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ISBN

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Publication Date

2026-05-01

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

The Theology of the Rise of the Novel

By

Matthew Manno

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor J. Picciotto, Chair

Professor J. Sorensen

Professor D. Marno

Professor L. Kurke

Spring 2026

The Theology of the Rise of the Novel

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Abstract

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Theological trends in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries influenced the development of prose fiction generally and the sentimental novel in particular. In 1667, Latitudinarian clergyman Simon Patrick claimed the Eucharist was like a “History or Romance” because of its ability to evoke sympathy—a unique way of putting the common notion that one ought to meditate on the life of Christ and become Christ-like. Sympathy then is morally good insofar as it causes one to become Christ-like and become morally good like Him. Pierre Hadot and Peter Sloterdijk have emphasized the capacity of philosophy’s literary form to inculcate spiritual practices; I argue that early novelists understood their work as inculcating a practice of sympathy that could be directed toward Christ. *Clarissa* not only alludes to but also adapts Jeremy Taylor’s 1650 *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying*, a representative of the *imitatio* tradition of Thomas à Kempis. However, the novel is Janus-faced, simulating secularity in *Clarissa*’s displacement of Jesus Christ. The sympathy inculcated by the eighteenth-century novelists evolves into a broad, diffuse sympathy of all with all, the novel genre amounting to a site of public theology. Characters such as Richardson’s, in moral conflict and reaching ethical conclusions, rely on a soteriology of prevenient grace, associated with the Latitudinarians, according to which God endows all with an impulse toward Him. In this way this dissertation explains the role of moral impulses in sentimental texts, arising not from Humean sympathy but from the Grace of God. In the twentieth century, Philip K. Dick demonstrates the continued disposition of the novel and of the moral regime toward a perilous form of sympathy.

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Chapter 1

Bishop Simon Patrick's Theory of the Novel in the Anglican Eucharist

1.1 Introduction

In his 1755 poem “On the Goodness of the Supreme Being,” Christopher Smart addresses God as “Thou, who to lowliest minds dost condescend, // Assuming passions to enforce thy laws” (lines 129-30). “Passions” in the philosophy of the eighteenth century, as in David Hume’s *Treatise*, normally refer to involuntary and intense emotional and somatic states and appetites. In his poem, Smart indicates that God—through the Holy Spirit, to give the most common view—modifies the appetites of saved individuals such that those appetites inherited from the Fall of Man are reformed. “Lowliest” here is not the relative superlative—as if there are some other, higher human minds—but an absolute superlative describing all the minds of the human race as humbly as the poet can; if there is any comparison to be made, perhaps it is to Thrones and Seraphim. The human mind is too weak, due to its Original Sin, to follow God’s law of its own accord, despite its desire to, and so God condescends to us, providing the assistance we need in the form of emotional and somatic disturbances.

This dissertation will explore the theological contention, shared by many Christians, that God assumes “passions” to “enforce” His laws, as it became a major subject of controversy during the Reformation. It will also demonstrate the influence of that doctrine on the English novel in the eighteenth century, the sentimental novel in particular: characters with inexplicable sensations, those flummoxed by angelic powers, the body’s conflict with evil minds, and atheists who shudder at the thought of Hell. Such novels, of course, were often written by trained Anglican ministers like Swift or Sterne, or pious dissenters like Richardson and Defoe. The novel genre, however—founded as it is upon the sympathy one feels with its characters—also develops an ethical character all its own, suggesting that morality comes not from the Holy Spirit’s intervention but from our own diffuse sympathy with others. As such, the sentimental novel has been of particular interest to critics, particularly in how it fails to live up to these ideals. I will argue that, far from failing to properly inculcate broad sympathy, a different, uniquely novelistic form of moral education arises at least in part from Christian meditative practices that emphasized sympathy with Christ as a means of sharing with Him in moral perfection. The novel as an object inculcates sympathy in preparation for one’s sympathy with Jesus Christ. Sympathy was not good in itself, in other words, but a step in one’s development toward the perfection of Christ. However, as the novel became a prestige form in the nineteenth century, Christ was elided in favor of a generalized sympathy reminiscent of a rule-bound utilitarianism. Utilitarianism, as I will show, finds its roots in some of the earliest sentimentalists, particularly Frances Hutcheson, who first supposed that morality meant doing the greatest good for the greatest number. In this, he has a strange congruity with Bernard Mandeville, who abstracted moral actions so much from themselves that supposed vices, like avarice, when scaled, might accrue into a virtue in a consequentialist analysis.

One might view these claims about literature inculcating certain patterns of thought also in the context of Pierre Hadot, in *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, or Peter Sloterdijk’s *You Must Change Your Life*. Both Hadot and Sloterdijk have suggested that philosophy’s literary form—for example, the dialogues of

Plato—inculcates a spiritual practice distinct from propositions. For Hadot, a specialist in antiquity, this means specifically the style of Plato’s dialogues educating one into a certain practice, even a spiritual practice, as opposed to conveying a set of positivistic beliefs. Sloterdijk critiques the idea of a return to religion in 2009, and suggests that we are seeing in the modern world a return to practices and modes of being as opposed to the sort of religion predicated on belief claims. I argue, then, that the novel genre in the conception of early novelists aided the reader in moral and religious self-development. The novel propagates a certain way of thinking, similar to the way in which Socratic dialogues would inculcate a mode of thinking, not just ideas. Similarly, I will argue in the next chapter, the *imitatio* tradition of religious literature, including the *Imitatio Christi*, inculcates a form of religious meditation by modeling it in the text. Moreover, the kind of thought propagated by novels is moral, social thought—as stated above, sympathy. This sympathy in my reading recapitulates the late-medieval Christian meditative practice of sympathizing with Christ—derived culturally from the Franciscan Order, *devotio moderna*, and the *imitatio* genre of Jeremy Taylor, Thomas à Kempis, and Ignatius of Loyola. However, the subject of that meditation, Christ, is displaced—he first vanishes into a backdrop of plausible deniability in the works of Richardson. Then later the idea of sympathy within the novel is broadened to society itself, most evidently in the theorizing of George Eliot—Maggie Tulliver in *The Mill on the Floss* reads à Kempis’ *De Imitatione Christi* at length, but Eliot’s goals were distinct from those of Richardson, directed as she was toward an anthropology of England’s many classes.

Though the idea that we are unable to be good without God’s grace, his intervention has been repeated by theologians for thousands of years, we still must marvel at how strange it is from our perspective. Ethics, today, is mostly a matter of intellection. We give arguments from utility, or virtue, or consequence, or *telos* for why a thing is right or wrong. Usually we suppose that because something brings about the greatest good for the greatest number that it is moral. We implicitly believe, moreover, that we also have a motivation toward these things. You might expect the same of Saint Thomas Aquinas—often described as a virtue ethicist—but go looking and you find, instead, a treatise on soteriology: how and why people are saved.¹ Of course the great theologians still argue about individual acts—for example, Aquinas’ argument in favor of lethal self-defense, which forms the basis of the Doctrine of Double Effect—but *how* one is good, or where the cardinal virtues come from, are inevitably questions of salvation, not simply ethics. Smart’s line given above draws the oft forgotten connection between soteriology and Divine law.

The Doctrine of Double Effect is particularly relevant as a contrast to Mandeville’s abstraction of moral action. In ST.II-II.Q64.A7, Aquinas argues that self-defense killing is justified because the moral content of the action exists not in its consequence—in this case, the death of a human being—but in the intention: here, the intention would be self-preservation. The death of another, for Aquinas, is a secondary or double effect of the primary action. This same argument was deployed by Philippa Foot (in the same paper in which she introduces the Trolley Problem) as a Catholic justification for abortion, at least in cases where the life of the mother is at risk. This dissertation will be greatly concerned with the moral content of human action distinguished from consequence. A primary motivator in that enterprise is what I would call the statistical mind in the modern moral regime: moral actors become estranged from the actual content of their actions, upon which the DDE focuses, in favor of secondary if not tertiary effects of those actions. This is, perhaps, one cultural or ideological result of living in imagined communities with mass media—the individual becomes abstract to themselves.

¹ Whether an act is intellectually defensible, let’s say, is distinct from the point of this paragraph, namely that the way in which ethics is discussed is pointedly metaethical at its foundation in someone like Aquinas.

While Smart's position was not new, and was likely quite common among those who knew their theology, soteriology had become in the post-Reformation period a particular flashpoint due to the rise of Reformation theologies such as Calvinism and Arminianism. Anglicanism, besieged on two sides by the Catholics and the Zwinglians, sought a middle ground in which sacraments could confer grace, but by working in the heart, not through the caprice of a bishopric or episcopacy. Their solution, I argue in this introduction, was to locate sympathy for Christ in the liturgy. A primary theoretical problem for the mass has been how to bridge the gap between one's self and Christ—in both time and space—such that holy union with Christ may be joined. Sympathy, I argue, was capable of doing just that. This sympathy, moreover, was the basis of the sentimental fashion that overtook England during much of the eighteenth century, as well as of the sympathy of the novel genre itself, which not only asks that we sympathize with characters in a way that distinguishes it from earlier forms of fiction and myth, but also that, in early instantiations, prepared the way for its readers to sympathize, not with its characters, but with Christ Himself.

Sympathy, moreover, solved not only their soteriological question, but also an ethical one. I would argue that an understanding of Christianity as sympathetic practice persists from the later middle ages into the eighteenth century, with John Wesley's Methodism being in large part inspired by the writings of Thomas à Kempis, whose *De Imitatione Christi*—which advocates and models a faith founded upon sympathy with Christ as he lived and died—Wesley republished under the title *The Christian's Pattern*. Becoming "Christ-like" was part of Christian devotion since Polycarp—he once said that an ideal life would involve one's friends betraying them, since that is what happened to Christ—but around the fourteenth century we see a sudden uptick in an explicitly imitative practice, alongside à Kempis and the *devotio moderna* of which he was a part. This tradition, moreover, arises from a religious culture deeply influenced by St. Francis. The Rule of Saint Francis, for example, followed by the nascent Franciscan Order, demanded a sort of poverty meant to imitate Christ's own life. However, I emphasize as with the example from Polycarp that this imitation was literal, even formal: not *feeling like* but *becoming*. To "pattern" or "imitate" recalls a definition of sympathy still very much operative in the eighteenth century, discussed by the Cambridge Platonist Ralph Cudworth among others—sympathetic magic, the strange influence of one object on another. Francis in 1224 supposedly received Christ's stigmata as bleeding wounds during a moment of religious ecstasy. This is still a key aspect of sympathy as it was understood in the eighteenth century, and as well-worn of a concept as sympathy is in studies on the period, this mystical aspect has been neglected.

Perhaps a more tame version of this same form of devotion came in the sixteenth century, when the Spanish monk Ignatius of Loyola called explicitly upon the imaginative faculty to place one's self into the Gospel narratives in his 1584 *Spiritual Exercises*. We find, then, around or just before the time of the "rise of the novel," the deployment of a narrative imagination for spiritual ends. I hope to demonstrate how, on the one hand, these theological contexts stretching back to Saint Francis can be seen in the novels of the eighteenth century; and on the other hand, how they likely influenced the development of the genre. J. Paul Hunter's *Before Novels*, while not making such a specific argument about theology and religious *praxis*, strongly emphasizes the ways in which the novel was continuous with other forms of writing common in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, notably newspapers, pamphlets, biographies, and, yes, religious tracts. He is also fittingly critical of the way in which the religious concerns of normal people in previous centuries are treated as alien and trivial.

I accept Margaret Doody's idea that the novel was not an invention of the eighteenth century but likely of antiquity; however, while those texts—*The Golden Ass* or *Chaereas and Callirhoe*—abound in circumstantial detail, they are not caught up in a circuit of sympathetic practice as are those this

dissertation studies. After Ian Watt's "rise of the novel," when the novel took on a new popularity, spurred on by an explosion of literacy and printed materials creating new readers and new markets, sympathy and its management became foundational aspects of the novel genre. It is a critical commonplace that the novel is peculiarly equipped for arousing and managing sympathy; George Eliot herself said so in "The Natural History of German Life," and while critics from David Marshall to Lynn Festa most associate sympathy with fiction in the eighteenth century, Rae Greiner traces it through the nineteenth century as well. But the arousal of sympathy, in the eighteenth century, was a new function of the novel—not merely its verisimilitude or fictionality, which have precedents—a function which has persisted in the novel to this day. My contribution, I hope, will be to position sympathy in the context of Christian practice, and thereby contextualize the novel's explosion as religiously inflected. In doing so, I will argue that this key Christian component to sympathy and the novel—sympathy as a form of imitation—has been largely overlooked by criticism up to this point.

George Eliot is an important touchpoint, moreover, because of the way in which her writings represent a shift from the sympathy in the novel which I will be discussing and the one readers today more likely know, not from novels only but from "novelistic media," such as films, television shows, and comics. I call these novelistic because they, like the sympathetic novel, ask their readers to identify with a protagonist and sympathize with them, oftentimes so that, as Eliot says, we might be moved toward social change. Eliot writes that "The greatest benefit we owe to the artist, whether painter, poet, or novelist, is the extension of our sympathies. Appeals founded on generalizations and statistics require a sympathy ready-made, a moral sentiment already in activity; but a picture of human life such as a great artist can give, surprises even the trivial and the selfish into that attention to what is a part from themselves, which may be called the raw material of moral sentiment" (Eliot 145-46). I take Eliot to mean here that the nation, a relatively new historical entity, demands distant sympathies for our fellow citizens, but as the utilitarianism of public policy works primarily through statistics, the novelist has the unique role of awakening "social sympathy" as she calls it.

However, a distorted version of Eliot's conception of the role of art—divorced from the sort of Hegelian spirituality found in Eliot's translation of Ludwig Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*²—has arguably come to define the novel genre as well as our public morality, tinged with sympathy for an abstracted utilitarian end. James Baldwin called this kind of novel the protest novel. Harriet Beecher Stowe, he writes, "was not so much a novelist as an impassioned pamphleteer; her book was not intended to do anything more than prove that slavery was wrong; was, in fact, perfectly horrible. This makes material for a pamphlet but it is hardly enough for a novel; and the only question left to ask is why we are bound still within the same constriction." Stowe is not alone in these goals and concomitant failings, in Baldwin's account. He writes that "the avowed aim of the American protest novel is to bring greater freedom to the oppressed. They are forgiven, on the strength of these good intentions, whatever violence they do to language, whatever excessive demands they make of credibility. It is, indeed, considered the sign of a frivolity so intense as to approach decadence to suggest that these books are both badly written and wildly improbable. One is told to put first things first, the good of society coming before niceties of style or characterization" (Baldwin). In this dissertation I will not be addressing contemporary protest novels such as those Baldwin is criticizing, but I imagine readers can

² "But if God is a living, i.e., real God, is God in general, only in virtue of this—that he is a God to man, a being who is useful, good, beneficent to man; then, in truth, man is the criterion, the measure of God, man is the absolute, divine being. The proposition: A God existing only for himself is no God—means nothing else than that God without man is not God; where there is no man there is no God; if thou takest from God the predicate of humanity, thou takest from him the predicate of deity; if his relation to man is done away with, so also is his existence" (Feuerbach 338).

summon some examples: Richard Wright's *Native Son* was Baldwin's primary target when going after the protest or social problem novel; we might also think of the Young Adult social novels that are foremost in the way that students today are taught to read, and which are some of the only novels any of them will *ever* read. Novels such as these function as a form of public, moral theology: theology because they inculcate normativity, and normativity always has a transcendental valence, as it strives as it does toward the ultimate good. I am adapting this point somewhat from Iris Murdoch's *The Sovereignty of the Good*, in which the Good, while not being divinely commanded, exists in a transcendent space. The relevance of that point here will be in my rejection of secularization, arguing that all societies that experience normativity must also imply some sort of transcendent reality. And this public theology in the modern West has its origins in the academic theology of the Reformation.

1.2 *Mensa Mystica*

Mensa Mystica, a short, 1667 treatise on the Eucharist written by the Latitude-man and later-Bishop Simon Patrick, works the ground for an aesthetic theory based on sympathy—first our sympathy for Christ on the Cross in his Passion, and second our sympathy for the sympathetic hero or heroine of a romance or true history. Patrick's theory was motivated not by aesthetics, though; instead, he was trying to pioneer a new logic of sacramental signification unique to Anglicanism that responded directly to theories of signification that could be viewed as undercutting the efficacy of the Mass: If words merely signify and do not accomplish anything in themselves, then how do blessings and sacraments actually work the way the Church says they do? Patrick's answer was that sympathy for Christ in the mass works upon the heart in a way that is distinct from simple "remembrance," Hobbes' conception of how language works.³

Patrick then can be placed in a sort of genealogy of the novel that changes how we view sentimentalism—not as an isolated, late eighteenth-century movement, but one intimately tied up with the rise of the novel itself. "When we read a true History, or a Romance," Patrick says,

We are apt to side with some Persons in the Story; and when we meet with a Duel, we favour one of the Combatants, and are sensible of his Wounds, and sorry for his Fall, as on the contrary we are glad he comes off a conquerour and wins the field. So may a Man when he thinks of Christ and his Tragedy, conceive a natural Hatred and Indignation at the treachery of Judas, and the vile malice of the Pharisees, and be much moved to see him used in such an unworthy manner, it may be fetch Sighs from his Heart and Tears from his Eyes, and put him into such a huge Passion, as if he suffer'd with him (Patrick 4).

Patrick's language of "fellow-feeling" —sighs, heart, suffering, passion, movement, sensibility—seems at home with the Cult of Sensibility in eighteenth-century England; it brings to mind the Humean logic

³ I am not treating here the distinction between pastoral and scholastic "theology," about which a great deal has been written. Indeed, Patrick's text reads more as pastoral in nature, explaining how best to receive the sacrament, than as a systematic, scholastic treatise. Augustine, too, frequently shifted between these registers, as did one of the founders of theology as a discipline, Origen. It is not a new form of hybridity, in other words, and not one I will treat extensively here. Patrick writes a pastoral text, moreover, but not one, in my estimation, that is devotional on the order of Jeremy Taylor, for example—that distinction pertains primarily to the meditative intention of the text.

of ideas reanimated as live impressions. As a Theory of Novel, it'd be nothing new: Catherine Gallagher, Adela Pinch, John Mullan, David Marshall, and Suzanne Keen have written on the subject. But Patrick's claim is as theological as it is literary—the two realms converge here. According to this future Bishop of Ely, unless the communicant at the rail feels “such a huge Passion, as if he suffer'd with him,” unless they are “sensible of his Wounds,” then the rite is “void of the Divine or Heavenly Spirit” (Patrick 4-5). Here we find a justification for the novel genre in a theory of the spiritual justification of those who inherit Adam's Original Sin; and sympathy reemphasizes not the interiority of the character on the page but the interiority of the reader and the penitent.

R. S. Crane gave us in 1934 a genealogy that traced the sentimental novelists to Lord Shaftesbury, potentially the first sentimental-ethical philosopher, and to Patrick's fellow Latitude-men among the Caroline Divines. However, many of the arguments Crane provides for using the Latitudinarians as a precursor—that they championed universal benevolence and affection—have proven quite weak. Donald Greene said of Crane's article in 1977, “Few essays by a literary scholar have been so widely influential or accepted with so little question” (Green 159). Greene proceeds to rip Crane apart so effectively and entirely that it is a wonder he was ever mentioned again. Greene attacks the historical particularity that Crane claims for sentimentalism and Latitude-men, saying, “If members of the whole spectrum of late seventeenth-century English Protestantism... can be cited as illustrating aspects of Crane's ‘latitudinarianism,’ the conclusion would seem to be that Crane's ‘latitudinarianism’... is nothing more than general Protestantism of the time—tenets with regard to the nature of man and his relationship to God and his neighbor that had been held and preached from the time of the Reformation and earlier” (Greene 180). The more pressing problem with the Latitude genealogy for the highly affective moral feeling of the sentimentalists is that Latitudinarians were “deficient in their understanding of the affective element in religion” (Greene 182, citing H. R. McAdoo's *Spirit of Anglicanism*). Per Isabel Rivers, “The central tenets of the latitudinarian movement in the Church of England” were “the rational basis of religion, the co-operation of human reason with divine grace, and the resulting happiness of the moral life” (Rivers vol. II, 1); an “essentially rational basis of religion” (Rivers vol. I, 35).

