlike (Robert H. Ray, *An Andrew Marvell Companion*, (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1998), p.160.

⁵⁷⁷ Stubbes, image 2, right page.

and mirrors.⁵⁷⁸ Bradley quotes theologian and poet Alanus de Insulis (1114–1203) who ‘builds up a hierarchy of truth’ to argue that ‘three-fold is the mirror in which you ought to look: the mirror of the Holy Scriptures, the mirror of nature, and the mirror of creatures’.⁵⁷⁹ Bradley claims that each of these shows us what we ought to be so that ‘in the mirror of the Scriptures you see your present state; in the mirror of creatures you see yourself as a wretched one; and in the mirror of your human nature you judge yourself as guilty’.⁵⁸⁰

Just as Davies’ poem portrays a body and soul caught up in the difficulties of self-knowledge, so Bradley highlights how this is reflected in scripture. This trinity of mirrors encompasses and describes the scrutiny of the self as Davies portrays it and, perhaps, as Gump may allude to it—self-knowledge is bound up with mystery, potential inaccuracies, with mirrors and vision. Both Bradley and Davies place reason at the centre of this division, its role being key in achieving true self-knowledge. As Bradley describes it, ‘reason is the true mirror wherein right things appear right and left things appear to be left, thus reversing the qualities of the mirror that lead Plato to distrust it.’⁵⁸¹

These works by Davies and Gump illustrate the role of the mirror in the formation of early modern selfhood, highlighting the dialogue of religion, pride, vanity and virtuous behaviour that frames any exploration of inwardness in this

⁵⁷⁸ Philip C. Almond in *Adam and Eve in Seventeenth-Century Thought* considers the ‘threefold image in man’ and notes that it was popular during the seventeenth century, ‘not least because it reflected the threefold nature of the divine’ (Almond, p.12). The Trinity is the expected ‘threesome’ but Almond finds that others were popular, including Milton’s trinity of ‘natural wisdom, holiness, and righteousness’ in *Christian Doctrine*, and the three trinities that John Donne made in man: ‘mind, will and understanding; power, knowledge, and goodness; nature, grace, and goodness’ (Almond, p.13). See Almond’s first chapter in Philip C. Almond, *Adam and Eve in Seventeenth-Century Thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.4-32.

⁵⁷⁹ Ritamary Bradley, ‘Backgrounds of the Title *Speculum* in Medieval Literature’, *Speculum* 29 (January 1954), 100-115 (p.110).

⁵⁸⁰ Bradley, p.112.

⁵⁸¹ Bradley, p.112.

period. However, more than this, these pieces reveal the imprint technology made; optical deception and visual trickery are made manifest in Gump's self-portrait, while metaphors of vision are inscribed in the verses of Davies. Both texts take advantage of the opportunities that the mirror offers, incorporating its connotations into their explorations of self and selfhood.

This chapter has investigated the connections between technology and the arts, and shows how these are integrated into existing social systems, so that individuals can work with the technology and societal norms in order to express themselves creatively. The mirror of Medusa has the power to destroy her deathly gaze and so images of her centre upon *not* seeing and not looking. Medusa controls the gaze that falls upon her until that gaze is her own, while the mirror mediates between her gaze and those attempting to look at her. The mirror in Ovid is often a very dangerous object, leading to death in some cases, and is a marker of vanity in others. This sense of vanity is, as we have seen, popularly applied to the mirror in both literature and conduct manuals, so that the mirror is almost automatically associated with women and negative behaviours. Despite the changes in technology that worked to remove the mystery of the mirror and of the mechanisms of sight, the classic negative connotations of the mirror remained alongside the technological improvements, so that women experienced great difficulties in attempting to escape the problems it presented. Moreover, it is *because* of advances in mirror technology that these negative associations were reinforced, as the larger, clearer and more widely available looking-glasses only served to bolster the connections with vanity and self-love. This means that images of women, particularly self-portraits, present a number of difficulties and expectations. Anguissola, in adhering to a number of social rules,

presenting herself as modest and virginal or as being painted by a master, manages to simultaneously announce her authority as artist. Similarly, Gentileschi's choice to turn herself into the allegory of painting ensures that she assumes a role that is traditionally figured as feminine and so poses no particular threat to the social order or hierarchy. While Venus is a character to whom the mirror is often attributed and who embodies carnality and sin, her image makes use of the particular features of the mirror to retain a sense of modesty. It is in these ways that the woman achieves a self-portrait without appearing to be indulging in the sins of vanity or pride.

This contrasts with the self-portrait of Johannes Gump, in which self-imaging is the topic for the painting. Gump, by including both the mirror and the portrait in progress, as well as himself, investigates the very structures that make self-imaging possible for women artists, exposing them in a way that is far less accessible to the woman painter. Gump's portrait highlights the problem of the mirror and the painting, making the viewer alert to the problems of the mirror and the work of art, reminding us that neither the mirror nor the portrait are normal visual experiences since they form part of a tripartite structure that separates out reality from its mirror and its copy.

While the technologies of the mirror and theories of vision are developing rapidly throughout this period, the images of Anguissola, Gentileschi, and Peeters, combined with the discussion of self and the mirror in Davies's *Nosce Teipsum*, illustrates that the mirror is still being used in its traditional context of sin, pride and vanity, and blended with Platonic theories of vision to fall in line with the Pauline directive. Mirrors are implicated in the struggles for definition and power, particularly as they relate to women, who are at the centre of representation in their self-portraits but

who are short of institutional and formal power. In the development of ways of seeing, the mirror appears as a tool of self-improvement, as a means of gazing into the truth of the soul, or what the soul ought to be, and as a motif for true self worth. The mirror and its reflection both expands and limits the possibilities of the gaze, whether by offering the woman an opportunity to redirect the gaze that falls upon her, thus securing her privacy, or by inhibiting the content and composition of the female self-portrait.

The mirror becomes an important part of knowing the self, whether in spiritual or practical terms. However, the mirror is associated with knowledge more broadly than this. The tradition for compendia which often used 'mirror', such as *Uranoscopia Britannica., or, An almanack and prognostication for the yeare of Christ 1650. and from the creation, 5643. and the second after bissextile or leapeyear or a prospective glasse* (1650) by John Booker, saw knowledge, vision and mirrors related in a different way. Chapter five will consider the relation of microcosm/microcosm and vision, through a study of Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

Cosmology, religion and vision are in the seventeenth century interrelated. In chapter four I argued that although scientific advances were pushing forward the theories of optics and catoptrics, the traditional metaphors related to mirroring remained in currency. This chapter will examine the intersection of science with literature in order to show why there may be a resistance to freely expressing and investigating the progress of science. The chapter will discuss two printed texts from the period, both of which approach vision and the eye from very different viewpoints, which will establish examples of contemporary opinion on the topic of optics. However, beyond this, the chapter will centre on a discussion of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), tracing through a number of extracts his approach to vision and to the science that had the potential to re-order the trajectory of theology and culture in the seventeenth century. This chapter will discuss Milton's use and understanding of the ideas of microcosm and macrocosm as he creates them in *Paradise Lost*, carefully balancing the Ptolemaic (geocentric view in which earth is at the centre of the universe) and Copernican (heliocentric view where the sun is at the centre) ideas of the universe. Milton's work will, I argue, show a cautious, yet interested approach to Copernicus's heliocentric cosmology, and Milton strikes this balance in order to retain the existing theological order. I will show that there is an important relationship to be recognised between the eye, and the organising structures imposed by the concepts of microcosm and macrocosm. Science considered the eye to be a functional entry-point for information and knowledge, and

so the new information brought forward by Copernicus, that displaced the earth as the centre of the universe, was potentially destructive knowledge that threatened the ordered universe. The danger posed by such information cannot be underestimated and the consequences of speaking out are evidenced in the harsh and public punishment of figures such as Galileo who wrote about what the eye could see through the telescope. I will argue that the eye sits at the centre of the debate between theology and science and my argument will state that the ‘relationship between the little and large worlds represents a universal harmonious order’ which ‘establishes the place of everything else’.⁵⁸² The final section will consider Eve’s mirror-moment when she catches sight of herself in the pool, shortly after awaking in Eden, drawing on the earlier discussions of self-discovery and self-recognition in chapters three and four, and noticing the ways in which the themes of power and hierarchy established elsewhere in Milton’s epic appear in Eve’s moment. Societal hierarchical power prevents Eve from having the opportunity of experiencing and coming to understand herself, in the way that Narcissus comes to know himself.

To return to the idea of microcosm and macrocosm, the OED defines ‘microcosm’ as ‘human nature or experience considered as representing the counterpart in miniature of divine or universal nature; the human individual in general’, and this definition was first used in 1475. In 1606, Ben Jonson used ‘microcosm’ in *Hymenaei* to mean globe, a usage which is now obsolete. In a more general sense, the OED describes ‘microcosm’ as ‘a place, situation etc., regarded as encapsulating in miniature the characteristic qualities or features of something much larger, and offers John Donne’s ‘An Anatomy of the World’ (1611) as an example, in the lines

⁵⁸² Philip C. Almond, *Adam and Eve in Seventeenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) p.40. See pp.39-41 for Almond’s full discussion on microcosm and macrocosm.

‘She to whom this world must itself refer, / As suburbs, or the microcosm of her’
L.235-236).⁵⁸³ Philip C. Almond argues that ‘intimately linked to the idea of man as
the crown of creation’ was the ‘imagining of him as “a little world” who
comprehended within himself all, or most of, the world about him’ and that ‘this
[idea] was a seventeenth century commonplace’.⁵⁸⁴ On a very basic level, man was a
microcosm ‘because he shared in the characteristic features of other beings higher or
lower than himself’ but more significantly, ‘man was a microcosm because he was
the epitome of creation’.⁵⁸⁵ Finally, man was the microcosm because ‘God repeated
in man his creation of the universe’ so that ‘he was that which held creation together
and links the opposites’.⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁸³ *The Oxford English Dictionary Online*, <<http://dictionary.oed.com>> [accessed 15 October 2009];
John Donne, ‘An Anatomy of the World’ in *The Complete English Poems* (London: Penguin, 1971),
p.276.

⁵⁸⁴ Almond, p.39.

⁵⁸⁵ Almond, p.39.

⁵⁸⁶ Almond, p.40.

*Added by a Friend of the Publisber
of this Piece of Crollius and
Paracelsus in English.*

CROLLIUS.

T*wo things are seen within this Volumn small
the great and the lesse Worlds Originall,
Here may man see as in a glasse his shape
by which he may corruption quite escape.
The Author was divinely taught that writ,
so likewise was he that translated it.
Here may be seen, what nature is and grace.
what God his back parts are, and what his face.
Here is both heaven and earth in Harmony,
a cure to ease us of our vanity.
The true Elixir's here, the stone that doth
transmute the outward and the inward both :
And make all heavenly like to Chrystall fine,
yea like to Christ the prototype divine.
What is above is likewise here below,
as this Anatomy of man doth show.
The man in all the parts of him consists
of what the Macrocosme composed is.
The World it selfe's a man, though great and big,
and Man himselfe's a World ; do but here dig,
A treasure will appear more worth then all,
by which he may be ransom'd from his fall.*

The

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⁵⁸⁷ Oswald Croll, *Philosophy Reformed & Improved in Four Profound Tractates*, trans. by Henry Pinnel (London: Printed by M. S. for Lodowick May Lloyd, 1657), EEBO, image 11, left page.

This sense of man as God's microcosm of his creation is evident in the commendatory verse (above) of Oswald Croll's account of Paracelsian medicine, translated by Henry Pinnel, a former chaplain in the Parliamentarian army. Pinnel captures a particular sense of the bodily or physical with the use of 'shape', 'prototype', 'anatomy' and 'transmute', a sense that is combined with the poem's overt theme of microcosm and macrocosm considered in its religious context. The 'particular foundation of Croll's medical theory' is 'the Paracelsian notion of a harmonious correspondence between the macrocosm and the microcosm'.⁵⁸⁸ Croll's short text puts together religion and cosmology, and balances them against each other to provide a harmonious exemplary mirror, from which the individual can learn. Croll's text may be considered a microcosm of Milton's epic, as the aims and achievements of both texts, captured in Croll's line, 'Here is *both* heaven *and* earth *in* Harmony' (l.9), show the 'divinely instituted structure in microcosm and macrocosm'.⁵⁸⁹ Compendius texts, like Croll's, often used 'mirror' or related mirror-terms in the title, to reflect – both in a metaphorical and literal sense – that 'nothing was impossible and everything was worthy of study in this desperate and doomed attempt to order the ever increasing corpus of knowledge', which was intended to 'reflect, as a microcosm, God's plan for the universe'.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁸ Linden, p.213.

⁵⁸⁹ Marshall Grossman, *Aemilia Lanyer: gender, genre, and the canon* (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), p.133.

⁵⁹⁰ Paolo L. Rossi, 'Society, Culture and the Dissemination of Learning' in *Science, Culture and Popular Belief in Renaissance Europe* ed. by Stephen Pumfrey, Paolo L. Rossi & Maurice Slawinski (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 143-175. Nicholas Jolly argues that although it is easy to assume that 'all that is vital in seventeenth-century philosophy' can be 'attributed to the scientific revolution', many of the most significant developments can be 'traced to the demands of theology' (p.363). Jolly explains that early medieval scholars often made little or no distinction between theology and philosophy, seeing each as connected or supporting the other, but over time this changed so that 'scholasticism is marked by an increasing emphasis on the distinction between philosophy and theology' (p.364). See Nicholas Jolly, 'The Relation Between Theology and Philosophy' in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* ed. by Daniel Garber & Michael Ayers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), i, pp.363-388.

This thesis focuses on the intersections between literature and optical/catoptrical science, specifically with regard to how the mirror and vision relate to each other – Gump’s self-portrait (figure twenty) uses the mirror and the portrait to illustrate the mutability of the looking-glass and its reflection, as well as to indicate the potential difficulties with what we see in the mirror or represented in a self-portrait. The powerful metaphoric connotations of the mirror and vision are built and rebuilt, adapted and used in literature and visual culture, as we can see in Hans Baldung Grien’s image (figure 13) which shows the mirror in its traditional context of pride, decay and vanity, and in Jan Brueghel’s painting (figure 1), which highlights the importance of optics, as the canvas is filled with particularly visual objects such as paintings, but also the tools of vision, such as the telescope. As chapter two revealed, the visual theories are often intertwined with expressions of devotion, and this chapter builds on this relation, continuing to examine the differing approaches of science and religion to the eye and, in part, to the mirror. Milton’s *Paradise Lost* examines the events of Adam and Eve’s experiences at the beginning of Genesis, and a central focus in his retelling of their story is its cosmology which, coupled with Milton’s own approach to vision, provides parallels between the organising principles of microcosm and macrocosm, and the eye and vision.⁵⁹¹

‘Model worlds’, claims Elizabeth Spiller, ‘whether poetry and experiments’, or ‘the golden world of fiction...produce knowledge and virtue’.⁵⁹² Model worlds, such as Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, produce knowledge that is safe, that brings order and

⁵⁹¹ Rayna Kalas, in her analysis of ‘frame’ during the early modern period, notes that the word ‘frame’ ‘epitomizes a cosmological order, the kind of order considered characteristic of the sixteenth century by E. M. W. Tillyard...and...Foucault, who defines the sixteenth century as one organized according to resemblance and similitude’, (Kalas, *Frame, Glass, Verse: The Technology of Poetic Invention in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2007), p.58.

⁵⁹² Elizabeth Spiller, *Science, Reading and Renaissance Literature: The Art of Making Knowledge, 1580-1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.27.

structure and, unlike in the real world, a model world can be used more easily to teach, influence and direct an individual's world view. In Croll's short verse we find described a particular aim to characterise the text as one that teaches.⁵⁹³ The compendious nature of the text's scope is encapsulated in the opening two lines which claim that the volume will cover 'the great and the less Worlds Originall' (l.2), that is, the macrocosm and the microcosm.⁵⁹⁴ In this 'glasse', as Croll refers to his text, man may see 'his Shape', as if in a mirror, and thus 'corruption quite escape' (l.3). This line appears to call upon the religious import of the mirror's imagery encoded in St. Paul's 'now through a glass darkly' in 1 Corinthians, hinting that by using it the individual can learn about him or herself, and therefore avoiding any of the mirror's negative influences. These four opening lines bring together microcosm and macrocosm, seeing, and the exemplary mirror metaphor: this volume, with its philosophical emphasis, will allow individuals to see and learn about themselves, as they might in the looking-glass. The lines that follow indicate the theme of divine knowledge and learning, with the confirmation that the text's original author and its translator are suitably taught, and a specific reference to the bible. It is Croll's aim to

⁵⁹³ Oswald Croll (c.1560-1608) was a professor of alchemy and medicine at the University of Marburg in Germany, who believed that chemistry and alchemy were closely related (Allen G. Debus, *The Chemical Philosophy: Paracelsian Science and Medicine in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Science History Publications, 1977), vol. 1, pp. 117-126. Croll's text, and Paracelsian medicine in general, is often considered within the context of the importance of anatomy: Jonathan Sawday notes that 'anatomy...was seen as vital to the underpinning of [the cosmological] hierarchies, providing that it was seen as a holistic undertaking' and that 'emphasis within Paracelsianism on the unity and order of the cosmos appealed to those who were anxious to defend older political and intellectual hierarchies' (see Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the human body in Renaissance culture* (London & New York: Routledge, 1995, repr 1996), p.232-233, in particular the chapter entitled 'Royal Science'). Also, see Walter Pagel, *Paracelsus: An introduction to Philosophical Medicine in the Era of the Renaissance* (Basel & London: Karger, 1982).

