

THE *CLOUD*-AUTHOR'S REMAKING OF THE PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS'
MYSTICAL THEOLOGY

The Cloud of Unknowing and its companion texts were among the outstanding accomplishments of the flowering of English spiritual writing that occurred in the late fourteenth century. As a prelude to his final poetic evocation of contemplative fulfilment in *The Cloud* itself, the anonymous author formulates the paradox on which his instruction is based. Although the intellect as a spiritual faculty can know all created spiritual things, he writes, except through its failing it cannot know God, who is both spiritual and uncreated. He elucidates with a quote from the Pseudo-Dionysius' *On the Divine Names*: 'þe moste goodly knowyng of God is þat, þe whiche is knowyn bi vnknowyng' (125.111-12).¹ He then takes the opportunity to comment on this source, on citing authorities, and on intellectual presumption:

& trewly, who-so wil loke Denis bookes, he schal fynde þat his wordes wilen cleerly aferme al þat I haue seyde or schal sey, fro þe bigynnyng of þis tretis to þe ende. On none oþerwise þen þus list me not alegge him, ne none oþer doctour for me at þis tyme. For somtyme men þouzt it meeknes to sey nouzt of þeire owne hedes, bot zif þei afermid it by Scripture & doctours wordes; & now it is turnid into corioustee & schewyng of kunnyng. To þee it nedip not, & þerfore I do it nouzt. For who-so haþ eren, lat hem here, & who-so is sterid for to trowe, lat hem trowe; for elles scholen þei not. (125.13-22)

The energized colloquial language, free from the conventions of religious rhetoric, suggests both the author's individual voice and an independence of mind which in the long history of commentary on *The Cloud* has been celebrated by some, denied or deplored by others. This passage is distinctive in the author's writings in its open resort to Dionysius' authority, then accepted as apostolic, and in its implied alignment with divine authority in its closing adaptation of Christ's often repeated words.² Elsewhere the author is true to his expressed dislike of academic display, in that he does not draw attention to his indebtedness in chapters 63-6 and 71-3 to Richard of Saint-Victor's *Benjamin minor* and *Benjamin major*, to Carthusian sources,³ or to borrowings from *The Scale of Perfection* by his contemporary Walter Hilton.⁴ In its defensive invocation of authority and direction to a limited readership, the passage is one of many internal revelations of the discursive fragility of *The Cloud* in ecclesiastical tradition and contemporary context.

Such fragility is further suggested by the text's development, which is characterized by repetitions and fluctuations in rhetoric that sometimes indicate interruptions to composition.⁵ The author's offer to amend or amplify on request (130.14–17) confirms that he did not seek to polish his longest treatise to the structural perfection achieved in his formal epistles, *Discretion of Stirrings* and *An Epistle of Prayer*, which are the literary equivalents of costly manuscript art. Instead the oral dialogues with his apprentice that seem to have inspired *The Cloud* and which permeate it as a textual strategy extend to an intertextual dialogue with Hilton.⁶ Thus although the text solidified to the form familiar to later generations at the point when manuscript transmission commenced, its details probably remained conditional in its author's conception. In the same empirical spirit he translated the Pseudo-Dionysius' *Mystical Theology* under the title of *Deonise Hid Diuinite*.⁷

The Latin sources from which the author fashioned his translation were selectively published, together with the Middle English text, in 1924 by Abbot Justin McCann⁸ and again in 1955 by Professor Phyllis Hodgson. McCann demonstrated that chapters 1–3 of *Deonise Hid Diuinite*, comprising approximately three-quarters of the text, are based on John Sarracenus' (John Sarrazin's) *Nova translatio* (c.1167), while chapters 4–5 follow Thomas Gallus' *Extractio* or *Paraphrase* (1238). Some conflation of these sources occurred, with the further complications that the *Extractio* is based on Sarracenus and that it mixes translation with exposition.⁹ The editors traced further borrowings to Gallus' *Explanatio* (c.1241), a commentary on Sarracenus' version of the Pseudo-Dionysius' canon, including the *Mystical Theology*.¹⁰

The source texts chosen by the *Cloud*-author represented major stages in the process by which the philosophy of the Pseudo-Dionysius came to influence the spiritual beliefs and practices of the western Church. Sarracenus' free rendition found equivalent Latin terms for Greek vocabulary that John Scotus Eriugena had retained in what became known as the *Vetus translatio*, the first acceptable Latin translation of the canon, completed by 875. As a monk at Saint-Denis, Sarracenus helped to build a tradition of Parisian Pseudo-Dionysian scholarship in which Gallus, a canon regular at the abbey of Saint-Victor, was to occupy a 'prominent and distinct position'.¹¹ Gallus' immersion in Pseudo-Dionysian thought over twenty years produced interpretations that blended scholarship with pastoral and contemplative concerns.¹² His commentaries were widely read, and from the fourteenth century their manuscripts circulated in Carthusian circles both on the Continent and in England. They were therefore a natural source for the *Cloud*-author when he came to compose the only known Middle English version of the *Mystical Theology*.

Although Hodgson claims that *Deonise Hid Diuinite* 'follows its Latin sources closely, with only very minor additions, omissions and modifications',¹³ she lists these at length. She also notes the presence of 'more vivid imagery ... often reminiscent of the lively language of *The Cloud*'.¹⁴ By contrast, in 1983 Rosemary Ann Lees referred to the translation's 'comparative emancipation ... apparent both in the flexibility with which it supplements and culls matter

from its various sources as well as in the facility with which it seems in general to preserve the native idiom of English prose'.¹⁵ She claims more contentiously that 'intelligibility seems in all things to have governed [the author's] practice as a translator'.¹⁶ My argument is that the small changes introduced by the *Cloud*-author follow discernible trends, outlined below, and that even in this short text they accumulate sufficient mass substantially to remake the sources. I contend further that the author's procedures in *Deonise Hid Diuinite* were chosen so as actively to confirm his development of negative theology in *The Cloud*.

The prologue to *Deonise Hid Diuinite* maintains the mixed pastoral and defensive stance of the *Cloud* passage quoted above:

Dis writyng þat next folowep is þe Inglische of a book þat Seynte Denys wrote vnto Thimothe, þe whiche is clepid in Latyn tonge *Mistica Theologia*. Of þe whiche book, for-þi þat it is mad minde in þe 70 chapter of a book wretin before (þe whiche is clepid *Pe Cloude of Vnknowing*) how þat Denis sentence wol cleerli afferme al þat is wretyn in þat same book: þerfore, in translacioun of it, I haue not onliche folowed þe nakid lettre of þe text, bot for to declare þe hardnes of it, I haue moche folowed þe sentence of þe Abbot of Seinte Victore, a noble & a worþi expositour of þis same book. (2.3-12)

Two slippages suggest authorial anxiety. The first is that 'Denis bookes' in *The Cloud* has become 'Denis sentence', a change that glosses over the adoption of the *Mystical Theology* as being fully representative of Dionysius' thought.¹⁷ The connective 'þerfore' camouflages a second slippage, since the declaration that the author resorted to Gallus to clarify a difficult text does not follow logically from the contention that the *Mystical Theology* will clearly affirm every word of *The Cloud*. The author's uncharacteristic praise of Gallus may aim to defend his choice of the *Extractio* over Robert Grosseteste's commentary, which was based on the Greek original. However the *Cloud*-author's assertion is more obviously aimed at defending his decision to combine his sources.