In response to Greene's article, G. S. Rousseau in 1978 writes that “Now our ‘rock of sentimentalism’ has disappeared and we will have to furnish our students with a different reply when they ask when the sentimental movement began and why Richardson, Sterne, and company are deemed the first sentimental writers in English literature” (De Bruyn 350). Ironically, though, I do not think a different reply needs to be furnished at all. We can give the same reply—that the Latitudinarians, their theology specifically, serve as an important touchstone in the genealogy of the sentimental novel—but give a far better justification. That is what I intend to do here. R. S. Crane, I propose, was something like the character from the Gettier problem—he was right about how many coins were in his pocket, but he didn't understand why.

1.3 Defoe's Atheist

Kenneth MacLean in 1949 says offhand, “Sterne, we need not be reminded, was not especially strong on the subject of ethics” (MacLean 399). His purpose here was to pin Sterne to the sentimental moralizing

of Adam Smith: “I think then we may see that Sterne, writing close to the time of Adam Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, understood sympathy as did the philosopher” (409). This simple method of argumentation—equating the author with the philosopher, but only the philosopher gets agency—is a far-too-common bad critical habit. To be sure, as Pinch, Ellison, Festa, and Mullan have written, sentimental philosophers such as Smith and David Hume are productive lenses through which to read sentimental literature; and yet the one-to-one mapping to which critics like MacLean fall prey ought to be avoided, because it erases agency on one side—the author’s.

George Starr, by contrast, presents an interpretation of Aphra Behn, for example, as sentimental that emphasizes the unique ways in which the novel form is intervening in larger cultural discourses, not copying or representing the work of some other form. “The sentimentalist is less intent on refuting Hobbes than on imagining how a Hobbesian world feels to those on the receiving end of the nastiness, the brutality” (Starr 362). Only novelists could achieve this effect—Starr’s interpretation endows them with agency that MacLean erases. While I will take a different approach, methodologically this article has the same goal: to demonstrate the ways in which novels take uniquely novelistic approaches to cultural discourses.

Moreover, the application of Hume and Smith to the sentimental novelists is not merely methodologically deficient—it is, in my interpretation, explanatorily deficient as well. Hume and Smith are illuminating as multidisciplinary coordinates by which to map one’s way through the century, but they do a poor job at demystifying why things happen in sentimental novels how they do, despite the fact that Hume and Smith are temporally closer and maybe more representative of the culture of Richardson’s time, and Mackenzie’s and Sterne’s and Brooke’s, than are the Latitude-men.

One paradigmatic example from my perspective is that in Defoe’s third installment of the *Robinson Crusoe* series, *Serious Reflections during the Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe: With his Vision of the Angelick World*. Here, in the aforementioned vision of the angelic world, the book concludes with a closet drama, a dialogue between a Christian student and an atheist. The Christian convinces the atheist to read a piece of apologetics aloud, and the Christian monitors his physical responses during the reading:

Stud. Did you feel no Motion within you, when you read those Words, *There may be a God*.

Ath. What Motion? What do you talk of?

...

Stud. It’s in vain to struggle with it, ’tis not to be conceal’d, you betray’d your self, I tell you.

Ath. How betray’d myself? you are might dark in your Expressions.

Stud. Did I not tell you, I would look in your Face all the While you read? Did I not see into the Distraction of your Soul? Did you not turn pale at the very Words, when your Tongue said, *There may be a God*? Was there not a visible Horror in your Countenance, when you read the Word HEAVEN? A Horror, which signified a Sense of your having no Share in it, or Hope about it? And did I not feel a Trembling in your very Joints, as I held you by the Hand, when you read the Word HELL? (71-72).

Here, Defoe employs proto-“sentimentalism” in a specifically theological context, arguing to his audience that it is impossible for the human body to resist responses to the divine. It would not be unreasonable to call what’s being described here a sense, but it is a sense for the divine, the sort of thing

that, according to Puritans like Bunyan or even to Catholics like Aquinas, would be the manifestation of grace imparted by the Holy Spirit indicative of election.⁴ Of course the Anglicans had by this point broadly adopted the Arminian notion of universal, prevenient grace, meaning that the atheist is just as much divinely moved as the devout believer.⁵

Prevenient grace, a soteriological theory that competed with and eventually won out over the irresistible grace of Calvinism, somewhat resembles Francis Hutcheson's and Lord Shaftesbury's moral sense, in that it is (1) innate and (2) present in all people. Arminianism, a branch of Reformation theology named for Jacobus Arminius, but which mostly takes after the *Five Articles of Remonstrance*, which are something of a point-by-point response to the TULIP system of the Calvinists. Calvinists held that grace was irresistible but limited; Arminians countered that it was resistable but universal. If Defoe's sense of the divine is Arminian in character, as I argue that it is, then it would be a necessary part of the human constitution that all people share, but which can be denied, as it is in this scene. Were, for example, the grace received irresistible as it is in Calvinism, the atheist would necessarily convert. The Arminianism becomes clear in Defoe's stated belief in the universality of the experience of God: "Here is a visible Evidence of God, and of his Being and Nature fix'd so in the Mind, that not'the moft hardn'd Atheist can deny it. Nature recoils at every Endeavour to suppress it, and the very Pulsation of his Blood shall discover and acknowledge it" (82).

Compared to Hume and Smith, sympathy plays very little role in the systems presented by Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, who are chronologically closer to the Calvinist-Arminian controversy. Hutcheson actively pushes the ethical into the realm of explicit calculation with a series of equations that attempt to mathematically define "that Action ... which procures the greatest Happiness for the greatest Numbers" (125)—later repurposed by the utilitarian philosophers. Nevertheless, for both Hutcheson and Shaftesbury, the "sentiments" that guide moral thought derive from a "moral sense" that is innate in human beings; this sentiment, moreover, is not "derived" from sympathy.

Moreover, following the Arminians, Hutcheson states that the moral sense is endowed in the human being by its creator. Prudence, according to Aquinas, is "practical reason only" and concerns "things that we have to do in relation to some end" (ST II-II Q.47 A.2). Similarly, Hutcheson claims that reason is only capable of determining the best means to an end but never for determining the end itself: "[A]s the Author of Nature has determin'd us to receive, by our external Senses, pleasant or disagreeable Ideas of Objects, according as they are useful or hurtful to our Bodys.... in the same manner he has given us a Moral Sense, to direct our Actions, and to give us still nobler Pleasures; so that while we are only intending the Good of others, we undesignedly promote our own greatest private Good" (99); "Nay, this very moral Sense, implanted in rational Agents, to delight in, and admire

⁴ Neither, of course, were sense theorists in the way that Frances Hutcheson was. However, both dissenters and Catholics agreed that the source of moral drive was the Holy Spirit. Below, I will discuss the Pelagian Heresy, an early-church controversy in which Pelagius argued against St. Augustine that the human being could attain salvation by their own will, by following the laws of the Bible. Augustine vociferously fought against Pelagius for most of his career, establishing some of the basic tenets of soteriology that persisted throughout church history, most important among them being that the human being needs the Holy Spirit both for salvation and for doing good at all.

⁵ Note that the atheist's experience cannot be explained through Calvinist soteriology because, if the atheist felt God, he would therefore have received the Holy Spirit, and, since grace, given by the Holy Spirit, is irresistible according to TULIP, then the atheist would cease to be an atheist necessarily. The above narrative is one of conversion, but it is still not possible to apply the Calvinist frame because Defoe gives his reader the story's main moral outright: "Here is a visible Evidence of God, and of his Being and Nature fix'd fo in the Mind, that not'the moft hardn'd Atheist can deny it. Nature recoils at every Endeavour to suppress it, and the very Pulsation of his Blood shall discover and acknowledge it" (82). Double predestination precludes this. Under Calvinist limited atonement, there will necessarily be hardened atheists who cannot be convinced; Arminianism liberates God's grace for all people for the liberal age.

whatever Actions flow from a Study of the Good of others, is one of the strongest Evidences of Goodness in the Author of Nature” (198). If Aquinas is at all a representative thinker in the history of Christianity, then it is reasonable to assume that some of his assumptions were shared by the English. Notably they were shared by John Milton. In *De Doctrina Christiana*, Milton writes: “The other effect [of regeneration] is love or charity, arising from a sense of the divine love shed abroad in the hearts of the regenerate by the Spirit, whereby those who are planted in Christ being influenced, become dead to sin, and alive again unto God, and bring forth good works spontaneously and freely” (362-63). This free and spontaneous action is the same as action inspired by God’s Grace in Aquinas and which seems to persist into Hutcheson.

Similarly, there is the definition of Grace given by Faithful in Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*: “inclining the soul to abhor its sin” (81). Moreover, Bunyan writes in *Law of Grace*, as quoted by Isabel Rivers, those with grace “are so far off from delighting in sin, that sin is the greatest thing that troubleth them” (Rivers vol. 1, 134). This is the other side of Milton’s “good works.” Bunyan also references something of a motivational problem in *Pilgrim’s Progress*: “He doth not lay the blessing in the knowing of them, but in the doing of them. For there is a knowledge that is not attended with doing: He that knoweth his masters will, and doeth it not.... It [Grace] gives him conviction of sin, especially of the defilement of his nature and the sin of unbelief” (82).

This brings me to a nagging methodological question about how to reconcile theology with apparently secular philosophies, such as Hume’s, who, though not a moral sense theorist in the mode of Hutcheson, participates in the same discourse. What these theological and theologically-tinged theories all constellate around is a concern over motivation, which I would argue became a major cultural problem in the seventeenth century and which persisted through the eighteenth. For all the above sentimental philosophers, Hume and Smith included, sentiments are the source of motivation, and reason cannot motivate one to act on its own. This is another way of putting Hume’s is-ought, also present in Shaftesbury. This may appear to be a major break with the Latitude-men, who tried to reduce religion to rational principles, as previously stated. And yet it is notable how, despite their theories of right action, those Caroline Divines struggled to explain how motivation results from rationality: Henry More’s Boniform Faculty, for example, fills the place of motivation in his theory, and functions similarly to Hutcheson’s moral sense. There is, however, even more explicit homology with the Latitude-men’s opponents, namely the Puritan ministers who often rejected rationalist apologetics—In many non-conforming churches, such as those of Bunyan and Baxter, it was taught that the elect had an innate attraction to the good and a revulsion toward evil, generated by the grace given by the holy spirit (Rivers vol. 1, ch. 3).

Bunyan “placed great emphasis on the primacy of grace and the gift of faith, and on the enormous difference between the erroneous doctrine of acting legally in order to be justified and the true doctrine of acting evangelically as a consequence of being justified” (Rivers vol. 1, 105). Such a view of “grace” was consonant with the views of much of the Catholic Church since Augustine: In order to avoid the charge of Pelagianism—the view that people can achieve moral perfection *without* the help of God—it was necessary to develop an idea of election and specifically a *grace* that gives people the proper inclinations. Aquinas expressed it the most effectively: “And thus in the state of perfect nature man needs a gratuitous strength superadded to natural strength for one reason, viz., in order to do and wish supernatural good; but for two reasons, in the state of corrupt nature, viz., in order to be healed, and furthermore in order to carry out works of supernatural virtue, which are meritorious. Beyond this, in both states man needs the Divine help, that he may be moved to act well” (ST I-II Q.109 A.2). Receiving this grace was, for some in the church but not Aquinas, identical to virtue. He writes: “Some

held that grace and virtue were identical in essence, and differed only logically—in the sense that we speak of grace inasmuch as it makes man pleasing to God, or is given gratuitously—and of virtue inasmuch as it empowers us to act rightly. And the Master seems to have thought this” (ST I-II Q.110 A.3), referring to the author of the *Sentences*, Peter Lombard.

We have dismissed Crane’s argument, but his general conclusion—that the Latitudinarians are a precursor—might still be right. The Latitudinarians are useful to this investigation as ethical philosophers, with the view that “the essence of religion is morality” (Rivers vol. 1, 37). Sarah Hutton notes that “the Cambridge Platonists had stronger philosophical links to Scottish moral philosophy [Hume and Smith] than the received history allows” (Hutton 9).⁶ This is the reason why the antinomians were deemed incorrect: Grace must entail morality. Yorick from *A Sentimental Journey*—being a parson but, more to the point, a human being, a recipient of God’s prevenient, Arminian grace—seems to experience the effects of normativity in his body. Normativity is defined by Korsgaard as a first-person experience of something being “good.” In other words: the attachment to good deeds and the aversion from bad deeds, in themselves, not analogically or sympathetically. In the seventeenth century, the basic idea of sentimental philosophy—the view that humans have certain affections or passions that direct them to do good—was already reaching maturity among the Latitude-men: “Reason on its own is powerless to move: the passions have a motivation to action. Both [John] Smith in his *Select Discourses* and More in his *Enchiridion Ethicum* developed the idea that the experience of virtue is sensory as well as intellectual; the idea is captured in More’s concept of the ‘boniform faculty’, which directs the soul to the good through ‘the relish and feeling’ of virtue” (11). I would argue that this idea of the ‘boniform faculty’ prefigures the same discourse that was motivating Hume’s is-ought; in both instances there is the acknowledgement that some other force needs to bring about normativity than intellection. Hutton’s main subject is Ralph Cudworth, and she explains in detail how his ideas were received by Hume himself and others in Scotland. Cudworth’s corollary to the boniform faculty was the *hegemonikon*, “which both understands the principles of virtue and empowers us to direct our actions to the good. The *hegemonikon* unifies the functions of the soul, uniting it with the body” (22). This sounds more like Yorick, and like Shaftesbury, also a figure in Crane’s genealogy, who claims that morality must be imbued in the human being by a moral sense given by God; Francis Hutcheson in Scotland had much the same idea of the moral sense, and was a direct influence on Hume.

I propose therefore that Crane was correct to find in the Latitudinarians a genealogy for the man of feeling, but not because they had particularly unique theories of morality; while trying to put things on firmer logical footing, many came to conclusions that were quite similar to Augustine or to Aquinas. And yet in the boniform faculty and the *hegemonikon*, there is something new nevertheless: a burgeoning discourse around the “motivation to action.” “Sentimental” philosophers Smith and Hume, the second generation of sentimentalists, came to very different conclusions about where morality came from than did the first generation. For Smith and Hume, morality was constructed through a sympathetic mechanism; in Shaftesbury there was a “moral sense” present in all humans that provided second-order affective response to moral stimuli. And yet all these are trying to answer the same basic question: Where does normativity come from?⁷ This is the question that became important

⁶ This is a politically tricky subject. Note that Hutton is careful not to say that the roots of the Scottish Enlightenment are English—for obvious reasons.

⁷ In my interpretation, normativity and motivation are effectively synonymous because, as Christine Korsgaard explains, “The question how we explain moral behaviour is a third-person, theoretical question, a question about why a certain species of intelligent animals behaves in a certain way. The normative question is a first-person question that arises for the moral agent who must actually do what morality says” (Korsgaard 16). In other words, normativity concerns the feeling that we

about a century earlier in large part because of the interrelatedness of that question to soteriological questions. If we assume, following Augustine, that it is impossible to be good without God's Grace, then who is good and why? Does everybody get that Grace or just some people? This is the question that in part split the Calvinists from the Arminians, who upheld a universal prevenient Grace. And Patrick's Grace works in much the same way as the boniform faculty. As quoted above: "It doth both quicken us to his Service, and tie us to him."

1.4 Sacramental Signification

I will attempt to demonstrate one way in which this theological problem could be said to influence what is known as the rise of the novel—not the invention of the novel, *per se*, but the conditions that made it plausible that this one genre of literature would sweep so suddenly to prominence in the modern era. The novel is associated with liberalism and the ostensible secularism of the eighteenth century. This arises in part from an oversimplification of the eighteenth century as one of Enlightenment as opposed to one in which almost all people remained fervently religious. And theology, even though it was practiced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is not remembered in that period, despite the long-running religious turn in the humanities,⁸ as being the robust discipline it used to be. Instead, researchers would rather plumb nascent, quasi-secular philosophies for the intellectual contexts of an apparently new narrative form. And yet it should be self-evident that theology mattered—it even mattered to the writers of fiction. The writers of novels had some theological interests—such as Richardson publishing the late mystical works of William Law—and these interests almost certainly influenced their work.

One avenue for addressing this question is to consider how signification itself was implicated in theological debate. The two traditional positions in the argument over naming can be found in Plato's *Cratylus*. Cratylus understands words to have an innate relationship to the object to which it refers, whereas Hermogenes believes they are merely conventional. The late-Medieval *Modistae*, among whom we might count Roger Bacon, the thirteenth-century grammarian, whose works influenced Dante, believed not only in a universal grammar—a semi-Chomskyist idea that was shared by many in the Middle Ages including Augustine—but also that it was a "speculative science" (Lombardi 86). As the work of Thomas of Erfurt, the fourteenth-century grammarian, indicates, "reality is mirrored in language" (97).⁹ In this sense, we might compare it to the way that moderns use mathematics: We assume that the universe conforms to the laws of mathematics and as such we may speculate on immeasurable aspects of cosmology based only upon equations. Similarly, according to the grammarians

should act in a certain way, distinct from saying something is simply "good," which G. E. Moore helpfully described as the Naturalistic Fallacy: the assumption that, simply because something is beneficial, we should want to do it.

⁸ People have been discussing a religious turn in the academy for decades. Sloterdijk is one example. A lot of this writing has taken the shape of post-secularism, however, and post-secularism, while being a useful touchpoint, is distinct from this dissertation's purpose, in that much of this work critiques the notion of secularism in modernity as a category that presupposes and is therefore inseparable from religion. This dissertation, by contrast, is critical of the secularization thesis not for this structuralist reason but because forms of transcendental thought about morality in particular persist to this day. This dissertation, therefore, treats religion not as a cultural symptom only but as a valuable interpretive framework. Such an approach I believe remains underutilized.

⁹ For the *Modistae*, signification (or *modus significandi*) was an aspect of grammatical study that also included syntax.

of the fifteenth century, it was possible to speculate about ontology based on the structure of universal language. Aristotle, I would suggest, uses this mode of argumentation as well, when he claims that, because we can refer to the “wood” of a wooden table and the “table” itself separately that they must have distinct ontological realities. Even before the Enlightenment, speculative grammar was attacked by William of Ockham, whose nominalism entailed a rejection of universal forms.

Sacramental signification—the broad idea that a sacrament like the Eucharist or baptism means something in addition to its elements, bread or water, for example—was vital in theories of salvation, since sacraments were required according to the Catholic Church in order for the soul to be saved; therefore it followed necessarily that something more than water in baptism was operant. In some theories, the sacrament is both a sign and a cause—i.e., it simultaneously represents the reception of God’s grace and causes it to be bestowed. This might be likened to a speech act, but with more metaphysical complexity, since it has bearing on God, who is also free in His actions. In other theories, a sacrament is merely a sign of faith; and in yet others it is merely a sign of something received; in these latter theories, though, the Catholic Church would argue that the sacraments, which are set for in scripture, are made metaphysically irrelevant.

This is one aspect of Reformation theology that I have not seen brought to bear on the novel.¹⁰ And yet there are plenty of monographs and articles on how the Reformation reformed the culture of reading in Europe, its influence on biblical interpretation, and the way all this influenced commonly held views about how words work. As Brian Cummings puts it, “What was new about grammatical study in the sixteenth century was not that it was newly central (it had never been less than central) but that it was newly controversial” (Cummings 23). By grammar, we mean what today would probably be referred to as philology. Cummings points out, for example, the “new attention” paid to Greek, and Erasmus’ demand for more rigorous Greek grammatical study of the New Testament; and Hebrew, given the Old Testament’s renewed theological importance, produced even more problems, since the grammarians’ system, based on Latin, bore little resemblance to a Semitic language. The purpose of this renewed attention, moreover, was both to address the textual basis for Christianity now that that text was so widely disseminated by the printing press, leading to Luther’s reforms among others, as well as to return Christianity, which some would claim had drifted from its roots, back to origins.