⁵⁹⁴ Stanton J. Linden finds that the poem is 'representative of the large, interesting, but artistically uneven body of Renaissance alchemical verse' and that it is 'characteristic of the Christ-philosopher's stone parallels and themes of spiritual purification and transformation present in much alchemical writing of this era' (Stanton J. Linden, *Darke Hieroglyphicks: alchemy in English literature from Chaucer to the Restoration* (Lexington: University of Kentucky, 1996), p.214).

present a balanced account which will act as ‘a cure *to ease us of our vanity*’ (l.9-10). Presumably the vanity to which Croll refers is the assumption that the earth sits at the centre of the universe, an idea that has already been challenged [by Copernicus in *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (*On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres*), 1543, and by Galileo in *Sidereus Nuncius* (*Starry Messenger*), 1610], by the time Croll publishes this text in 1657. Differing, changing world-views were already common, claims Spiller, during the Early Modern period. She finds that ‘ranging from the “golden world” of poetry set out in Sidney’s *Defence of Poesy*, the “green” world depicted in Renaissance pastoral and romance’, to ‘the architectural form of the Globe theatre which encompassed “Heavens” and “Hell” within itself, the “hypothetical” model of planetary motions described by Copernicus’ and ‘...the terellas designed by William Gilbert for his research into the earth’s magnetism’, there is ample evidence that “The Renaissance was characterised by the rediscovery of a belief in the human imagination...[that] leads to the creation of a ‘second-world attitude’”.⁵⁹⁵ Milton’s epic, which becomes a microcosm presenting his own world-view, indicates and incorporates those theories of planetary movement that have been proposed during his lifetime.

Croll’s short verse illustrates its concern with serving as a ‘mirror’ for the reader, using ‘glasse’, ‘stone’, and Chrystall’ to emphasise this function of the text, and blending it with the divine application of the mirror – that is, to make use of it for spiritual self-improvement. Lines seventeen and eighteen figure man as the microcosm of ‘Christ *the prototype divine*’, suggesting that man, ‘in *all the parts of him consists / of what the Macrocosme composed is* (l.17-18). Man, then, becomes

⁵⁹⁵ Spiller, p.29 [Spiller quotes Harry Berger in *Second World and Green World*, p.9.

God's mirror on earth so that, interchangeably, 'The World it selfe's a man' and 'Man *himselfe's* a World' (l.19-20). If the reader should seek to 'dig' through Croll's text, then a 'treasure' which will free man from the sins of the Fall will be revealed (l.21-22).

God's Universe: Defining the Eye



Albrecht Dürer, *Astronomer* (1500), British Museum, London⁵⁹⁶

Chapter four noted that during the seventeenth century, scientific progress was made in visual theories, with key figure such as Descartes, Kepler, Galileo and Newton all making significant observations and publishing new, much improved theories in the

⁵⁹⁶ Albrecht Dürer, *Astronomer* (1500), British Museum, London, *Web Gallery of Art* <http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/d/durer/2/12/1_1500/index.html>.

fields of optics, catoptrics and astronomy. However, although more advanced work and new ideas emerged, confirming the intromission theory, previous models and beliefs persisted alongside these. For example, the editor's footnote that accompanies Robert Herrick's (1591-1674), in 'Upon her Eyes' (1648) states that here the word 'intelligence' is intended to mean 'the angelic spirits which were thought to control the motion of each 'sphere' in the universe, according to Ptolemaic theory'.⁵⁹⁷ That the eye is provider and participant in the body's most vital sense is at times disputed, but Herrick elevates the eyes of the lady to the heavens:

Clear are her eyes,
Like purest skies,
Discovering from thence
A baby there
That turns each sphere,
Like an intelligence.⁵⁹⁸

Herrick adheres to Ptolemy's geocentric view of the universe – that is, the opinion that the earth was the centre of the universe and that other planets rotated around it – even though the Copernican heliocentric view had already been expressed in 1543. The heliocentric theory, which put the sun at the centre of the earth and noted that all else rotated round it, was supported in the seventeenth century by Galileo's observations and Kepler's theories. Herrick chooses to hold to a theory that has already been contested, perhaps because it was considered safer to do so. Unlike Croll, Herrick does not seek to balance his world-view, but does go on to make a

⁵⁹⁷ Maclean, p.134. There is, however, no evidence in the OED that would support Maclean's theory. The only definition in the OED that would appear to make sense within this usage of 'intelligence' is, 'a piece of information or news', which does not appear to fit with the poem.
<<http://dictionary.oed.com/>>.

⁵⁹⁸ Robert Herrick, 'Upon Her Eyes' in *Ben Jonson and the Cavalier Poets* ed. by Hugh Maclean (New York & London: Norton, 1974), p.134. Stuart Clark, in *Vanities of the Eye* addresses the issue of the hierarchy of the senses, finding that Augustine, Aristotle and Plato all privilege sight over the other senses, and that this opinion later became commonplace, since the 'eyes provided the most direct knowledge of things' (Clark, p.9-10).

connection between the eyes and the universe – a connection that is repeated in two other texts of the period, as I will show. Herrick describes the lady's eyes as 'like purest skies' imbuing upon them a heavenly quality, and compares her eyes to 'spheres', thus elevating the importance of her eyes and, in using the term 'sphere', he equates them with the significance of the earth's position in the geocentric universe. However, although Herrick's representation of the eye is positive, there exists in the same period a series of negative connotations which, essentially, see the eye held responsible for the sins of Adam and Eve. This relation of the eyes to the universe, which suggests the eyeball as a miniature representation of the earth or a microcosm, is a theme that Milton explores in *Paradise Lost*, and which is found in two texts that discuss the eye.

In this period, clergyman Robert Dingley (1618/19-1660) and physician and anatomist Helkiah Crooke (1576-1648) both published texts which explored aspects of the eye in relation to these themes. Dingley's *Divine Opticks* (1652)⁵⁹⁹ and Crooke's *Mikrokosmographia* of 1615 offered competing viewpoints on the functions and importance of the eye: the title of Dingley's text would appear to suggest a blend of science, coded in the use of the term 'opticks', with religion, while Crooke's title tells us explicitly that his text will be a study of the microcosm – that is, the human body. Both authors situate the eye in the universe – Dingley sees the eye as a 'miniature globe', and Crooke uses the term 'globe' repeatedly in his descriptions of the eye. The eye is then aligned, according to their allegiances, with either religion or science: Dingley links the eyes with sin and the Fall, as they succumb to the temptations before them, while Crooke considers visual powers as

⁵⁹⁹ Marcus Nordlund gives a full account of Dingley's text, analysing it in order to 'relate key aspects of reformed (anti)visuality' to the commonly drawn analogy between the eye and the camera obscura (Nordlund, pp.136-153) – my discussion will focus on the religious import of Dingley's message.

the body's guide. Crooke assigns free will and choice to the individual who is presented with all that appears before the eyes. However, in *Paradise Lost*, Milton connects vision's fallibility with sin, fear and Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden, in ways that seem similar to Dingley's approach. The eye, aligned with the falseness of 'images' and 'idols', is the site of sin's entrance into the body. Stuart Clark reminds us that during the Medieval and Early Modern periods it was thought that 'the eyes gave access to all manner of physical horrors and moral evils which corrupted the seer and destroyed his or her moral and psychological stability'.⁶⁰⁰ The principal failing of the eyes was also their 'essential function' – that is, that they 'instantly "represent and deliver all that they see"'.⁶⁰¹ Blindness, on the other hand, 'freed the individual from peril and temptation...and led to strength of spirit, clearer apprehension and imagination, perfect memory, and...better contemplation of things "high and heavenly"'.⁶⁰² Although scientific thought was progressing, older (and less accurate) ideas persisted, as we find in Herrick's poem. Dingley and Crooke, however opposed their ideologies were, shared a common comparison: both writers draw parallels between the eye and the universe, and so too does Milton in *Paradise Lost*, in which he approaches the emerging technologies and theories with caution, presenting them as part of the existing theological order of his story.

Dingley's title, *Divine Opticks, or A Treatise of the Eye, Discovering The Vices and Virtues thereof*, appears to suggest that throughout his text he will present a balanced account of the eye, discussing both its 'vices' and 'virtues'.⁶⁰³ However,

⁶⁰⁰ Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.20-23.

⁶⁰¹ Clark, p.21.

⁶⁰² Clark, p.23.

⁶⁰³ Robert Dingley, *Divine Opticks*, London, 1652, EEBO, title page, document image 1 [accessed 13 October 2009].

addressing the same themes that we will find in *Paradise Lost*, Dingley blames the eye for causing the Fall so that ‘misery man first began in that sense’, though he also praises the eye, referring to ‘the wonderful Frame thereof’. He refers to the eye as ‘a little globe full of visory spirits’ which ‘resembles the round animated world’.⁶⁰⁴ Dingley depicts the eye as a miniature ‘globe’, a microcosm situated in the eyes of the human body. Dingley sees this ‘animated world’ encapsulated in the eyes as apertures for sin. The earth, the centre of the Ptolemaic universe, is located for Dingley in the eyes. Dingley’s cosmography combines with religious doctrine to foreground the eye as the site of Original Sin. Milton’s long poem is akin to Dingley’s work as it is, at its most basic level, a deeply and fundamentally religious tale. However, we will find that Milton’s work differs from Dingley’s in his approach to cosmology since *Paradise Lost* does take account for both theories.

Nordlund notes Dingley’s Puritanical presentation of the eye as a ‘semi-autonomous henchman (broker, spy or pimp) who goes forth into the world and restlessly hunts out immortal sights for his vulnerable master; an *active* capacity for selection which seems to be the root of the ocular evil’.⁶⁰⁵ Dingley has a long list of grievances with the eye and although he comments that ‘the eye is made up many wonders, and large Tracts are written of it Philosophically’, his overwhelming response to the eye is that of negativity.⁶⁰⁶ He finds that ‘the eye is not onely a means to wrong our selves, but others’ and even in ‘dreams of the night...poor Seekers and seduced ones are ensnared by the Devil’.⁶⁰⁷ In his list of the failings of the eye he includes among others the ‘proud and scornful eye’, a ‘wanton and lustful

⁶⁰⁴ Dingley, image no. 24, p.36.

⁶⁰⁵ Nordlund, p.137.

⁶⁰⁶ Dingley, EEBO, image no 24, p.34.

⁶⁰⁷ Dingley, EEBO, image no 22, p.30.

eye’, an ‘idolatrous eye’, a ‘furious and wrathfull eye’ and an ‘envious carping eye’.⁶⁰⁸ Dingley sees only the endless potential dangers presented in daily life, finding little cause for trust, marginalising the science of the eye and his sense of cosmology in favour of a heavily religious viewpoint.

Dingley sets himself out as following something similar to the extramission theory, claiming that ‘visory spirits...flow from the brain, into the eye’ and from these flow ‘the visible and reflected rays in the eye as in a glass’ which ‘form an image of the thing seen’, which is then ‘conveyed to the brain’.⁶⁰⁹ This shows us, again, that even though this theory were technically outdated and wrong, it still held currency throughout the period regardless. The anatomical tracts, Dingley tells us, are written to let us know ‘the frame of it, and display the several colours, muscles, tunicles and humours that be in the eye; all of which the curious Anatomist an exact Arist hath taken notice’: Dingley makes clear his position within the scientific debate and makes mention of those who have written in detail about such things, signalling to the reader that the science of vision shall not be his topic.⁶¹⁰ Unlike Croll, Dingley does not aim to bring balance to his ideas, instead offering a view that is rather one-sided.

While for Dingley the eye was the aperture for sin and allied to religious doctrine, Crooke’s text approaches the eye from the history of science and anatomy. Crooke’s *Mikrokosmographia* of 1615, was the first anatomical text written in English by a physician rather than a surgeon. There were attempts to suppress the document, made by surgeons, the president of the college of surgeons and the bishop of London, but these were unsuccessful and Crooke’s description of the body of man went on to

⁶⁰⁸ Dingley, EEBO, image no, 19, pp.24, 25, and image no 20, p. 27.

⁶⁰⁹ Dingley, EEBO, image no 24, p.34.

⁶¹⁰ Dingley, EEBO, image no 24, p.34.

become an extremely successful text.⁶¹¹ In Crooke's detailed book, which was reprinted twice (1616 and 1618) and was addressed to the 'Barber-Chirurges' of the day, he spends thirty-one pages on the anatomy of the eye, covering its physiology in detail. He begins by making a direct comparison between the sun and the eye: 'for as the Sunne (saith Galen in the 10. Chapter of his third book *de usu partium*) in the great world, so is the Eye in the Body.'⁶¹² In Genesis, light was the second element that God created. Having generated heaven and earth, 'Then God said, Let there be light: and there was light'.⁶¹³ The marginal note that appears alongside this verse states that 'the light was made before ether sunne or moone was created', and verse fourteen elaborates on how light was developed: 'And God said, Let there be lightes in the firmament of the heaven to separate the daie from the night, & let them be for signes, and for seasons, and for daies and yeres'.⁶¹⁴ Here the light is harnessed in the 'sunné, the moone, and the stares' and provides a structured hierarchy that brings a regulatory control to God's earth.⁶¹⁵ Crooke, in drawing his comparison between the sun and the eye, suggests the primacy of vision and indicates its position in the body. Crooke's cosmology allows for the harmonizing of the microcosm of man with the macrocosm of the heavens. Like Croll, Crooke offers a point of view that presents a balance of heavens and earth and it is this sense of balance that will characterise Milton's text.

⁶¹¹ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* < <http://www.oxforddnb.com/> > [accessed 19 October 2009].

⁶¹² Helkiah Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia: a description of the body of man* (Barbican: 1615 repr 1651), EEBO, document image 214, p.397. Marc Bensimon notes that in Bosch's *Seven Deadly Sins* the sun is 'the symbol of God's all-seeing eye' and 'the eye of God looking at man is really a mirror in which man sees himself' p.247 (see Marc Bensimon, 'Modes of Perception of Reality in the Renaissance' in *The Darker Vision of the Renaissance: Beyond the Fields of Reason* ed. by Robert S. Kinsman (Berkeley & London: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 221-272).

⁶¹³ *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition* (Massachusetts: Henrickson Publishers, 2007), p.1, Genesis 1:3.

⁶¹⁴ Genesis 1:3, note g; Genesis 1:14.

⁶¹⁵ Genesis 1:14, note k.

The eye to Crooke is as important as the light which makes the earth both intelligible and inhabitable and his view of the purpose of eyes is balanced, neither painting them as inlets for sin or as useless for divine perception: ‘these Eyes are the Organs of the faculty of Seeing, which we use as spies, not only to avoid those things which would offend us, and to lead us unto that which is profitable...but especially that by those things which are visible we may take consideration of the omnipotency of the invisible god’.⁶¹⁶ The eyes are not criminalized but instead celebrated as offering the individual the opportunity to escape the dangerous or potentially hurtful and, most of all, the opportunity to appreciate God’s power and the beauty of his gifts on earth.

Crooke goes on in his description of the eye, to reduce it to its component parts, taking each in turn to explain their functions, relying particularly on the works of Galen and Vesalius as his guides. This demonstrates the depth and range of texts, and ideas, that were in print and in use during the period in which Milton was writing.

⁶¹⁶ Crooke, EEBO document image 214, p.397.