As translator he in fact displays the same colloquial vigour and independence that he demonstrates in the invented passages so far discussed. McCann, Alastair Minnis, and John Clark have considered how closely the theology of *The Cloud* is aligned with Gallus' affective teachings.¹⁸ However, *Deonise Hid Diuinite* is infused not only with Gallus' 'sentence', but also with the doctrine and stylistic features of *The Cloud*. The translation extends the sequence by which Sarracenus¹⁹ and Gallus in turn²⁰ adapted Dionysius' Greek Neoplatonism to Latin Christian doctrine. Beyond this, the uniqueness of negative theology in the vernacular devotional context of England in the 1390s further explains why the author shaped his version of the *Mystical Theology* so as to support *The Cloud*.

Many of the changes that he made are founded on his belief, already explained in *The Cloud*, that rather than the intellect or imagination, love is the means by which the soul is united to God.²¹ In emphasizing love's pre-eminence he moderates Dionysius' philosophical abstractions by introducing affective, experiential, personal, and explanatory elements. These intrusions recapture *The Cloud's* presentation of contemplation as a vigorous human activity. The author's reservations about learning and learned men are used to soften further

the sources' intellectual language. However an exception occurs at the end, where Dionysius demonstrates the moment of the intellect's failing through an exaggerated textuality which stretches language beyond its limits. Here the *Cloud*-author extends the sources' linguistic overreaching to the point where a silence eloquent with the divine mystery intervenes. In reapplying another technique perfected in *The Cloud*,²² the translation thus mimes the surrender in contemplation of the flow of thoughts to 'affecyon abouen mynde' (*Deonise Hid Diuinite*, 2.25f.).

The author begins to diverge from his sources' scholarly status by translating 'theologia', found in the titles of all surviving Latin versions, not by 'theologie', which by then was an accepted English word, but by the older Latin borrowing 'diuinite'. Since 'diuinite' can mean either 'theology' or 'godhead',²³ the English version maintains an outward faithfulness to the original. However it imports the suggestion that this work, like *The Cloud*, is 'A Book of Contemplacyon',²⁴ the words and structure of which will themselves assist the reader's practical efforts to attain knowledge of a God 'hidden' to the intellect. A later mistranslation of Sarracenus' 'Theologiam' as 'Cristes diuinitee' (4.13) meaning 'divine nature', and an added reference to 'pis deuinite' (6.32) meaning 'contemplative method', further support this interpretation. In the same way an address of the opening prayer to 'Wysdome', a concept favoured by Dionysius but often a portmanteau term for contemplation,²⁵ replaces the conventionally theological 'Trinitas', which again is found in all known Latin versions. Whereas Sarracenus gives the ending as 'Igitur ista mihi quidem sint oratione postulata' ('Therefore may these things asked for in my prayer indeed be mine'), implying an exemplary function, the *Cloud*-author personalizes the opening with added first- and second-person pronouns: 'þou vnbigonne & euerlastyng Wysdome' (2.14) ... 'I beseche þee' (2.17). He thus invites the reader to take part in the prayer.

Deonise Hid Diuinite personalizes the divine to approximately the level reached in *The Cloud*. Intruded personal pronouns continue to be applied to God, extending the effect achieved in the opening prayer (2.19; 5.23; 5.31; 7.18f.; 7.32–8.3). Additions of 'hym', 'himself' and an insertion to the effect that the true understanding should be held by faith ('fastliche for to holde in sijt of byleue') qualify the abstraction of Dionysius' thought about the primal cause (4.3–10). Two references to Christ are also added (4.13). Where Sarracenus writes: 'quomodo divina et bona natura singularis dicitur', the translation retains Anglicized forms of the adjectives, but undermines their abstraction with an Anglo-Saxon noun and definitions: 'how þat hiȝe, deuine synguleer kynde, þe whiche is God, is one' (7.14f.). By preferring Gallus' *Extractio* over Sarracenus, the conclusion to chapter 3 replaces non-personal with personal constructions.²⁶ However in a contrary procedure in chapter 5, based on Gallus, God is referred to as 'he' following Sarracenus, in preference to Gallus' 'omnium causa' (9.26).²⁷

Furthermore, the first of a series of interpolated references to 'affecyon' as a supra-rational faculty for apprehending the divine expands Sarracenus' conclusion to the prayer quoted above, so that it reads as follows: 'And for alle

þees þinges ben abouen mynde, þerfore wiþ affeccyon abouen mynde as I may, I desire to purchase hem vnto me wiþ þis preier' (2.25–7). The expansion imposes on the source a proposition that the author had explored empirically in *The Cloud*, namely that a mind focused on God's substance operates above the ordinary human level (120.2–8). By touching on the theme of longing also recurrent in *The Cloud*,²⁸ it grounds in the reader's desire the paradoxical abstractions of Dionysius' address to a divinity opaque to intellectual seeking.

While the interpolations involving 'affeccyon' are confined to the long first chapter of the *Cloud*-author's translation, which is mostly based on Sarracenus, they have the effect of extending Gallus' doctrinal influence in the form in which it already appears in the affective focus of *The Cloud*. However, only one of the interpolations (5.15) draws on Gallus' writings as a direct source, and even here his equivalent word is 'dilectio'.²⁹ The author therefore appears to be acting independently in giving prominence to 'affeccyon'. In *The Cloud* his chosen term for the faculty by which God may be 'getyn & holden' is 'loue' (26.4f.),³⁰ meaning the soul's will and power to love (18.15–20). However by the time of writing 'affeccyon' was thoroughly acclimatized in English devotional texts including *The Cloud*,³¹ and the author's preference in *Deonise Hid Diuinite* for 'affeccyon' is thus a relatively minor concession to Sarracenus' abstract Latin vocabulary and the status of the *Nova translatio* as theology. Moreover the interpolated references to 'affeccyon' are a technique of emotional enrichment appropriate to the *Cloud*-author's practical contemplative purpose and to his recognition in *The Cloud* that the 'swetnes of loue' (46.18) is also a feeling: 'þe felyng of þis is eendles blisse' (19.13). In *Deonise Hid Diuinite* a later pair of examples expands the description, 'munde ... cuncta auferens et a cunctis absolutus', with an acknowledgement of human complexity: 'makyng þiself clene fro al wordly, fleschly, & kyndely likyng in þin affecciou' (3.14f.). This prepares for the contemplative reader's again being 'drawen up abouen mynde in affecciou' (3.16f.) to the divine darkness. Two final insertions of 'affecciou' (4.25, 5.15) likewise relate to contemplative practice rather than to theory.