My point here, though, is to argue that it was not just in the realms of biblical interpretation where signification was snared in controversy—in the Eucharist and other sacraments, the Reformation called into question basic assumptions about what certain parts of the Liturgy indicated was happening metaphysically or ontologically regarding one’s salvation. It would be reasonable to assume that theoretical changes happening here, with stakes that were fundamental to one’s eternal salvation, would have seeped into the cultural mainstream. To put a fine point on this, Calvin became concerned that, if the divine and the sign were not distinctly separated, congregants might begin to practice an idolatry of signs (Evans 40). So the Reformation amplified concerns about signification in the mass and sacraments, but we still need a full accounting of how such Reformation sign theory influenced literary production and nascent novels in particular. It is my theory that to the degree that theology and literature are interrelated in this period it has especially to do with how the Anglicans took up the problems of

¹⁰ Some work done in this area includes Jay Zysk’s book *Shadow and Substance* (2017) and, to a somewhat lesser extent, Brian Cummings’ *Grammar and Grace* (2002). Stephanie Buhr’s *Martyred Signs* will cover Reformation hermeneutics but possibly not the signification of the sacraments. A vast body of work on the literary significance of the eucharist centers on lyric, primarily Herbert and Donne—take, for instance, Robert Whalen’s *The Poetry of Immanence* (2004) and Regina Schwartz’s *Sacramental Poetics* (2009). There is also plenty of secondary literature on drama, and Shakespeare in particular—for example, Mark S. Sweetum in “*Hamlet* and the Reformation of the Eucharist” (*Literature and Theology*, Vol. 21, No. 1 March 2007).

signification that were being brought up by apparently secular writers like Hobbes, who said in the first book of *Leviathan* that “the first use of names, is to serve for Markes, or Notes of remembrance” (Hobbes 13). Hobbes defines “remembrance” several pages earlier as “when of an effect imagined, wee seek the causes, or means that produce it;” and by “imagination” Hobbes intends the “decaying sense” (5) that we have of perceived objects—corollary to Hume’s ideas. Hobbes attacks religion on the grounds that certain of its significations are “insignificant” (52)—they signify nothing at all.

The then-Rector of St. Paul’s under Charles II, Simon Patrick, is providing an account of what theologians call sacramental causality—that is, distinct from sacramental *signification*, if and how a sacrament confers grace—and his approach seems to have been unique for its time period. Zwingli rejects sacramental causality and calls the communion a memorial symbol, a theory fittingly called memorialism, but Patrick claims the eucharist strengthens an ontological union with Christ through the vicarious power of the Holy Spirit, maintaining, as Anglicans are wont to do, a *via media* between extreme positions of the Catholics and the dissenters on the point of sacraments; and while Luther rejects transubstantiation but insists on the “local presence” of the body and blood, our second-generation Cambridge Platonist Simon Patrick rejects both; and although Calvin’s *unio mystica* (Holtzen 610) may just be the basis for Patrick’s *mensa mystica*—one of the only modern theologians Patrick cites is Martin Bucer, from Calvin’s same Reformed tradition—Calvin, in his notion of irresistible grace, entirely denies the communicant the agency that Patrick seems to center. Patrick demonstrates an Anglican allegiance to Arminianism in that universal grace is prevenient—which is to say, it comes before conversion—and requires the cooperation of the faithful to ensure salvation.

Frustrating still is the legacy of Hooker whose theology of sacramental causality has generated a voluminous body of scholarly work that has drawn relatively few conclusions: Hooker rejected both transubstantiation and memorialism while speaking of a mystical union, suggesting to some he was a Calvinist; and yet he called the sacraments “instruments” and a conditional “means” of salvation. Calvin explicitly states that the sacraments are *not* instruments: “Not that such spiritual gifts (*gratiae*) are tied to a sacrament, or enclosed in it, or that a sacrament is an implement or instrument (*organum ac instrumentum*) to the end that they may be conferred on us, but only because the Lord attests to us by this token his will to bestow these things upon us;” similarly, “Sacraments are like heralds that announce and show the things given to us by God’s bounty but do not bring them;” and “Whatever implements God employs, they detract nothing from his primary operation” (Gerrish 12). Grace is “irresistible” and “perseverant,” so the sacrament can do nothing but signify what God has already done. (Here we should assume Grace simply means salvation, but more is entailed, as will become evident later. If more were *not* entailed, the antinomians would not have been so fiercely resisted.)

Though the Catholic Church’s Doctors’ many views conflicted about how the sacraments conferred Grace—did it work as a sort of *fiat* currency, valueless in itself but recognized by the King of Kings, per Vasquez? Or was Suarez right that it worked physically from the Grace within the Body and Blood itself? Perhaps the most controversial was the *sine qua non* position, that the sacrament was a necessary condition for salvation—according to the Council of Trent the sacraments all “confer the Grace they signify” (Holtzen 621); Zwingli accused Calvin of not sufficiently distancing himself from that position and reiterated that the Papists believed “sacraments confer grace on all who take them” (Gerrish 3). A sort of middle position is staked out in the work of Scotus, that the “sacrament is at once cause and sign” (Huber 16).

Due to Hooker’s insistence on the instrumentality of sacraments, the Anglican eucharist, like much of Anglican theology, seems like a compromise between protestants and Catholics. Perhaps this is why his exposition on the eucharist is full of contradictions. In his *Defence*, Cranmer argues for an

alternative to transubstantiation, a eucharist which would “promise, signify and exhibit” (Richardson 427, quoting Cranmer); “The body of Christ cannot be in the elements since it is in heaven” (430). It is claimed for this reason that Cranmer was not a realist because a “realist” notion of the eucharist would hold that Christ’s body is present in the bread and the wine. But, per the modern theologian Cyril Richardson, Cranmer’s theology of “double indwelling” (429) implies real presence. Commentators have struggled, therefore, to easily categorize Cranmer’s beliefs on the subject of Eucharistic causality.

1.5 Sacramental Causality

The tension latent in this entire Eucharistic debate is in the word “signify,” a theological controversy with yet unclear literary implications. Due to Augustine’s writing on the subject, sacraments are understood to be signs in two senses—they are *signa*, or signs, and they have *verba*, words. Of *verba* he once offhand wrote that *accedit verbum ad elementum, et fit sacramentum*—“the word accedes to the element, and it becomes the sacrament”—and later theologians attempted to “transform St. Augustine’s occasional remark into a real principle valid for all sacraments” (Van den Eynde 5). However, while the *elementum* of any given sacrament is relatively straightforward—in baptism, it is water—the *verbum*, or word, is not; further the subject of *fit* is ambiguous, and the *verbum* could be minimized by taking *fit* with *elementum* and not some unspoken composite of the two (Van den Eynde 4). The common formulation of which Patrick may have been aware came from Peter Lombard in the *Sentences*. Following Augustine, Lombard divided the sacrament into two parts, the *res* or *elementum*, and *verbum*; the *res* in the Eucharist was bread and wine, but the *verbum* was some part of the rite. *Duo autem sunt in quibus sacramentum consistit, scilicet verba et res: verba, ut invocatio Trinitatis; res, ut aqua, oleum et huiusmodi*, “Two there are in which the sacrament consists, namely the word and the thing: word, as an invocation of the Trinity; thing, as in water, oil, or etc.” (12).¹¹ Here the *verba* is specifically the *invocatio Trinitatis*, and we see plainly, therefore, that words themselves effectuate Grace according to Lombard.

From this we can appreciate Bishop Patrick’s boldness in describing the Eucharist—he has expanded the *verba* from a single invocation (“in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”) into an entire story on the order of a Romance. The Romance in question the entirety of the institution narrative from the synoptic gospels—that is, the entire Eucharistic prayer, which recapitulates the Last Supper and reenacts Christ’s blessing of the bread and the wine. It is in this narrative that the mass engages sympathy with the end of Christ’s life.

And yet this and other systems of “sacramental composition”—there were many others, most notably that of William of Auxerre—is distinct still from Augustine’s use of *signum* for the rite. The use of *signum* may sound reductionist; many post-Saussure moderns assume of the signified and signifier an arbitrary relation, but in the medieval and ancient theory of the sign this was not assumed. (Foucault discusses this in *On the Order of Things*, though he does not provide reasons for his epistemic ruptures, and the basis of “representation” over “signification” in the pre-Modern period relies on magic more than theology.) The signified could also *cause* the sign—“Where there’s smoke there’s fire;” the fire caused the smoke; their relationship is not arbitrary, like a Peircean index. Aristotle and the Stoics called the signifier the *πρόδηλον*, “that which appears”; and the signified the *ἄδηλον*, or “unseen”. This usage

¹¹ Van den Eynde explains why we shouldn’t credit this theological invention to Lombard, but this is how the tradition is normally given.

continues to be found in works through Cicero and Quintillian. Thus *signum* “can normally be translated by ‘evidence,’ ‘symptom,’ ‘portent’” (Marcus 63).¹² Therefore one could say that the sign indicated an immaterial reality, one which occurred simultaneously, and which was logically implied by the sign.¹³ There are several understandings of sacramental “signification” that do not imply Zwinglian memorialism. Duns Scotus, for example, referred to the sacraments as *signa practica*, as opposed to *signa demonstrativa*, the latter being signifiers like smoke—the Peircean index—and the former both signifying *and* producing their effects—as if the smoke could cause the fire itself (Huber 28).

However, Simon Patrick seems also to have in mind debates over signification outside theology. *Mensa Mystica* begins with an analysis of the word ἀνάμνησις, “remembrance,” in the verse τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν (Luke 22:19). This phrase was, and still is, frequently recited in the Anglican mass as a part of the Eucharistic Prayer, rendered as “Do this in remembrance of me” in the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*. The purpose of signification, then, is not just for the sacramental *verbum* but also for remembrance, which implies, perhaps, Zwinglian memorialism; but Patrick continues, “I hope that none will conceive so little to be meant by this Word *remember* or *commemorate* as a naked mention of his Name with our Mouths, or a dead Image of him in our Minds” (Patrick 4). Here the attack seems aimed at Zwingli as well as at Hobbes’ theory of language. The word “remembrance” is quite apt in that sense, since Hobbes uses it himself. Patrick claims the word ἀνάμνησις does not merely mean the Latin *recordatio* but also *commemoratio*, seemingly drawing from the 1607 *Lexicon Graecolatinum*. Then the tenor of his veiled criticisms seems to slightly change. “For all these Words, to *know*, *believe*, *meditate*, *remember*, and the like, are hearty Words, and full of Life. Tho’ they seem to speak only Actions of the Mind yet in holy Language they include in their Comprehension *the Affections of the Heart*.”

This is why Patrick does so much kvetching about what “remembrance” means in different languages. It is somewhat unclear what “holy language” he is talking about. If he is thinking of a Hebrew word meaning “remember,” he does not specify which—perhaps זָכַר? He writes: “First, you must observe that the very Day of the Passover was לִבְרֹחַ for a Memorial of this miraculous Deliverance out of Egypt as you may read Exodus 12.14.” לִבְרֹחַ, however, is not a word in any Hebrew conjugation, but it is plausible to assume that לִבְרֹחַ is a misprint of לִזְכֹּרֶת, i.e. לָכֶם לְזַכֹּרֶת (Ex. 12:14), which is a form of זָכַר. The word זָכַר, according to Johannes Buxtorf’s 1645 *Lexicon Hebraicum*, means, among many other valances, *Memoriam constituit, In memoriam revocavit, Memoriam celebravit* (187). While not seemingly distinct from *Recordatus fuit*, Buxtorf records this meaning as a *secundum aliam significationem*. Patrick cites Buxtorf’s definition of זָכַר a chapter later, so this is probably the dictionary he was using. Possibly this is Patrick’s meaning, but *Memoriam celebravit* hardly speaks to Affections of the Heart. If Hobbes is right, moreover, then Patrick needs to demonstrate that the Eucharistic *verbum* can have efficacy *beyond* remembrance, despite the words of Christ, because, otherwise, those words amount to a “dead Image;” he needs to disprove Hobbes when he writes that “The generall use of Speech is to transferre our Mentall Discourse, into Verbal; or the Trayne of our Thoughts, into a Trayne of Words; and that for two commodities; whereof one is, the Registring of the Consequences of our Thoughts; which being apt to slip out of our memory, and put us to a new labour, may again be recalled, by such words as they were marked by” (12).

I might suggest that the ambiguity around Holy Language is deliberate—we are meant to see “holy language” as referring not to a different human language but a different application of language, a different linguistic context. This context is the mass, and the thing that makes that application of

¹² Marcus 63.

¹³ Augustine’s theory of signification was also important for his Biblical hermeneutics: Entire stories would signify spiritual truths.

language different from the signification of a “dead Image” is sympathy. Sympathy, in other words, transforms our simple, Saussurian experience of language—which is referential, indexical—into something that moves the heart. It is through this movement of the heart that the Calvinist *unio Christi* becomes possible.

Patrick argues later in *Mensa Mystica* that Eucharist confers Grace in the form of union with Christ in Heaven—here he differs with Zwingli and the Reformed, but also with Enlightenment philosophers of language who would have it that words are merely arbitrary signs with no power of their own. He agrees, though, with Hooker and Calvin, albeit developing a new framework for how this union occurs. According to the Rector, Christ’s body is not present at the communion table because Jesus, the Nicene Creed tells us, is seated at the right hand of the Father. He is in heaven, but the host is here; Patrick has rejected consubstantiation and transubstantiation. Patrick specifies that “Christ doth not descend *locally* unto us” (Patrick 87-88), to use what is effectively a technical term. And yet Christ “comes down upon us by the Power of the Holy Ghost, moving by its Heavenly Virtue in our Hearts.... It doth both quicken us to his Service, and tie us to him.” He says we “sensibly feel the Virtue and Efficacy of them in ourselves.” Christ has “Use of those Means that God hath instituted for Increase in Grace,” and Patrick deploys Tertullian’s term *vis vicaria* to describe the function of the Spirit in the eucharist—Christ’s power vicariously felt.

Neither Patrick nor his fellow Carolines will grant Zwingli his memorialism—They maintain “sacramental causality,” one brought about by the “real presence” of Christ in the host itself. But that “real presence” is not transubstantiation. “So that the real Presence is not to be sought in the Bread and Wine, but in those that receive them, according as learned *Hooker* speaks; for Christ saith first, *Take, and eat*, and then after that, *this is my body*” (Patrick 90). Patrick is citing Hooker’s *Laws*, in which he writes: “The real presence of Christ’s most blessed body and blood is not therefore to be sought for in the sacrament, but in the worthy receiver of the sacrament. And with this the very order of our Saviour’s words agreeth, first ‘take and eat’; then ‘this is My Body which was broken for you’ ... they are not really nor do really contain in themselves that grace which with them or by them it pleaseth God to bestow” (*Lawes* V.67.6). Patrick and Hooker are close reading this particular sentence of the Gospel, supposing a causative relationship between the terms *Take, eat* and *This is my body*: “Take and eat this, and *therefore* it *will* be my body.” Others, such as Luther in *Against the Fanatics*, suppose an explanatory relationship: “Take and eat this *because* it is my body *already*.” The predication in “This is my body” precludes the bread and wine from changing, because they must *already* be the body and blood (Gerrish 1988 4). But Patrick and Hooker have their own theory—for them, the bread and wine are *not* the body and blood, nor do they become it. And yet the grace conferred brings the communicant into bodily union with Christ.

Patrick’s Eucharistic theology, like Hooker’s, is closest to Calvin’s, and Patrick seems to signal this to readers through the recurrent image of “union” with Jesus. Calvin rejected that the Eucharistic host was the “real and substantial” body, by which he means Christ is “contained there, locally confined.” The communion is symbolic, as it is in Zwingli, but it is also given to the communicant “truly and efficaciously”—i.e., it accomplishes something; goes beyond mere signification. Gerring argues that Calvin “seemed to stumble between the rival opinions of Luther and Zwingli,” which, if true, would put Calvin in the company of the Anglicans, who are reluctant to make a claim about “things indifferent.” Hooker supposedly adopted Calvin’s *unio mystica* into his own sacramental theology. Holtzen makes the case, though, that actually Hooker differed from Calvin precisely in the efficacy he afforded to sacraments like the eucharist. For Calvin, if the elect take a sacrament, it is merely a sign since they are saved already—and if the unelect take a sacrament, it is not efficacious, but an

empty sign, because they are already the unelect, and a sacrament will not change this. Again, by contrast with Calvin, Patrick's Eucharist does something. Patrick writes: "Things at the greatest distance may be united by one spirit of life actuating them both, and so may Christ and we, though we enjoy not his bodily presence... The formal reason of the union that is made between the parts of our body, consists not in their continuity and touching of each other, but in the animation of them by one and the same spirit which ties them all together" (Patrick 84).

I want to suggest that Patrick's solution is to propose a secondary theory of signification in which signs not only recall but also create involuntary sympathetic responses— "affections of the heart" opposed to "actions in the mind." "Cold pale Thoughts, which have no Feeling of themselves, nor leave any Footsteps or Memorials"¹⁴ behind them, are as good as none at all"—mere signifiers— "And therefore I understand hereby a very warm Sense in the Soul, which begets and stirs up such Motions in the Heart as the conceived Object is apt to raise." This seems to be the meaning of the term "holy language"—language that is effective, not merely signifying. "And further, the Word καταγγέλλειν may import, that we do extol, predicate, magnify, and highly lift up in our Praises this great Benefit, so that all may come to the Knowledge of it, as far as is in our Powers to procure" (Patrick 12). This final qualification, "as far as is in our Powers," points to the basic doctrine in the church that saving Grace comes from God and not from man; but here Patrick protests that speech acts in the mass must at least have some divine effect upon the soul. The "Knowledge of it" therefore cannot be taken as mere signification—otherwise it would be up to God who did and not possess certain knowledge of facts—but a divine sort of knowledge, namely the faith produced in us by the intervention of the Holy Spirit.

Of course the mode of remembrance Bishop Patrick is describing is not new to Christian thought—it is only new, as far as I can tell, in how it implicates signification itself. Patrick's recommendation, though, to sympathize with Christ during the Mass, is entirely consistent with an *imitatio* tradition that was popular in Patrick's period, including with Jeremy Taylor. The idea of *imitatio*, partially derived from Thomas à Kempis—the most reissued Christian writer outside of the Bible itself—and the Franciscan movement. The Franciscans privilege to this day the literal imitation of Christ's poverty as a mode of Christian *praxis*, as well as the meditation on Christ's life and death. Such meditations, for their namesake, Saint Francis of Assisi, resulted in a bodily transformation in which the Saint took on the stigmata of Christ. These mystical stigmatists are in part received by à Kempis's *De Imitatione Christi*, in which the author recommends meditation on Christ's life and the literal imitation of Him. The tradition goes back further, though, to the early Church in which early Fathers desired literal martyrdom like Christ. Sympathy with Christ, one could say, literally formed a *unio mystica* with Him, then. Patrick's specific innovation on this idea, though, is to say that (a) this involves a type of signification distinct from Hobbesian signification—which of course probably does not literally hold up on the philosophical level—and (b) that the *unio mystica* important to the Eucharist has a sacramental causality that can be traced to this distinct signification.



¹⁴ Maybe Patrick's use of the word "Memorials" calls upon *Memoriam celebravit* with a different force than that of plain memory; and yet the word remains evocative of Zwingli's sacramental theology, which, given its emphasis on the faith of the communicant, Patrick need not reject entirely: The "faith" in question is simulated in the sympathetic affection for Christ.

In this dissertation on the novel and sympathy, I will perhaps unsurprisingly focus primarily on the sentimental novel, since the sentimental novel is the main site in English literary criticism for sympathy and its theoretical foundations. My first chapter will focus on Samuel Richardson and *Clarissa*, interpreting that text not merely as religiously inflected in its plot, but in its form as well, deliberately modeled after sympathetic modes of Christian meditation. *Clarissa*, I will argue, serves as preparation for the reader to sympathize with Christ. In the second chapter on Laurence Sterne, I will analyze the presentation of the body specifically and the way in which the author is recovering the body and its ability to sense from the Lockean empiricists and positing its perfection in a way consistent with the doctrine that, at the end of time, human beings will be raised perfected in their bodies like Lazarus; moreover it is through a careful consideration of the body and perception that Sterne shows the ways in which sociality is still possible, distinct from a simple form of sympathy, which is insufficient in his case, as it is in the case of Defoe's atheist. This dissertation, furthermore, will treat the sentimental novel, in my re-reading of its dynamics, as an ongoing paradigm for the novel genre, not simply a sub-genre that came about suddenly and just as quickly vanished. As a result, the final chapter of this dissertation will focus, probably to the reader's surprise, on Philip K. Dick's fiction and philosophical writings. Dick will serve as a datapoint that will hopefully demonstrate the persistence of the ideas discussed in this dissertation's earlier chapters, as well as how questions of sympathy with a deity become more mystical, more skeptical, and less certain.

This historical arc also entails the implication that a certain culture of sentimentality—what I would prefer to call an ethical regime of sympathy—persists to this day. Seeing as I describe sympathy's origins as Christian in nature, one might wonder if this is not a secularization hypothesis; however, this dissertation interprets religion as primarily moral (as did the Latitude-men), explaining and coping with people's differences in morality, the demands of justice, and the world's natural lack of moral clarity. Smart's description of the Holy Spirit "assuming passions to enforce thy laws" has force even for the non-religious, who at least must wonder where morality comes from. Even in utilitarian theory, G. E. Moore has made the point, something being beneficial does not logically imply a normative demand. I believe that, to the extent that the novel adopts the role of arousing and managing moral sentiments, the novel has become a form of civic religious discourse, a site for the refinement of our moral beliefs. I make this latter claim because of the transcendent quality of all normative claims.