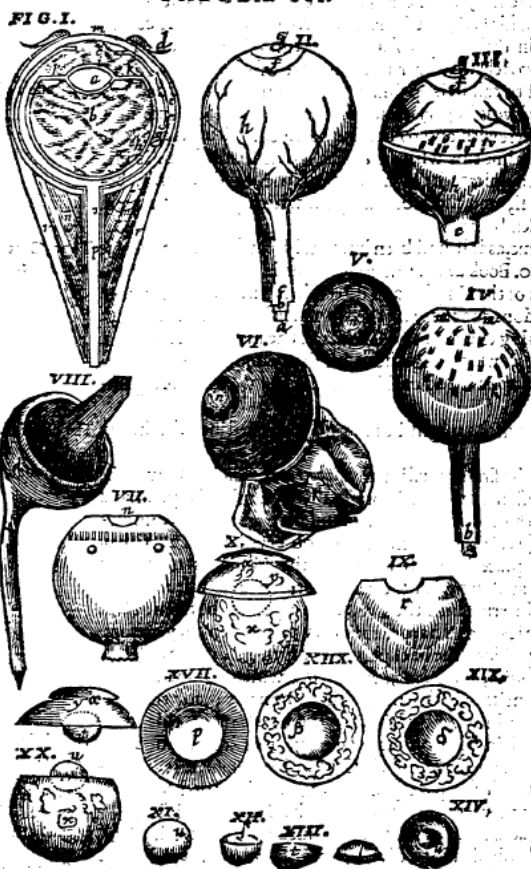
brane because, saith he, it differeth from the *Dura Meninx* of the brain, not onely in substance but also in thickeffe and in figure. For by it self alone it maketh another sphericall cavity arising beyond the superficies of the hard Membrane, and both within and without is free from any connexion.

- Table 3. figure 1. sheweth the Membranes and humors of the Eye by lines drawn after the manner of a true Eye.
 Figure 2. sheweth the horny coat with a portion of the Optick Nerve.
 Figure 3. sheweth the same divided by a transverse section.
 Figure 4. sheweth the Uvea or Grapy coat with a portion of the Optick Nerve.
 Figure 5. The Grapy coat of a mans Eye.
 Figure 6. The Horny, Grapy, and the Choroides.
 Figure 7. The interior superficies of the Grapy coat.
 Figure 8. The Posterior part of the horny coat together with the said Net coat separated from the Eye.
 Figure 9. The coat of the vitreous or glassie humor cald *Hyaloides*.
 Figure 10. Three humors joined together.
 Figure 11. The forward part of the Crystalline.
 Figure 12. The Crystalline humor covered yet with his coat.
 Figure 14. The Crystalline of a mans Eye.
 Figure 15. His Coat.
 Figure 16. The watery humor disposed upon the Crystalline round about.
 Figure 17. The hairy processes be coming by sprinkled through the fore side of the coat of the glassy humor.
 Figure 18. The fore side of the glassy humor.
 Figure 19. The place of the watery humor.
 Figure 20. The Glassy humor containing or comprehending the Crystalline.

- The explication of the first figure by it self.
 a, The Crystalline humor.
 b, The Glassy humor.
 c, The watery humor.
 d, The utmost coat called *Adnata*.
 e, The dark part of the horny Tunicle which is not transparent.
 f, The Grapy coat called *Uvea*.
 g, The Net-like coat called *Retiformis*.
 h, The coat of the glassy humor called *Hyaloides*.
 i, The coat of the Crystalline.
 k k, The hairy processes cald *processus ciliares*.
 l, The impression of the grapy coat where it departed from the thick coat.
 m, The horny coat, a part of the thick coat.
 n n, The fat betwixt the Muscles.
 o, The optick Nerve.
 p, The *Dura Meninx*.
 q, The *Pia Mater* or thin *Meninx*.
 r r, The Muscles.

- The explication of the other 19 figures together.
 a, 2, 4, 8 The Optick Nerve.
 b, 2, 4, The thin *Meninx* clothing the Nerve.
 c, 2, 3, The thick *Meninx* clothing the Nerve.
 d, 8, The posterior part of the horny coat.
 e, 8, The coat called *Retina* gathered together on an heap.
 f, 2, 3, The Rainbow of the Eye.
 g, 2, 3, The lesser circle of the Eye or the *pupilla*.
 h, 2, 3, Vessels dispersed through the *Dura Meninx*.
 i, 3, 6, The Grapy coat but i. in the 3. fig. sheweth how the vessels doe join the hard membrane with the Grapy coat.
 k, 2, 6, The horny or hard membrane turned over.
 l, 3, 4, Certain fibres and strings of vessels whereby the Grapy coat is tyed to the Horny.
 m, m, 4, 5, The impression of the Grapy coat where it recedeth or departed from the horny coat.
 n, n, 4, 5, 6, 7, The *pupilla* or Apple of the Eye.
 o, 6, 7, The Ciliar or hairy processes.
 p, 7, The beginning of the grapy coat made of a thin membrane dilated, but p. in the 17. figure sheweth the ciliar processes sprinkled through the forepart of the glassy humor.
 r, 9, The bosom or depression of the glassy humour receiving the Crystalline.
 s, 12, 15, The breadth of the coat of the Crystalline.
 t, 12, 13, 14, 16, The posterior part of the Crystalline humor which is sphericall or round.
 u, 11, 14, 20, The forepart of the same Crystalline depressed.
 x, 10, 20, The amplitude of the glassy humor.
 y, 10, 16, 19, The amplitude of the watry humor.
 z, 10, The place where the Glassy humor is distinguished from the watry by the interposition of the *Hyaloides* or coat of the glassy humor.
 a, 10, 16, The place where the grapy Coat swimmeth in the watry humor.
 b, 18, The cavity or depression of the glassy humor which remaineth when the Crystalline is exempted or taken from it.
 c, 19, The cavity or depression of the watry humor made by the same means.

TABULA. III.



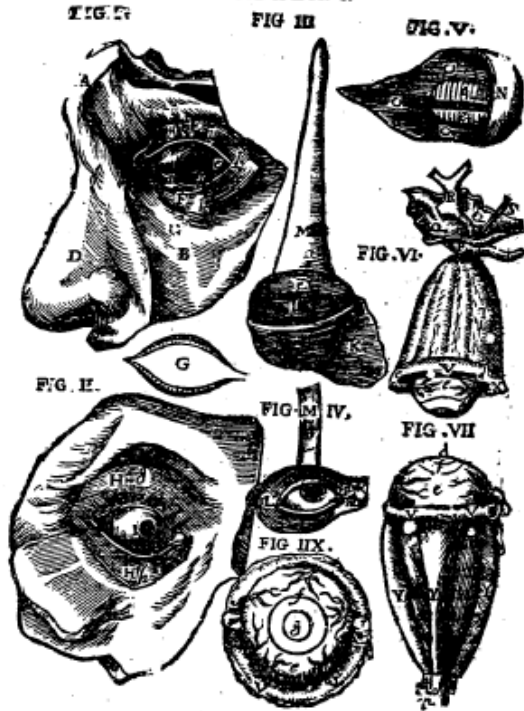
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eyes, they would have deformed the face, as we perceive by those who are troubled with the disease before named called *Fistula lacrymalis* or the dropping Fistule.

Table 1, Fig. 1. sheweth the whole eye, not at all dissected, his bones, together with the eye-lids, and the hairs thereof.
 Fig. 2, shewing the eye-lid having the skin taken away.
 Fig. 3, and 4, exhibiteth the muscles of the eye-lids.
 Fig. 5, sheweth the eye-lids separated and inverted.
 Fig. 6, and 7, sheweth the fig. of the whole eye with his muscles drawn out of the Skull and freed from the eye-lids.
 Fig. 8. The fore side of the globe of the eye.

A 1, The forehead bone.
 B 2, the bone of the upper Jaw.
 C 1, the yoke bone.
 D 1, the Nose.
 E 1,3, the upper eye-lid.
 F 1,3, the lower eye-lid.
 a a 1, the Tarsus or little griffle wherein the hairs grow.
 b b 1, the hairs of the eye-lid.
 c 1, 6, the greater Canthus or corner of the eye.
 d 1, 6, the lesser Canthus or corner of the eye.
 e 1,5,6,7,8, the membrane called Adnate which in the 6,7, and 8 fig. is intertexted or woven with veins,
 f 7,8, the Rain-bow called Iris.
 g 1,2, the hollownesse of the upper eye-lid & in the 7, and 8. the apple of the eye.
 h 1,2, the under cavity in the lower eye-lid.
 m n 4,7,8, two holes in the greater angle or corner of the eye.
 o 7, the optick nerve
 p q 7, the *Pia meninx* at p, and the thick at q, which do invest the optick nerve.
 r 7, 8, a Caruncle or little flesh in the interior corner.
 G, the Cartilages or griffles of the eye-lids called *Tarsi*.
 H H 2, the orbicular or round muscle of the eye-lid without the skin.
 I 2, the hornie coat containing the Rain-bow and the apple of the eye.
 K 3,4, the orbicular muscle of the eye-lid set alone, but in the 4, it is described compassing the whole eye-lid which *Vesalins* divided into two.
 L 4, in this place *Vesalins* set the second.
 M 3,4, the right muscle of the eye-lid set alone.
 N 5, the outward part of the eye-lid.
 O O O 5, the concavous and interior face of the eye-lid.
 P 6, the interior portion of the wedge-bone where-through the optick nerve doth passe.
 Q Q 6, a part of the thick membrane or *Meninx*.
 R 6, the concourse or meeting of the optick nerves.
 S. 6, the moving nerve of the eye.
 T 6, the fat between the muscles.
 U 6, 7, 8, a part of the coat called Adnata stretched under the eye-lids. X 6, Membranes going from the Skull-skin to the muscles of the eye on the one side. T 7, the muscles of the eye on the one side.

TABULA I.



under the eye-lids. X 6, Membranes going from the Skull-skin to the muscles of the eye on the one side.

The moving of tears, how many wayes.
 1. By expression.

Nature therefore studying to preserve the beauty and comeliness of the face, as also the clearness of the sight, hath provided means to move them by expression or by dilatation and attraction. By expression the tears are moved either when we rub our eyes, or by the coldness of the air, or by the wind, or by some grief of mind and weeping fit; at which times they drop out like plentiful sweat, or rather like a bubbling stream through those holes which we said before were formed in the terminations of the brims of the eye-lids: for at such times the muscles of the face and of the adjacent parts doe contract themselves sometimes with wayling and mourning, sometimes without; sometimes the Respiration being cut off in the midst with a sobbing stay and the voice broken about the top of the *Larynx*, yea sometimes quite intercepted: and thus is this matter of the tears moved by Expression.

2. by dilatation.
 Hippocrates.

By dilatation they are drawn out sometimes by heat, often by laughter, sometimes by the Sun, for saith Hippocrates in his Book *de videndi acie*, the Eye being not able to resist a bright object, calleth out the matter of the tears to succour it, which also in the conflict is heated. Anger also and a sharp Ague do by dilatation provoke and call out the matter of the tears.

Aristotle.

And in such an Ague saith Hippocrates in his first Book *Epidemion* (if other signes be not mortall) tears so appearing doe foreshew a flux of blood by the nose. That these are the very causes of the profusion of Tears, we may gather out of Aristotle in the 13 Probleme of the fifth Section. *A-quapendens* is of opinion that Nature purgeth the tears by an expulsive faculty given to the Eyes

However, while Crooke breaks down the eye, reducing it to its mechanical parts, he does not strip it (or the human body) of any sense of spirituality. Firstly, in discussing the senses, Crooke describes the eyes as ‘spies or Centinels’ which ‘day and night keepe warch for vs’ and which should be used to ‘take view of those infinite Distances and glorious bodies in them’.⁶¹⁹ Secondly, Crooke has a chapter entitled ‘How profitable and helpfull Anatomy is to the knowledge of God’, in which he justifies the processes and knowledge sought by anatomy, by linking it to God: ‘His incredible wisdome appeareth in the admirable contabulation or composition of the whole’. Thus, Crooke provides intimate links between man and God, by framing it in terms of anatomy and the relation of the microcosm to the macrocosm, balancing and justifying his science with this spiritual aspect.

Thus far, we have seen Croll’s account, which offers itself as an exemplary mirror, and seeks to bring harmony. Addressing the themes of microcosm and macrocosm, Croll argues that the ‘anatomy of Man...consists of what the Macrocosm composed is’, comparing the structures of the body with those of the universe. While Dingley largely shuns the science in favour of religion, he does consider the eye as a tiny globe. That, however, is as far as his engagement with science goes. Crooke, on the other hand, is more in line with Croll, perhaps only to add validity to his largely scientific, anatomical text. Crooke situates his craft, and the human body, at the centre of God’s world, placing it as a microcosm of God’s universe, which again provides a structural framework that both validates and organises the body.

⁶¹⁹ Crooke, EEBO document image 15, p.6.

While Croke makes his sources quite obvious and therefore clearly follows specific theories of vision, Robert Burton makes no such claims in *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). As is often the case in the early modern period, Burton begins by stating that ‘sight is held to be the most precious, and the best and that by reason of his object; it sees the whole body at once; by it we learn, and discern all things, a sense most excellent for use’.⁶²⁰ Burton expands his description of sight and specifies that there are three things required for us to see – ‘the object, the organ, and the medium’ and he tells us that the object is ‘that which is to be seen’; the organ is ‘the eye, and chiefly the apple of it’ through which the optic nerves send the sight to the ‘common sense’; and the medium is the ‘illumination of the air which comes from light’ (i.i.157-158). However, beyond this level of description Burton will not go. He appears to be unwilling to endorse either the ‘*intra mittendo*’ or the ‘*extra mittendo*’, instead commenting that many have already disputed these theories in turn, and that they are the problem of the ‘perspectives’ of which ‘Alhazen the Arabian, Vitellio, Roger Bacon, Baptista Porta, Guidus Ubaldus, Aquilonius, etc., have written whole volumes’ (i.i.158). Burton displays his knowledge of the existing, contrasting and competing modes of visual theory, the intramission and the extramission but, unlike Dingley, refuses to settle with any particular opinion. Milton approaches his interests in theology and science in a similar fashion, when he combines these disciplines in *Paradise Lost*, beginning with ideas of sight.

⁶²⁰ Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* ed. by Holbrook Jackson (New York: New York Review Books, 2001), i.i.157-158.

Milton and Sight

The previous section examined the extracts from Dingley and Crooke in order to illustrate the different ideas and opinions that available during Milton's time. Dingley's text characterised the eye as the inlet for sin and corruption. Within this context of religious belief, Marcus Nordlund's historical study of sight, *The Dark Lantern* considers in its second chapter visual experience in fifteenth and sixteenth century English and the 'growing unease' surrounding the eye.⁶²¹ Opening his chapter, Nordlund begins:

If our Biblical progenitors fell into disgrace with God because their eyes were opened, and these organs are both untrustworthy and lecherous, it follows that a good way to become a better Christian is to become blind.⁶²²

Like Dingley, Milton also finds the eyes to be the apertures that tempt the body into transgression. Records of Milton's life have shown that between 1650 and 1652, Milton's sight degenerated progressively to complete blindness. A German diplomat named Hermann Mylius records on 3 January 1652 that Milton was suffering from 'suffusion of the eyes' and, after their final meeting on 5 March, Mylius noted that Milton "was wholly deprived of his sight in his forty-second year".⁶²³ It is known from a note from 11 July 1652 that Milton struggled with the sense of helplessness caused by his blindness as he describes himself as "the man that wrot this booke is now growne blind and is led up and downe".⁶²⁴ His loss of sight perhaps, in part, accounts for the recurring theme of vision, seeing, and of light and dark in *Paradise*

⁶²¹ Marcus Nordlund, *The Dark Lantern: A Historical Study of Sight in Shakespeare, Webster, and Middleton* (Sweden: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1999), p.109.

⁶²² Nordlund, p.107.

⁶²³ Gordon Campbell, 'The Life Records' in *A Companion to Milton* ed. by Thomas N. Corns (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001) pp.483-498 (p.493).

⁶²⁴ Campbell, p.493.

Lost.⁶²⁵ Demaray argues that after blindness afflicted Milton in the 1650s, ‘he began to display in written works’ an ‘ever more intense absorption in themes of physical and spiritual vision’ which, Demaray claims, lead to an increased consciousness ‘of an assumed inner vision, the intuitive rational conformity of his mind with the supposed immaterial essences of being’.⁶²⁶ The language of vision is apparent throughout the text of *Paradise Lost*. There are several ‘visions’ displayed to different characters (such as in book XI when the angel Michael shows Adam the future of the world) and, alongside the uses of the telescopic metaphor, the eyes become the focus for much of the events in the garden of Eden.

In the beginning of book III, Milton concentrates on light and dark, on sight and blindness:

Hail, holy Light, offspring of heaven first-born
Or of the eternal coeternal beam
May I express thee unblamed? Since God is light,
And never but in unapproached light
Dwelt from eternity – dwelt then in thee,
Bright effluence of bright essence increate.
Or hear’st thou rather pure ethereal stream,
Whose fountain who shall tell? (III.1-8)

The ‘holy Light’ is the first ‘offspring’ of heaven and is therefore closest to God. The intensity of the light is drawn attention to with the double use of ‘bright’ which, coupled with the use of words that indicate the divinity of the light, create a sense of primacy. Yet, even though through blindness God’s light can be sensed, it can never be seen:

⁶²⁵ Clark tells us that ‘many early modern authors chose to express their own reservations about sight by playing with paradoxical arguments in favour of blindness’ and notes that ‘the simplest sixteenth-century version’ of these types of argument came in a paradox ‘entitled “That it is better to be blinde, th[a]n to see cleerely” in Ortensio Landi’s *Paradossi* (1543)’ which was translated into English by Anthony Munday in 1593. See pp.20-25 for Clark’s fuller discussion on the problems of vision and the ‘benefits’ of blindness.