The drift to an experiential orientation in *Deonise Hid Diuinite* is confirmed by the opening to chapter 1. Here, in an expansion unparalleled in Sarracenus or Gallus, the author fictionalizes Timothy's and the reader's state at the commencement of contemplative practice: 'what tyme þat þou purposist þee by þe steryng of grace to þe actueel excersise of þi blynde beholdynges' (2.31f.). *The Cloud's* focus on the novice's preliminary progress in chapters 1 and 2 is comparable. A parallel resort to narrative occurs in an introduction added in *Deonise Hid Diuinite* to Sarracenus' account of Moses on Sinai: 'Ensaumple of þis se by þe story how ...'(4.27). An interpolated reminder of context likewise recalls the development of this narrative, based on *Benjamin major*, in the climax to *The Cloud*: 'In þis tyme it was þat Moyses in syngulertee of affecciou was departid from þees beforeseyde chosen preestes' (5.15f.). Moses' separation is not referred to in the sources,³² but recalls contrasts in *The Cloud* among Moses, Bezaleel, and Aaron as priest. Chapter 1 of the translation concludes by again invoking a dimension of the contemplative's affective experience that goes

beyond Sarracenus, whose difficult Latin the author partly mistranslates in a way that rules out pantheistic implications: 'for to fele in experience þe presence of hym þat is abouen alle þinges, not hauyng felyng ne þinkyng of no beyng þing' (5.19–21).³³

Again, when the author describes the ascent to transcendence as occurring 'somytyme sodeyner þen oper' (8.19), he recaptures *The Cloud's* interest in the duration of contemplation.³⁴ Among other experiential additions reminiscent of *The Cloud* is his exhortation that as well as 'stronge' (Sarracenus 'forti'), contrition should be 'sleiz' and 'listi' (3.1). 'Sleiz' and its cognate 'sleizt' (referring to the strategic working of grace) are interpolated again later, also in relation to contemplation (6.27, 6.26). First recorded in English in *The Cloud*, 'listi' and 'listely' designate enthusiasm for spiritual practice.³⁵ Together 'sleiz' and 'listi' denote an eagerness tempered by wisdom, and in *The Cloud* they encompass the notion of contemplation as play. This nexus recurs over several chapters³⁶ and includes an explanation of the significance for contemplation of the proverb, 'wirche more wiþ a list þen wiþ any liþer strengþe' (87.6f.).³⁷ *Deonise Hid Diuinite* therefore qualifies the Latin text's recommendation of strength with the sagacious easeful approach evoked by the language of *The Cloud*.

Further psychological and theological modifications recapture features of *The Cloud*. The author's reiterated distinction in the earlier work between 'bodily wittes' and 'goostly wittes' is used to extend Sarracenus' generalized allusions to physical perception. The translation adds a definition of 'bodily wittes': 'as heryng, seyng, smelling, taastyng, & touching' (3.2), and specifies separate areas of operation for the bodily and spiritual senses: 'alle þoo þinges, þe whiche mowe be knowen wiþ any of þi fyue bodely wittes without-forþe; and alle þoo þinges þe whiche mow be knowen by þi goostly wittes wiþinne-forþ' (3.3–6). An added dismissal of those 'wonyng 3it not only in here goostly wittes of natureel philosophy, bot lowe downe byneþe in here bodily wittes, þe whiche þei hauen bot in comoun with only beestes' (3.27–30) recalls the satiric cameos in *The Cloud* of misguided contemplatives who mistake bodily feelings for spiritual working (chapters 51–3). Finally, *Deonise Hid Diuinite* modifies Sarracenus' representation of Dionysius' theology with intruded references to grace,³⁸ a doctrine which, in accordance with Augustinian tradition, including Gallus, pervades *The Cloud*.

In yet another significant parallel to *The Cloud*, where the author creates recognizable identities for himself and his disciple, *Deonise Hid Diuinite* strengthens the sense of a speaker and a hearer for its message. Authorial first-person pronouns are introduced in such phrases as 'I beseche þee' (2.17); 'as I may' (2.26); and 'I haue affermyngliche set' (7.29). Where Sarracenus reads 'quid dicat quidem aliquis?', the translation personalizes to: 'what schul *we* sey þan ...?' (3.27). Gallus' 'remouetur ab eo' in the *Extractio* similarly becomes '*we* schuld do away from hym' (8.33). As reader's representative, the apostle Timothy is actualized in the opening by intruded second-person pronouns³⁹ and by translating Sarracenus' adverb 'ignote' as 'in a maner þat is þou woste neuer how' (3.11). This parallels such phrases in *The Cloud* as 'þou wost not how' (16.14) and 'þou wost neuer what' (17.1), and alludes to the earlier work's many

evocations of the desired contemplative state of unknowing. Again, *The Cloud* constructs the author and disciple as fellow contemplatives: 'siþen we ben boþe clepid of God to worche in þis werk' (129.10f.). *Deonise Hid Diuinite* recreates this relationship in two interpolations: 'as it is possible to me for te speke & to þee to vnderstonde, loke þat þou rise wiþ me in þis grace' (3.9; Sarracenus: 'sicut est possibile, ignote consurge'); and 'us alle þat ben practisers of þis deuinite' (6.32; no Latin parallel).

The Cloud survives in the twenty-first century as a guide to contemplation because of the subtlety and practicality of its teaching. The vernacular assertiveness that distinguishes it as text in its Middle English setting⁴⁰ erupts in *Deonise Hid Diuinite* in the form of oppositions: 'It is noþing þus: bot þus most it be' (4.1; no Latin equivalent); 'not to alle, bot to hem only' (4.20f.; Sarracenus: 'his qui'). It also takes the form of emphases: 'þe whiche in himself is abouen alle, 3ei boþe doyng away and affermyng of hem alle' (4.10f.; Sarracenus: 'quae est super omnem ablationem et positionem'). Similarly, the author augments the *Extractio* by adding energetic repetitions of 'al' to the list of bodily things to be taken away in the effort to conceptualize the divine nature (9.15–20). This strategy enlarges his vivid demonstration in *The Cloud* that 'no3 where bodely is eucrywhere goostly', a proposition to be experienced as true by those who renounce the intervention of the senses in spiritual working (121.15–21). A related interpolation articulates his prejudice against those who create figures of God and spiritual things 'in here fantastik ymagynatyue wittes' (3.35).⁴¹ The author's vigour of utterance sometimes takes the form of removing qualifications. He translates as superlatives a series of Latin comparatives designating spiritual things close to God (8.10, 17, 18, 23, 24, 27), and excises modest implications of doubt: 'betokeniþ' translates Sarracenus' 'hoc autem puto significare' (5.6) and his 'sicut arbitror' is omitted (6.32).