Obviously not all religious writing is theology—there are, in the period I am primarily describing, also works of spiritual autobiography, sermons, devotional poems, and more. My purpose here is to claim that novels, regardless of their apparent secularity, may be a form of religious writing as well. "Theology" in the wake of the Reformation becomes a much more marginal discipline, replaced in part by a dispersion of academic subfields like physics and philosophy. Theology did not, of course, wilt and die—systematic theological treatises were written throughout the eighteenth century and are written today. And yet part of its scope seems to have been eclipsed by other disciplines of writing. For example, the homily becomes much more important in this period—becomes a bestselling medium, in fact—in a way that echoes how distinct "theological" doctrines were oftentimes expounded for the first time in the discursive context of a homily in the early church. The 1571 Thirty-nine Articles of Religion in Article 35 outsources some of its work to homiletics. This is not to say that the Articles are not "theological" or that they do not achieve their ends, but that, in this period following the Reformation, there was an opportunity for other forms of religious writing—the spiritual autobiography as another example, which bore with it the formal marks of Calvinist theology—to compete legitimately against systematic theology as a primary mode of religious writing. Part of the reason for this, surely, was the

advent of a vernacular liturgy, rising literacy and print media, and a notion of a priesthood of all believers—all the new audiences cultivated by these innovations demanded new styles in which to engage with religion textually. I propose that the novel rose to prominence in the eighteenth century partly as a form of religious writing that catered to a broadening reading public—even if those still tended to be bourgeois individuals—not just the academic elite.

The displacement of Christ in the practice of sympathy has the result of obscuring the true ethical purpose of sympathizing with Christ in the late-medieval tradition. Sympathizing, according to Aquinas and following Aristotle, is not a moral prerogative but a social grace which lessens the burden of another's pain (ST.I-II.Q38.A3). The sympathy we feel with Christ in the liturgy, by contrast, has the transformative effect of Stigmatism: The Christian seeker should transform, in part, into the object of sympathy: the assumption of another's body, of course, being explicitly ruled out by Smith in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. I will argue that becoming Christ-like entails adopting His ethical attitudes; however, this attitude is not one of sympathy as we define it—the sharing of emotion for the sake of promoting positive action—but of law and mercy. (Of course, this is not the sympathy of imitation, either, since that would entail the transformation of the self.) The word for mercy in Latin, *miser cordia*, is defined by Aquinas as *dolorem de miseria aliena*, “sorrow for another's distress” (ST.II-II.Q30.A3). Unlike *compassio*, though—literally “suffering with”—Aquinas claims that *miser cordia* is not an effect of the passions: *non secundum passionis affectum* (ST.I.Q21.A3). This is an important distinction because God, under the doctrine of divine impassibility, cannot suffer lest it detract from His perfection. God's mercy, according to Aquinas, is rational, unlike compassion, which is a passion, and passion, from the same root as suffering, cannot describe God. Of course Christ adopted many of the “defects” of human beings when becoming man, but these of course are not the aspects of Christ we imitate—His ability to perceive pain while being crucified, for example.

And yet the displacement of Christ was so complete, I believe, that our culture, completely saturated with novels and novelistic media—we could call films and television novelistic in the way in which narratives there, too, seek to arouse and manage sympathy—inculcates us all into a regime of sympathy: not a sympathy of imitation, again, but a sympathy of distant, shared emotion. While often supposed by our moral culture to be the pinnacle of ethical cognition, it is plain that sympathy is not a sufficient prescription on its own, and that the acts that sympathy itself prescribes are contradictory and potentially dangerous, lending credence to the critiques of distant sympathy offered by Lynn Festa in her analysis of sympathy's relationship with empire. Philip K. Dick's divine visions and theological sympathy echo this introduction and the use of sympathy in the writings of Ralph Cudworth, where it was conceived of as a magical influence of one object over another. In Dick, this magical power is used both for good and ill, by divine powers, charlatans, and aliens.

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Chapter 2

De Imitatione Clarissae: On the Imitation of Clarissa

2.1 God in the Room

I once posed this question to a class full of English majors: “Who are the characters in the room in the first letter of Pamela?” After students listed Pamela herself, Mrs. B, and the other servants, there was silence as I waited for one more name. It was one of those pauses where you wonder if you should step in or let them percolate. To my relief, one brave student raised her hand and said, as if it was a question: “...God?” Like they said in pedagogy class, you might have to let them percolate for a little longer than you yourself find comfortable.

Pamela writes in her letter that, upon the passing away of Mrs. B,

God, whose graciousness to us we have so often experienced at a pinch, put it into my good lady’s heart, on her death-bed, just an hour before she expired, to recommend to my young master all her servants, one by one.

Richardson does not employ active language for Mrs. B. The subject of the sentence is God. Knowing how things go from here, we might ask, why would God allow this? No, worse: why would God *want* this? And why didn’t anybody else in the class notice? Now, we should acknowledge that Pamela could be wrong to think this is providence—she’s pretty naive at best. In fact, maybe what follows immediately proves me wrong:

When it came to my turn to be recommended, (for I was sobbing and crying at her pillow) she could only say, My dear son!—and so broke off a little; and then recovering—Remember my poor Pamela—And these were some of her last words! O how my eyes run—Don’t wonder to see the paper so blotted. Well, but God’s will must be done!

It looks like God put a thought into Mrs. B’s head, but not about Pamela, and then she gets cut off, and Pamela just assumes that she was supposed to be a servant to Mr. B like the rest of the maidens. The syntax is quite broken; it’s tough for students to parse what’s happening. But a lot hinges on what *remember* means. The other maidens are “recommended,” which is to say “entrusted.” But Pamela is to be “remembered”; in what sense is this different? The Latinate “re-” prefix suggests that there’s a deliberate contrast happening between the two verbs. It’s conceivable that “remember” is synonymous with “recommend” in this context, but it conveys a secondary meaning of “retaining” in one’s mind, and therefore implies the twist of the novel, which is that Pamela saves Mr. B by reforming his soul. So Richardson gets across a double providence by switching the verb: the idea to be recommended, and the *capacity* of Pamela to reform a wayward rake—“God’s will must be done!”

This article will add one voice to the chorus of critics complaining that the scholarship on English literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries does not take religion seriously enough.¹⁵ This vignette resembles the one provided by Branch 2022 in this very journal. On a theoretical level, this article has a debt to Asad 2012 and the challenge therein to the dichotomization of the religious and the secular. I will also argue at the end of this article that the sort of sympathy inculcated in the novel amounts to a sort of civic theology for modernity. These claims and others rely on a framework that views the secular as the product of, something entirely intertwined with, religiosity. However, this article differs from many works on “post-secularism” following Asad in that a challenge to the dichotomy of religious and secular is not so much this paper’s goal as it is one of its several underlying assumptions.¹⁶ Instead, this paper’s purpose is to revise our understanding of sentiment and sympathy in the light of religious, theological contexts that have not yet been sufficiently studied.

I will argue two related points, one about Richardson—specifically with reference to *Clarissa*—and one about the novel genre itself. We can presume that, of the aspects of the Holy Trinity, the one that would have placed an idea into Mrs. B’s head in *Pamela* is the Holy Spirit, God’s worldly manifestation that works in our hearts. It was commonly held by Anglicans and many dissenters that the Holy Spirit could influence actions. The more theologically rigorous version of this idea would hold that the Holy Spirit bestows God’s Grace which reforms the appetites of the individual, tainted from birth by Original Sin. In my reading, this is a matter of normativity, i.e., our first-person experience of moral obligation: According to the ethics of the Anglican and Catholic Churches, normativity is founded not upon reason or evidence—otherwise everybody would be good, or at least everybody who’s *smart* would be good—but upon drives, appetites which, for us, are fallen, but which the Holy Spirit alone can correct. How exactly the Spirit intervenes, though, is a problem of soteriology—who is saved and why—and the prevailing view in the Anglican Church at this time was Arminianism: grace granted to all but able to be denied by the recipient.¹⁷ Lovelace’s apparent awareness of what is right, and his temptation toward what is right, and yet his ultimate choice of evil, smuggles Richardson’s soteriological understanding into the text.¹⁸

There are also those who don’t say explicitly, but potentially imply without meaning to, that the main ideas of certain eighteenth-century authors came from a handful of “secular” philosophers—in our case, the “sentimentalists” Hume and Smith applied to “sentimentalists” like Richardson. I’m thinking of Lynn Festa and Adela Pinch in particular, who would certainly not say that we should map Hume onto Richardson one-to-one; and yet the disciplinary historicism that’s been concomitant with Foucault’s theoretical historicism over the past few decades has created incentives for emphasizing what is new in one’s own century, as opposed to all the things the authors in their century are potentially taking from the century across the hall. This all has the unforeseen consequence of limiting the agency

¹⁵ Others who have sought to bring religion more directly to bear on the early novel include Anderson 2012, Seidel 2021, and Diamond 2024. See also Branch 2006 and, somewhat ironically, Reeves 2020—despite being about atheism, Reeves’ book discusses the many theologies that were branded as atheistic and why, while helpfully giving background on Richardson and why Lovelace, despite his many evils, was not written as an atheist.

¹⁶ Said declares that religion made its return as early as 1983. It seems that religion has been a vampire in the doorway for a few decades now, too diffident to come in, relatively certain he’s still not invited.

¹⁷ Were these not directly related questions, antinomianism might well be the result.

¹⁸ Obviously I am not the first to take this novel’s connection to religion seriously—those who already have include Dussinger 1966, Erickson 1989, Keymer 1992, and Thomson 1999. Thomson, in particular, brings specific theological theories to bear on *Clarissa*, namely atonement theories: theories as to why it was necessary that Christ suffer and die. An atonement theory does not entail a soteriological theory, though, so there is not too much overlap in our respective arguments as much as a general, shared predisposition. For discussion of providence specifically, see Damrosch 1985. More recent sources include Hernandez 2019 and 2010, as well as Loewen-Schmidt 2009.

of authors themselves—who think idiosyncratically, often unlike their historical peers—when you marshal them and others under a single flag that represents a century.

This essay therefore will be negotiating between two different senses of the word “sentimentalism”—first, the literary sense, the movement characterized by sensitive characters and sympathy-evoking incidents; and second, the philosophical sense, in which ethicists like Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Hume, and Smith broadly shared the view that ethics is not properly based in reason but in feeling. Much of the scholarship on the eighteenth century implies that these two “sentimentalisms” are correlates, and usually that the literary can be mapped onto the philosophical. By contrast, I will argue in the first part of this essay that connecting all these strands of thought is in fact a question of normativity that originated in Christian soteriology centuries earlier.

My proposition is that sentimentalism in literature is at least partially the result of Arminianism becoming a consensus theological position in England. It is still possible, of course, that Arminianism was itself the product of something else—I don’t intend to say that theology itself drives history—and, further, perhaps that *tertium sine quo non* is actually the thing that caused, say, the Cult of Sensibility as Smollett parodies it in *Humphry Clinker*. But the sort of sentimentalism in Richardson in particular seems so theologically inflected that the *tertium* feels beside the point: There appears to be a throughline from Arminian soteriology to Richardson; so, too, with sentimental philosophy, such as in Hutcheson, attributing a moral sense to God. Even those who don’t deploy theology in their arguments, like Hume and Adam Smith, I think are part of a larger discourse around morality that was shaped by Arminianism.¹⁹

By Arminianism, I am referring to the broad trend in England that rejected Calvinism, specifically on the topic of Monergism—that God alone is the agent of salvation—which took on political dimensions beyond the technical theology itself. This might sound like old news, since Crane talked about the Latitudinarians being part of the genealogy of the “Man of Feeling” back in the 30s, but neither he nor anybody else in my reading has elaborated on the actual *theology* of the Latitudinarians or their contemporaries, preferring, instead, vague descriptions of their optimism about human nature and the ethical importance of charity to them, as if most Christians throughout history had not shared these basic views.²⁰ My claim is that Arminianism is relevant for sentimentality not because of its liberalism or optimism but because of its philosophical assertions about the sources of normativity, which build subtly on the normativity of Calvinism.

The sentimental novel, then, is not a historically isolated trend but a characteristic form of prose fiction in the post-Reformation era. I would argue that two modes of prose fiction gained substantial prominence in the latter half of the seventeenth century: the first is covered by the news-novel matrix of J. Paul Hunter or Lennard Davis²¹—Defoe, for example, going off to China in *The Consolidator* to find a space ship that goes to the moon. Such texts seem to arise out of a milieu of news writing; they don’t

¹⁹ Hutton 2012 traces Cambridge Platonism to the Scottish Enlightenment in what is a good precursor to my argument here.

²⁰ Indeed Crane’s argument also fails to capture what is now quite clear in scholarship of the Latitudinarian movement, that they were suspicious of enthusiasm and sought primarily to set Anglicanism on more sure rationalist footing. For more on this, see Rivers 2000. However, any attempts at rationalism by people like Henry More were thwarted by the problem of motivation. Motivation, which I would argue is closely aligned with normativity in its appetitive aversions, is in Thomistic and Augustinian theology directly caused by the Grace bestowed by the Holy Spirit, and was therefore difficult for the Latitudinarians to excise. This is why Shaftesbury and Hutcheson still have recourse to the Holy Spirit to explain the provenance of the Moral Sense. Obviously this footnote is not sufficient for explaining the history of this issue, but I hope it can address any concerns the reader may have over “enthusiasm.”

²¹ This view has also been discussed by McKeon 1987, Anderson 1991, and Gallagher 2022. See also Robinson 2024 for a response to the notion that the fictionality of the eighteenth-century novel is unprecedented.

pass themselves off as true as much as transmute news, as a medium, into art. But what these sorts of tales lack is a narrative designed to evoke sympathy: that is the domain of the other strand of prose narrative.²² Verissimilitude is not the major criterion here; sympathy is.

Despite the sentimental novel being framed as historically bounded, this practice of sympathetic identification has come to dominate what we think of as the novel—certainly not to be taken for granted as an aspect of prose fiction—as well as embedded itself in our culture; it plays a foundational role in how morality is conceived. I refer to the novel genre, then, as a tool of secular theology or civil religion. This morality I argue derives from the Christian practice in the thirteenth century, stretching through the Reformation, of meditating on—that is, sympathizing with—the life and suffering of Jesus. The Franciscan order were early exponents of such a practice, with the *devotio moderna* gaining prominence in the century after, influencing Erasmus, Ignatius, and Thomas à Kempis. *Clarissa* is a sort of hinge point in this history—a protagonist who commands the sympathy of the audience but who, in her well-attested status as a Christ-figure, prepares the way for the sympathy with Christ one might feel in prayer or communion. What comes after is the slow displacement of Christ in the civic ritual of moral contemplation: The practice of sympathy with Christ is transmuted into a civic exercise of sympathizing with one's fellow man.

I am not simply saying “more religion” or “religion instead of philosophy.” Instead, I want to represent *Clarissa* as a dual, Janus-faced text, that makes manifest the double nature of the religious and the secular in modernity. Ian Watt, who it would seem I disagree with entirely, was right about one of the two faces—an apparently liberal, secular face that Richardson meant for Watt to see. But he left another face for me, one of old religion. I will discuss this more in the context of William Law—where religion hides in secularity; this is mysticism, where God speaks and we wonder if we hear Him, and there are no priests, just people who interpret signs. As a result, studies on Richardson do not need more religion—they need to reckon with the novel as a form of religious writing coordinate with homiletics, theology, and Puritan autobiography. The novel performs unique religious work that reflects on the double-faced religiosity of the culture that birthed it.

2.2 Sentimentalism and Arminianism

In *Virtue in Distress*, Brissenden defined sentimentalism as a constellation of “notions of man's innate benevolence, of his ‘humanity’, of his capacity to sympathize, of his ability and his right to exercise his own judgment, to formulate alone and unaided his own moral sentiments” (Brissenden 1974: 33). Brissenden remains an authority, but he omits one fundamental aspect of the cultural movement known as the Cult of Sensibility: its theological justification, the source of moral knowledge in God, what I call Christianity's normativity. Not only does Christianity provide moral guidance; it also explains the possibility of normative claims. Arminianism accepted the Total Depravity of mankind, meaning that both the Calvinists and the Arminians believed that humans were incapable of saving themselves—that is to say, doing good at all—without the intervention of God because of their fallen appetites. In salvation, the Holy Spirit bestows a Grace that reforms our appetites; otherwise

²² My view is structurally similar to that of Doody 1996, though I might emphasize the newness of this movement in prose fiction a little bit more, and on different grounds. I also suspect that she finds the characters of ancient novels like *Daphnis and Chloe* more sympathetic than I do.

Arminianism or Calvinism would be vulnerable to the Pelagian Heresy—the notion that you can save yourself by your own will.

The term *normativity* describes not *why* something is wrong, but the inclination we feel not to do it. The problem with social contract or utilitarian theories of morality is that they lack a justification for normativity; the reason we refrain from immoral acts isn't because we have some theoretical view on ethics but because we *feel* that these things are *wrong* in some transcendent sense. "The question how we explain moral behaviour is a third-person, theoretical question, a question about why a certain species of intelligent animals behaves in a certain way. The normative question is a first-person question that arises for the moral agent who must actually do what morality says" (Korsgaard 1996: 16). Perhaps Lovelace thinks it is "wrong" to rape Clarissa because the social contract forbids it; but that is distinct from thinking it would be *bad* to do it. A modernday Lovelace might say it's because of evolutionary biology that we say it's "wrong" to rape Clarissa, but it isn't "really" wrong, because *nothing* is—not in a mind-independent sense. Hume and Smith provide explanations for the sources of morality, but not for the sources of normativity.

Total Depravity would suggest that normativity comes from God; if we positively desire that which is good, then it is because of Him. Total Depravity means that rationality is not the source of normativity; normativity is found in drives. As in Hume, then, it is not possible to derive an *ought* from an *is*. It is through the Holy Spirit's activity²³ in the individual soul that normative claims are possible in the first place. Brissenden's "capacity to sympathize" smuggles Humean or Smithian ideas into a broad, cultural definition that would not describe Shaftesbury—his theory has nothing to do with sympathy and is instead focused on a God-given moral sense—much less the millions of Anglicans who were, in this century, becoming more uniformly Arminian in their soteriology.

Calvinism would imply that normativity is limited to saved Christians; one tension felt in the Puritan autobiographers is not simply whether or not they are saved but whether their drive to the Good—which ostensibly they all have, since they have the nominal intent to be Christians—is in fact motivated by authentic desire or if it is actually selfishness and narcissism: the fear of Hell, perhaps. In Arminian soteriology, by contrast, the Holy Spirit acts upon the soul preveniently—that is, *before* one becomes Christian—and universally; and the individual has the choice of whether or not to heed it. This isn't just about salvation but why, in this world, normativity is *universally* felt.

The authors we study in this period were mostly church-goers if not *ministers*, like Laurence Sterne or Jonathan Swift. Brissenden's definition, by leaving out theology, makes it sound like the people of the eighteenth century were all enlightenment rationalists, and not, as they plainly were, majority church-going Christians. Even when it's there in front of him, Brissenden can't seem to see the religiosity of these people, almost like Anglicanism is mustard in his fridge. For example, Brissenden quotes Richard Whytt in 1758 saying that "the Deity seems to have implanted in us a certain Sense respecting Morals" (Brissenden 1974: 43), and Brissenden does not even attempt to address Whytt's statement as a theological assertion, even though that is literally, syntactically, what it is; he instead returns to discussing Whytt's medical research, as if he didn't just make a sweeping claim about the creator of the universe. It's become perilously easy to treat God as an empty signifier like a Greek particle the translation of which nobody's really ever figured out. But Whytt's claim here is actually a common

²³ Grace is frequently identified as the suprarational gift of a monarch, or as an inexplicable quality in aesthetics, but in theology, I would argue, the term's definition is relatively circumscribed, though of course debated. For evidence of the claim that Grace is the product of the activity of the Holy Spirit in the individual, I would point to Aquinas, who writes that "grace is instrumentally caused by the sacraments, and principally by the power of the Holy Spirit working in the sacraments" (ST.I-II.Q112.A1); and Calvin, claiming that "it is by the Spirit alone that he unites himself to us. By the same grace and energy of the Spirit we become his members" (Institutes 3.1.3).

theological position in this century—namely, that God has *given* us our morality, our *normativity*, written it upon our hearts—and that should make it clear that Whytt means this statement literally and sincerely, that God really *has* implanted in us a moral sense. As Francis Hutcheson said in 1725, “this very moral Sense, implanted in rational Agents, to delight in and admire whatever Actions flow from a Study of the Good of others, is one of the strongest Evidences of Goodness in the Author of Nature” (Hutcheson [1725] 2004: 198). The obvious move would be to make these theological claims, spanning a half century, the context for Brissenden’s “notions of man’s innate benevolence”; innate benevolence was justified theologically and, for most people, would have been most immediately legible in Christian, specifically Arminian terms—a *universal* benevolence, able to be denied but implanted in all of us. And therefore it makes more sense to apply Hutcheson and Shaftesbury to the movement than it does to apply Hume and Smith, who weren’t moral sense theorists at all, but theorists of sympathy as a mechanism of social regulation.