⁶²⁶ Demaray, p.188.

thee I revisit safe,
And feel thy sovereign vital lamp; but thou
Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;
So thick a drop serene hath quenched their orbs,
Or dim suffusion veiled. (III.22-26)

Since Milton's own 'orbs' were 'veiled' by 'suffusion', he understands only too well the eternal darkness into which the individual can be plunged. The individual who is blind finds his or herself cut off from the world, 'not to me returns / Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn / Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose (III.41-43). Instead, 'cloud...and ever-during dark / Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men / Cut off, and, for the book of knowledge fair / Presented with a universal blank (III.48-48). However, although this enduring darkness prevents the reading of the Bible and the sight of nature's beauty, 'celestial Light, / Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers / Irradiate' (III.51-52), so that God's divinity can be appreciated from within. These internal 'eyes' 'purge and dismiss' all 'mist' so that the physically blind can 'see and tell / Of things invisible to mortal sight' – inward, celestial light is yet more powerful than anything the naked eye can perceive, and shows God's light just as well. This section supports Nordlund's claim that 'a good way to become a better Christian is to become blind', and links sight directly to religious devotion.⁶²⁷ By removing the eyes and the power of sight from the discussion, Milton avoids the sins and dangers to which vision is susceptible, meaning that God's 'celestial light' can be 'seen' inwardly without interruption from the world's temptations.

⁶²⁷ Nordlund, p.107.

In examining what he calls the ‘reformed eye’, Nordlund draws on several works, including that of Puritan George Hakewill (1578-1649) who published *The Vanitie of the Eie* in 1606.⁶²⁸ Hakewill espouses the potential benefits of blindness. This text was ‘First beganne for the Comfort of a Gentlewoman bereaved of her sight’ and later expanded for the ‘Common good’ and explains the evils of the eye which, numbered, include ‘That the eie is the instrument of wantonnesse, gluttony and covetousnesse’; ‘how pride is begotten and nourished by the eie’; ‘how the generall rebellion of the body is occasioned by the eie’; ‘Of the false reporte which the eie makes to the inner faculties in the apprehension of naturall things’; and ‘Howe Idolatry hath a kinde of necessarie dependance vppon the eie’.⁶²⁹ The ‘eie’ then, is still regarded as entirely unreliable by this Puritan author who sees it as the principle reason for Original Sin. As Nordlund concludes on the theme of Hakewill’s work, ‘All in all...the loss of sight is to be cherished’ because it ‘protects us from dangerous, deceptive, grievous, or enticing sights’ and also ‘enables the soul to concentrate on divinity’, so Milton’s passage above concludes about the ability to perceive God’s light.⁶³⁰ The works of Dingley and Hakewill denigrate the value of vision and the eyes, citing them as the ultimate danger that risks the potential for true spiritual vision. In Milton’s focus on blindness and the resulting intensified spiritual experience, we see no evidence of science or scientific theory – his approach is purely religious. Nicholas Jolly explains that early medieval scholars often made little or no distinction between theology and philosophy, seeing each as connected or

⁶²⁸ Clark, whose book *Vanities of the Eye* takes its title from Calvinist Hakewill’s often anti-Catholic 1606 text, considers it to be ‘the most thoroughgoing denigration of vision in sixteenth- and seventeenth century English...thought’. The aim of Hakewill’s text was to provide comfort to the blind gentlewoman by removing ‘all eye-sight’s privileges as a sense’ and ‘blaming it for everything that was wrong in the world’. (see pp.25-31).

⁶²⁹ George Hakewill, *The Vanitie of the Eie*, 1606, EEBO, title page, document image 2; A2, document image 3 [accessed 14 October 2009].

⁶³⁰ Nordlund, p. 108.

supporting the other', however, over time this changed so that 'scholasticism is marked by an increasing emphasis on the distinction between philosophy and theology'.⁶³¹ Milton's text seems at this point to limit itself to a theological viewpoint akin to that of Dingley.

This section has discussed light and darkness, coupled with sight and blindness. Inherent in the depiction of light and darkness is their association with good and evil. Each of these are binary opposites which are built into the structures of *Paradise Lost* and support the control of these hierarchies. Catherine Belsey looks more closely at the use of opposing values and points to Adam and Eve's decision to eat the fruit as a 'deconstruction' of 'binary oppositions'.⁶³² The prevailing attitudes of paradise, which are constructed in terms of opposing values, uphold the hierarchy as they give no room to grey areas of uncertainty. However, Belsey argues that Adam and Eve's consumption of the forbidden fruit blurs boundaries so that 'in the final image of the poem Adam and Eve have each other *and* Providence' and this 'demonstrates that alternatives need not be exclusive'.⁶³³ This is the first suggestion of the structures, or organisational hierarchies, that Milton brings into his epic, which he does entirely within the bounds of an almost Puritan approach to the powers and susceptibility to corruption of the eyes.

The term 'image' is used repeatedly in *Paradise Lost* and, rather than presenting a clear and simple meaning, it holds an array of connotations. Margaret Aston tackles the shift in connotations associated with the term 'image' when she finds that 'in the hundred years between 1450 and 1640 the 'idols' of the reformation, like the word

⁶³¹ See Nicholas Jolly, 'The Relation Between Theology and Philosophy' in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* ed. by Daniel Garber & Michael Ayers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), i, pp.363-388, (p.364).

⁶³² Catherine Belsey, *John Milton: Language, Gender, Power* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), p.84.

⁶³³ Nordlund, p. 108.

‘image’ itself, moved from a predominantly physical to a largely mental connotation’.⁶³⁴ The image that Eve sees reflected in the pool of water shortly after her ‘birth’ is one such image, in which the physical is entirely lacking and the mental connotation is one from which she is forcibly separated – that is, the realisation that the image which she finds is her own self, reflected. It may be possible to consider this shift, which removes the sense of the physical from the image and instead attaches a sense of the mental, through the recognition of the move from the extramission visual theory, which stressed the physical rays issuing from the eyes, to the intromission theory, in which the body was passive but the brain active. This can be linked in with Milton’s emphasis on blindness and its benefits, as the individual is the passive recipient who received the divine light – not actively seeing, but the submissive into whom God’s light flows, where it can be processed and understood.

The idol, when confused with its originator, becomes like the image in the eye – that is, false. This position we see laid out plainly in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. The eye was the primary cause of Eve’s sin and the innumerable references to vision’s frailty call attention to the theme of suspicion that framed theories of sight as well as idol worship. Once Adam and Eve have committed Original Sin, Raphael takes Adam and shows him the future of man on earth, and he sees the failings of man:

‘...Why should not man,

⁶³⁴ Margaret Aston, *England’s Iconoclasts: Volume 1: Laws Against Images* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), p. 465. See also chapter five of Clark’s *Vanities of the Eye*, ‘Images: The Reformation of the Eyes’, in which he discusses the move from the eye to the ear in matters of spiritual devotion. Images were clearly central to the debate of iconoclasm but within this, Clark points to ‘imaging’ – the ‘relationship’ of images ‘to their originals’ (pp.161-203). The ‘whole argument’ says Clark, ‘turns on the difference between ‘idols’ and ‘images’, since the first have ‘false referents and the second true ones’ (Clark, p.170). See also ‘The origin of man’, Almond’s first chapter in *Adam and Eve in Seventeenth-Century Thought* in which he claims that a ‘critical question was the extent to which the image of God had been destroyed by the Fall’, finding that ‘for Augustine, as for Luther, the image of God was wholly lost’, while the Catholic position ‘was that although the supernatural gifts such as grace and virtue were lost, the natural gifts such as reason and domination over animals were not lost’, a position that was ‘endorsed...unwittingly by Walter Raleigh’ (p.14, and pp.4-32).

Retaining still divine similitude
In part, from such deformities be free,
And for his maker's image' sake exempt?
'Their maker's image,' answered Michael, 'then
Forsook them, when themselves they vilified
To serve ungoverned appetite, and took
His image whom they served – a brutish vice,
Inductive mainly to the sin of Eve. (XI.511-519)

The repeated use of 'image' and 'similitude' indicates the importance of man's representational nature and this, in turn, refers again to the structural hierarchy that Milton emphasises in *Paradise Lost*. Adam and Eve are subordinate to God, created as their 'maker's image', and having only 'similitude' to their originator. Once humankind has sinned against God, they are corrupted and imperfect 'images' of God. Raphael explains that they are 'Disfiguring not God's likeness, but their own' (XI.521). Their implied distance from God's perfect image in them establishes the task of the good Christian, who must strive to adhere to God's word in order to be reunited with God in heaven. Nordlund points to the term 'idol' as central to both reformation theology and optics and makes this point in order to draw parallels between the 'reformed concern with visual or visible images' and 'the optical revolution', and show how 'early modern optics' is also 'an essentially iconoclastic enterprise'.⁶³⁵

Book IX, the section in which Adam and Eve eat from the Tree of Knowledge, is filled with the language of the senses. Satan's words focus on the sensuality of Eve and the surroundings of Eden, and his speech to her is resplendent in its descriptive nature, as he describes the 'goodly tree' 'loaden with fruit of fairest colours mixed' and from which 'a savoury odour' is blown (IX.575-579). The visual images that

⁶³⁵ Nordlund, p.145. Also, see chapter five of Clark's *Vanities of the Eye* for his discussion on images and idols, pp.161-203.

Satan creates depict a rich, tempting scene, one that appeals visually and is intended to exploit the weakness of the vulnerable eyes. He continues, ‘Grateful to appetite, more pleased my sense / Than smell of sweetest fennel’ and speaks of fruit that sparks both hunger and thirst, so tempted is he by its scent and appearance (IX.580-581). The image painted appeals to all the senses and its seductive imagery reminds us that ‘like strictly pictorial forms, literary works were dangerous and controversial because of their alluring and unnerving capacity to create visual images’.⁶³⁶ Milton illustrates the failing of the body, of its senses and passions, to be tempted by a well-drawn image, and demonstrates the lure and power of the visual and of imagery. Anna Beer argues that Milton creates this vision of Eden as an ‘erotic world of sensuous pleasures, where man and woman are fascinatingly different from each other’, to reclaim ‘female sexuality as a positive thing’.⁶³⁷ Beer qualifies this theory, however, with the realisation that a distinction must be drawn between love and lust because ‘once Adam and Eve fall, they ‘burn’ in lust’.⁶³⁸ Oppositional forces are again put in place to bring order to the garden, and set alongside visual vulnerability in order to emphasise the ease with which this order can be disrupted.

Eve, on arriving at the tree with the serpent, finds the reality of it every bit as alluring as his description – ‘fixed on the fruit she gazed, which to behold / Might tempt alone’, while in her ears ‘the sound / Yet rung of his persuasive words’ and her appetite was ‘raised by the smell / So savoury of that fruit’ (IX.735-740). As the image that Satan created in his description of the tree seduced Eve, so the appealing reality of the tree impresses itself upon her senses. The fruit ‘solicited her longing eye’ (IX.743), thus appealing to the most corruptible of her senses. Eve, in turn,

⁶³⁶ Nordlund, p.116.

⁶³⁷ Anna Beer, *Milton: Poet, Pamphleteer and Patriot* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008), p.325.

⁶³⁸ Beer, p.326.

when first finding Adam after she's consumed the fruit, fills her speech with terms denoting the senses:

The pain of absence from thy *sight*. But strange
Hath been the cause, and wonderful to *hear*;
This tree is not, as we are told, a tree
Of danger *tasted*, nor to evil unknown
...but of divine effect
To open *eyes* and make them gods who *taste*;
And hath been *tasted* such
[...]
Endued with human voice and human *sense*
...I
Have also *tasted*, and have also found
The effects to correspond – opener mine *eyes*,
Dim erst, dilated spirits, ampler heart,
And growing up to godhead (IX.860-877, italics mine)

Sight is, in Milton's epic, just as Dingley described it: idolatrous, wanton, lustful and covetous. Milton here uses references to vision three times and alludes to taste four times. To taste the fruit is forbidden, yet there are almost as many references to looking at it as to eating it. Albert W. Fields argues that 'Milton's view of man distinguished between his rational part...and his passionate nature'.⁶³⁹ Vision, here, is as much to blame for Eve's downfall as is the serpent who brings her to the tree.

The sense of vision is vital to many of the key moments of Milton's epic, as we have seen in the moments before the Fall. However, sight is also used in the sense of having visions, which occurs throughout the poem. This form of does not focus on real objects so that the important aspect of this form of sight is that it takes place in a state of imagination. Adam experiences several visions in book VIII, speaking of a 'Presence divine' (VIII.314), 'the heavenly vision' (VIII.356) and 'the vision bright' (VIII.367), and in books XI and XII when Michael is sent to 'show' Adam 'what will

⁶³⁹ Albert W. Fields, 'Milton and Self-Knowledge', *PMLA* 83 (1968) 392-399 (p.392).

come in future days (XI.357). These ‘sights’ do not rely on physical vision or the ‘lustful’ eye in any way – instead, seeing in this way allows Adam to see truth as well as the future. Raphael warns, however, that the mind is still corruptible since ‘apt the mind or fancy is to rove / unchecked’ (VIII.188-187). This risk seems greatest with Eve, as demonstrated when Satan comes and speaks to her in a dream and she wakes much distressed. As Dingley commented, at night, in their dreaming state, the susceptible are ‘ensnared by the Devil’. This dream is an entirely new experience for her, ‘for I this night – / Such night till this I never passed’ (V.30-31) and it fills her mind with ‘offence and trouble, which [her] mind / Knew never till this irksome night’ (V.34-35). Visual display, in the form of dreamed images, is disturbing and invasive – the pictures enter Eve’s mind without her permission and are out of her control. As Eve reveals the details of the dream to Adam, it becomes clear that sight is again the principal sense at risk:

...heaven wakes with all his *eyes*,
whom to *behold* but thee, nature’s desire
In whose *sight* all things joy, with ravishment
Attracted by thy beauty still to *gaze*? (V.44-47, italics mine)

The voice of Satan, which in the dream Eve perceives as Adam’s voice, appeals to her sense of vanity, flattering her in order to rouse her and gain her attention. When she is led, in her dream, to the Tree of Knowledge, is it again the *sight* of it which seems most appealing:

...fair it seemed,
Much fairer to my fancy than by day;
And as I wondered looked, beside it stood
One shaped and winged like one of those from heaven
By us oft seen...
...on that tree he also gazed (V.52-57)

Eve finds the sight of the tree captivating and her indulgence of this is justified by the presence of the angel who also gazes upon it. Seeing, it would appear, is the primary route to error and sin.

The language of vision is used frequently in *Paradise Lost*: Milton talks of vision, blindness, the sense, and of visions. In this sense, it is a particularly ocularcentric text. The passages of Dingley, Hakewill and Milton denigrate the powers and primacy of sight. This, in conjunction with the lines that place Adam and Eve as God's subordinate, begins to suggest the hierarchy necessary for organising and controlling man's presence on earth, and his relation to God and the universe.

Milton's Cosmology and Mechanical Eye

Think only of what concerns thee and thy being;
Dream not of other worlds, what creatures there
Live, in what state, condition, or degree –
(John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, VIII.174-176)

Until this point, the passages examined in this chapter have discussed the focus on vision within a religious context and, so far, science has not played a part in these analyses. This section will examine Milton's awareness of the celestial sciences and examine the ways in which he incorporates this into a story that is, naturally, overtly religious in tone. However, whereas figures such as Dingley refuse to enter into the scientific debate, Milton's *Paradise Lost* sees the presentation of multiple world-views. Milton presents the differing views of the universe and, like Burton, straddles the debates. Instead of stating allegiance to any particular idea, Milton uses the ideas to add to the sense of hierarchy and order that he generates. As Spiller noted, 'model worlds', as represented in literature, 'produce knowledge and virtue' and in Milton's

Paradise Lost, the reader is warned to ‘think only of what concerns thee and thy being’ and to ‘dream not of other worlds’. Warning his reader against ‘other worlds’, Milton’s approach sidesteps possible dissension, because to do otherwise would be to challenge the existing systems of thought in which science appeared secondary to theology.