Commentators have noted *The Cloud's* use of vivid physical imagery.⁴² However *The Cloud* also seeks to negate the physical associative properties of the metaphors that it applies to God and contemplation by upholding their figurative status: '& wene not, for I clepe it a derknes or a cloude, þat it be any cloude congelid of þe humours þat fleen in þe ayre, ne 3it any derknes soche as is in þin house on niztes, when þi candel is oute' (23.13–15). This same tension persists in *Deonise Hid Diuinite* in interpolated figures and analogies that alternate with efforts to limit or thwart the imagination. Among the interpolated images is a simile, 'as þe lady haþ hir maydens' (5.8), that was domesticated in the *Cloud* group by the translated allegory of Jacob's wives and their handmaids in *Benjamin minor*. In *Deonise Hid Diuinite* it further elucidates the subordination of the intellect in contemplation. Supplementary kinaesthetic metaphors of drawing up, fastening, and folding⁴³ likewise recall the exposition of contemplation as an energetic human work in *The Cloud*, where each of these actions conveys an aspect of practice or experience.⁴⁴

The most substantial remaking of sources in *Deonise Hid Diuinite* is the author's treatment of Dionysius' brief sculpting analogy. This is translated by Sarracenus and slightly expanded in Gallus. The *Cloud*-author's alternating

augmentation and undercutting of figures relating to contemplation adapts the analogy to the teaching and vocabulary of *The Cloud*, while again theorizing a distrust of the intellect as a faculty for approaching uncreated being.

As elsewhere, the English text initially inflates the likeness with experiential details. The 'facientes' and 'artifices' in Sarracenus and Gallus are replaced by a situation and a character: 'Here is a man hauyng a sounde stok of þe grettest quantitee wiþoutyn hym, liing before hym, and hauyng wiþinne hym entent ...' (5.33f.). The inner-outer balance thus established persists through a psychodrama, invented by the author, of uncovering the divine image at the centre of the block. Details of the artist's preliminary imaginative grasp of the image are added. The analogy describes how he finds the centre by 'mesuryng of riȝt lynnyng' (6.2), and the 'craft' and 'instrumentes' that he uses to carve away the obscuring wood (6.7). The changes again encompass *The Cloud's* view of contemplation as a 'werk', while the adapted analogy's fusing of the artist's imagination with the physical world recaptures yet another emphasis of *The Cloud*, where this fusing is seen as a cause of erroneous working (94.22-4). Therefore it is not surprising that the author proceeds to undermine the imaginative analogy at the point of application: 'Riȝt so we must haue us in þis hiȝe deuyne werk, as it is possible to be comyn to in vnderstondyng by soche a boistous ensauple of so contrary a kynde' (6.9-11).

After thus rejecting the bodily 'ensauple' suggested by his sources, the author provides an alternative spiritualized analogy. This begins with a lucid evocation, unparalleled in Sarracenus or Gallus, of the divine 'kynde' hidden at the centre of the block. In re-creating this central Dionysian conception, the Anglo-Saxon words retain paradox as an anti-intellectual device, while avoiding the abstract Latinity typical of the sources:

pof it be in itself & to itself euermore free – wiþinne alle creatures, not inclusid; wiþouten alle creatures, not schit oute; abouen alle creatures, not borne up; bineþe alle creatures, not put down; behynde alle creatures, not put bak; before alle creatures, not dreuen forþe – (6.13-17)

However these terms too are revealed to be inadequate, since the divine image cannot be grasped by an embodied understanding (6.18f.), in which it is overlaid and obstructed,

wiþ vnnoumberable sensible bodies & vnderstondable substaunces, wiþ many a merueilous fantastik ymage, conielid as it were in a kumbros clog abouten hym, as þe ymage of þe ensauple wretyn before is hid in þe þik, greet, sounde stok. (6.20-4)

This culminating redefining of the block as the complex faculties of body and mind affirms yet again the deceptiveness of the imagination and the bodily figures that it creates.

Earlier *Deonise Hid Diuinite* had dismissed those who seek to reach the first cause 'bi making of figures of þe last and þe leest worþi þinges of þees beyng visible þinges, as stockes or stonnes ...' (3.32f.). This dismissal foreshadows the translator's rejection of his sources' analogy as a deceptive product of the

bodily imagination. The dismissal's concluding phrase, equivalent to 'scilicet lapidibus et metallis' in the *Extractio*, is conventionally applied in Middle English to the worship of false gods.⁴⁵ These additional negative resonances persist in the analogy's construction and reconstruction (5.33, 6.2), which emphasize the physicality of the 'þe þik, greet, sounde stok'. For example, the remade analogy replaces Sarracenus' image, 'circumvelatum' ('veiled about'; Gallus: 'latentum sub mysticis velis'), with 'wallid aboute' (7.6). Furthermore, the analogy's final disparagement of the 'stok' as 'a kumbrous clog' of thoughts and images aligns it with the congealed 'lump' in *The Cloud* of all sins together, 'none oper þing þan þi-self' (73.17f.).⁴⁶

Deonise Hid Diuinite further adjusts the reconstructed analogy to contemplative practice by a first-person application of *The Cloud's* teaching and an infusion of its terms: 'For we moten be in þis *werk* as it were men makyng an ymage of his *nakyd*, vnmaad, & vnbigonne kynde ...' (6.12f.);⁴⁷ and 'þe whiche koumbrous clogge ... we moten algates craftely pare away by *sleight of grace* in þis deuine *werk*' (6.24–6).⁴⁸ Ineffability and practicality remain paramount to the end: 'in a maner þat is vnknowen how vnto alle, bot only to þoo þat it prouep; and 3it euermore to þoo same, bot onliche in tyme of þe proef' (6.29–31). These assertions parallel the final chapters of *The Cloud*, which stress the incommunicability of fulfilled contemplation, 'þis nou3t when it is nou3where wrou3t' (122.18f.), and caution against the mistake of judging others' experience by one's own (chapter 72).

Outside the analogy, other modifications in *Deonise Hid Diuinite* focus on the limits of the intellect's attainment in contemplation. They thus recapitulate a message delivered empirically and theoretically in *The Cloud*. For example, an interpolated clause defines 'summitatem divinarum ascensionum' as 'þe teerms & þe boundes of mans vnderstondyng, be it neuer so holpen wip grace' (5.1f.). Again, the translation re-emphasizes God's transcendence 'of alle vnderstondable þinges ... & alle vnderstondyng' (8.25f.) with a vigorous added *complexio*: 'And 3it he in hymself is abouen boþe alle spekyng and alle vnderstondyng' (8.34f.). Like *The Cloud*,⁴⁹ *Deonise Hid Diuinite* supports the view that God is beyond 'alle spekyng' by attending to the threshold where the intellect, and with it language as the mediator of concepts, fails. Sarracenus describes the state beyond this threshold as 'non sermonum brevitatem, sed irrationabilitatem perfectam et imprudentiam'. The author strengthens this by translating: 'not onliche ... þe schortyng of wordes, bot as it were a madnes & a parfite vnresonabiltee of alle þat we seyn' (8.14–16).