Perhaps this sounds irrelevant, because *of course* the culture would justify itself theologically; they were duty-bound to justify *everything* that way. And perhaps that is why Brissenden doesn’t discuss it. Theology is just a concession to orthodoxy. The problem then becomes that Brissenden’s theory of choice, Kuhn’s “paradigm shifts,” obviously implies a sharp break with the rest of intellectual history that, from a theological perspective, did not happen. The humanities ought to take the present opportunity—its listlessness—to break out of its addiction to historicism: the urge among academics to point out fissures and epistemic breaks²⁴ as opposed to continuities. Crane’s genealogy of sentimentalism seems to suggest, as Donald Greene once pointed out, that benevolence was some kind of a *new idea* in the seventeenth century, and there’s no way that’s true. While sentimental fellow-feeling has its own character, Crane gets dangerously close to suggesting that being nice to people is historically particular.²⁵

More recent scholarship has tended to interpret sentimentalism through Hume and Smith, usually contrasting the two, the one being unmediated and the other mediated intellectually. By contrast, I tend to group Hume and Smith together; as opposed to treating them as opposed to one another, I refer to them as “metaphysical” or “constitutive” sentimentalists²⁶ because they both argue for certain social mechanisms that bring about socially-accepted moral norms—morality is not mind-independent for them. Contrast them with the “epistemic sentimentalists,” Hutcheson and Shaftesbury, properly called moral sense theorists because they propose the existence of a sixth sense that identifies that which, beyond the human mind, indicates what’s truly good. The epistemic sentimentalists need a God in order for their theories to function; and since Hume and Smith are effectively responding *to* Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, it is reasonable to say that they are participating in a discourse originally concerned with Christian normativity.

²⁴ This sort of historicism, focusing on *epistemai* that change somewhat unaccountably and are mostly incomparable to one another, is usually traced to Foucault 1966.

²⁵ Donald Greene is not alone in his criticism of Crane. Frans De Bruyn in 1981 agreed with the critique on theological grounds but found value in Crane’s perspective when paired with the period’s development of liberalism and Lockean toleration.

²⁶ This metaethical terminology is used by Antti Kauppinen in his articles on Hume, and in his article “Moral Sentimentalism” for the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. For these terms in use outside of Kauppinen’s work, see Cowan 2018.

For the purposes of this article L224 in *Clarissa* will serve as evidence for why Humean-Smithian sympathy shouldn't be applied—at least so unreservedly²⁷—to Richardson. Before attempting once again to rape Clarissa, Lovelace falters—has a moment of moral clarity, but not one that is intellectual. He says to his own body parts, “Limbs, why thus convulsed?—Knees, till now so firmly knit, why thus relaxed? why beat you thus together?” Hume's theory asks us for an idea, in Lovelace's mind, which can be revived into an impression of present pain; this doesn't appear to exist, and that actually makes Richardson's narrative stronger thematically, because Lovelace has never been a woman, never been raped, and never will, and yet he has these feelings of revulsion anyway. It's not a sympathetic pain but an almost—as Hutcheson might have it—*aesthetic* disgust. Perhaps, you could argue, Lovelace is able to conjecture what this sort of assault might feel like—make some synthetic idea out of his own prior experiences—but then I would say: There is no reason for that impression to be felt in his knees. These feelings are distinct from anything Lovelace is considering inflicting. It would be much easier, instead, to argue that Lovelace is fighting with his body—even that his own body parts are contesting with one another. That reading is far more intuitive. Lovelace's knees are revolting because he needs his knees in order to stand up and commit his crime.

Lovelace is having a direct experience of God that suggests the sort of mystical experience demanded of Christians by Richardson's friend William Law. Law was an evangelical, non-juring minister who wrote the classic *A Serious Call*, but late in his career, when he was working with Richardson to publish salacious tracts about Jakob Böhme that were widely denounced by the dissenters, he turned toward controversial mysticism for knowledge of the true God. Richardson hitched himself to Law's floundering reputation when he printed Law's *The Way to Divine Knowledge* about Jakob Boehme in 1752, right in between his own publication of *Clarissa* and *Charles Grandison*. I think Law expresses some mystical views, also, in his remarks on the “unpardonable sin” in his *Address to the Clergy*. There is a lot of hesitation among academics to ascribe the term “mystical” to moderns—maybe because of that irascible historicism I talked about earlier—but I'm actually in a club with Isabel Rivers and C. D. A. Leighton with regard to Law. Leighton calls Law “the most notable post-Reformation English mystic” (Leighton 1998: 301), and Rivers says that the evangelicals “recognized the usefulness of Law's early treatises while deprecating his theology, in particular his later mysticism” (Rivers 2008: 638). Mysticism—by definition hard to define—comes into focus at least a little bit when we acknowledge that most mystics are condemned less for their doctrinal beliefs than for the fact that they usurped the Church in its role as mediator between individual and God.²⁸ Law insists that the actions of the Holy Spirit not be subordinated to doctrine—this, he said, was the sin of the Pharisees. John Wesley, for example, says in the commentary to the Gospels that the unpardonable sin was the belief that Christ's miracle were actually produced by Satan, which only the Pharisees appear to have committed. But Law also expands the scope of the sin to include the clergyman who, in his own day, “calls immediate Inspiration Enthusiasm” (Law 1762: 19). Here I think Law wants his readers to adopt a more mystical experience of God that seeks direct inspiration from Him. It is the denial of the Holy Spirit, operating in us and others, that is unpardonable. So Law concludes of the unforgivable sin: “But when Father and Son were come in the Power and Manifestation of the Spirit, then he that refuses or resists this Ministration of the Spirit, resists all that the holy Trinity can do to restore and revive the

²⁷ While it is a pervasive critical impulse to draw homologies between sentimental literature and sentimental philosophy, Kay 2016, for example, demonstrates how Richardson is implicitly critical of the sort of approbation-based morality found in Adam Smith.

²⁸ Julian of Norwich's visions, for example, short-circuited church hierarchy. For a historical discussion of the condemnation of mysticism, see Pagels 1979 on the Gnostics.

first Life of God in the Soul, and so commits the unpardonable Sin, and which is therefore unpardonable, because there remains no further, or higher Power to remove it out of the Soul” (21)—and here the word “resists” should probably put us in mind of the Articles of Remonstrance, suggesting strangely that only an Arminian would accept this sin as even possible. Lovelace is guilty of the unpardonable sin of the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit when he resisted the “ministration of the Spirit” (109) in his soul. In a way, he is not tempted to do evil, for evil is his original state—on the contrary, Lovelace is tempted to do *good*, and resists the urge.

So far I have been taking critics to task for their abandonment of religious frameworks for the interpretation of these books,²⁹ but it’s clear why they did, even if I think it’s a mistake. The difference between Richardson and Law or a Puritan autobiographer is that Richardson lets God recede into the background to a point of plausible deniability, such that his novelistic “realism” is not threatened. So in *Clarissa*, the use of theology as an interpretive framework is, by Richardson’s own design, simply optional. That isn’t a mere generic concession to Ian Watt’s formal realism—it actually creates a new religious mode of thinking. I will argue below that the novel, as a medium that inculcates sympathy, can historically be traced to the religious practice of sympathetic meditation on the life of Christ. Novels are in large part founded upon the sympathies we have with characters: This sympathy, I believe, is in *Clarissa* meant to draw us close to Christ due to Clarissa’s literal homologies with Christ, and her own sympathetic transformation into Christ, dying a martyr like him.³⁰

2.3 The Book of Daniel

In Letter 224, a hundred or so pages before he “can go no farther” (L257), Lovelace intends the “execution of my plot,” the “springing of my mine,” when his mind fails to move his body. “What—What—What now!—Bounding villain! wouldst thou choke me?—I was speaking to my heart, Jack!—It was then at my throat.... Whether are these billowy heavings owing more to love or to fear? I cannot tell, for the soul of me, of which I have most.” What is happening now to Lovelace’s body? Or specifically, to his body *parts*, which seem not to be working in concert with one another? Why is he revolting against himself? One part against the other?

Limbs, why thus convulsed?—Knees, till now so firmly knit, why thus relaxed? why beat you thus together? Will not these trembling fingers, which twice have refused to direct the pen, fail me in the arduous moment? (L224).

The strange verbiage here is actually a textual cue: Richardson is gesturing to the fifth chapter of Daniel, a book composed of several distinct episodes about a prophetic interpreter of symbols. Such a reference would enhance Richardson’s novelistic project. I’ve already made the point that, in the novel as a genre,

²⁹ As I listed above, many scholars do not fit this description. In fact, some critical works that have examined the relationship between soteriology and literature in the period include Aers 2004 and 2009, Marno 2016, and Stachniewski 1991.

³⁰ A body of literature already exists interpreting Clarissa as a Christ figure, including Dussinger 1966 and Thomson 1999; Thomson’s treatment foregrounds atonement, though, which is separate in most cases from my topic, soteriology. She interprets Clarissa as a Christ-figure so she can consider the purpose or purposelessness of Clarissa’s victimization. My intent, then, is not to trot out all the similarities between Clarissa and Jesus but to interpret the novel *itself* as a tool of Christian praxis—the Franciscan and Ignatian practice of meditating on the passion of Christ and becoming more like Him as a result.

religious meaning is not self-evident, though it's there; it just requires an interpreter. This individual search for truth, the practice of interpretation, is an aspect of mystical experience that pervades our contemporary, secular religion. Mostly, though, Daniel interprets dreams, such as King Nebuchadnezzar's, which forecast his degradation and insanity. In Daniel 5, the interpreter is called upon to read the Writing on the Wall. After Nebuchadnezzar's successor Belshazzar raided the temple in Jerusalem for gold and silver goblets and threw an unholy party with gluttonous prostitutes, the text describes disembodied fingers—*שְׁנֵי דְּיָדֵי אֱלֹהִים*, in Aramaic—writing upon a wall near the banquet table. According to the King James Version, "In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote" (Daniel 5:5). These fingers could be read in analogy with Lovelace's "trembling fingers, which twice have refused to direct the pen," though I acknowledge fingers are a common synecdoche. By contrast this next part is almost surely not accidental: Daniel 5:6 reads: "Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that *the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.*" In Richardson, the knees are "firmly knit" and "thus relaxed," a sort of pleonasm from the Biblical "loosed," and the second term, the smiting, is rendered with "beat."

The use of this textual cue indicates, first, a divine intervention, much like the fingers writing on the wall. Just as with Belshazzar, the Lord has struck dumb fear into Lovelace—dumb, of course, because Belshazzar doesn't bother reading the writing written by the divine fingers, even though Aramaic is the language of the court. Instead, he calls upon Daniel, who not only needs to interpret the text but to read the text aloud, such that the reader knows what the Aramaic text even says. (Daniel says in 5:25, "And this is the writing that was written, *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.*") But in Lovelace's case, the fingers writing are his own, not disembodied ones on a wall. But *are* the fingers Lovelace's own? Once again, I realize the synecdoche does not seem terribly convincing on its own—but Letter 224 comes after one of *Clarissa's* more philosophical letters, in which Lovelace reflects on who he is, what he's done, and what he plans: "What is there so greatly amiss, as the world goes, in all this?" (L223). He seems completely baffled at his sudden, involuntary paroxysm of introspection, but "I must write on, and cannot help it." By the next day, he is relieved that such nuisances have ceased: "I think I am my own man again" (L224).

And yet he is not his own man, since his body is not under his own control. These fingers may not, in the end, be *his* fingers. Moments of, perhaps, divine possession call into question who is speaking when Richardson *tells us* who is speaking. However, Lovelace's charismatic possession comes to an end and he, nevertheless, finds his will to rape Clarissa. The Holy Spirit does not dictate human actions, then, but "tugs on them," maybe. The Holy Spirit does not force Lovelace's will, but is visible to him as he makes his own choices.

The Holy Spirit is Daniel's source of interpretive knowledge. The text of Daniel uses the exact phrase, "holy spirit of God," five times by my count—*רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים קָדוֹשׁ*—referring to it being "in" Daniel, *בְּ* and *בְּ*. It is because the Holy Spirit is within him that the King calls on Daniel to interpret his dream. The prophecy, which the King cannot be bothered to read even phonetically, states according to Daniel that his kingdom is doomed. "He has weighed and now they divide." That night, the King dies. I think Richardson is using this particular scene as a textual cue because Lovelace's "kingdom" is doomed to fall—that is, his plots ultimately fail, bringing about his death by gunshot.

Lastly, perhaps it is a stretch to suggest that it is meaningful that Lovelace, toward his letter's end, refers to his confidante Mr. Belford—to whom he addressed the vast majority of his letters, and who has defended Clarissa to Lovelace from a distant place—as an *advocate*. "I will now once more turn

to my friend Belford's letter. Thou shalt have a fair play, my charmer. I'll re-peruse what thy advocate has to say for thee. Weak arguments will do, in the frame I am in!" (L224). The Holy Spirit, among other names, is sometimes called the Advocate, including in Matthew Henry's *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*. From one perspective, Lovelace's invisible interlocutor might be the Holy Spirit itself, from the beginning of the novel working from afar to pull Lovelace toward the good. Perhaps, again, one thinks this is an overread. But the reason why "weak arguments will do" is because morality, the result of the saving Grace of God, is felt; it is not rational. So it is not just a "weak" argument that will do, but none at all.

Richardson is dramatizing the Arminian theology of grace. He says in his "Postscript" that his goal was to "investigate the great doctrines of Christianity under the fashionable guise of amusement." Gillian Beer says that Richardson "implies" that "he is writing Christian tragedy—whose cosmology must include Heaven and Hell as well as Earth, and where acts and their consequences unroll far beyond the bounds of human society. The spirit, if not the machinery, of such a work would seem to have some kinship with epic" (Beer 1968: 262). Then she compares *Clarissa* to *Paradise Lost* and to *Comus*—expanding meaningfully on Lovelace's comparison of himself to "the devil in Milton (an odd comparison tho'!)"—explaining that Richardson has much the same program in mind. "The progress of Satan and of Lovelace," says Beer, "is to be for us a gradual disillusionment which will make evil recognizable" (270).³¹ By contrast, though, he "is working outward from human figures and attempting to invest them with the transcendental force of Good and Evil" (264).

Beer says that scenes like those I've been describing resemble the soliloquies of Satan. For example Letter 187.1-4 presents broken excerpts of letters from Lovelace; the reason for this editorial choice on Richardson's part is unclear, though. It might be because he just needed a shorter book, and these letters weren't that important. But when the editor takes over, the character loses control; Lovelace is losing control of himself and Richardson causes Richardson *qua* editor to manifest that loss formally.

At that instant, *says he*, I was upon the point of making a violent attempt, but was checked in the very moment, and but just in time to save myself, by the awe I was struck with... O virtue, virtue! *proceeds he*, what is there in thee, that can thus against his will affect the heart of Lovelace!—When these involuntary tremors, and fear of giving mortal offence?

The suggestion that Lovelace's monologues feel like Satan's soliloquies is borne out here by the strident temptation, perhaps, to devolve into iambs and rhyme. The third-person self-reference, coupled with the third-person reference of the editor, starts estranging Lovelace from himself, as the "angelic something" of which he speaks in Letter 187 does combat with his vile nature. That estrangement from self mirrors his lack of bodily control in 224. According to *Clarissa* herself, "His emotion was visible; yet he endeavored to suppress it—Approaching me again, again he was obliged to turn from me; Angelic something, he said: but then, obtaining a heart more *suitable* to his wish, he once more approached me" (L187). The "angelic something" could be *Clarissa* herself; it seems at times that her beauty is what stops Lovelace's worst impulses. (The euphemistic meanings of the word "something" seem to be attested only a century after *Clarissa*.) But the ambiguity here seems deliberate. Similar to the ambiguity that opens *Clarissa*, ambiguity veils the presence of God.

³¹ That obviously didn't stop many of his readers from wishing *Clarissa* had ended up with her rapist, leading to years of vigorous rewrites and revisions designed to emphasize and reemphasize the evil, lost disposition of his villain. Keymer 1992 builds on Beer by discussing just this tension between Richardson and his readers.

Galatians 5:17 reads “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit.” The Geneva Bible, in turn, includes this footnote: “That is, the natural man striveth against the Spirit of regeneration.” In the letters in *Clarissa*, you surely witness natural man striving. But this is merely the Calvinist interpretation. The Arminian interpretation would go further, and say that Lovelace, like all human beings, is the recipient of a prevenient grace, which has made choice between good and evil possible. Unlike in Calvinism, that grace is resistible; so Lovelace resists.³² The verbiage of “resistance” might feel a little backward. When we think of *akrasia*, we usually think of a desire that we know rationally isn’t for what is good, but we can’t help ourselves; our will is weak in the face of passion. But Lovelace is experiencing inverted *akrasia*, a weakness of the will to do what is evil because of a passionate appetite to do what is good. (And besides, even if the good is in some sense “rational,” both Calvin and Arminius reject human reason as an effective tool for moral decision making; prudence, the virtue of practical reason which aids in moral decision making, requires regeneration in a way that speculative reason does not.) This resistance to grace is the unique theological position in Arminianism that Richardson is dramatizing in the soliloquies of Lovelace.

2.4 Theology and a New Form for Religious Writing

If we define theology somewhat narrowly as a positivistic discourse based on axioms, then not all religious writing is theology, even if it still does quasi-theological work: that is, justifying and explicating doctrine. I want to argue, then, that that new form of religious writing to gain prevalence in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—the Puritan, spiritual biography—isn’t alone in its attempts to recharacterize religious thought in prose: The novel dramatizes and inculcates a normative quasi-theology of sympathy for the propagation of a civil religion of sentimentality. The novel and the spiritual autobiography are two sides of a coin; two reflections of the situated perspective of the individual in relation to God, something that verges on mystical experience, as opposed to the traditionally circumscribed experience of the congregation in the mass.

It is not at all revolutionary at this point to say that what we call “secular” is actually highly inflected by religiosity. Plenty of scholars have found the assumption of a “secular world” being “Godless” or completely irreligious worthy of criticism. And to the degree that religion gives a normative dimension to the material world—to the degree that *all* normativity presupposes transcendence—then our modern assumptions of utilitarian, sympathetic normativity are not as secular as they purport to be. Today, sympathy is the near-universally-accepted regulating framework for moral decision making. And it has devolved from the priesthood and revelation to each one of us to regulate our own morality, which we now accomplish by use of our sympathy for the distant sufferers across the

³² Per Reeves 2020, does the fact that Lovelace, according to Richardson himself, is not an atheist negate my point? Calling Lovelace an adherent seems like a bit of a stretch—instead, he seems more to be part of a Christian culture that he has, for his own benefit surely, seen fit not to buck completely. Reeves deals with just this problem when he cites Taylor 2007: Religion was perhaps not so much about belief as “lived experience.” I would suggest that Lovelace is a Christian in the sense that he is British and respectable; however, his Christianity does not entail even the reception of the Holy Spirit in his heart. As Reeves indicates, nobody in 1748 was even known publicly to be an atheist, and it was, instead, a term used to describe this and that heresy: this shows, I would suggest, how narrow a universe of religion most people imagined. Arminian grace was universal, but Christian Europe *was* the universe. Wesley claimed that people far off in the world never exposed to the Gospel were also recipients of prevenient Grace, but I suspect that, for most, this was a theoretical question that verged on navelgazing.

world, and by acting in such a way as to bring about, in Francis Hutcheson's utilitarian dictum, "the greatest happiness for the greatest numbers." The common misunderstanding of Kant's categorical imperative—that it says to do what you'd will to become universal law, as opposed to what Kant actually said, to do what you could will to be universal law without leading yourself into self-contradiction—demonstrates our projection of this near-universal moral framework.