Regina M. Schwartz reminds us that Milton was a ‘poet, theologian and political figure’ and describes him as an ‘astute literary critic’ of the Bible.⁶⁴⁰ This meant that when Milton wrote *Paradise Lost* he composed it with ‘the faith of a believer’ and the ‘sensitivity of a poet’.⁶⁴¹ However, also evident in Milton’s epic is his interest in, or awareness of, science. Milton, born in 1608, grew up and was educated during a period when Galileo made astronomical discoveries with the revolutionary new telescope, published writing that rejected the geocentric idea that the Earth was the centre of the universe, and was placed under house arrest on suspicion of heresy. *Paradise Lost* embraces and manages the themes of cosmology and astronomy, balancing them in harmony, like Croll, with religion. The sense of space is expansive as Milton divides up the universe into heaven, hell, chaos and earth.⁶⁴² Thomas N. Orchard argues that Milton settled on a Ptolemaic structure for the poem because he was ‘attracted by its picturesqueness, by its symmetrical configuration, and by its well-defined limitation’.⁶⁴³ However, as I will argue and as later criticism

⁶⁴⁰ Regina M. Schwartz, ‘Milton on the Bible’ in *A Companion to Milton* ed. by Thomas N. Corns (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), p.37.

⁶⁴¹ Schwartz, p.37.

⁶⁴² Thomas N. Orchard argues that Milton settled on a Ptolemaic structure for the poem because he was ‘attracted by its picturesqueness, by its symmetrical configuration, and by its well-defined limitation’ – see Thomas N. Orchard, *Milton’s Astronomy: The Astronomy of Paradise Lost* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1913). However, as I will argue and as later criticism illustrates, Milton’s view was broader and more inclusive, so that he presented not only the Ptolemaic theory, but also the Copernican viewpoint.

⁶⁴³ See Thomas N. Orchard, *Milton’s Astronomy: The Astronomy of Paradise Lost* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1913).

illustrates, Milton's view was broader and more inclusive, so that he presented not only the Ptolemaic theory, but also the Copernican viewpoint, thus evading potential conflict between science and religion.

Milton's basic organisational structure separates good from evil, and places Chaos in his order as a form of purgatory or warning, while the 'pervasive sense of space is brought about by the fact that the setting of the epic transcends earth and instead takes place over the cosmos, encompassing heaven and earth, and Chaos between it and hell'.⁶⁴⁴ This greatly expanded universe, which Marjorie Nicolson attributes to a particularly seventeenth century outlook on space, is still God's kingdom and thus under His power.⁶⁴⁵ The sense of the expansive universe present in *Paradise Lost* may be due, in part, to the 'intellectual tide' of 'Baconian and Cartesian proto-science' against which Milton 'strove'.⁶⁴⁶ This 'tide' of 'proto-science' created from nature 'a storehouse of commodities to be extracted by technology'; 'an expanding interpretation of the 'dominion' over nature given in Genesis as an encouragement to shape all habitats for human use' and 'the seemingly inexhaustible wilderness of the New World which colonizers advertised as both bountiful and in need of being subdued'.⁶⁴⁷ The organisational structures and hierarchies which Milton imposes upon the spaces and characters in his poem are perhaps mechanisms by which to control those spaces and thus minimise the 'inexhaustible wilderness'.⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴⁴ Marjorie Nicolson, 'Milton and the Telescope' in *ELH* 1 (1935) 1-32 (p.16).

⁶⁴⁵ Nicolson, p.18.

⁶⁴⁶ Diane Kelsey McColley, 'Milton and Ecology' in *A Companion to Milton* ed. by Thomas N. Corns (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), p.157.

⁶⁴⁷ McColley, p.157.

⁶⁴⁸ Bensimon argues that thought and memory became dependent on 'spatial points of reference' so that 'actual places *must be seen* with the eye of the imagination'. In this 'composition of place' the individual can 'summon to the imagination, by means of each of the five senses, hell, paradise, or eternity (Bensimon, p.248).

Book VIII illustrates how Milton neatly avoids engaging in a debate between religion and science, when Adam questions Raphael on the motions of the heavens:

Something yet of doubt remains,
Which only thy solution can resolve.
When I behold this goodly frame, this world
Of heaven and earth consisting, and compute
Their magnitudes – this earth a spot, a grain,
An atom, with the firmament compared
And all her numbered stars, that seem to roll
Spaces incomprehensible (for such
Their distance argues, and their swift return
Diurnal) merely to officiate light
Round this opacous earth, this punctual spot,
One day and night, in all their vast survey
Useless besides – reasoning, I oft admire
How nature, wise and frugal, could commit
Such disproportions, with superfluous hand
So many nobler bodies to create,
Greater to so manifold, to this one use,
For aught appears, and on their orbs impose
Such restless revolution day by day
Repeated while the sedentary earth,
That better might with far less compass move,
Served by more noble than herself, and attains
Her end with least motion, and receives,
As tribute, such a sumless journey brought
Of incorporeal speed, her warmth and light:
Speed, to describe whose swiftness number fails’ (VIII.13-38)⁶⁴⁹

Adam expresses curiosity at the feat which is performed daily by the heavenly bodies, all of which activity is for the ‘mere’ purpose of regulating light. To him the spaces are ‘incomprehensible’ and the rate at which these movements take place is something which he comments upon, mentioning ‘speed’ twice, and using ‘swift’ and ‘swiftness’, and ‘restless revolutions’. Nature, normally so ‘wise and frugal’, invests a great amount of energy which could be put, Adam feels, to other uses. The heavenly bodies are in continual motion while the ‘opacous’, or dark, earth sits ‘punctual’ and ‘sedentary’, and is rewarded with ‘light and warmth’. Adam here

⁶⁴⁹ John Milton, *Paradise Lost* ed. by Alasdair Fowler, 2nd Edition (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 1968 repr.1997, 2007).

recognises that the earth is situated in a universe vast in scale and posits the accepted view that all else rotates around earth which remains stationary in its position. Peter Lloyd notes that although ‘Milton made use of the Ptolemaic system of astronomy’ it was still ‘possible to pursue a new line of investigation and to reveal a new truth without calling into question all the teaching of authority’.⁶⁵⁰ This meant, argues Lloyd, that ‘astronomy and theology became interrelated and supported each other’ (Lloyd, p.11). Raphael, on the other hand, suggests the opinion that saw Galileo suspected of heresy:

What if the sun
Be centre to the world, and other stars,
By his attractive virtue and their own
Incited, dance about him various rounds?
Their wandering course now high, now low, then hid,
Progressive, retrograde, or standing still,
In six thou seest; and what if, seventh to these,
The planet earth, so steadfast though she seem,
Insensibly three different motions move?
[...]
Whether the sun, predominant in heaven,
Rise on the earth, or the earth rise on the sun;
He from the east his flaming road begin;
Or she from west her silent course advance
With inoffensive pace that spinning sleeps
On her soft axle, while she paces even,
And bears thee soft with the smooth air along – (VIII.122-130, 160-166)

Where Adam considers the great motions of the heavens excessive for the purpose of controlling light, hinting that he sees less value in light than in the heavenly movements, Raphael situates the sun at the centre of the universe. Via Adam and Raphael, Milton demonstrates his knowledge of what is essentially a Copernican viewpoint, as well as offering the biblical standpoint. This new approach presents a view of the earth that ‘irretrievably breaks the constraints and many of the

⁶⁵⁰ Peter Lloyd, *Perspectives and Identities: The Elizabethan Writer's Search to Know his World* (London: Rubicon, 1989), p.8.

correspondences of the old medieval iconographic cosmography'.⁶⁵¹ Milton uses his cosmography as a means of portraying the nature and scale of the fall, combining old and new theories and presenting them alongside one another in order to illustrate the accepted authority next to the unknown or uncertain. Demaray argues that 'the epic narrator's mimetic verse depiction of this earth – fallen and yet containing vast and previously unknown continents and seas – gives further meaning to the sad but spiritually adventurous departure of Adam and Eve from the Garden (Demaray, p.195-195). However, Milton, erring on the side of caution, closes the section with a warning to Adam:

Leave them to God above; him serve and fear;
Of other creatures as him pleases best,
Wherever placed, let him dispose; joy thou
In what he gives to thee, this Paradise (VIII.168-171)

By closing with the warning that Adam must 'dream not of other worlds' (VIII.175), Milton elucidates both Ptolemaic and Copernican astronomy but warns against over-reaching by attempting to gain knowledge of that which is 'for thee too high' (VIII.172). This warning closes the debate by stating God's supremacy over his universe and directing the reader that His universe is not suitable for intellectual investigation. Schwartz, noting that 'like the rest of Milton's astronomical observations' this section is 'studiously designed to avoid taking up the cosmological controversy', argues that 'to presume to question the *mechanical* workings of the universe is to presume to question the *theological* ones' since 'both ask if the universe works right'.⁶⁵² It is Adam's key role to 'serve and fear' God, not to give

⁶⁵¹ John G. Demaray, *Cosmos and Epic Representation: Dante, Spenser, Milton and the Transformation of Renaissance Heroic Poetry* (Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 1991), p.195.

⁶⁵² Regina M. Schwartz, *Remembering and Repeating: Biblical Creation in Paradise Lost* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p.44-45.

thought to the sciences. Raphael here reinstates the proper hierarchy and ensures that Adam does not extend his reach beyond what is appropriate. John Rogers argues that by the late 1650s ‘Milton had been driven...to reconfigure the political state as a rude multitude governed from above by a ‘rational’ elite’, and claims that ‘Raphael’s image of the differently spiritualized things of nature charts a hierarchical organization identical to the only Puritan commonwealth Milton...was able to envision’.⁶⁵³

The sense of regularly restoring balance to the hierarchy, a theme Croll insists upon in his verse, continues throughout Milton’s epic. After Adam and Eve have eaten from the Tree of Knowledge, God sends his Son to earth to give out punishment. He first punishes the serpent, ensuring that it will upon its ‘belly grovelling...go, / And dust shalt eat all the days of thy life (X.178-179), and that humans shall stamp on its head, though it will always present a danger to the heels of mankind; he punishes Eve by decreeing that women will suffer pain in childbirth and will submit to the dominion of their husbands; and Adam’s punishment means that man must labour in the field to survive and provide for their families, rather than enjoy the abundance of the garden, from which they are expelled. These organised judgements appear to punish each sinner, in order of whose sin is greatest – thus, first Satan, then Eve and finally Adam. Furthermore, the earth was realigned to create the seasons: ‘Some say he bid his angels turn askance / The poles of earth twice ten degrees and more / From the sun’s axle; they with labour pushed / Oblique the centric globe (VIII.668-671) – Adam and Eve would no longer enjoy the pleasure of the continually temperate climate of Eden. Again, these regular seasonal changes

⁶⁵³ John Rogers, *The Matter of Revolution: Science, Poetry, and Politics in the Age of Milton* (Ithaca & London: Cornell, 1996), p.111.

will create a sense of regularity and order on earth. Milton is considered to have a ‘lagging understanding and appreciation of the astronomy’ but yet has an ‘interest in a considerable range of celestial details’.⁶⁵⁴ However, it seems clear that ‘Milton must have possessed more advanced knowledge and curiosity about such scientific fields as geography and astronomy’, and Osamu Nakayama notes that Milton’s mention of Galileo in *Paradise Lost* demonstrates his awareness of contemporary developments in astronomical theory, but claims that, for all this, Milton’s ‘real interest lies in political and religious matters’.⁶⁵⁵ Thus, while Milton demonstrates an active interest in cosmology and balances contemporary with more traditional theories of planetary movement, his epic is dominated by the theology which is its basis.

Nicolson claims as fact the idea that ‘Milton’s imagination had been stimulated by astronomy’ and positions *Paradise Lost* as ‘the first modern cosmic poem’ which is played out ‘against a background of inter-stellar space’.⁶⁵⁶ Nicolson also supposes that Milton must have had ample opportunity to use a telescope to view the night sky, before blindness prevented him.⁶⁵⁷ However, Nicholson’s view does not account for the relation of vision to astronomy, and thus passes over the uncertainty with which Milton speaks of vision, as we saw previously in relation to his thoughts on blindness and devotion. In book I, Milton’s ambivalence about specifically optical science emerges:

He scarce had ceased when the superior fiend
Was moving toward the shore; his ponderous shield,

⁶⁵⁴ Earl Miner (ed.), *Paradise Lost (1668-1968): Three Centuries of Commentary* (Lewisburg: Buckness University Press, 2004), p. 485.

⁶⁵⁵ Osamu Nakayama, *Images of their Glorious Maker: Iconology in Milton’s Poetry* (Tokyo: Macmillan Language House, 2002), p.94.

⁶⁵⁶ Nicolson, p.2-3.

⁶⁵⁷ Nicolson, p.10.

Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round,
Behind him cast; the broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
At evening, from the top of Fesolè (I.283-289)

The 'Tuscan artist' to whom Milton refers is Galileo and the use of the word 'artist' diminishes the status of Galileo's science but suggesting not a true but an imaginative response. The use of 'optic glass' indicates that this is not an ordinary 'glass'. The 'Tuscan artist' is using special apparatus to view the moon; this equipment greatly enhances his powers of sight and allows him closely inspect the distant objects of the heavens. Milton acknowledges that science has provided the ability to enhance vision but undermines it with the use of 'artist' which is suggestive of 'images' and not realities, thus in turn indicating the imaginative powers. Images, visions, and dreams are associated in *Paradise Lost* with danger, the type of danger to which Dingley finds the eye most susceptible, and so Milton's epic is less the 'first modern cosmic poem' that is played out over a 'background of inter-stellar space' and more a cautious and wary examination of emerging technologies and scientific thought, that must be aligned and resolved with the existing religious order of things.

Milton's awareness of celestial science is evidenced elsewhere and, once more, Galileo's telescope is framed as an instrument in which fantasy is engaged: 'as when by night the glass / Of Galileo, less assured, observes / Imagined lands and regions in the moon (V.261-23). Uncertainty in astronomical discovery is coded in the use of 'less assured' and 'imagined lands and regions', both of which suggest that this science cannot offer reality since it is fuelled by the imagination. These lines are situated in a passage which mentions ancient and far-away lands such as Delos and Samos, as well as the mythical bird the phoenix. This context of the very distant or

imaginary characterises Galileo's telescope and discoveries as unrealistic, distant and invented, and so gazing upon the heavens will not bring truth or assurance. Regina Schwartz summarises this, indicating that what Galileo sees is focused on 'a fabrication, an idealised image composed at an ideal point in a telescope' which she refers to as 'another fabrication'.⁶⁵⁸ Thus, 'for the astronomer, and the voyeur, to observe *is* to imagine', and 'Galileo does not see the moon, he sees an image in his optic glass'.⁶⁵⁹ However, although this definition of 'artist' was already in use during the 1500s, alongside it sat the meaning, 'a person skilled in magic arts or occult sciences; an astrologer, an alchemist' which was first used in 1563.⁶⁶⁰ Milton's use of 'artist' may make use of both meanings, emphasising Galileo's position as scientist and astrologer, but simultaneously applying the sense of the imaginative, inherent in the word 'artist', in order to connote and imply the lack of pure, definitive fact offered by sciences such as astronomy where uncertainty, discovery and rediscovery, and continually changing 'proof' were common factors.

Larry L. Langford, considering Adam's first moments of awareness, suggests that 'Adam's first movement of life encapsulates what is one of the central concerns of *Paradise Lost*', that is 'the possibility of independent will and action in a world hierarchically structured by an omniscient and omnipotent creator'.⁶⁶¹ When Adam first wakes from his 'soundest sleep', 'straight toward heaven [his] wondering eyes [he] turned' (VIII.253, 257).⁶⁶² Adam's first instinct is to gaze beyond his own

⁶⁵⁸ Regina Schwartz, 'Rethinking Voyeurism and Patriarchy: The Case of *Paradise Lost*', *Representations* 34 (1991) 85-103 (p.89).

⁶⁵⁹ Schwartz, p.89, p.96.

⁶⁶⁰ OED.

⁶⁶¹ Larry L. Langford, 'Adam and the Subversion of Paradise' in *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 34 (1994) 119-134 (p.122).