As a further technique to convey the failing of language and thinking, *Deonise Hid Diuinite* extends the Pseudo-Dionysius' use of paradox. In the first instance, 'blynde beholdyngs' is imported from *The Cloud* (32.7) to translate Sarracenus' non-paradoxical 'mysticas visiones'. Elsewhere 'mysticus' is translated as 'derke' (2.19) and 'hid' (title and 5.18).⁵⁰ The enigma inherent in 'blynde beholdyngs' encourages and perhaps produces the renunciation of conceptual thinking that is basic to the *Cloud*-author's contemplative method. Secondly, Sarracenus' 'nullus indoctorum' is rendered paradoxically as 'none of þees vnwise men 3it wonyng in

here wittys' (3.19f.), thereby reinforcing the author's conviction of the inferiority of intellectual working to contemplative love. Finally, where Sarracenus presents the insights gained in contemplation paradoxically: 'et per non videre et per ignorare, videre et cognoscere', the translation heightens the contrast by applying *The Cloud's* central negation: '&, bi nouzt seeyng & vnknowyng, for to see & for to knowe' (5.27f.). This change is repeated when the goal of contemplation is condensed as 'knowe þat vnknowyng' (7.5; Sarracenus, 'cognoscamus illam ignorantiam'). This phrase draws on the quotation from *On the Divine Names* in *The Cloud* with which this essay began. In *Deonise Hid Diuinite* as in *The Cloud*, the author uses 'vnknowyng', which connotes activity, for the highest contemplative experience; he rejects the Latinate equivalent word 'ignoraunce', which in *The Cloud* retains its derogatory passive associations.⁵¹

The state of 'vnknowyng' is captured in Gallus' *Extractio* in a conclusion that overstrains language in an apparent effort to cross from text into transcendence. The ensuing silence resonates not only with the failing of concepts but also with the possibility of a supra-rational understanding:

ipsum neque ponimus neque auferimus; quoniam et super omnem positionem est perfecta et unica omnium causa, et super omnem ablationem est excessus ipsius ab omnibus absoluti et super omnia eminentis.⁵²

The English version goes even further in challenging the limits of linguistic possibility. It demonstrates the failing of the intellectual powers through multiple reiterations, and piles up superlatives and antitheses in its ascent to an even more eloquent silence:

hym we mowe neiþer set ne do away, *ne on any vnderstandable maner afferme him, ne denie him.* For þe parfite & þe singuleer cause of al *most nedelynges be wipoutyn comparison* of þe *moost bige heijt* abouen alle, boþe setting & doying away. And his *not-vnderstandable ouerpassyng is vn-vnderstandably abouen alle affermyng and deniinge.* (10.17–23; italics indicate interpolations)

The Cloud applies a parallel technique in a passage which recommends attaching 'a litil worde of o silable' to the divinely inspired 'steryng of loue' which is the essence of 'þe werk' (28.10–29.6). The discussion is unified on repetitions of 'worde', which is first linked with warrior metaphors (28.17–20) but later mimes the practice of mental repetition being taught. As the overtures of a distracting thought that offers 'of his grete clergie' to expound the 'worde' are progressively rejected (29.1–4), both textual 'worde' and 'worde' as contemplative vehicle merge into a stillness filled with potentiality.

The *Cloud*-author's remaking of the *Mystical Theology* is therefore not minor but significant. Insofar as his choices as translator buttress and recapitulate his own spiritual and writing practices previously developed in *The Cloud*, his remaking is also innovative and daring. His many departures from his Latin sources follow the trends discussed above. Expanded references to the limitations of the intellect and language and recollections of his resistance in *The Cloud* to the pretensions of learning signal a reduced tolerance in *Deonise Hid Diuinite* for scholarly abstractions. *The Cloud's* exposure of the deceptiveness

of the imagination as an aspect of bodily existence and therefore a hindrance to contemplation takes the form in the translation of an initial undermining, followed by a radical reconceptualizing, of Sarracenus' and Gallus' sculpting analogy. This same expansion contains the author's exegesis of an indwelling divine nature open to exploration 'in þis deuine werk' (6.26). The translation's doctrinal adjustments include interjected references to grace and a personalizing of the divine in a way that differentiates it from a philosophical postulate. Yet other changes reintroduce the author's characteristic robustness of tone and contribute to a sense of his own reality and that of his reader.

It remains to consider how *Deonise Hid Diuinite* fits within the flourishing traditions of medieval translation theory and practice. In tracing the theory from its classical origins, Rita Copeland reveals how the paradox inherent in translation as 'a sign of both continuity and rupture'⁵³ coalesced with a series of rethinkings to produce a range of options. Cicero's *De optimo genere oratorum* authorized a view of translation as contending against the source text that it sought to displace and replace, as the translator laboured to expand the literary capacity of his own language.⁵⁴ In *De doctrina christiana* Augustine transmitted a related view of translation as a function of the rhetorical act of *inventio*, a discovery or 'coming upon' of multilayered meanings in Scripture that it was the exegete's task to reconfigure as text and language.⁵⁵ A contrary stream of opinion sanctioned by St Jerome's prescription for Bible translation as a faithful replication of the word of God diluted this understanding.⁵⁶

Deonise Hid Diuinite falls nearer to the creative end of the spectrum of approaches. The author's stated purpose in translating, quoted above, is to 'aferme' his teaching by resorting to Dionysius as a respected 'doctour'. His intention to follow 'þe nakid letter of þe text' suggests that his purpose is not to displace his Latin sources, but his rewriting of the sculpting analogy militates against this. Moreover, a cultural transference, comparable with that aimed at in Cicero's translations from Greek, has taken place, in the vigorous English tone of *Deonise Hid Diuinite*, and the 'translation' of the text to a practical contemplative, probably Carthusian, context. The author's experiments with the liminal space between vernacular language and the silence of contemplation, as well as the neologisms discussed by Hodgson and Lees,⁵⁷ are original features that 'discover' the potential of English and help to establish its credentials. Hodgson rightly describes the author as 'an *inventor* who enriched the language by his attempts to express philosophical and theological conceptions'.⁵⁸

In this respect the contemporary text with which *Deonise Hid Diuinite* has most in common is Chaucer's translation of Boethius' *Consolatio*. Like the author, Chaucer regarded his work as a 'translacion', and Copeland and Tim Machan have analysed the *Boece* for the insights it provides into late fourteenth-century understanding of the term.⁵⁹ Three points of comparison with *Deonise Hid Diuinite* are evident. First, the author selected his sources from a Pseudo-Dionysian textual tradition in a way that parallels Chaucer's selection of mixed Latin and French sources from an admittedly richer Boethian tradition.⁶⁰ Secondly, like the *Boece*, *Deonise Hid Diuinite* conflates the two main components

of medieval translation identified by Copeland: *interpretatio*, or exegesis as an act that goes beyond mere replication; and *exercitatio*, or an instructive exercise that enables a 'discovery ... of one's own language'.⁶¹ Nevertheless, and this is the third point, both *Deonise Hid Diuinite* and the *Boece* adapt a challenging but revered philosophy for an audience more concerned with *sentence* than aesthetic effect.⁶² In applying techniques for engaging such an audience, the *Cloud*-author's stance as a translator is comparable with Chaucer's, for whom 'the *Consolation* was a living text which invited reader involvement'.⁶³