And yet, while this secular theology took hold in the period of Richardson or a little earlier, I have already demonstrated why I don't think Humean sympathy will work for understanding *Clarissa*. I've shown that sympathy isn't the source of normativity for Richardson, and that actually that's the role of divine grace. But sympathy is still an important part of *Clarissa*. *Clarissa* actually bridges, I think, one historical notion of sympathy and morality—our own—with another, one that is explicitly Christian and meditative, not meant for moral regulation itself.

I would argue that sympathy in moral discourse actually first arose, not from sentimental philosophers, but from Christians reflecting on the life of Christ, as it is found in Thomas à Kempis' *De Imitatione Christi*—popularized in the period by Wesley and his editions of the text³³—and, later, in Jeremy Taylor's *Life of Christ*. The fellow-feeling—the literal translation of the Latin *com-passio* and Greek *sum-patheia*—adherents had for Him served to transform them like Franciscan stigmatists. So sympathy was a religious command in this tradition which gained credence around the thirteenth century. But instead of, subsequently, sympathizing with our fellow humans, we were to adopt Christ's merciful disposition when regarding the shortcomings of mankind. I make this distinction, between mercy and sympathy, because of divine impassibility—that God, being perfect and unchanging, cannot "suffer." Suffering—which in Greek is *pathos*, where Latin gets *passio*—Augustine defined as contrary to reason, like a "passion" in philosophy, and therefore can not describe a rational God.³⁴

But if God cannot suffer, then how can we sympathize with Jesus on the cross? Anselm asks this very question in his *Proslogion*—"How art Thou at once pitiable and impassible?" (Mozley 1926: 112)—and the answer usually has to do with dyophysitism: that Christ had two natures, and one of those natures was that of a man, and could suffer, but the nature that was God's could not suffer. But in such a case, Jesus suffered *like* us, but God does not suffer *with* us. More relevant to Richardson would be Luther, Calvin, and Socinus appearing to reject monophysitism because of divine impassibility. It was only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, according to Mozley, that divine impassibility became frustrating for regular Christians, who desired a more sympathetic deity.

A strange theology arises from our sympathy with Christ, then. The cross is no longer a temporally circumscribed event; it is repeated, perpetually, forever. Jesus "died for you on the Cross," says à Kempis, "That you may also bear your Cross, and desire to die on the cross with Him. For if you die with Him, you will also live with Him" (à Kempis 1952: 85). This is a sympathy far removed from Hume and Smith—it is a sympathy of direct, miraculous replication, which, for the stigmatists, extended to a painful, bodily transformation, in which St. Francis bled like his savior bled for him. In the early church many desired to experience Christ's suffering quite literally—one, Polycarp, apparently wished to be betrayed by his friends, like Jesus was. "Imitation was thought to involve man's being rather than his doing, what he was rather than what he did" (Constable 1995: 148–48). So martyrdom was good not simply because of the devotion to Christ it signaled but because you were *literally like Him*.

³³ See Rivers 2018. Wesley was among numerous translators and adaptors. It's doubtless that Richardson would have been aware.

³⁴ The history of sympathy has been covered in Schliesser 2015, Herdt 2001, and McNamer 2010.

The necessity of sympathy from a theological level can be seen in a surprising 1667 Latitudinarian tract called the *Mensa Mystica* by later-Bishop of Ely Simon Patrick. Hooker and Cranmer had earlier taken up an unstable middle ground between transubstantiation and Zwinglian memorialism in the Eucharist—holding that the elements did not literally become the body and blood of Christ, but that communion was still not merely symbolic of faith as Zwingli held; it was, instead, efficacious—in the sense of Calvin’s *unio mystica*, most likely—as a sacrament through the “real presence” of Christ in the elements. This was accomplished by working in the soul of the communicant; as Tillotson expressed, the sacrament’s efficacy does not depend on the nature of the elements but the disposition of the person receiving them. In the absence, then, of explicit transubstantiation, the efficacy of the rite becomes reliant upon the active participation of congregants in Christ’s Passion. One could say, then, that the Anglicans extended the logic of Christian imitation of the rite of the Eucharist itself, suggesting that the efficacy of the rite is founded upon our sympathy for Christ on the Cross.

Simon Patrick’s views, then, are not entirely unique—he thinks that the efficacy is based on the spiritual experience of the communicant, not the elements themselves—but his explanation of this process is his own, and quite illustrative for my purposes: He draws a direct comparison to the nascent novel genre. “When we read a true History, or a Romance,” Patrick says,

We are apt to side with some Persons in the Story; and when we meet with a Duel, we favour one of the Combatants, and are sensible of his Wounds, and sorry for his Fall.... So may a Man when he thinks of Christ and his Tragedy, conceive a natural Hatred and Indignation.... and be much moved to see him used in such an unworthy manner, it may be fetch Sighs from his Heart and Tears from his Eyes, and put him into such a huge Passion, as if he suffer’d with him.

Patrick’s language of “fellow-feeling” —sighs, heart, suffering, passion, movement—seems at home with the Cult of Sensibility in eighteenth-century England; it brings to mind the Humean logic of ideas reanimated as live impressions. As a theory of the novel it’d be nothing new. But Patrick’s claim is as theological as it is aesthetic—the two realms converge. Unless the communicant at the rail feels “such a huge Passion, as if he suffer’d with him,” unless they are “sensible of his Wounds,” then the rite is “void of the Divine or Heavenly Spirit” (Patrick 1667: 4-5). Here we find a justification for the novel genre in a theory of the justification of the fallen; and sympathy reemphasizes not the interiority of the character on the page but the interiority of the reader and the penitent.

The novel’s new form for religious thought displaces sympathy *from* Christ and *to* other subjects—not to “secularize” it, not to deny Christ, but to prepare the way of the reader *to* Christ, and to render the whole world mystically religious. Patrick’s wording might imply that sympathy in the novel came first and was then applied to theology, but this wouldn’t be the case, since the *imitatio* tradition predates Patrick and the literary tradition to which he was referring. Hume’s sympathy more literally takes this tradition—however unconsciously—and removes Christ; instead of sympathizing with Him, you sympathize with others directly. You could say he’s cut out the middleman, and that would be right if not for the important way that this changes the structure of morality; instead of achieving Christ’s divine mercy through sympathy with Christ, you have sympathy only, a power that is only ever human. Put another way, in the eighteenth-century, the sympathy vector, directed toward Christ, is replaced with a broad, radial, globe-spanning sentiment in which feeling is communicated from one to another, sometimes across vast distances because of a newspaper clipping or a book off a printing press—and spontaneously.

Something is lost in converting the one moral theory into the other, and I think the sentimental novel is a major example of the way in which that conversion took place. *Clarissa's* double nature, its Janus face, provides an important hinge point *in* that conversion. Richardson is repurposing Christian sympathy for a new Christian purpose, trying to turn Clarissa the character into an object of Christian meditation and devotion; he is trying to demonstrate for his audience an imitation of Christ—Clarissa's—that triumphantly ends in martyrdom the way Christ's life ended in death. His readers might just become like Clarissa herself, and then, with a few further steps, or just by transitivity, become like *Christ* Himself.

Richardson gestures to this project directly. For example, he has Lovelace pretend to read a copy of Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying* (L313), a work that both models Christian meditation on revelation and also provides new compositions for the practice—conceptually similar to how Thomas à Kempis pantomimes Christ on the Cross. “A smart book, this, my dear!”³⁵ Much earlier in the novel, Clarissa lends her copy of Thomas à Kempis' *De Imitatione Christi* to her sister, saying “You will find excellent things, Bella, in that little book” (L75). After Lovelace deposits the Taylor volume on the table, Clarissa begins composing her own meditations (L364, 399, 402, 413, 418)³⁶; and she later refers to a “book of *Meditations*” (L460), likely her own—Richardson actually issued these meditations in a stand-alone volume in 1750, with some thirty more not included in the novel itself.³⁷ These meditations themselves are usually collages of Bible verses and lines of poetry reappropriated, I think because this is how his readers are meant to use Richardson's book, too: as the raw material of contemplation and prayer. Clarissa's compositions are interesting for how they mirror Taylor's prayers in *Holy Living* in the way that they collage verses into something new. Here is an excerpt of Taylor's:

Let the sick man often meditate upon these following promises and gracious words of God:
 May help cometh of the Lord, who preserveth them that are true of heart. Psal. vii. 11.
 And all they that know thy name, will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast never failed them that seek thee. Psal. ix. 10.
 O how plentiful is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, and that thou hast prepared for them.... Psal. xxxi. 21.
 Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him.... Psal. xxxiii. 17.
 The Lord is night unto them, that are of contrite heart.... Psal. xxxiv. 18.
 (Taylor 1834: 254-55)

This sort of particularly dense litany of verses recurs throughout Taylor's text. I suspect this is narratively how Clarissa got the idea to produce some of her own. For example, Letter 413:

Meditation

How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words!
 Be it indeed that I have erred, mine error remaineth with myself.
 To her that is afflicted, pity should be shown from her friend.

³⁵ For conversation of Lovelace's motives in this scene, see Doody 1974. She also has a different sense of why Richardson might want readers to keep it in mind.

³⁶ The dates in Richardson's published volume of meditations would suggest she started composing pathetic meditations in April, well before the June date when she encounters the Taylor volume. In any case, I take what is in *Clarissa* at face value.

³⁷ For detailed discussion of these meditations not found in the body of *Clarissa*, but which are still dated as though they were, see Erickson (1989).

But she that is ready to slip with her feet, is as a lamp despised in the thought of them that are at ease.

There is a shame which bringeth sin, and there is a shame which bringeth glory and grace. Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye, my friends! for the hand of God hath touched me.

If your soul were in my soul's stead, I also could speak as ye do: I could heap up words against you—

But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief.

Why will ye break a leaf driven to and fro? Why will ye pursue the dry stubble? Why will ye write bitter words against me, and make me possess the iniquities of my youth?

Mercy is seasonable in the time of affliction, as clouds of rain in the time of drought.

Are not my days few? Cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little—before I go whence I shall not return; even to the land of darkness, and shadow of death!

Clarissa produced her meditations mostly from the Book of Job. Taylor does something strikingly similar when he collates “Job, v. 8, 9. 11. 19-26” (Taylor 1834: 118). If God is literally in the room in *Pamela* and *Clarissa*, then God’s choice resembles the one He makes in Job, when he allows the Adversary, הַשָּׂטָן, to take everything from Job, to see if he surrenders his faith. When questioned, Elohim demands, אַיְיִתָּה בְּיִסְדֵּי אֲרֶזֶן?—Where were *you* at the founding of the Earth? Miss Howe tells Clarissa, “It must be allowed that your present trial is but proportioned to your prudence”—which is a particularly plosive rewording of 1 Corinthians 10:13: “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” Mr. Belford confirms the former part of the verse in Letter 481: “She had but drawn a common lot, triumphing in it.” Here, Belford is invoking the ancient custom of drawing lots at random, which Richardson artfully contrasts with a Roman Triumph. The lot is “common,” of course, because she is not unique—humanity is fallen. And yet the question of lots is also one of God’s sovereign will, or providence. According to Clarissa Harlowe, “The ways of Providence are unsearchable” (L492). “Providence” in this sense isn’t the providence of God intervening miraculously to help us; it’s a providence that contains the whole of creation, and all its evils. As such, I think that Clarissa rejects theodicy. It is not for us to know why God is going to put her, or Pamela, through such horrific trials. As some of her favorites, Taylor and à Kempis are good models for understanding Clarissa: She is suffering, like Christ, and becoming like Christ for it, as Polycarp would have liked; and that transformation is being given a literary form that has been modeled by the divines of her day. Richardson says in his Postscript, “Who that are in earnest in their profession of Christianity but will rather envy than regret the triumphant death of Clarissa, whose piety... Heaven *only* could reward?”

According to Terry Castle, Clarissa’s compositions, letters and all, amount to a project of imagining herself; and the composition is always opaque, always falls short of human truth, and therefore the interpretations different characters project onto Clarissa’s text prefigures the appropriation and violation of her body; and we, readers, interpreters, are complicit, too. She’s “an exemplary victim of hermeneutic violence” (Castle 1982: 22). I have no intention of contesting such a beautiful account of such a masterpiece, that captures exactly *why* I would stand in front of a class of students and *call* this work a masterpiece. I disagree with the claim, though, that her meditative collages “bespeak an initial despair, and an overriding sense of the failure of language—a failure equivalent, in Clarissa’s terms, of

course, to a failure of coherence in ‘Nature’ itself” (121); that “they comment, hermetically, on her own linguistic exploitation, and the essential uselessness of words, except as tools of violence” (130). It’s particularly shocking to hear Castle refer to “Clarissa’s own activity of selective extraction, which unwittingly violates the integrity of the scriptural text” (131). It seems to me that the “integrity of the scriptural text” is being projected onto scripture by a modern reader;³⁸ Castle is missing that this isn’t a literary formalization of trauma, but of literary liberation in Christ. “Paper X,” which Castle discusses and which is on the cover of her book, demonstrates Clarissa’s impulse to find meaning in her pain through old scraps of language reassembled and transformed into something new; but it is not an estrangement of self since she continues this mode of composition after she arguably claims victory in her death like Christ. It is for this triumphant reason that people would go out and buy a companion volume of these meditations. The finding of oneself *in* text is actually the beginning of a process of liberation.

I might also go as far as to suggest, to those daunted by *Clarissa*’s length, to treat it as Clarissa treats the Bible, as something you can “dip into”;³⁹ you don’t need to read the whole thing through to find a scrap or a sentence that changes who you are. If *Clarissa* is meant to be a text for religious meditation like other texts in the tradition, then the religious practice of sympathy is being displaced from Christ onto Clarissa; and her acts of meditation prefigure our own acts of meditation in the reading of her text.

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³⁸ Castle might be importing New Critical “organic unity” into a devotional space in which oftentimes texts are fragmentary and multiple.

³⁹ My terminology here comes from M. A. Screech’s recommendation for how best to read *Gargantua and Pantagruel*—keep it on your nightstand and flip it open to see if something interests you. This, he implies, is what Rabelais would have expected from his readers, not a straight-through slog. This is in line with Johnson’s comment about the artifice of *Clarissa* being more the point than the plot. This takes on a scriptural dimension, though, which again Castle has neglected, but which Dayton Haskin refers to as “openings” in *Milton’s Burden of Interpretation*. There, Haskin discusses the bibliomantic practice of opening the Bible at random and seeing if an individual verse speaks to you. This necessarily means that the text of scripture was not viewed, at least by many Protestants, as having an organic “integrity” during Richardson’s period.

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Chapter 3

Modeling the Philosophical Life in Sterne and Nietzsche

3.1 The Most Liberated Writer

This dissertation has argued that the sympathy of Hume and Smith, and which many in the West today take for granted as a moral norm, is historically particular to a post-Enlightenment, sentimentalist society; that, prior to that, sympathy developed in the cloisters of monasteries and nunneries, where men and women meditated on the life and suffering of Christ—taking on his merciful attitude toward all humanity—sympathy expanding outward only for the laity’s own imitation of Christ and for the purpose of explicating the sacramental causality of the mass in the seventeenth century. This dissertation has used the exemplary case of Richardson’s *Clarissa* to argue for an interpretive framework founded upon the diffusion of imitative, meditative practices as opposed to Humean sympathy.

In facing the works of Sterne, we still find robust sociality—in forms even more recognizable as “sentimental” in their physicality and emotion—and yet our sympathy with Tristram, unlike our sympathy with *Clarissa*, is continually frustrated by the novel’s very structure. Tristram’s attempts to write to the moment are productive of a portrait of a certain human being; as the epigraph suggests, it is better, perhaps, for the biographer to focus less on the *pragmata* and more on the *dogmata*. However, neither Tristram’s life nor his opinions present themselves as ready subjects of spiritual contemplation. I will argue, instead, that the text of *Tristram Shandy* models a philosophical life, like *Clarissa*, but in a different way: following the naive realism of his experimental stress-testing of Locke, a naively optimistic, first-person epistemology.

Of Sterne, Friedrich Nietzsche said in *Human, All Too Human*: “*The most liberated writer.*—How, in a book for free spirits, should there be no mention of Laurence Sterne, whom Goethe honoured as the most liberated spirit of his century! Let us content ourselves here simply with calling him the most liberated spirit of all time” (Nietzsche 113). Knowing Nietzsche, that he would say this is not terribly surprising. After all, he says in the same book, as if recapitulating the formal project of *Tristram Shandy*, “*Life as the yield of life.*—No matter how far a man may extend himself with his knowledge, no matter how objectively he may come to view himself, in the end it can yield to him nothing but his own biography” (513). Nietzsche has been known to be a wearer of masks, not on the level of Kierkegaard, of course, who wrote several books in the voices of his feuding characters, but in his willingness to play with ideas more than to argue for them. This manifests in a great wash of ambiguity over particularly Nietzsche’s later works, of which *Human, All Too Human* is a part: “Sterne is the great master of ambiguity... The reader who demands to know exactly what Sterne really thinks of a thing, whether he is making a serious or a laughing face, must be given up for lost: for he knows how to encompass both in a single facial expression; he likewise knows how, and even wants to be in the right and in the wrong at the same time, to knot together profundity and farce” (113). Indeed, at the beginning of the second installment of *Tristram Shandy* there is the epigraph: *Multitudinis imperitiae non formido iudicia; meis tamen, rogo, parcant opusculis*——*in quibus fuit propositi semper, a joci ad seria, a series vicissim ad jocos transire*. “I don’t fear the judgement of ignorant masses. Nevertheless, let

them spare my little book, I plead!—in which it is ever proposed to move from jokes to serious matters, and then from such matters back to jokes.”

It is self-evident that, in the mode of Pierre Hadot, in *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, or Peter Sloterdijk’s *You Must Change Your Life*, Nietzsche writes philosophy as a means of modeling a philosophical life: His epistemological theory, perspectivism, skeptically values knowledge from the first-person perspective. He rejects systematic philosophy because of the way it stifles the first-person account of reality; his own experience, in other words, always won out over the theories that were supposed to govern reality. We could imagine that Nietzsche believes that Sterne, too, was rejecting the system in favor of the naive certainty of his sensory apparatus.

Indeed, while Nietzsche is known for his rejection of systems, he does not lack certain convictions: his view of what is right and wrong for the human being, for example. Through all the perspectivism, a positive morality takes shape in the *Gay Science*:

273. Whom dost thou call Bad?—Him who always wants to put others to shame.

274. What dost thou think most humane?—To spare a person shame.

275. What is the Seal of Attained Liberty?—To be no longer ashamed of oneself.

Nietzsche’s disdain for “morality” as it is often described concerns the way it is wielded against the human spirit. This becomes most evident in his *Antichrist* in which he moderates his criticism of “Christianity” at large, claiming that Jesus was himself a “free spirit” in that he refused to be put to shame and spoke movingly about the perfectibility of the human condition. His hatred for Christianity was primarily directed at the clergy, whom he viewed as perverting this message of human greatness. Specifically, they weaponized Jesus’ statements, meant to vindicate the weak and sick, in order to empower themselves, all by putting the common people to shame. It is clear how a view of human boundless greatness might abet something like fascism, but also that fascism itself, in the iterations in which we come to know it, fails to achieve Nietzsche’s vision of a humanity never put to shame.

As stated in the introduction to this dissertation, Pierre Hadot, in *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, or Peter Sloterdijk’s *You Must Change Your Life*, have argued that philosophy’s literary form inculcates a philosophical life distinct from simple propositions. For Hadot, a specialist in antiquity, this means specifically the style of Plato’s dialogues, educating one into Socrates’ method: *elenchus* to *aporia*. In Hadot’s historical analysis, philosophy as a way of life was gradually eclipsed by theoretical discourse after antiquity. His examples of those who at least somewhat recovered Socrates’ practice of philosophy are Kierkegaard and Nietzsche.

The novel, in Sterne’s hands, is a way of doing philosophy. I suggested in this dissertation second chapter that the novel arose as a mode of religious writing that was not theology; here, I mean to suggest that the novel in Sterne’s hands also amounts to a form of philosophical discourse that is not systematic philosophy itself, a text similar in this sense to Nietzsche’s body of work. In the second chapter, I made the claim that the religious role of the novel found its basis in the evolving, late-medieval practice of meditating sympathetically on the life of Christ. And yet the novel form, and the masks it provides, become fertile ground for the play of ideas. Nietzsche is known, too, for this play of ideas, as are the voices we find manifest in the pages of Plato, at whose own beliefs and ideas scholars can only guess.