⁶⁶² Almond discusses 'man's erect stature' as 'compared to the animals' and finds that this erectness was 'the major physical sign of human superiority'. He claims that the origin of the 'notion that beasts look down but men look heavenward' was probably Plato, though it was developed by Aristotle

realm and Langford says that although this may represent Adam's 'natural affinities for the as yet unknown values of heaven', it is important to remember that 'any concept of hierarchy implies a certain amount of stasis, so that any movement upward within a hierarchy can seem disruptive because it means something has left its designated place'.⁶⁶³ Adam's first glance beyond his natural surroundings could indicate a challenge to the natural, established order. Crooke discusses the human body in these terms and attempts to harmonise his anatomical studies with a sense of spiritual devotion. He states that the human body is the 'house of the soule' and describes the body as 'the frame and composition which is vpright and mounting toward heauen' with 'the moderate temper' and 'the equal and iust proportion of the parts'.⁶⁶⁴ He justifies the partitioning of the body, and the anatomical dissection of it, by saying that the 'parts' of the body have 'wonderfull consent and mutuall concord as long as they are in subiection to the Law and rule of Nature'.⁶⁶⁵ Finally, the human body is here implicated as the microcosm of God's universe: 'for so long in them we may behold the liuely Image of all this whole Vniuerse, which wee see with our eyes (as it were) shadowed in a Glasse'.⁶⁶⁶ The 'frame' which Crooke describes is like Adam's, upright and looking heavenward, and so Crooke accounts for his interest in dissecting and understanding the body by labelling man as microcosm, celebrating God's universe and gazing at it 'shadowed in a Glasse', presumably as St. Paul directed. Whether by Milton or by Crooke, man is placed within a structure that denotes his position within that hierarchy.

and is offered at the beginning of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, "Thus, while the mute Creation downward bend / Their Sight, and to their Earthy Mother tend, / Man looks aloft; and with erected Eyes / Beholds his own hereditary Skies" (p.26). See Almond, pp.27-32.

⁶⁶³ Langford, p.122.

⁶⁶⁴ Crooke, EEBO document image 14, p.5.

⁶⁶⁵ Crooke, EEBO document image 14, p.5.

⁶⁶⁶ Crooke, EEBO document image 14, p.5.

At the core of the story of Adam and Eve, which Almond claims is ‘the central myth of Western culture’, are astronomy and cosmology. Built into this concern with science are the issues of power, control and hierarchy. The universe’s existence, stability and activities, which are brought into question by scientists like Galileo, are by Milton described, organised and regulated, so that an appropriate structure exists without having to engage directly with the discoveries that questioned established beliefs.

Andrew Marvell (1621-1678), in ‘On a Drop of Dew’ (1681) explores, through the extended metaphor of the droplet of morning dew, the relation of the microcosm to the macrocosm, and exemplifies in his poem the successful harmonisation of cosmology with divine belief.⁶⁶⁷ ‘On a Drop of Dew’, a poem that examines the nature of the vulnerable soul, susceptible to temptation and thus to falling, celebrates the beautiful droplet that sits on the flower:

See how the orient dew,
Shed from the bosom of the morn
Into the blowing roses,
Yet careless of its mansion new;
For the clear region where 'twas born,
Round in itself incloses:
And in its little globe's extent,
Frames as it can its native element.
How it the purple flower does slight,
Scarce touching where it lies,
But gazing back upon the skies,
Shines with a mournful light;
Like its own tear,
Because so long divided from the sphere.
Restless it rolls, and unsecure,
Trembling lest it grow impure:
Till the warm sun pity its pain,

⁶⁶⁷ Nigel Smith, editing Marvell’s ‘On a Drop of Dew’, notes that ‘dewdrops featured in emblem literature and elsewhere: since they were believed to descend from the heavens, they were regarded as a microcosm of eternity’ (See Andrew Marvell, *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*, ed. by Nigel Smith, (London & New York: Longman, 2003), p.39.

And to the skies exhale it back again.
 So the soul, that drop, that ray
 Of the clear fountain of eternal day,
 Could it within the human flower be seen,
 Rememb'ring still its former height,
 Shuns the swart leaves, and blossoms green;
 And, recollecting its own light,
 Does, in its pure and circling thoughts, express
 The greater Heaven in an heaven less.
 In how coy a figure wound,
 Every way it turns away:
 So the world excluding round,
 Yet receiving in the day;
 Dark beneath, but bright above:
 Here disdainng, there in love.
 How loose and easy hence to go:
 How girt and ready to ascend.
 Moving but on a point below,
 It all about does upwards bend.
 Such did the manna's sacred dew distil;
 White, and entire, though congealèd and chill.
 Congealèd on earth: but does, dissolving, run
 Into the glories of the' Almighty Sun.⁶⁶⁸

The dew 'round in itself incloses' creating in itself a microcosm, a tiny bubble which 'Frames...its native element' (l.6-8).⁶⁶⁹ The microcosmic drop of dew is 'imprisoning itself to avoid sin' since 'contact with the world makes it subject to contamination'.⁶⁷⁰ That Marvell refers to the dew explicitly as a 'globe' immediately figures it as a miniature representation, a microcosm, which is elemental, concentrated, and contains the essence of its origin. Scarcely making any impact upon the place where it lies, the drop is 'gazing back upon the skies' (l.11).

⁶⁶⁸ Andrew Marvell, *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*, ed. by Nigel Smith, (London & New York: Longman, 2003), p.41-42.

⁶⁶⁹ Smith glosses lines 7-8 by noting the 'image was suggested by the use of convex mirrors in painting (especially the work of Van Eyck) where a greater environment is reflected in a much smaller space' (p.41). Robert H. Ray, in his 'dictionary' of Marvell, also considers these lines in terms of the mirror, finding that 'as a reflecting drop, it "frames" as best it can, its "native element", the sky, the heavens' and 'it makes itself a mirror in this earthly realm, reflecting the sky above it' (Robert H. Ray, *An Andrew Marvell Companion* (London & New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), p.124).

⁶⁷⁰ Patsy Griffin, *The Modest Ambition of Andrew Marvell: A Study of Marvell and His Relation to Lovelace, Fairfax, Cromwell, and Milton* (London: Associated University Presses, 1995), p.83.

The droplet is pointed heavenward, the use of 'back' suggesting that it looks in the direction from which it came. Just as Adam rose in Paradise and first looked to the heavens, so the drop of dew, signifying the soul, looks to its origins.

There is, however, a sense of danger present in the poem. The droplet is 'so long divided from the sphere', that it becomes 'restless' and 'unsecure / Trembling, lest it grow impure' (l.14-16).⁶⁷¹ The tiny microcosm, mirroring its origins in its very form, is separated from 'the sphere' and fears the potential for its own corruption, a fact which simultaneously intimates its currently pure and untainted state. Dew was 'a symbol of transience' but also; of the hope of immortality' - the droplet, in enclosing itself from its surroundings, strives to retain its purity, and the sun takes pity on it and 'exhales it back again' (l.18).⁶⁷² The dew, having been exhaled back, is in the position of being able to recall 'its former height' (l.22), it's 'own light' (l.24), and it can 'express / The greater heaven in an heaven less' (l.25-26). The microcosm, then, serves to express the macrocosm, and in remembering its origins (heaven), it can recollect its paradisaal, pre-Fallen state.

'On a Drop of Dew' ends with a series of images that cements the metaphor of the dew as a globe or microcosm. Firstly, Marvell refers to the rotations of the earth and their relation to daytime and night time: Every way it turns away; / So the world-excluding round, / Yet receiving in the day; / Dark beneath, but bright above (l.28-31). Secondly, it refers to the earth spinning on its own axis: How loose and easy hence to go; / How girt and ready to ascend; / Moving but on a point below, / It all about does upwards bend (l.33-36). Marvell here expresses a Copernican viewpoint,

⁶⁷¹ Smith notes that the 'sphere' of line 14 refers to the 'sphere of heaven (in the Ptolemaic description of the universe) from which the dewdrop descended (p.41).

⁶⁷² Smith on Marvell, p.39, who finds that Marvell's use of the symbol of dew, is 'purely and explicitly as an emblem of the soul' (p.39).

in that he specifies that the earth is ‘moving...on a point below’, rather than it being the stationary planet around which all others rotate.

Marvell’s whole conceit, painting the soul as the fragile, pure element that wishes to resist temptation and fears its own corruption, is established within a framework that offers the more modern, and scientifically relevant, viewpoint on planetary movement. However, as it is used to describe spiritual innocence and purity, this perhaps acts to balance the use of a potentially problematic perspective. Marvell illustrates the ways in which spiritual devotion can and will connect appropriately with revised ideas of the earth’s position in the universe. Both literary and scientific re-imaginings of the world ‘redefine the way that the “artificial” interacts with the “real”, meaning that, ‘to the extent that scientific experiments and imaginative fictions are engaged in producing “small worlds”, both work with simulacra’.⁶⁷³ In Marvell’s case, this is demonstrated by the drop of dew which, although it is ‘derived from and in some way dependent upon the real world’, it ‘consciously [is] *not* the real world.’⁶⁷⁴ The ‘micro-world’, created in the droplet of dew, offers a moral lesson or example for spiritual devotion.

Milton’s Mirror for Eve

Themes of hierarchy and power extend into Milton’s portrayal of Eve’s first moments in paradise. After Eve first wakes, she sees herself reflected in the mirror offered by a still pool of water. However, she does not recognise herself and is not allowed the opportunity to realise her own self – Milton ‘presents us with the

⁶⁷³ Spiller, p.31.

⁶⁷⁴ Spiller, p.31.

problem of female selfhood as one of cognition and recognition'.⁶⁷⁵ In 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the 'I' as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience', Jacques Lacan reveals the stages through which an individual uses the mirror to learn about and identify themselves. The child, having learned to see and recognise his self in the mirror, then makes differential judgements on his perception of the 'Real' and the 'Imaginary'. The 'Real' and the 'Imaginary', along with the 'Symbolic', form part of Lacan's 'three dimensions' in the psyche and each of these are all equally important to the forming subjectivity.⁶⁷⁶ When Eve bends over the pool and glimpses her reflected self:

As I bent down to look, just opposite
A shape within the watery gleam appeared,
Bending to look on me; I started back,
It started back, but pleased I soon returned (IV.460-463)

Eve approaches her liquid mirror and finds in it a moving, responsive shape, a life. Intrigued she plays at the water's edge, observing the figure before her until she is interrupted. God breaks into her moment and explains that "What thou seest, / What there you seest, fair creature, is thyself" (IV.468-9). Eve's opportunity for her own mirror-moment is removed from her, thus preventing her from self-recognition. Eve cannot have her own moment of self-discovery; she is taken away from the 'mirror' and the reflection is explained to her before being cast aside. Eve's experience of herself comes through God – she does not find it, she is simply told it. Furthermore, she is not permitted to explore it, or to comprehend it by herself: Eve has no selfhood.

...but follow me,

⁶⁷⁵ Julia M. Walker, *Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, and the Metamorphosis of the Female Self* (London: Associated University Presses, 1998), p.158-159.

⁶⁷⁶ Vincent B. Leitch (ed.), *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (New York & London: Norton, 2001), p.1281.

And I will bring thee where no shadow stays
Thy coming, and thy soft embraces – he
Whose image thou art; him thou shalt enjoy
Inseparably thine... (IV.469-473).

Eve is led away from herself, her reflection described as nothing more than a ‘shadow’; her moment for self-discovery is gone. Unlike Narcissus, Eve is not left to discover her self. She is directed towards Adam, ‘whose image’ she is, who she ‘shalt enjoy’ and who will be ‘inseparably hers’, all of which instantly removes her individuality and free choice, and places her within a hierarchy in which she is Adam’s subordinate. Eve’s identity, then, ‘depends upon a selfhood that is absent’.⁶⁷⁷

This moment is, in Lacanian theory, closely allied with a conception of selfhood. Lacan cites the child’s recognition of itself as ‘an essential state of the act of intelligence’.⁶⁷⁸ Eve has been denied this stage and, significantly, according to Lacanian theory it affects her experience of the reality around her. Lacan explains that having made the discovery of self-reflection, the child then goes on to use the mirror as a tool to examine ‘the relation between the movements assumed in the image and the reflected environment’ and between a ‘virtual complex and the reality it reduplicates...around him’.⁶⁷⁹ The child thus learns to judge between the ‘real’ and the ‘imaginary’. Eve, however, does not learn this or experience this for herself, she is merely told it. Until this mirror-stage, Lacan claims, the child has understood himself in pieces, as a fragmented body viewed from his own perspective. Arguably Eve is left in the position of the child, recognising herself only as fragments of a

⁶⁷⁷ Walker, p.159.

⁶⁷⁸ Jacques Lacan, ‘The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the ‘I’ as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience’ in *Ecrits: A Selection* trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1997), p.5.

⁶⁷⁹ Lacan, p.1.

whole, since she is not afforded the opportunity of autonomous self-recognition and therefore may be unable to properly distinguish between the real and the imaginary. Christine Froula goes further than simply suggesting that Eve's departure from the 'mirror' leaves her fragmented, by attending to the language Milton uses at the moment of Eve's interruption by God:

What thou seest,
What there thou seest fair creature is thyself,
With thee it came and it goes: but follow me,
And I will bring thee where no shadow stays (IV. 466-469)

As Froula argues, God's instruction to Eve here demands that 'she abandon not merely image in the pool but her very self'.⁶⁸⁰ In this way, the 'reflection is not of Eve...it is Eve' and she therefore becomes 'a substanceless image' until she is united with Adam, in whose image she is made.⁶⁸¹ Eve has little sense of self and is not permitted to explore her interest in her self, so that her 'image was for most only a reflected one', since 'in modern terms, she merely bathed in reflected glory'.⁶⁸²

While Walker claims that Eve '*never* recognises anything...[and] simply accepts the cognition given to her by the voice and hand of God and by the voice and hand of Adam', I would argue that Eve is forcefully denied the *opportunity* to recognise anything. Eve's body and experience of herself is mediated through the masculine, and she is not afforded even a moment to define it otherwise, through self-

⁶⁸⁰ Christine Froula, 'When Eve Reads Milton: Undoing the Canonical Economy' in *Critical Inquiry* 10 (December, 1983) 321-347 (p.328).

⁶⁸¹ Froula, p.328.

⁶⁸² Almond, p.152. This approach mirrors the passage in 1 Corinthians – 'For a man ought not to cover his head: forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man' (1 Corinthians 11.7). 1 Corinthians 11.8 and 9 continue on this theme, 'For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man' (11.8) and 'For the man was not created for the woman's sake: but the woman was for the man's sake' (11.9). The marginal notes in the Geneva Bible qualify verse 7 thus: Adam is 'the image of God's glory, in whom his majesty & power shine concerning his authority' (note d), while Eve 'receiveth her glory, in commendation of man, & therefore is subject' (note e). See *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1969), I Corinthians 11.7-9.

recognition.⁶⁸³ When she finds herself intrigued by the image in the pool, God intervenes and tells her how she must understand the reflection as a ‘shadow’ of her body. Finally, she is defined against man, as part of him when she is brought to Adam and told that it is he ‘whose image thou art’. Eve is designated the role of ‘image’ – that is, her place is that of the *not* real. Her identity is not hers and it is she is not individual; instead, she is tied to Adam and the implication of this is that Adam is more ‘real’ than Eve, and that he is not an ‘image’ in this manner.

This particular section of *Paradise Lost* has drawn much critical attention which often focuses on the subordinate position in which Eve is placed. Dennis Danielson considers that ‘Milton had to build into his narrative...the necessary conditions for Adam and Eve’s falling’ and argues that the temptation to which Eve is exposed, as a precursor to her fall, is finding her reflection in the water, with which she ‘almost becomes infatuated, Narcissus-like’. Eve moves from ‘being attracted to a two-dimensional image to loving a real person whose image she shares’, which indicates her ‘fallibility’, giving the poem coherence.⁶⁸⁴ Claire Colebrook, addressing the depiction of Eve, argues that the ‘hierarchical’ presentation of Eve is ‘ennobling’ and should be considered in the light of Milton’s ‘doctrine of the body’ in which ‘the hierarchical relationship between reason and the body does not seek to pervert or deny the body but to bring it closer to the character of reason’.⁶⁸⁵ Undoubtedly, then, hierarchy is as much a concern in this section of *Paradise Lost* as in the passages I examined previously. Colebrook contends that although Milton is ‘bound by an

⁶⁸³ Walker, in her chapter ‘Eve: The First Reflection’, argues for a gendered geography of the cosmos that Milton describes, which she notes is an ‘elementally feminine universe’ but those ‘elemental feminine forces are circumscribed by masculine principles’ (p.161).

⁶⁸⁴ Dennis Danielson, ‘The Fall of Man and Milton’s Theodicy’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Milton* ed. by Dennis Danielson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) pp.113-129 (p.121-122).

⁶⁸⁵ Claire Colebrook, *Milton, Evil and Literary History* (London: Continuum, 2008), p.91.

institutional and scriptural tradition of the inferiority of women', he sees 'this inferiority not as placing women in an entirely other category of being altogether but as differing in degree (like Adam from the angels)'.⁶⁸⁶ Colebrook attempts to rehabilitate Eve's 'inferior' position by pointing to Eve's closeness to God; she is different to God and to Adam, but not 'an entirely other category'.⁶⁸⁷ However, while I disagree with Danielson that Eve's fallibility is designed to give coherence to the poem, I cannot accept Colebrook's proposition that Eve 'differs in degree'. Colebrook's sympathetic analysis of Eve seems to dismiss the fact that Eve is first portrayed as a Narcissus-like figure who takes pleasure in her own image when she finds it, and is therefore immediately associated with specifically female sins such as vanity and pride, and finds herself captivated more by images than by reality. Milton's Eve must be rescued from this sin and have her attention redirected appropriately. Thus, as Danielson finds, Eve is necessarily the subordinate, marginalised figure whose sin of self-interest gives coherence to the epic.