The merging of roles of expositor and translator traced by Copeland underpins the author's approval of Gallus as 'a noble & a worþi expositour', and it is likely that he saw his use of the *Extractio* as an extension of Gallus' work. The distinction between Gallus and Eriugena, who was, and who regarded himself as, a *fidus interpres*, is a feature of Pseudo-Dionysian tradition⁶⁴ that the *Cloud*-author probably knew. As an expositor he complied with current expectations regarding translation. However, in adapting his version of the *Mystical Theology* to the approach and tenets of *The Cloud*, he moved beyond exposition and resumed his pre-existing stance as *auctor*, yet another category that the period imperfectly distinguished from translator.⁶⁵

The breadth of the author's self-positioning in relation to *Deonise Hid Diuinite* evokes the innovatory nature of that work and *The Cloud* as the only vernacular texts at the time of writing to offer Pseudo-Dionysian philosophy to an English audience. The defensive strategies of *The Cloud*, and the author's intention that each work should affirm the other, suggest that they met with resistance from some readers or from the Church. Like contemplative texts in other historical periods, they seem to have occupied the unstable creative margins of the religious culture that produced them.

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NOTES

¹ Page and line references are to *The Cloud of Unknowing and The Book of Privy Counselling*, ed. Phyllis Hodgson, EETS, OS 218 (London, 1944). The quotation is from *De divinis nominibus* 7.3. See *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luibheid, The Classics of Western Spirituality (London, 1987), p. 109.

² 'Qui habet aures audiendi, audiat' (Matthew x.15; xiii.9; xiii.43; Mark iv.9; iv.23; vii.16; Luke viii.8; xiv.35).

³ For Carthusian sources, see *The Cloud of Unknowing*, ed. James Walsh, The Classics of Western Spirituality (Ramsay, NJ, 1981), introduction, pp. 19–26, and *The Cloud of Unknowing and Related Treatises*, ed. Phyllis Hodgson, Analecta Cartusiana 3 (Salzburg, 1982), introduction, pp. xlv–xlix. John P. H. Clark regards the *Cloud*-author's direct borrowings from Hugh of Balma's *Viae Sion lugent* as limited, and argues that he did not know Guigues du Pont's *De contemplatione* (*The Cloud of Unknowing: An Introduction*, 3 vols (Salzburg, 1995–6), I: *Introduction*, Analecta Cartusiana 119:4, pp. 71–4).

⁴ For borrowings from Hilton, see John P. H. Clark, *The Cloud of Unknowing: An*

Introduction, III: *Notes on The Book of Privy Counselling*, *Analecta Cartusiana* 119:6, pp. 103–6.

⁵ See Cheryl Taylor, 'Paradox upon paradox: using and abusing language in *The Cloud of Unknowing* and related texts', *Parergon*, 22 (2005), 31–51 (pp. 34–7).

⁶ Clark argues that *The Cloud* responds to arguments in book I of *The Scale* (*The Cloud of Unknowing: An Introduction*, I, 86–8), and that it initiated a series of exchanges in treatises by both authors that continued until Hilton completed the second book of *The Scale* shortly before his death on 24 March 1396.

⁷ Page and line references are to '*Deonise Hid Diuinite*' and *Other Treatises on Contemplative Prayer Related to 'The Cloud of Unknowing'*, ed. Phyllis Hodgson, EETS, OS 231 (London, 1955).

⁸ *The Cloud of Unknowing*, ed. Abbot Justin McCann, Monk of Ampleforth, 2nd edn (London, 1952), introduction, pp. xiii–xv.

⁹ Rosemary Ann Lees, *The Negative Language of the Dionysian School of Mystical Theology*, 2 vols, *Analecta Cartusiana* 107 (Salzburg, 1983), II, 182. For dates of writing of Gallus' commentaries, see P. G. Théry, 'Chronologie des œuvres de Thomas Gallus, Abbé de Verceil', *Divus Thomas* (Piacenza), 11 (1934), 364–77; and Daniel A. Callus, 'An unknown commentary of Thomas Gallus on the Pseudo-Dionysian letters', *Dominican Studies*, 1 (1947), 38–67 (p. 66).

¹⁰ The present argument is based on a comparison of Hodgson's text with the following sources: Sarracenus' *Nova translatio* and Gallus' *Extractio in Dionysiaca: Recueil donnant l'ensemble des traductions latines des ouvrages attribués au Denys l'Aréopage*, ed. Dom Philippe Chevallier, 2 vols (Paris, 1937), I, 565–602 and 709–12; and the quotations from Gallus' *Explanatio* in British Library, Royal MS 8 G.iv printed by Hodgson. Clark points out that Gallus may not be the author of the *Expositiones seu glossae* (PL, CXXII, cols 267–84), diversely attributed to Eriugena, Adam Marsh, and Peter of Spain, and he finds Hodgson's view that this work was a supplementary source for *Deonise Hid Diuinite* 'less persuasive' (*The Cloud: An Introduction*, I, 61f.). My observation is that none of the parallels adduced by Hodgson in her editions establishes her case for direct borrowing from the *Gloss*.

¹¹ Alastair Minnis, 'Affection and imagination in *The Cloud of Unknowing* and Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*', *Traditio*, 39 (1983), 323–66 (pp. 336f.).

¹² Lees, *Negative Language*, II, 182.

¹³ *Deonise Hid Diuinite*, ed. Hodgson, p. xlii.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xliii.

¹⁵ Lees, *Negative Language*, II, 198.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 209.

¹⁷ *The Cloud* also draws on *On the Divine Names*, as the above quotation and other references confirm. See Clark, *The Cloud of Unknowing: An Introduction*, I, 53.

¹⁸ *The Cloud of Unknowing*, ed. McCann, introduction, pp. xiii–xv and notes *passim*; Alastair J. Minnis, 'The sources of *The Cloud of Unknowing*: a reconsideration', in *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England: Papers Read at Dartington Hall, July 1982*, ed. Marion Glasscoe, Exeter Medieval Texts and Studies (Exeter, 1982), pp. 63–75; Clark, *The Cloud of Unknowing: An Introduction*, I, 63–8.

¹⁹ 'Sarracenus ... undertakes to align the Dionysian corpus – insofar as his role as translator permits – with the traditional Christianity of the Western Church for which his text was compiled' (Lees, *Negative Language*, II, 179).

²⁰ Minnis refers to Gallus as having 'medievalized' the *Mystical Theology* ('The sources of *The Cloud*', p. 63); similarly Lees: 'It was principally at the hands of Thomas Gallus ... that Sarracenus's latinization of the Dionysian corpus and his project to establish beyond question its total accord with orthodox Christian theology was finally brought to full

effect' (*Negative Language*, II, 181); 'Thomas Gallus was largely instrumental in ensuring the assimilation of Dionysian theology into the mainstream of Christian tradition in the West' (II, 193).

²¹ See Minnis, 'The sources of *The Cloud*', pp. 64f.