We see this project plainly when we see against whom Sterne was writing. Sterne at least at one point intended to make Tristram’s tutor in *Tristram Shandy* William Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester. He was dissuaded from doing this, in one account, by new friends in London who indicated to him that it would be improper; in another account, Warburton personally bribed Sterne with a “purse of

Guineas.” Much of Sterne’s interest in Warburton probably evolved from his 1738 *Divine Legation of Moses*, which I would suggest is written in a style remarkably similar to *Tristram Shandy*. Rabelais obviously belongs in the lineage of *Tristram Shandy*, but it’s possible that the *Divine Legation* was more on Sterne’s mind when he was composing. While Warburton was arguing against the deists, he fell into a pattern in the *Legation* of proposing wild and quasi-conspiratorial theories, including that *Aeneid* VI was actually a coded manual for initiation into the Eleusian Mysteries, a claim that Edward Gibbon found particularly ridiculous; he also claimed that Job was actually an allegory about the Babylonian Captivity rendered by the author of Ezra.

The denial of system also has a religious valence for Sterne specifically in the way in which, despite people like Warburton attempting to systematize a positive interpretation for Job’s suffering, the book’s outright refusal to accept rationalization. As *Clarissa* meditated on the text of Job, so did Sterne preach on the topic, as he also claimed in letters to be including allegories to Job in his novels (Lamb 20). Job’s impregnable providence serves as the basis for a general epistemic skepticism. Sermon X, on the shortness of life in Job, reflects not simply on the inability of humans to search the ways of providence, but also that life, being short, accommodates so little real contemplation. We would not say, from this point of view, that a systematic accounting of the universe is metaphysically impossible—just practically so. As a result, the philosophy advocated in *Tristram Shandy* is a way of life, not a bundle of propositions.

That said, Sterne did have clear beliefs. Sterne plays a tune quite similar to the Arminians in discussions of human nature and morality. When Sterne, in Sermon VII, seeks to defend human nature from the Hobbesian critique of its self-interestedness, his recourse is not sympathy and Hume but to theology and God: “The scripture tells us, That God made man in his own image,—not surely in the sensitive and corporeal part of him, that could bear no resemblance with a pure and infinite spirit,—but what resemblance he bore was undoubtedly in the moral rectitude” (Sterne II, 4). Notice Sterne’s surprising rejection of the sentimentalism that is often ascribed to him: that “sensitive and corporeal” part of the human species is not that which endows it with its “moral rectitude,” but the semblance it bears to that “infinite spirit” that endowed it with life. Here, again, we might hear echoes of Hutcheson.

Sterne’s philosophical way of life, like Nietzsche’s, is justified by a naive optimism about human nature—about their abilities to relate to one another and to apprehend the world around them. It is on this basis that, although systems are impracticable for human beings, the individual can nevertheless engage in philosophy as a lifelong process of embodied discernment. We might return to Northrop Frye’s distinction between process and product, between Aristotle and Longinus: Warburton presents philosophy as a product, as a single system to be accepted or denied, and this is evident in the propositional structure of the *Legation*; by contrast, Sterne’s philosophy, in the form of a novel, works in the Longinian, processual mode, in which the product, the object held in the hand of the reader, is the process of philosophy itself.

3.2 The Hobby-Horse

Kenneth MacLean says dismissively in 1949 that “Sterne, we need not be reminded, was not especially strong on the subject of ethics” (MacLean 399). We, too, need not be reminded of how little agency Sterne has received in charting his own intellectual trajectory.

Just as the sentimentalism of Laurence Sterne is often implied to be Humean or Smithian, his epistemology is often assumed to be Lockean. Arthur Cash, Sterne's biographer, says in 1955 that "An untenable interpretation has prevailed in the last thirty years, that Locke's association principle, functioning in the mind of the narrator, is the structural principle of *Tristram Shandy*" (Cash 126). Nevertheless, Cash concludes that "An adequate explanation does offer itself, however, in Locke's *Essay*" (127), in the form of Locke's empiricism to the extent that the senses "are no direct and open path to knowledge of the ontological world" (128). And yet I believe it is exactly this that Sterne wanted to refute—that humans are trapped, to use a term coined by Daniel Dennett to criticize the view that consciousnesses are essentially homunculi inside the skull, in a Cartesian theater. In this chapter I will argue that *Tristram Shandy* revels in direct realism—the philosophical view of perception, consonant with McKeon's "naïve empiricism," that human perceptions are basically accurate, which Locke reduces to the perception of qualities and sense data—as well as immediate communication that retrieves sociality from the bonds of defective language. I am certainly not the first to critique what Jonathan Lamb identified as a habit of influence criticism among scholars, following Traugot's rejection of the Lockean interpretation of *Tristram Shandy*. My contribution is to argue that Sterne produces a theory of perception and communication that merges Christian anthropology—the way in which theologians have understood the human being to be constituted, inherited largely from Aristotle's *De Anima*, in which humans are necessarily a composite substance of a body and soul, not to be separated—with the nascent field of epistemology, and prefigures the same critiques of British empiricism that would be levied by phenomenologists of the twentieth century such as Edmund Husserl, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty: namely that the human being perceives through the body just as much as through the mind. This distinction between empiricism and phenomenology is essentially that between, for example, one's ears hearing, and one hearing *via* the ears. In the former, you are your ears; in the latter, the ears are a tool, and *you* are something else: a consciousness, a homunculus.

Tristram Shandy most reveals itself in the symbol of the hobby-horse. "Hobby-Horse" is Tristram's technical term—summed up by the maxim "there is no disputing in matters of taste" or *de gustibus non est disputandum* (16.22)—for the strange obsessions of his relatives, such as Toby's with fortification. Many critics, Mullan among them, read Hobby-Horses as the obsessions that each of us have that make communication beyond gesture impossible. Mullan states, referring to Tristram's Hobby-Horses: "Whatever its promises of pluralism, Sterne's novel can only propose a sympathy which overrides monomania because it is authoritative enough to trace obsessions like Walter's and Toby's through their bizarre and specific involutions" (Mullan 161). Thus in this novel of communication, Toby speaks a sort of fortified idiolect. It would follow, then, that the most effective pieces of rhetoric in the text, according to Sterne's narrator, are not text at all but postures, flicks of the pen, and facial expressions—gestures not susceptible to failures of interpretation. "For Yorick in the *Sentimental Journey* perfectly intelligible conversation depends on gestures rather than words, on sensitivity to the non-verbal rather than confidence in what can be said" (158). My interpretation of this set of facts differs in that, as I will demonstrate, I believe the importance of gesture indicates a different conception of the way that language operates, suffused through the body, and not, as in the theories of Saussure, defined by rote indexes in mental circuitry.

Hobby-Horses in *Tristram Shandy* expand one's ability to interact with the world. Similarly, a car, when one is driving it, acts as a functional appendage of the human body, explaining why one might get car sick in the passenger's seat but not the driver's seat. Following this metaphor of the toy horse, the psychological hobby-horse is a sort of structure of thought that expands the scope of one's world and allows one to get a handle on it. Disability is a relevant frame of reference, since most all *Tristram*

Shandy's characters are disabled in some way or other—Trim has a bad knee, Toby has his wound, and Tristram himself has multiple life-altering injuries; Walter, likewise, is apparently impotent. Oddly, physical disability in Sterne becomes an intellectual problem, putting one's direct experience of the world under threat. This extends to non-male characters as well, primarily Tristram's mother whom Walter accuses of a breach of contract when she suffers a false pregnancy—it is this breach of contract that results in Walter hiring Dr. Slop, a rural hack doctor and a Catholic, to deliver Tristram, instead of going to London for the birth, resulting in Tristram's broken nose and all the incidents that follow, even his name.

I will argue in the first place that Sterne's focus on different constructions of the body belies an anxiety about the endpoint of Lockean empiricism. If the body is damaged, do we lose our connection to the outside world? In the case of Toby's genitalia, does one lose the ability for intimacy, or even love? A mind, or a soul, trapped up in a body like a prisoner in a castle would lead one, inexorably, to these terrifying conclusions of science fiction.

Toby's wound to the groin, then, is the most significant both narratively and thematically; Toby receives the major digression in the book's second half in which he has his romance with Widow Wadman, where we find, as well, perhaps the novel's best joke:

—And whereabouts, dear Sir, quoth Mrs. Wadman, a little categorically, did you receive this sad blow?—In asking this question, Mrs. Wadman gave a slight glance towards the waistband of my uncle Toby's red plush breeches, expecting naturally, as the shortest reply to it, that my uncle Toby would lay his forefinger upon the place—It fell out otherwise....
My uncle Toby's Map is carried down into the kitchen (*TS* 9.26-27).

It is fitting, then, that Toby has the most pronounced obsession—namely fortification, something associated with the wound itself which he received in Flanders when part of a castle rampart collapsed. Just as a wheelchair expands the range of motion and interaction of an individual, Toby's Hobby-Horse expands his potential to intellectually and socially engage.

And yet we need to address why, in Sternean psychology, a wound to the body would wound the mind as well, and demand intellectual as well as physical compensation. Tristram, for one thing, conceives of the body and mind as analogous to the inside and outside of a man's coat—rumple one, rumple the other: "a man's body and his mind, with the utmost reverence to both I speak it, are exactly like a jerkin, and a jerkin's lining;—rumple the one,—you rumple the other" (Sterne 127). Sterne was almost certainly aware of George Cheyne's *The English Malady*, in which the author in fact recommends "hobby-horses" in just Tristram's understanding:

I would earnestly recommend to all those afflicted with *Nervous* Distempers, always to have some innocent entertaining *Amusement* to employ themselves in.... It seems to me absolutely impossible, without such a Help, to keep the Mind easy, and prevent its wearing out the body, as the Sword does the Scabbard; it is no matter what it is, provided it be but a *Hobby-Horse*, and an Amusement (Cheyne, from New 528-29).

Cheyne and Sterne are under the cultural influence of Aquinas and Aristotle. specifically the *De Anima*, in which the body and soul make up a composite substance that is a human being, with the implication that the human would not be human if it did not also have its body. Aquinas' argument, moreover, is not just about Aristotelian hylomorphism but about the ability of the human being to sense. "Sensation is not the operation of the soul only. Since, then, sensation is an operation of man, but not proper to

him, it is clear that man is not a soul only, but something composed of soul and body” (ST.I.Q75.A4). Caroline Walker Bynum has worked to dispel the notion that medieval Christianity specifically, like the Gnostic heresy it condemned, reviled embodiment in ways evocative of contemporary Evangelicals—not all Evangelicals, of course, but, to quote N. T. Wright, “some Western Christians have embraced something worryingly similar to second-century Gnosticism when they think of the present world as evil and the only solution being to escape it and to go to heaven instead” (Wright 197). This belief, often unstated, would take the human body as a sort of container for an immortal soul, a vile dross that hopefully one day, shaken off, will permit the soul to engage in that perfect intellectual life of the philosophers and theologians—no longer bound by passions and by lusts. Rationality, this Platonist argument would hold, is tantamount to morality itself, and it is the mind, divorced from the body, that was created by God to think rationally like Him. It is evident the way in which this supposition smuggles not Medieval anthropology and ontology but Enlightenment empiricism and Cartesian dualism into modern folk theology. The theological problem for these dualist gnostics, of course, is Christ Himself—imbued with a double nature, at once human and divine, this human form seemingly so perfected as to prove definitively the perfectibility of human nature and the human form; created, as it were, in the image of God Himself—that, and his resurrection, forecasting the resurrection of all the dead, just so, in their bodies, at the end of time, to live perfected on His perfected Earth.

Interestingly, alongside his evident pillorying of Lockean empiricism, which has been so well attested, Sterne may be putting this sort of theology to the test in *Tristram Shandy*: the unity of the body and the soul in a hylomorphic substance; the resurrection of the body at the end of time. Sterne asks: How much damage can the body sustain before the soul is so deformed that it cannot speak?

3.3 Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Intentional Perception

Anna Sagal agrees with Mullan that the fear of the impossibility of communication looms throughout *Tristram Shandy*, but has indicated that one reason for this may not be a Sternean obsession with Lockean empiricism, but the traumatic histories of the characters. She develops a strong reading of Toby’s experience as a soldier at Namur that is at once physical and psychological. She writes:

... [Sterne’s] novel is among the few eighteenth-century texts, and perhaps the first, to invest figures of disability with central importance Toby’s hobby-horse has the potential to be a radical mode of communication—a method of meaning-making not restricted to the able-bodied (Sagal 105).

This method of meaning-making is reminiscent of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who argues that bodies interact with the world in different ways according to their differing constructions and constitutions, and therefore find different meanings in it. By this, Merleau-Ponty specifically means through intentionality, a technical term in phenomenological philosophy referring to the relationships one develops with their environment. In other words, Merleau-Ponty shorts out the distinction between communication and perception by predicating perception itself on sociability. As such, the body, regardless of its constitution, experiences and interacts with the world, and gesture *through* the body becomes a means of expression beyond the confines of language. Sterne writes that “... the many perplexities [Toby] was in, arose out of the almost insurmountable difficulties he found in telling his

story intelligibly, and giving such clear ideas of the differences and distinctions” (94.6-17). Sterne sees the body and mind as having a dynamic and resilient relationship. It does not lose, with the loss of sight for instance, a dimension of experience, which is to say a certain discreet, measurable amount of experience. For Merleau-Ponty, or Husserl before him, perception was not a matter of reading sense data as in Locke, but a matter of forming a relationship with a thing. In the absence of sight, for example, such relationships with objects are altered, yet remain. A chair changes if we have the ability to sit in it. This is a form of relativity that is bounded by the body itself and its possible constructions. In order that he may communicate and in order that he may interact with the world as fully as before the war, then, Toby adopts a Hobby-Horse.

Contrary to France’s encyclopedists, like Denis Diderot with whom Sterne was friends, Toby sees words losing their rigidity and distinctiveness. Sterne’s chosen encyclopedia was the *Cyclopedia* produced by Ephraim Chambers. His indebtedness to this compendium has been noted in scholarship throughout the last century, particularly by one 1954 article by Bernard Greenberg. The tendency, however, has been to sneer a bit at Sterne—he never read Locke, but only the entry on Locke in Chambers. Locke and Chambers are usually cited as two of Sterne’s most direct influences, and to be sure, Sterne quotes directly from Chambers on many occasions without attribution. Sterne’s goal, however, was to represent the human being and the world as plastic and changing; this goal is contrary to the encyclopedic desire to categorize and identify. It would follow, then, that these borrowings are ironic and indicative of a larger project, critical of systems of totalizing knowledge, like Johnson’s *Dictionary*.

In the preface to the *Cyclopedia*, Chambers provides a schema for all knowledge and a theory of knowledge deriving more or less directly from Locke. Some of Sterne’s text is reminiscent of some of Chambers’ more dubious claims, usually in the mouths of the most absurd characters. Take, for example, Chambers’ statement that “Every word is supposed to stand for some Part, or Point of knowledge; such as do not, have no business in the Language, and ought of consequence to be thrown out of doors” (Chambers vi). Chambers’ view of knowledge is highly reminiscent of Locke’s theory of ideas, in which ideas are either perceived or derived from what is perceived through reflection. Similarly, for Locke, everything must have its proper name, a name which communicates an object’s purpose. According to Yolton, Locke was one of the major proponents of the teleological view of language. Many commentators have pointed out that Sterne seems to be manipulating Lockean ideas of mind—let my contribution to the scholarly discourse be, among other things, to say that Sterne’s critiques might be understood as filtered through Chambers’ encyclopedic view of knowledge.

Sterne’s first jabs at what might be termed the encyclopedic worldview were in his “Rabelaisian Fragment,” composed the same year as the first installment of *Tristram Shandy*. In the story, Longinus Rablaicus proposes the production of a new encyclopedia, the *Kerukopedia*, that would contain all the sermons ever written so that preachers had as little work to do as possible. The name Longinus is notable: Frye uses Longinus to represent the aesthetic philosophy of process over product. Longinus’ process-oriented literary theory corresponds to Bakhtin’s theory of the body as open and changing, which we certainly find in *Tristram Shandy*’s open and modifiable bodies—it is this modifiability and permeability that influenced William Mottolese to apply Donna Haraway’s cyborg theory to the text. Aristotle’s product-centered view, by contrast, corresponds to the anatomized whole and to the encyclopedia.

Walter is not one for Hobby-Horses—he thinks they impinge upon an objective, philosophical perspective (ironically, this amounts to a hobby-horse itself). Obsession becomes a lens through which the world is perceived, and Walter, who disregards the *Lebenswelt* of Husserl for the sense data of

Lockean empiricism, rejects anything that might detract from the perfect apprehension of what is. Speaking of Toby's increased interest in fortification, Walter says: "I would not, brother Toby, continued my father,—I declare I would not have my head so full of curtins and horn-works" (128.2-6). Again in opposition to Merleau-Ponty's idea of meaning-making in different bodies, Walter espouses a belief in objective and absolute meaning outside the body, or in the mind, purely rational and universal. Regarding different terms of fortification, Walter asks: "Where then lies the difference?" Toby replies,

In their situations, answered my uncle Toby:—For when a ravelin, brother, stands before the curtin, it is a ravelin; and when a ravelin stands before a bastion, then the ravelin is not a ravelin;—it is a half-moon;—a half-moon likewise is a half-moon, and no more, so long as it stands before its bastion;—but was it to change place, and get before the curtin,—'twould be no longer a half-moon; a half-moon, in that case, is not a half-moon;—'tis no more than a ravelin.—I think, quoth my father, that the noble science of defence has its weak sides—as well as others (129.5-15).

In this passage we see how the flexibility and adaptability of the Hobby-Horse—the way language does not conform to discrete definitions—antagonizes Walter's encyclopedism: his view that all knowledge can be discretely and accurately categorized and articulated. Walter cannot suffer one word to mean two different things—nor can somebody compiling a dictionary, or encyclopedia, where meaning should be stable. Walter, of course, is one such person, producing a *Trista-pedia*, an encyclopedia for his son.

A pun, of course, also obscures the meaning of a word, manipulating it to do two things at once. This manipulation of words, of which Yorick, the man of infinite jest, is so fond, subverts the pragmatic system of meanings upon which Walter Shandy sets up his world. "Dennis the critic could not detest and abhor a pun, or the insinuation of a pun, more cordially than my father;—he would grow testy upon it at any time;—but to be broke in upon by one, in a serious discourse, was as bad, he would say, as a fillip upon the nose;—he saw no difference" (128.9-13). The aversion to punning parallels the contrast Locke makes between wit and judgment—Lockean wit involves the synthesis of meanings in a single signifier, which confounds proper judgment. Dr. Slop puns also commonly, in a more crass way than the venerable Yorick, but Slop is also unique in his proclivity for cursing—when Dr. Slop proposes cursing Obadiah for making a knot he can not undo, we see that Walter is averse to this kind of language as well: "Small curses, Dr. Slop, upon great occasions, quoth my father (condoling with him first upon the accident) are but so much waste of our strength and soul's health to no manner of purpose" (199.16-19). Per Tristram's aside in *TS IX.19*: "Doctor Slop was the worst man alive at definitions" (792.5).

Curses, put another way, carry with them no meaning—they are, in Merleau-Ponty's verbiage, examples of gestural speech: they do not carry meaning but, like the word *ouch*, are said reflexively, like a wave or a smile. Merleau-Ponty argues that language and gesture are both instantaneous expressions of consciousness that need not be intellectually translated by those looking on, as in the famous diagram from Saussure's course. Sterne suggests this in *A Sentimental Journey I*, in a chapter called "The Translation":

There is not a secret so aiding to the progress of sociality, as to get master of this *short hand*, and be quick in rendering the several turns of looks and limbs, with all their inflections and delineations, into plain words. For my own part, by long habitude, I do it so mechanically, that when I walk the streets of London, I go translating all the way (47-48).

Here Sterne is describing a process of translation from speech to gesture and then gesture back into speech. The notion of a *short hand* makes language more than just a system of symbols for communicating abstract ideas, but a physical presence. The word *translate* occurs again when Uncle Toby makes his “attack” on the Widow Wadman: when the possibility of looking at Toby’s wound is presented to her, she blushes in such a way that Tristram feels inclined to translate: “*L—d! I cannot look at it*” (772.14). This act of translation, though, actually shows that gesture is not translated by the mind into something linguistic: the translation demonstrates a world of meanings communicated in physicality itself that, in the absence of images, must be described not as a blush but as a string of lines, delineated like poetry. “It shews what little knowledge is got by mere words—we must go up to the first springs” (773.14-16).