Milton's poem of Adam and Eve's story appears reminiscent of Plato's tale in *The Symposium* of the first united and then divided human beings, in which each half longs for the other in order to become whole again, just as Adam longs for a

⁶⁸⁶ Colebrook, p.92.

⁶⁸⁷ Colebrook, p.92. Almond argues that in *Paradise Lost* Milton celebrates Eve as the culmination of God's work – 'Under his forming hands a creature grew, / Manlike, but different sex, so lovely fair, / That what seemed fair in all the world, seemed now / Mean, or in her summed up, in her contained' (8.473). However, Eve's place as subordinate to Adam is firmly established: 'Whence true authority in men; though both / Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed; / For contemplation he and valour formed, / For softness she and sweet attractive grace, / He for God only, she for God in him' (4.295-9); 'To whom Eve thus replied. O thou for whom / And from whom I was formed flesh of thy flesh, / And without whom am to no end, my guide / And head' (4.40-3); 'My author and disposer, what thou bidst / Unargued I obey; so God ordains, / God is thy law, thou mine: to know no more / Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise' (6.35-8).

partner.⁶⁸⁸ Adam yearns for a partner, noticing that he is the only one of God's creatures to have been placed on earth alone. However, where Adam desires company, Eve's first instinct on being presented with her partner is to take flight. She is drawn back by God, "Return fair Eve; / ...Whom thou fliest, of him thou art" (IV.481-2), preventing her escape and her attempts to return to the reflection of which she became fond. Eve is not an individual in her own right; she is, even with Adam, an incomplete whole as fragmented as the child before the mirror-moment. Phillip Stubbes affirms Eve's position as Adam's subordinate in *The anatomie of abuses* (1583), declaring that God 'made man after his own likeness, & similitude, geuing him a woma~, made of a ribbe of his own body'.⁶⁸⁹ While Stubbes closely follows the Bible in that in Genesis it is God's decision to create 'an helpe mete' for Adam and upon waking, Adam declares 'This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh, she shalbe called woman, because she was taken out of man'.⁶⁹⁰ Victoria Silver notes that 'the "unequal" or disproportioned appearance of our first parents would seem to warrant the speaker's pronouncement' that 'Adam in his nature corresponds directly to God', while 'Eve's being addresses to God only

⁶⁸⁸ Plato describes the original form of human beings as 'round all over' with 'back and sides encompassing it every way', with 'four arms, and legs...and two faces perfectly alike', and recounts the unruly behaviour of these humans as they attempted to attack the gods, prompting Zeus to formulate a plan to restore harmony:

"Methinks I can contrive that men, without ceasing to exist, shall give over the iniquity through a lessening of their strengt. I propose now to slice every one of them in two, so that while making them weaker we shall find them more useful by reason of their multiplication; and they shall walk erect upon two legs. If they continue turbulent and do not choose to keep quiet, I will do it again...and then they must go their ways on one leg, hopping". This meant that, 'Now when our first form had been cut in two, each half in longing for its fellow would come to it again; and then would they fling their arms about each other and in mutual embraces yearns to be grafted together, till they began to perish of hunger and general indolence, through refusing to do anything apart' (Plato, p.137-139).

⁶⁸⁹ Stubbes, Phillip, *The anatomie of abuses* (London, 1583), EEBO, image 2 [accessed 17 June 2007].

⁶⁹⁰ *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition* (Massachussetts: Hendrickson, 1969), I Corinthians, Genesis 2:18, 2:23.

mediately'.⁶⁹¹ However, Silver goes on to argue that 'Eve's making has a unique dignity since she is formed by God, not from the dust of the ground like all other creatures, but from Adam's own flesh' so that 'Eve...unites the whole worlds in herself, because her existence expresses that distinction in elective affinity describing deity's relationship to its creatures'.⁶⁹²

Milton, however, offers a protracted discussion between God and Adam on the topic of his desire for a companion. In book VIII Adam sees that he, as God's image, is above the animals which God has created and that he cannot engage with them in any intelligible way, and he expresses the problem that this poses: 'In solitude / What happiness, who can enjoy alone, / Or, all enjoying, what contentment find? (VIII.364-366). Adam recognises also that all the animals 'so fitly them in pairs thou hast combined', and that he is alone like no other creature and, upon arguing these points to God, is told that he was being tested 'To see how thou could'st judge of fit and meet' (VIII.448). Adam, having recognised himself as the image of God and thus above all others in intelligence, has passed God's test and will be rewarded with 'Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self' (VIII. 450). Adam and Eve are again presented as two parts of one being. Eve will be Adam's 'other self', suggesting that Adam is in some way lacking or requiring another 'self'. This position, for Eve, relegates her status as individual as created solely for the purposes of another. Adam was created in his own right, as his own individual, to be God's representative on earth; while Eve was created solely for the purpose of fulfilling a need, a requirement of Adam's for companionship.

⁶⁹¹ Victoria Silver, *Imperfect Sense: The Predicament of Milton's Irony* (Princeton & London: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 284.

⁶⁹² Silver, p.316-17.

Milton's account, though close to that of Genesis, departs from the Bible so that the issue of companionship is first raised by Adam and not God. The interchange between God and Adam focuses on God's image existing only in Adam and not in all living creatures on earth, which highlights Adam as God's sole image and subtly alters the trajectory of Eve's story. Rather than first being declared 'bone of *my* bones, flesh of *my* flesh' (italics mine), Milton increases Eve's status when she is announced by God as Adam's 'likeness', his 'other self' which positions Eve less as a by-product of Adam's body and moves her closer to being, in part, an image of God. A sense of hierarchy is established, between God, Adam, Eve and beasts and this sense of hierarchy is thematic throughout the epic.

Eve's first experiences of herself are quite different to Adam's. While Adam is left alone to explore Eden, Eve is guided and coached throughout. Unlike Adam, she is not permitted the time to investigate her surroundings unaccompanied and, where Adam has ample time to grasp his self and his situation in paradise, so that he questions his solitude wondering 'who can enjoy alone', Eve is led away from herself and delivered directly to her partner. God exerts his power over her, drawing her away from her own image and her opportunity for a Lacanian moment of self-discovery, and thus Eve is instantly slotted into the hierarchy of Eden, as subordinate to Adam.

This chapter illustrates the intersection between optics and catoptrics and literature, where science, religion and the eye are allied with each other throughout the texts of Crooke, Dingley and Milton. Science views the eye as the body's entry point for all the information the world provides, whereas religion considers it an entry point for sin and danger. Both disciplines, however, believe the eye is a

microcosm of the world. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton draws upon both the elements of free will assigned by Crooke's scientific approach, and the links to sin and the fall that Dingley applies. The sense of hierarchy, power, and the sense of microcosm/macrocosm are repeated in the poem, as Milton mediates between science and religion to create his epic of Adam and Eve. Milton balances these opposing themes to present an organised structured hierarchy, a sense of structure that extends into Eve's sense of self and her relationship to God and Adam.

Salmacis and Hermaphroditus



Figure twenty-one: Jan Gossaert, *The Transformation of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis* (1517), Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam⁶⁹³

⁶⁹³ Jan Gossaert, *The Transformation of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis* (1517) Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam
<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Salmacis_%26_Hermaphroditos_0.jpg> [accessed 14 December 2009].

This thesis has included discussion of two myths from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in which the mirror, reflections, or vision feature centrally. It therefore seems appropriate to close this research with one more of Ovid's tales which features a 'mirror'. Throughout this thesis, I have woven together two key myths – those of Narcissus and Medusa – both of which tie in with the themes of mirroring and vision that inform this research. All of the motifs which I have traced in those two tales can be found in the story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus: vanity, self-love, the dangerous female, pride and death have each recurred in association with the mirror and vision in the literature and art of the period, and 'Salmacis and Hermaphroditus' therefore seems an appropriate way in which to draw the thesis to a close.

The mirror in the myth of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus is less prominent and obvious than those in the stories of Narcissus and Medusa, however it nonetheless features as the primary locus of attraction and, ultimately, death. 'Salmacis and Hermaphroditus' tells of a beautiful, innocent young boy who comes upon a glittering pool which soon becomes the site of transformation, as their two bodies are joined to create the hermaphrodite. This myth and metaphor represents a number of aspects of the exemplary mirror: duality, the 'other', and the unified self. The pool functions as a mirror for Salmacis and thus carries with it the traditional connotations of pride and vanity. However, this myth, like the myth of Narcissus, deals with the self and the 'other'. When Salmacis looks into the pool-mirror, she sees herself, the unified whole, when she and Hermaphroditus enter the pool, they do so as two separate beings, and when Hermaphroditus exits the water, he and Salmacis have merged to become a single being, the combination of both individuals. The myth of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus combines the moral mirror – seen in the image of

Salmacis beautifying, signifying vanity – with the problem of duality and unity found in the mirror. The mirror both duplicates in unifies, as we saw in Narcissus's mirror moment, where it functioned in both ways.

Among the translations of the *Metamorphoses* is Arthur Golding's *Fifteen Books of Ovid's Metamorphoses of 1567*, which was credited as the first translation into English; Frances Beaumont's long poem *Salmacis and Hermaphroditus*, published in 1602; and George Sandys translation, *Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished, Mythologiz'd, and Represented in Figures*, which was informed greatly by that of Golding and appeared in 1632. The translations of Golding and Sandys remain for the most part close to the Ovid's original text, differing mainly in word-choice. However, these differences in word-choice create interesting and significant developments in the meaning of the myth, while Beaumont's poetic interpretation of the original myth is at times both subtle and dramatic.

All three authors have an introductory verse before they begin re-telling the myth and each of these differs significantly. Golding begins:

Learne why the fountaine of Salmacis diffamed is of yore
Why with his waters overstrong it weakeneth men so sore
That whoso bathes him there commes thence a perfect man no more.⁶⁹⁴

Although it is named the 'fountaine of Salmacis', Golding genders it masculine, thus the reduction of the 'perfect man' becomes a power struggle between the man and the yet more powerful masculine forces of the pool. Sandys, on the other hand, speaks of the spring, 'knowe how Salmacis infamous grew; / Whose too strong

⁶⁹⁴ Arthur Golding, *The Fifteen Books of Ovid's Metamorphoses, 1567: The first translation into English*, ed. by B. F., 2002, IV.347-349 <<http://www.elizabethanauthors.com/ovid00.htm>> [accessed 24 October 2004].

waues all manly strength vndoe, / And mollifie, with their soule-softning touch.⁶⁹⁵

Here the fountain and the nymph are fused; Sandys does not specify that he means only the water, therefore Salmacis is the fountain and the fountain is Salmacis, she takes on the masculinity of the water. Where Golding speaks only of a physical change, Sandys describes a transformation both internal and external including in his descriptions of the waves power, ‘their soule-softning touch’: these waves reach the inner depths of the soul and alter its being. Finally, Beaumont’s introduction to his poetic re-working of ‘Salmacis and Hermaphroditus’ is light hearted and playful in tone. The author describes Salmacis and Hermaphroditus as a ‘luckless pair’ in an opening stanza reminiscent of Shakespeare’s introduction to *Romeo and Juliet*, and blames their misfortune on ‘the strange enchantment of a well’.⁶⁹⁶ Beaumont is also explicit in painting Hermaphroditus as a figurative Hermaphrodite from the outset: ‘And from them conjoin’d he drew his name’.⁶⁹⁷ Immediately this creates the image of man and woman joined together in a single being, symbolic of the fate that is to befall him at the poem’s conclusion.

This notion of duality is evident in all versions of the myth. Hermaphroditus is in each tale introduced as a boy of duality: ‘in whose face such beauty did abide, / As well therein his father both and mother might be knowne’.⁶⁹⁸ Sandys translation is similar, ‘His father and his mother in his looke / You might behold: from whom, his name he took’.⁶⁹⁹ in his features he carries the image of two people, of both parents, and thus is appropriately named with nearly all of his father’s name and all of his

⁶⁹⁵ George Sandys, *Ovid’s Metamorphosis, Englished, Mythologiz’d, and Represented in Figures* (1632) <<http://etext.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/sandys/4.htm>> [accessed 24 October 2004].

⁶⁹⁶ Francis Beaumont, ‘Salmacis and Hermaphroditus’ in Sandra Clark, *Amorous Rites: Elizabethan Erotic Narrative Verse* (London: Everyman, 1994) p.94.

⁶⁹⁷ Beaumont, L.18.

⁶⁹⁸ Golding, IV.353-354.

⁶⁹⁹ Sandys, L.322-323.

mother's name. The 'es' ending of Hermes is dropped to merge the two names together creating 'Hermaphroditus'; already the boy has in him more feminine than masculine. It is in this respect that this myth differs from that of Narcissus: Narcissus and his reflection were two separate bodies which could not be united without the destruction of one or the other of them.

Sandys makes no description of Hermaphroditus but Golding elaborates, describing him 'in whose face such beautie did abide', while Beaumont paints vividly a picture of the most beautiful boy:⁷⁰⁰

As grac'd those clear as with a clearer face
For his white hand each goddess did him woo,
For it was whiter than the driven snow;
His leg was straighter than the thigh of Jove,
And he was far fairer than the God of love.
When first this well-shaped boy, beauty's chief king.⁷⁰¹

The image Beaumont portrays of Hermaphroditus is that of a very beautiful young boy, the most beautiful child, since he is 'fairer than the God of love', a description very feminine in its terminology, focusing on purity, chastity and perfection. Thus, in just a few stanzas from each poet, the reader has an image of a beautiful, pure and innocent boy, whose very nature contains the duality and androgyny illustrated in these descriptions.

The idea of the female body dismembered, its parts viewed separately, is reflected in Beaumont's description of Salmacis:

So fair she was...
So straight a body, and so sweet a face,
So soft a belly, such a lusty thigh,
So large a forehead, such a crystal eye,
So soft and moist a hand, so smooth a breast,
So fair a cheek, so well in all the rest.⁷⁰²

⁷⁰⁰ Golding, IV.353.

⁷⁰¹ Beaumont, L.70-75.

The female body is deconstructed, anatomised and reduced to its parts, in order to appreciate it fully. Salmacis's body must be appreciated in pieces, not as a cohesive whole, and this process of deconstruction renders the female body safe; it is no longer mutable and subversive. Just as she is part of the pool, dwelling 'within it', so each body part is within her body, making up the whole that is Salmacis. Note also the use of words denoting purity in the description of Salmacis; 'crystal', 'whiter', 'softer', 'fair'; all of these terms describe clarity and purity, as with the water. The image is one of virginity and chastity. Nancy J. Vickers discusses female 'bodily disintegration', considering the notion of the

troubling encounter of a male child with intolerable female nudity, with a body lacking parts present in his own, with a body that suggests the possibility of dismemberment.⁷⁰³

This analysis considered in conjunction with the pool and its effects on Hermaphroditus is significant; after he bathes in the 'vagina-pool' with Salmacis, Hermaphroditus experiences dismemberment; he becomes emasculated and weakened. The descriptions of the pool in each version are significant for their similarities and differences. In Golding's translation the pool is 'cristall clear' and there is 'no pricking poynt' so that the 'utmost borders from the brim' are 'beclad with herbs ay fresh and green and pleasant smelling flowers' (Golding, IV.361, 362, 365). The sexual connotations of the descriptive language is clear – the 'christall clear' pool is symbolic of the pudenda and the 'pricking poynt' of the phallus, the borders are 'beclad with herbs ay fresh and green', clearly intimating the pubic

⁷⁰² Beaumont, l.105-110.

⁷⁰³ Nancy, J. Vickers, 'Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme', *Critical Inquiry*, 8 (1981) 265-279 (p.260, 273).

region. This pool represents a vagina pure and chaste, with no indication of the phallus. Sandys's description of the pool contains similar rhetoric, though the sexual connotations implied by Golding's 'pricking poynt' are less explicitly described in Sandys version. He states that the water is 'so passing cleare' and contains 'no piked Bull-Rushes': it is less clear here but it is still possible to construe this line as descriptive of the phallus. Again, the vagina and the pubic area are described in 'garden terms': 'living turf upon the border grew'. Sandys also adds that the spring did not ever experience a winter, thus his pool is imbued with images of perpetual warmth and regeneration, a pool not cold or barren but living and constantly growing.