²² See René Tixier, '“Good gamesumli pley”: les jeux de l'amour dans *The Cloud of Unknowing*, *Caliban*, 24 (1987), 5–25 (pp. 13–15); and Taylor, 'Paradox upon paradox', pp. 40–2.

²³ See Lees, *Negative Language*, II, 257–9.

²⁴ 'Book of Contemplacyon' occurs in the title to *The Cloud* in Cambridge University Library, MS li.6.39 and MS Kk.6.26; London, British Library, Harley MS 959; and Dublin, Trinity College, MS 122. The texts in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 576 and MS Douce 262; London, British Library, Royal MS 17 C.26; and Parkminster, MS D 176 refer in their titles to 'diuync clowde'. The repetition 'diuync'/'diuinite' may reflect the author's view of *The Cloud* and *Deonise Hid Diuinite* as companion texts.

²⁵ The change to 'Wysdome' aligns *Deonise Hid Diuinite* with the Middle English translation of *Benjamin minor*, described in its opening sentence as 'a book ... of þe studie of wisdom' (*Deonise Hid Diuinite*, ed. Hodgson (1955), 12.4). This work traces the purification of the faculties in contemplation through a biblical allegory of Jacob, his wives, and their maidservants. Probably not the work of the *Cloud*-author, *A Treatise of the Study of Wisdom* accompanies his authentic works in four manuscripts.

²⁶ For example, when Sarracenus writes: 'Quoniam hoc quod est super omnem positionem ponentes ...', *Deonise Hid Diuinite* inserts a clause from Gallus: 'For whan we wolen merk God by setting ...', followed by a modification of Sarracenus: 'þe whiche in hymself is abouen alle setting ...' (8.24f.).

²⁷ The translator personalizes or simplifies others of Sarracenus' and Gallus' formulations: 'ad divina Dei' becomes 'vnto God' (7.30), 'Deus' becomes 'he' (10.9), and 'in Verbo' becomes 'in hym' (10.12).

²⁸ e.g. chapter 1 develops the metaphor of 'a lyame of longing' (*Cloud* 14.4). After exploring the error of a bodily directing of the mind upward in the time of prayer (112.1–3), chapter 60 refers to: 'þeire loue & þeire desire, þe which is goostly þeire liif' (112.15–18).

²⁹ 'Per unitionem dilectionis' (*Extractio*) is translated 'syngulertee of affeccion' (*Deonise Hid Diuinite* 5.15).

³⁰ *The Cloud* combines the terms in the phrase, 'an affectuous stering of loue to God' (33.2f.), and defines virtue as 'an ordeinde & a mesurid affeccion, plainly directe vnto God for him-self' (39.17). 'Affecton', meaning the feeling faculty, is again linked with love in the phrase, 'þan schalt þou fele þine affeccion enfaumid wiþ þe fiire of his loue' (62.17f.).

³¹ Lees, *Negative Language*, II, 205.

³² The translator is faithful to the biblical account in adding references to the cleansing of the people (*Deonise Hid Diuinite* 4.28f.; Exodus xix.10, 14f.). However neither Dionysius' statement that Moses received the commandments accompanied by chosen priests (Sarracenus: 'cum electis sacerdotis'), nor the impression given in the English that he was alone, is biblically exact, since God commands Aaron to accompany him (Exodus xix.24).

³³ Sarracenus: 'et impalpabili omnino et invisibili fit, omnis existens ejus qui est super omnia, et nullius, neque suipsius, neque alterius.' This translates as: 'and he is made [or enraptured in; adheres to] wholly of him [add: who is] intangible and invisible, his whole being [add: consisting of the One, or belonging to the One] who is above all, and of none else, neither of himself, nor of another.'

³⁴ e.g. 'For ȝif it be trewlich conceyued, it is bot a sodeyn steryng, & as it were vnaused, speedly springing unto God as sparcle fro þe cole. & it is merueylous to noumbre þe sterynges þat may be in one oure wrouȝt in a soule þat is disposid to þis werk' (*Cloud* 22.6–10). Earlier the author compares the duration of the 'werk' of contemplation to an 'athomus', as defined by 'trewe philisophres in the sciens of astronomye' (17.14–20).

³⁵ *Deonise Hid Diuinite*, ed. Hodgson (1955), p. 122.

³⁶ *The Cloud's* recommendation of contemplation as play, established in chapter 32 in descriptions of spiritual 'sleȝts' ('devices') that are compared with childlike play (67.10–13), recurs in chapter 46 (87.19–88.4), following a passage that associates 'list' (enthusiasm) with true spiritual working and a courtesy in contemplation that is the opposite of bodily straining: 'leerne þee to loue listely wiþ a softe & demure contenaunce, as wel in body as in soule' (*Cloud* 87.16f.). Chapter 47, described in its heading as offering a 'sleȝ' (meaning 'subtle') teaching, develops the insight that the contemplative's playful hiding from God of desire for him casts that desire 'into depnes of spirite, fer fro any rude medelyng of any bodelines' (89.16f.).

³⁷ Repeated in *An Epistle of Prayer*, the proverb is again linked with the word-stem 'sleȝ': '... it is my counsel þat þou seke sleȝtes, for "Betir is list þan leþir strengþe"' (*Deonise Hid Diuinite*, ed. Hodgson (1955), 58.1–2). The same combination occurs as an addition to the Latin source in *A Treatise of the Study of Wisdom*: 'For betir is a sley man þan a strong man, 3e, and betyr is list þen liber strengþe. And a sley man spekþ of victories' (*Deonise Hid Diuinite*, 41.3–5). The repetitions suggest that the author's circle explored the proverb's relevance to contemplation.

³⁸ A reference to grace is introduced from Gallus into an early passage based on Sarracenus (2.32). Unsourced references to grace are added at 3.10 and 3.6f.

³⁹ These occur in the following phrases: 'þou purposist þee', 'þi blynde beholdynges', 'loke þou', 'þi bodely wittes', 'þi goostly wittes', 'þin vnderstandable worchinges', 'þin affeccioun'.

⁴⁰ For example, an account of the spiritual depth to be achieved by a repeated one-syllable prayer (which however must not become a substitute for the prayer of the Church) ends with the assertion: '& raper it peersþ þe eres of Almyȝty God þan doþ any longe sauter vnmyndfully mumlyd in þe teep' (75.4).

⁴¹ *The Cloud* develops the theme both briefly in similar words, e.g. 'a proude, coryous & an ymaginatif witte' (22.18f.); 'corious & ymaginatyue wittys' (94. 23f.), and at length: 'þees men willen sumtyme wiþ þe coriouste of here ymaginacion peerce þe planetes, & make an hole in þe firmament to loke in þerate. þees men wil make a God as hem lyst, & cloþen hym ful richely in cloþes, & set hym in a trone, fer more curiously þan euer was he depeynted in þis erþe' (105. 9–14). The contemplatives portrayed as deceived by bodily feelings and by 'pride & coryouste of witte' (99.20f.) are said to 'trauayle þeire ymaginacion so vndiscreetly, þat at þe laste þei turne here brayne in here hedes' (96.22–4).

⁴² e.g. John Burrow, 'Fantasy and language in *The Cloud of Unknowing*', *Essays in Criticism*, 27 (1977), 283–98 (pp. 293–6); Minnis, 'Affection and imagination', pp. 342f., 350.

⁴³ In the opening prayer a metaphor, 'drawe us up', replaces Sarracenus' 'dirige nos'. Later the author translates Sarracenus: 'Istos autem dico qui in existentiis sunt formati', meaning 'conformed', 'adjusted', as 'alle þoo þat ben fastnyd in knowing & louyng of þees þinges þat ben knowable and han bigynnyng' (3.20f.). Finally, an interpolated metaphor sums up the effort of removing concepts: 'we foulden alle togeders & done hem away' (7.4f.; Sarracenus: 'omnia auferimus').

⁴⁴ e.g. 'lat God drawe þi loue up to þat cloude' (34.20f.); 'fastnid bi it a lyame of longyng' (14.3f.); 'haue þis entent lappid & foulden in o worde' (28.10).

⁴⁵ e.g. 'Mechil more dyshonour doo we to God ... 3if we wurshepyn stockys or stonys or onye ymagys' (*Dives and Pauper* 1.90). The *MED* gives further examples.

⁴⁶ In *The Cloud* the 'lump' undergoes a series of transformations that are theologically more venturesome than those of the 'stok'. The author first invites the contemplative aspirant to consider, not individual sins, but sin as a lump, identified with the self (*Cloud* 78.17f.). For as long as he lives, he will 'fele in som partye þis foule stynkyng lump of synne, as it were onyd & congelid with þe substauce of þi beyng' (79.13–15). If he persists in contemplation he will experience the lump as a barrier of sin/self separating him from God (82.13–17); and later as the deepest apprehension of selfhood, which must be forsaken (84.14). The most original aspect of the author's thought on the lump of sin is nevertheless his identification of it, in terminology that he was to repeat in *Deonise Hid Diuinite*, with 'þis combros cloude of vnknowyng' (63.22). The contemplative sometimes experiences the cloud (122.18f.), as 'synne a lumpe, he wote neuer what, none oþer þing þan hym-self', i.e. as the remaining root and pain of original sin (123.16f.) Not even persistence in contemplative grace can entirely rub away the cloud/lump in this life (123.11f.). At other times however the contemplative experiences it as 'paradis or heuen' (123.19f.), and even as God (123.21). *The Cloud's* references to being encumbered by the burden of sin (38.1, 78.24) and by a studied outward demeanour (99.1) further foreshadow the encumbering block in *Deonise Hid Diuinite*. Both sequences may build on Hilton, who writes of being encumbered with oneself in bodily feeling (*The Scale of Perfection*, book I, ch. 88).

⁴⁷ Compare *The Cloud*: 'þe nakid being of God him-self only' (32.7f.); 'a nakid wetyng & a felyng of þin owne beyng' (83.3).

⁴⁸ Compare *The Cloud*: 'Somtyme we profite in þis grace by oure owne goostly slei3t, holpyn wiþ grace' (128.17f.).

⁴⁹ In *The Cloud* bodily language and the misconceiving of spiritual instruction in physical terms are denounced as sources of error, e.g. 'A 3ong man or a womman, newe set to þe scole of deuocion, hereþ þis sorow & þis desire be red & spokyn, how þat a man schal lift up his herte vnto God, & vnseesingly desire for to fele þe loue of here God. & as fast in a curiouse of witte þei conceyue þees wordes not goostly, as þei ben ment, bot fleschly & bodily, & trauaylen þeire fleschly hertes outrageously in þeire brestes' (85.15–21). This attitude seems to have led to a reversal in *Deonise Hid Diuinite* of Sarracenus' statement that words can only express conceptions that can be grasped by the intellect, in that 'tantum sermones conspectibus intelligibilium contrahuntur' becomes: 'in-so-moche þe wordes þat ben spokyn of hem to oure beholdynges maken streite oure vnderstondyng' (8.10–12).

⁵⁰ The phrase 'blynde beholdyngs' in *Deonise Hid Diuinite* forms a bridge between *The Cloud* and *The Book of Priuy Counselling*, the author's last known composition, where it takes various syntactical shapes (139.12, 142.9–12, 143.22, 144.1–3).

⁵¹ e.g. '... alle actyues pleynten hem of contemplatyues, as Martha did on Mary; of þe whiche pleynyng ignoraunce is þe cause' (*Cloud* 5.19f.); 'myn ignoraunte defaultes ... oþer mens ignoraunte wordes & dedes' (51.5f.).

⁵² The *Nova translatio* is similar: 'ipsam neque ponimus neque auferimus; quoniam et super omnem positionem est perfecta et unitiva omnium causa, et super omnem ablationem est excessus ab omnibus simpliciter absoluti et super tota.'

⁵³ *The Medieval Translator: The Theory and Practice of Translation in the Middle Ages: Papers Read at a Conference Held 20–23 August 1987 at the University of Wales*, ed. Roger Ellis, assisted by Jocelyn Price, Stephen Medcalf, and Peter Meredith (Cambridge, 1989), introduction, pp. 1–14 (p. 2).

⁵⁴ Rita Copeland, 'The fortunes of *Non verbum pro verbo*: or, why Jerome is not a

Ciceronian', in *The Medieval Translator*, ed. Ellis, pp. 15-35 (pp. 17-19).

⁵⁵ Rita Copeland, 'Rhetoric and vernacular translation in the Middle Ages', in *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 9, ed. Thomas Heffernan, New Chaucer Society (Knoxville, Tenn., 1987), pp. 41-75 (pp. 43, 62-6).

⁵⁶ Copeland, 'The fortunes of *Non verbum pro verbo*', p. 21.

⁵⁷ *Deonise Hid Diuinite*, introduction, pp. xxx-xxxiv; Lees, *Negative Language*, II, 203-5, 243-8.

⁵⁸ *Deonise Hid Diuinite*, introduction, p. xxxiii.

⁵⁹ Tim William Machan, *Techniques of Translation: Chaucer's Boece* (Norman, Okla., 1985), esp. pp. 2-10; 'Editorial method and medieval translations: the example of Chaucer's *Boece*', *Studies in Bibliography*, 41 (1988), 188-96; and 'Chaucer as translator', in *The Medieval Translator*, ed. Ellis, pp. 55-67; Copeland, 'Rhetoric and vernacular translation', 57-62, and *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 142-9.

⁶⁰ Machan, 'Editorial method and medieval translations', pp. 189f.

⁶¹ Copeland, 'Rhetoric and vernacular translation', p. 44.

⁶² Machan, 'Editorial method and medieval translations', pp. 191, 195.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

⁶⁴ Copeland, 'The fortunes of *Non verbum pro verbo*', pp. 30f.

⁶⁵ Machan, 'Chaucer as translator', p. 62.