While Hermaphroditus suffers dismemberment, there exists no such deconstructive description of Salmacis in either Golding or Sandys, whose translations stay faithful to Ovid's original text, a text which describes Salmacis simply as a nymph with 'lovely limbs' who would spend her time 'combing out her hair' and dressing herself in 'transparent robes'.⁷⁰⁴ Sandys, like Ovid, tells us that she wears 'transparent robes' but Golding states merely that Salmacis is in 'fine array'. Again, the notion of clarity is emphasized, nothing is hidden or concealed: the bottom of the pool is clearly visible through the 'crystall' water and so Salmacis's body is apparent through the transparent clothing she wears. Each author builds upon and emphasizes the clarity, therefore creating apparent purity, of both Salmacis and the pool, building an alliance and similarity between them. However, all authors comment on Salmacis's manner; Sandys condemns her for her laziness, as his lively verse displays:

⁷⁰⁴ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, p.102.

Fie Salmacis,
Fie lazie sister, what a sloth is this!
Vpon a Quiuer, or a Iauelin seaze;
Nor with laborious hunting mix her ease.
...
Herself oft by that liquid mirror drest;
There taking counsel what became her best.⁷⁰⁵

Sandys evidently condemns Salmacis for her laziness, commenting on her sloth, then listing all the activities that she refuses to do; the only thing she will do is admire her reflection, taking ‘counsell’ from the ‘liquid mirror’ to see what clothing suits her. Sandys tells us that Salmacis will consult no-one but herself, that is, her reflection, and takes her own opinion on her beauty, a mark of her self indulgence and arrogance. The mirror here takes on its traditional role as the attribute of pride and vanity, framing Salmacis in a language of sinfulness. The pool, then, is explicitly used as a mirror and is identified as such.

Golding’s comments are similar, though less strident in their denunciation of her laziness:

...But such a Nymph as neyther
To hunt, to run, nor yet to shoote, had any kind of pleasure.
...
But never could they hir persuade...
And at the water as a glass she taketh counsell ay
How every thing becommeth hir.⁷⁰⁶

Golding’s Salmacis refuses to do anything and cannot be persuaded to take part in any activities, but he resists labelling her slothful, as does Sandys. However, in describing her vanity, Golding is more explicit, and his language denotes a Narcissistic self-obsession and arrogance: ‘she taketh counsel...how everything becommeth hir’. It is her own opinion of her own beauty, and she considers herself

⁷⁰⁵ Sandys, L.340-349.

⁷⁰⁶ Golding, L.368-379.

to be beautiful in everything. Golding creates an image of Salmacis as the epitome of sin because, as Sabine Melchoir-Bonnet informs us:

Most sins, pride or arrogance, first and foremost, derive from sight. The mirror served as an attribute of sin because it is the emblem of the powers of sight, whose perverse effects it increases.⁷⁰⁷

Thus Salmacis, lazy and obsessed by her own reflection, symbolises various sins; vanity, pride and arrogance, as she gazes repeatedly at herself in her mirror-pool.

Beaumont's description of Salmacis's inactivity is yet more forgiving:

Yet the fair nymph was never seen resort
Unto the savage and the bloody sport
Of chaste Diana, nor was ever wont
To bend a bow, nor ever did she hunt;
Nor did she ever strive with pretty cunning
To overgo her fellow nymphs in running.⁷⁰⁸

Here Beaumont paints Salmacis as the nymph too fair and beautiful to take part in 'bloody' or 'savage' sports, too sweet in nature to be 'cunning' and beat her friends in running. Beaumont does, however, just four lines later, refer to her 'lazy idleness' and he also focuses on her vanity though seems more sympathetic than Golding or Sandys.⁷⁰⁹

Oft in the water, she did look her face,
And oft she us'd to practise what quaint grace
Might well become her...⁷¹⁰

Here it seems less the description of the arrogant, self-assured Salmacis as portrayed by Golding; Beaumont's Salmacis looks in the mirror to practise at her beauty, to rehearse ways of improving her appearance. This subtle distinction moves Salmacis

⁷⁰⁷ Sabine Melchoir-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History*, trans. by Katharine H Jewett (London: Routledge, 2001) p.193.

⁷⁰⁸ Beaumont, L.361-367.

⁷⁰⁹ Beaumont, L.372.

⁷¹⁰ Beaumont, L.381-382.

away from vanity into the realms of using the mirror for self-improvement. In a version so informed by the tale of Narcissus, it seems peculiar that this Salmacis is perhaps the least self-obsessed. Beaumont is also explicit in the attire that the nymph wears: 'Her skin was with a thin veil overthrown, / Through which her naked beauty clearly shone'.⁷¹¹ Beaumont's focus is on expressing the beauty of this extraordinary woman. Whereas other versions of the myth focus on Hermaphroditus' natural beauty and Salmacis's vanity, Beaumont creates an equality between them, both as beautiful as the other, but only Salmacis is aware of her beauty and how to enhance it and use it, using the mirror to her advantage. Beaumont brings to the tale the themes of self-love and self-effacement through love by means of the Narcissus tale: when Hermaphroditus happens upon Salmacis's pool, he stands in awe of it:

...Hermaphroditus stand
By her clear fountain, wondering at the sight,
That there was any brook could be so bright;
For this was the bright river where the boy
Did die himself, that he could not enjoy
Himself in pleasure...⁷¹²

The pool is not only described in terms of its beauty, clarity and with the imagery of the pudenda, it now becomes the site of death, self-love and self-effacement. However, it is still bright, alive and clear, and Beaumont includes the story of the mirror-pool in which Narcissus fell in love with himself. Already we have the pool in the context of a mirror, and he tells us that Hermaphroditus is 'wondering' at the sight. This is interesting because the etymology of the Latin word 'mirari' means 'to wonder, admire, whence Miracle'.⁷¹³ Hermaphroditus 'wonders at' the miraculous mirror-pool - Beaumont fills the lines with meaning and imagery that neither

⁷¹¹ Beaumont, L.385-386.

⁷¹² Beaumont, L.394-399.

⁷¹³ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, <<http://www.oed.com/>>.

Golding nor Sandys includes, their work mainly translating Ovid's original with less poeticism and more moralism.

When Golding's Salmacis approaches the beautiful boy, having first surveyed her own beauty, assuring herself that she is attired appropriately, and talks to the boy, first flattering him and then coming directly to her point:

Far more blist than these is shee
Whome thou vouchsafest for thy wife and bedfellow for to be.
Now if thou alreedy have one, let me by stelth obtaine
That which shall pleasure both of us. Or if thou doe remaine
A Maiden free from wedlocke bonde, let me then be thy spouse.⁷¹⁴

Salmacis makes clear her intentions to enjoy sexual pleasures with him, regardless of any existing wife or lover, or if he is still a virgin. Forthright and direct, her female sexuality is ungoverned and freely expressed - the ultimate expression of the dangers of the unregulated female body. The body of this forward young woman, clearly visible through its 'transparent Robes', represents Vickers' 'intolerable female nudity' with the 'body that suggests the possibility of dismemberment'.⁷¹⁵

When Beaumont describes how Salmacis and Hermaphroditus interact, the process is prolonged as Salmacis spends far more time in persuasion, and Hermaphroditus is more willing to listen, tolerating her advances for longer than in the other versions. It is important to note that although Beaumont's Salmacis is 'wanton' it is because 'by Venus' law / She did desire to have him as she saw' and not because she is a lazy, self-obsessed sexually aggressive woman.⁷¹⁶

The climax of the myth is the transformation that occurs as a result of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus's interaction in her pool. Each version of this myth has slight

⁷¹⁴ Golding, IV. 396-400.

⁷¹⁵ Vickers, p.273.

⁷¹⁶ Beaumont, L. 401-402.

differences in the translation of the language that is used to describe the appearance of the hermaphroditic body. In Sandys translation, Salmacis appeals to the Gods, 'Grant that no day may euer vs divide!'.⁷¹⁷ Salmacis does not wish to be joined but asks that she and Hermaphroditus never be 'divided'. This may allude to the earlier discussed theory proposed by Aristophanes in Plato's *The Symposium* that 'there were three human genders' and that the third gender 'man-woman' was a distinct gender as well as a name, combining male and female'.⁷¹⁸ In this explanation of the nature of love

Mutual love is ingrained in mankind, reassembling our early estate and endeavouring to combine two in one and heal the human sore.⁷¹⁹

Furthermore, Aristophanes describes a situation where it is only nature for two lovers to wish to be joined:

What is it good mortals, that you would have of one another?...Do you desire to be joined in the closest possible union, so that you shall not be divided by night or by day? If that is your craving, I am ready to fuse and weld you together in a single piece, that from being two you may be made one; that so long as you live, the pair of you, being as one, may share a single life; and that when you died you may also...be one instead of two, having shared a single death.⁷²⁰

In this theory, the two conjoined bodies are completely natural, representing the natural balance of lovers. It becomes unclear as to the type of body that the fused Salmacis and Hermaphroditus symbolize, since they represent both the fused lovers welded in one body as described above, but also the body of the 'androgynous' third gender which combines male and female. Sandys describes the aesthetics of this

⁷¹⁷ Sandys, L.417.

⁷¹⁸ Plato, *Lysis, Symposium, Gorgias* trans. by W. R. M. Lamb, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1933), p.135.

⁷¹⁹ Plato, p.141.

⁷²⁰ Plato, p.143-145.

new body: 'Euen in that space, / Their cleauing bodies mix: both haue one face'.⁷²¹ They are 'now but one, with double form indew'd / No longer he a boy, nor she a maid'.⁷²² Here there is the notion that the two bodies have mixed equally and have created some kind of 'double form' where both Hermaphroditus and Salmacis are represented, 'but neither, and yet either, might be said'; the perfect hermaphrodite.⁷²³ However, there is no further mention of Salmacis: 'Hermaphroditus at himself admires: / Who halfe a female from the spring retires, / His manly lims now softned'.⁷²⁴ The use of 'admires' is significant because although Hermaphroditus subsequently asks for every man who enters the water to 'return halfe-woman with infeeble lims' he does not seem horrified or alarmed by his transformation, he merely 'admires' the final result in the pool.⁷²⁵ Hermaphroditus, hardly ever the epitome of masculinity, part male and part female, now finally and fully represents the connotations of his name.

In Golding's version Salmacis prays to the Gods that 'this same wilfull body and I may never parted bee' and so 'The bodies of them twaine / Were mixt and joynd both in one. To both them did remaine / One countenance'.⁷²⁶ Golding carries on to describe the final result of the joining process, 'Ye could not say it was a perfect boy / Nor perfect wench', placing Salmacis as the guilty party and Hermaphroditus as the still-innocent boy.⁷²⁷ Hermaphroditus has been attacked by this 'wench' and reduced to 'halfe a man' as his 'limmes were weakened' and his voice had no 'manly

⁷²¹ Sandys, L.418-419.

⁷²² Sandys, L.423-424.

⁷²³ Sandys, L.425.

⁷²⁴ Sandys, L.426-428.

⁷²⁵ Sandys, L. 433.

⁷²⁶ Golding, IV.462, IV.469-470.

⁷²⁷ Golding, IV.469-470.

reere'.⁷²⁸ This would suggest that this new body is not the body transformed mutually in the 'desire and pursuit of wholeness' but the 'androgynous' body 'combining male and female'.⁷²⁹ He appeals to his parents that any man who should bathe in the pool will come out 'weakened' and 'but halfe a man'; that is to say, the nymph Salmacis has been completely effaced, just as Narcissus was, leaving only traces of her deconstructed femininity – the pool has created a new being.⁷³⁰ As Vickers tells us, 'bodies fetishized by a poetic voice logically do not have a voice of their own, the world of making words...is not theirs'.⁷³¹

Beaumont has still a different description of the transformations:

And in one body they began to grow:
She felt his youthful blood in every vein,
And he felt hers warm his cold breast again;
And ever since was woman's love to blest,
That it will draw blood from the strongest breast.⁷³²

The mutual mingling is discussed in terms of love, an encounter which inflames the heart of the virginal boy. Beaumont's interaction, using 'again' indicates two bodies joined in 'the pursuit of wholeness', two bodies once cut in half by Zeus, now reunited and joined again.⁷³³ Describing the final product of this encounter as 'neither and either' Beaumont concludes with Hermaphroditus asking that whoever

Shall come to cool himself in these silver streams
May never more a manly shape retain,
But half a virgin may return again!.⁷³⁴

⁷²⁸ Golding, IV.472-474.

⁷²⁹ Plato, p.24-26.

⁷³⁰ Golding, IV.477-478.

⁷³¹ Vickers, p.277.

⁷³² Beaumont, L.900-904.

⁷³³ Plato, p.23.

⁷³⁴ Beaumont, L.906, L.914-916.

Not only has Hermaphroditus lost his 'manly shape', such as it was, but he is no longer a proper virgin, he is only 'half a virgin'. Beaumont frames the transformation in terms of a sexual encounter, as well as a merging of bodies. However, once more, no female remains - there is no evidence of Salmacis except the bodily remnants that make Hermaphroditus not masculine. As her body was earlier deconstructed in order for its beauty to be fully understood and described, thus it now remains, a victim of their sexuality and passion.

Ann Thompson points to Hermaphroditus' address to his parents at the end of Beaumont's poem, and concludes that 'in the 1602 poem this request is presented as that of a dying man' but in Ovid she finds 'no suggestion that the hero actually dies at this time'.⁷³⁵ Thompson notes that this 'moment of extraordinary consummation from Salmacis's point of view is also the moment of the literal death of the hero', and rationalises that the 'altered climax' brings the story closer to the tale of Narcissus which pervades Beaumont's poem.⁷³⁶ However, she does not resolve the significance of the 'death' of Hermaphroditus, the 'hero'. I would argue that both Salmacis and Hermaphroditus 'die' in this final encounter, as the resulting body which emerges from the water is 'Neither, and either'; it is not Hermaphroditus but Hermaphrodite. That this 'death' is not portrayed explicitly in Sandys and Golding is not so problematic, as it is implied in the fact that Salmacis has disappeared and Hermaphroditus can no longer categorize himself as male, as the boy who set out to travel. In her insistence on the theme of 'death by water', Thompson fails to acknowledge the 'birth' that occurs in the vagina-pool.⁷³⁷

⁷³⁵ Ann Thompson, 'Death by Water: The Originality of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus', *Modern Language Quarterly* 40 (1979) 99-114 (p.101).

⁷³⁶ Thompson, p.101.

⁷³⁷ Thompson, p.107.

Sandys, in his commentary to his translation of book four tales that ‘Sensuall loue is the deformed issue of sloth and delicacy: and seldome suruiues his inglorious parents’.⁷³⁸ Here it becomes clear that death is the result of the sins, of which sloth and vanity (Salmacis) and delicacy or effeminate-ness (Hermaphroditus) are part, tied up with ‘sensuall loue’ as the couple interact in the pool. Sandys is also explicit in the commentary in summarising the Platonic version of love, as previously discussed:

The reason why louers so strictly imbrace; is to incorporate with the beloued, which sith they cannot, can neuer be satisfied.⁷³⁹

However, Sandys describes Plato’s theory of love as an obscure abstraction of the Biblical truth of Adam and Eve:

Plato recites a fable, how man at the first was created double, and for his arrogancy dissected into male and female: the reason of their affected coniunction, as coueting to returne to their originall: an obscure notion (as we haue formerly written) of Eua’s being taken out of the side of Adam.⁷⁴⁰

Had Thompson read further she would have found in Sandys this explicit condemnation of sloth, delicacy, sensual love, Platonic theory and sin. For Sandys, punishment and death are inevitable in a tale which exemplifies and discusses the tale of Adam and Eve.

Hermaphroditus, at the beginning of the story, is described as a figure that symbolises duality – each version of the myth points to the visible evidence of his origins, in that he bears resemblance to both of his parents. Once Hermaphroditus has entered the pool, which is firmly established as a mirror, he emerges as a single

⁷³⁸ Sandys, George, *Ovid Book IV Commentary* <<http://etext.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/sandys/4comm.htm>> [accessed 25 October 2004].

⁷³⁹ Sandys, *Commentary*.

⁷⁴⁰ Sandys, *Commentary*.

individual. The ‘pool-mirror’ is the site of his merging with Salmacis – as in Lacan’s theory of the mirror-moment, these bodies are understood separately as fragmented pieces until they enter the ‘pool-mirror’, at which point the fragmented bodies are unified into a single, resolved being. This myth illustrates many of the themes and motifs in which the mirror has become embedded during the early modern period, and which this thesis has examined. In this instance, the mirror is involved in ideas of duality, the ‘other’, and the unified self, as well as pride, vanity, and femininity, all classic associations for the mirror. Salmacis duplicates herself, staring in the mirror, and standing as an example of pride and vanity. However, once she enters the mirror-pool with Hermaphroditus, she begs for unity. These traditional associations are, as we see in the translations of Golding (1567), Beaumont (1602), and Sandys (1632), still current and in use alongside the developing theories in optics and catoptrics throughout the Renaissance, illustrating the wide and varied applications of the mirror, as well the persistence of a range of related meanings, metaphors and applications, across the fields of science, literature and art.

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