We might see a similarity in the way Sterne is presenting language and how Jean-Jacques Rousseau does in his *Essay on the Origins of Language*, in which language famously becomes a supplement for more immediate affects, such as innate pity. That innate pity also might carry weight for Sterne. In his *Discourse on Inequality*, Rousseau makes the argument that pity is an essential human emotion, described as “a natural Sentiment, which, by moderating in every Individual the Activity of Self-love, contributes to the mutual Prefervation of the whole Species” (Rousseau 76). Perhaps Sterne is saying that language is a supplement for gesture, and that even gesture is merely a supplement for this deeper, finer feeling. However, this would require Sterne privileging some presence over something else; notably he would not have agreed, presumably, with Rousseau’s idea that pity is innate as opposed to a general disposition toward the good that comes from God. Similarly, he likely would have found objectionable the idea that pity is for the preservation of the species. Jacques Derrida, in *Of Grammatology*, critiques Rousseau’s notion of supplementarity as merely reproducing the fallacy of presence that Derrida critiques in the Western philosophical tradition. Sterne seems to emphasize the real presence of the object itself, in the form of, for example, the famous black page and the marbled page. These pages are nothing but themselves, and their beauty and effect are entirely based on their physical presence, not what they supplement. Sterne writes in III.36 that “without much reading, by which your reverence knows I mean much knowledge, you will no more be able to penetrate the moral of the next marbled page (motly emblem of my work!) than the world with all its sagacity has been able to unravel the many opinions, transactions, and truths which still lie mystically hid under the dark veil of the black one.” It appears that the black page conceals a truth, much like the gestures of Widow Wadman, for example, communicate something linguistic; but then, of course, the gestures would be the supplement of speech, not the other way around. We might contrast this with the famous wave of Trim’s cane, which Sterne tells us is more valuable argumentatively than a syllogism. Neither gesture nor word, then, supplements the other neatly. Instead, I would suggest that in Sterne there is maximal presence, of the book, of the word, of the motley page and the gesture. In a way this again mirrors Derrida’s point, that writing, for example, is not a supplement to speech, because these all bear the same tinges of *différance*. We should not confuse this for what Derrida describes as the impossibility of perfect iterability of the signifier. Sterne’s use of the signifier as well as other markings in the text is more akin to Peirce’s indexical signifier. For Peirce, at least one kind of signifier, the index, is a direct mark of the signified on the world, such as, for example, the smoke that comes from fire; we could argue, for example, that the to-the-moment writing of consciousness in Richardson as well as Sterne is a form of indexical signifier in which the consciousness leaves a tangible mark on the world. As such, the words signify less their discrete definitions and more the consciousness that produced them. I would suggest that in Sterne, signifiers are indexical of the ones who utter or gesture them, and are, to extend that

point, extensions of the body itself. Language, in this theory, is the Hobby-Horse, too—an extension of the body in space.

The reliance upon sense perception to transmit the proper signals to the brain is a way of theorizing the body as closed and anatomized—there is a proper, complete way for the senses to deliver information to the consciousness, a way that is clear and free from error. “Now, as it was plain to my father, that all souls were by nature equal,—and that the great difference between the most acute and the most obtuse understanding... arose merely from the lucky or unlucky organization of the body, in that part where the soul principally took up her residence” (173.6-13). Walter Shandy, after hearing from Toby a story about a man who lived on with only half a brain, reasons as follows:

If death, said my father, reasoning with himself, is nothing but the separation of the soul from the body;—and if it is true that people can walk about and do their business without brains,—then *certes* the soul does not inhabit there. Q. E. D. (Sterne 174.1-4).

Whereas some may take the story to be about the adaptability of the human sensory apparatus, Walter continues trying, after Descartes, to locate the soul somewhere in the brain, and concludes it must be situated in the cerebellum. (Descartes himself identified it as the pineal gland.) Walter is so frightened that the cerebellum might be impacted in childbirth that he orders Dr. Slop to deliver Tristram from the feet.

Without the properly constituted body our perceptions could be modified or limited—and this, according to Merleau-Ponty, is actually true, seeing as our intentional relationships differ depending upon our bodies. The difference is that Merleau-Ponty does not privilege one *Lebenswelt* over any other—all Life-Worlds are by their nature relative though bound to the body. In contrast, the view espoused by Walter Shandy would have it that our souls are “equal” in their abilities to perceive but those souls are trapped in bodies that more or less accurately reflect the universe.

As stated, Merleau-Ponty makes the argument that speech and other forms of expression are gestural, fully embodied acts. The alternative is the one presented by Saussure in the *Course*. His view of language is inseparable from cognitivism, by which I mean an erasure of human embodiment and the adoption of a belief in the Cartesian Theater which phenomenology rejects and which is complicated by the Christian anthropology of the *De Anima*, that the human being is a composite of soul and body, in which Sterne would have been educated. Saussure writes of the “speaking circuit”:

Suppose that two people, A and B, are conversing with each other Suppose that the opening of the circuit is in A’s brain, where mental facts (concepts) are associated with representations of the linguistic sounds (sound-images) that are used for their expression. A given concept unlocks a corresponding sound-image in the brain; this purely *psychological* phenomenon is followed in turn by a *physiological* process: the brain transmits an impulse corresponding to the image to the organs used in producing sounds Next, the circuit continues in B, but the order is reversed (Saussure 11-12).

I would criticize this model not simply because the phenomenological approach is favored more by neuroscientists themselves—a theory called “enactivism”—but because it reduces the mind and body to dangerously impermeable vessels. These vessels are incapable of knowing one another without drastic mediation. Merleau-Ponty reassures us that words do not

act by arousing “representations” in me, which could be associated with them and which, when taken together, could eventually reproduce in me the speaker’s original “representation.” I do not primarily communicate with “representations” or with a thought, but rather with a speaking subject, with a certain style of being, and with the “world” that he aims at (Merleau-Ponty 189).

In other words, the word does not point to an index in my mind, but to an object in the real world, one to which I can stretch my consciousness. Because my friend and I inhabit the same world, we stretch ourselves out toward the same point. Words are bodily; they are in our muscles, not merely in our brains. Merleau-Ponty writes,

I have no need of representing to myself external space and my own body in order to move the one within the other... Likewise, I have no need of representing to myself the word in order to know it and to pronounce it. It is enough that I possess its articulatory and sonorous essence as one of the modulations or one of the possible uses of my body. I relate to the word just as my hand reaches for the place on my body being stung (Merleau-Ponty 186).

As a result of the embodiment just described, Merleau-Ponty implicitly rejects one of the key ideas of Lacanian literary criticism—that there is fissure between the signifier and the signified, that interpretation occurs in the space between those two, that the one obscures the other. He writes in “The Insistence of the Letter in the Unconscious” that “We are forced, then, to accept the notion of an incessant sliding of the signified under the signifier” (Lacan 121). In *Phenomenology of Perception*, by contrast, the distinction between what is said and what is thought is erased, to the degree that Merleau-Ponty says “Language does not presuppose thought; it accomplishes thought We must first recognize that, for the speaking subject, thought is not a representation; that is, thought does not explicitly posit objects or relations. The orator does not think prior to speaking, nor even while speaking; their speech is their thought. The listener similarly does not think about the signs” (Merleau-Ponty 185).

In a novel, then, per the classic definition, we are not witnessing thought transcribed; we are witnessing thought itself. As we have seen, Lovelace, for instance, says, “I love to write to the *moment*” (Richardson IV.58). In the preface to *Clarissa*, Richardson says, apologizing for the length, “The letters on both sides are written while the hearts of the writers must be supposed to be wholly engaged in their subjects: the events at the time generally dubious—so that they abound not only with critical situations, but with what may be called instantaneous descriptions and reflections.” In this description of process, Richardson seems to imply that his write-to-the-moment practice is not an instantaneous representation but active creation of his characters. Compare this to Merleau-Ponty: “The thinking subject is in a sort of ignorance of their thoughts so long as they have not formulated them for themselves, or even spoken or written them, as is shown through the example of so many writers who begin a book without knowing just what they are going to include” (Merleau-Ponty 183).

Mullan makes the case that “Yorick stands ‘behind in the circle’, not participant but transcriber. Out of his observations of gesture comes ‘sociality’: the sociality of the text” (Mullan 159). However, it is specifically *disembodied words* that are insufficient. Merleau-Ponty defends a view of gesture and language that is bodily and immediate: “the gesture does not *make me think* of anger”—which seems to be what Mullan takes as the problem—“it is anger itself” (Merleau-Ponty 190); “Here the experience of others, which is distorted by intellectualist analyses, must be restored, just as we will have to restore perceptual experience of the thing” (191). The method of restoring our connection to the real world

and to one another is to make language gestural, which is exactly what Sterne accomplishes when his description of Trim's oration is so predicated upon the physical, the postural, the *attitudinal*.

Cash indicates that Sterne, a life-long lover of visual art, was still sketching on his deathbed. Sterne's method of characterization is often explicitly related to the rendering of a likeness in a painting: "I have but one more stroke to give to finish Corporal Trim's character,—and it is the only dark line in it.—The fellow loved to advise,—or rather to hear himself talk" (Sterne 109.16-18); similarly, when describing Yorick, Tristram says: "I have the highest idea of the spiritual and refined sentiments of this reverend gentleman, from this single stroke in his character" (23.5-7). Sterne makes many references to Hogarth and his *Analysis of Beauty*, both in *TS* II.9 and II.14, and when, for instance, he is first describing the form of Dr. Slop. *Tristram Shandy* often reads like a series of carefully choreographed images like this one from *TS* III:

In this case, (unless, indeed, my father had been resolved to make a fool of himself by holding the wig stiff in his left hand—or by making some nonsensical angle or other at his elbow-joint, or armpit)—his whole attitude had been easy—natural—unforced: *Reynolds* himself, as great and gracefully as he paints, might have painted him as he sat (188.6-11).

Sterne's shows a linking in *Tristram Shandy* for the word "attitude" in the sense of posture, a word taken from portraiture and early aeronautics, here with a reference to the painter Joshua Reynolds, well-known for his portraiture: "I would not answer for my aunt Dinah, was she alive——'faith, scarce for her picture——were it but painted by *Reynolds*" (590.4-6). Cash points out that Sterne shortcircuits what Lessing would describe as the temporality of language in favor of the atemporality of the plastic arts. For example: after Dr. Slop breaks the bridge of Tristram's nose during delivery, and after Tristram's preliminary discussion of Walter's theory of noses, Sterne paints an image of Walter tossing himself in agony upon his bed. Notice how similar it seems to a painting:

The moment my father got up into his chamber, he threw himself prostrate across his bed in the wildest disorder imaginable, but at the same time in the most lamentable attitude of a man borne down with sorrows, that ever the eye of pity dropp'd a tear for.—The palm of his right hand, as he fell upon the bed, receiving his forehead, and covering the greatest part of both his eyes, gently sunk down with his head (his elbow giving way backwards) till his nose touch'd the quilt;—his left arm hung insensible over the side of the bed, his knuckles reclining upon the handle of the chamber-pot, which peep'd out beyond the valance—his right leg (his left being drawn up towards his body) hung half over the side of the bed, the edge of it pressing upon his shin bone—He felt it not. A fix'd, inflexible sorrow took possession of every line of his face.—He sigh'd once——heaved his breast often—but uttered not a word (254.25-255.15).

This passage highlights the flow of the novel as a whole being at times a succession of highly emotive images. This image of Walter recurs twice in the course of *Tristram Shandy*, becoming a minor motif whenever some misfortune (as defined by Walter) befalls Tristram, the other instance being when the sash window falls.

In other places, Sterne creates moving images like frames of a filmstrip—motion created not by an activation of one's concepts of motion but through the paratactic conjunction of comic book panels. Some pages after a conversation with Uncle Toby in which Toby, characteristically, has difficulty wrapping his head around Walter's theorizing, Walter goes on an angry march, in a highly paratactic passage:

—My father thrust back his chair—rose up—put on his hat—took four long strides to the door—jerked it open—thrust his head half way out—shut the door again—took no notice of the bad hinge—returned to the table—pluck'd my mother's thread-paper out of Slawkenbergius's book—went hastily to his bureau—walked slowly back—twisted my mother's thread-paper about his thumb—unbutton'd his waistcoat—threw my mother's thread-paper into the fire—bit her sattin pin-cushion in two, fill'd his mouth with bran (282.27-283.8).

Sterne's highly characteristic dash here shortcircuits temporal language in favor of a quick succession of stop-motion images. The physicality of Sterne's descriptions works in parallel with his interest in rhetoric. His lengthy description of Trim's posture before he recites the "Sermon on Conscience" is written with a painterly interest in the body but also in accordance to the rules of rhetoric manuals: "he stood before them with his body swayed, and bent forwards just so far, as to make an angle of eighty-five degrees and a half upon the plain of the horizon;—which sound orators, to whom I address this, know very well to be the true persuasive angle of incidence" (140.16-20). Sterne calls all this Trim's *attitude* (140.8), and this word carries both a mental and physical meaning. New directs us, also, to a number of rhetorical manuals, such as that of John Wesley and John Walker.

Sterne's interest in, even rescue of, the grotesque body from the nascent Cartesian theater brings to mind, again, the Christian unity of soul and body in which he would have been trained at Cambridge, as well as the radical notion that heaven would be established on Earth and that all would rise again, not metaphorically as a soul in some other plane, but literally as Christ or Lazarus. This view, now, feels foreign, due in part to what Harold Bloom would call the Gnosticism of American Christianity—rejecting the world and the body in favor of some other divine space. Colleen McDannell and Bernhard Lang trace changes in the theology of resurrection to the seventeenth century's General Crisis, a term favored by Eric Hobsbawm and others to describe, among other things, the major economic crisis that overtook Europe as it transitioned further toward capitalism. In the wake of these social changes, they suggest, people of faith reexamined their beliefs about this world's relationship to the next. The authors argue, therefore, that a form of "theocentric heaven" began to predominate in Europe, one in which heaven is "the opposite of earth. Death marks a radical difference between this life and the next. Life on earth is superficial, constantly changing, and full of disappointment." Seemingly rejecting the notion of "God's Kingdom on Earth," for the Puritans, the Jansenists, and many Calvinists and Lutherans, "Heavenly life is not a perfected version of life on earth" (McDannell and Lang, 178). Compare this to Augustine's word in 417: "Take away death, the last enemy, and my own flesh will be my dear friend throughout eternity... Our faith, instructed by God, praises the [human] body" (61). These two views are distinct primarily in their rhetoric, and yet the rhetoric itself is notable: a rising disdain for this world and despair over humanity and its redeemability. While I would not necessarily endorse the idea that Hobsbawm's or Trevor-Roper's General Crisis was a major contributing factor to shifts in theological emphasis, it is clear that Sterne in his career was responding to a shifting eschatological landscape, in which the resurrection of the body was both credal and deemphasized. Robert Boyle, for example, produced scientific experiments to prove the possibility of resurrection in the same body; by contrast, soul sleep and mortalism—the idea that the body is actually destroyed and recreated at the end of time—had gained purchase with many, including John Milton.

Sterne did not, himself, compose any sermons on the topic of resurrection and mortalism; the best researchers have are the presentations of the human body as we receive it in his novels—his apparent anxiety around the medicalization and anatomization of the human body, discussed as an

aspect of Sterne's "learned wit" by D. W. Jefferson, manifesting in a Bhaktinian, Carnavalesque opening of the body, as well as obsessive concern with perception and the possibility of sociality.

3.4 Philosophy as a Way of Life

To the degree that Sterne's novels, *Tristram Shandy* in particular, can be said to have positive philosophical content, beyond the modeling of a life, it is in the ways in which a life must be buttressed by philosophy—through, for example, a working theory of how direct realism can be recovered from the critiques leveled against it. Critiques of Lockean empiricism are implicit in that program, not the direct purpose of the text, which would contradict the role of the novel as a tool for inculcating a life.

However, we can still make some positive claims about the application of philosophies such as Hume's or Smith's to the text. Beyond simply the claim, like the outdated one by MacLean, that there is a clear one-to-one borrowing of ideas, moving in a single vector from the philosopher to the novelist, we can also treat the more nuanced claim that in the text we find representations of a certain philosophical discourse.

According to the Arminian or Hutchesonian view, when tested, a human being will recollect their innate knowledge of morality, just as the slave recollects how to do geometry in the *Meno*. In *TS* VIII, Toby says of Beguine nuns, "they visit and take care of the sick by profession—I had rather, for my own part, they did it out of good-nature" (698.22-24)—the profession being one of faith. Similarly, Tristram describes watching his Uncle Toby catch and release a fly. Upon witnessing an act of inter-species generosity, Tristram recollects some transcendent truth:

... but whether it was, that the action itself was more in unison to my nerves at that age of pity, which instantly set my whole frame into one vibration of most pleasurable sensation;—or how far the manner and expression of it might go towards it;—or in what degree, or in what secret magick,—a tone of voice and harmony of movement, attuned by mercy, might find passage to my heart, I know not. (131.1-15)

Here Tristram speaks of "one vibration of most pleasurable sensation," from which he can tell with certainty that being kind is good. It is notable how the memory that Tristram has of this event is visual, like a painting, as opposed to notional—morality was not imparted by a reasoned argument but by something that could be sensed. When human beings, despite being corrupted by the world around them, see or feel something that moves them they are reminded of the innate morality that we all possess. Once again, this distinguishes Sterne's theory from that of Rousseau, in which, in the state of nature, people possess an innate pity that is slowly lost due to the encroachment of modern civilization and the triumph of *amour-propre*. For Sterne, as for the Arminians, the moral sense is an inescapable aspect of universal atonement. A similar event takes place in *TS* IX when Trim is returning to discussion of his brother Tom:

The corporal blush'd down to his fingers ends—a tear of sentimental bashfulness—another of gratitude to my uncle *Toby*—and a tear of sorrow for his brother's misfortunes, started into his eye, and ran sweetly down his cheek together; my uncle *Toby's* kindled as one lamp does at

another; and taking hold of the breast of *Trim's* coat (which had been that of *Le Fever's*) as if to ease his lame leg, but in reality to gratify a finer feeling (746.5-12).

Here the “finer feeling” described seems to be the same as that which instigated physical sensation in Tristram in the above story about the fly. Of course this sort of moral sense is consonant with many more famous scenes in *A Sentimental Journey*: for example, Yorick’s musing about the King and the Bourbons. In the novel’s second chapter, Yorick decides he’ll go to France to settle an argument that happens off-page. He was just considering how, if he died there, the French *droits d’aubaine* would cause all his personal effects to go to the King of France, and not be left on his corpse for burial. Yorick suddenly turns more generous thoughts toward the monarch, and immediately feels the positive effects of such thoughts—universal benevolence, as Crane would put it—in his body: Its influence is greater than that of two bottles of wine; it makes him taller; he feels “every vessel in my frame dilate.” Similarly, after referring to the Bourbons as merely “misled,” he “felt a suffusion of a finer kind upon my cheek.” Thus, while in the case of Lovelace we see a man tempted by good but with his mind resolved upon evil, who struggled against his body to achieve his ends, instead in the works of Sterne we find characters in the inverse situation, feeling the bodily satisfaction of good deeds. This might remind one of G. S. Rousseau’s writings about sentimentalism and nascent medical discourse concerning early nerve theory, or even the letter from one Mrs. Donnellan to Samuel Richardson, claiming that the author was so talented because of his delicate nerves. Once again, we can sense what is good, even with our bodies—we don’t think or rationalize what is good. It would be a mistake, moreover, to view good deeds as self-interested in Sterne’s case: again to take the metaphor of beauty from Hutcheson, Sterne’s characters have an aesthetic attraction to good deeds based upon an inborn sense. This is distinct from wanting to do good, for example, because of a fear of Hell.

Critics are correct to point out that this is not sympathy and has little regard to the being that benefits from a good action. As Festa notes about Yorick’s starling, which leads him to considerations of the horrors of slavery, it is “the propitious coincidence of external circumstances and internal state, not sympathy for a like-feeling soul, that stirs Yorick’s emotions. The fact that Yorick is moved by accident does not mean that he is not really moved” (Festa 84-85). For Festa as well as other critics, I believe it is an object of critique that Yorick does not truly experience sympathy, nor, for that matter, does Toby or Tristram; instead, they experience a sort of effete, sentimental hedonism, it would seem. As discussed in this dissertation’s first chapter, a certain lineage of criticism of the eighteenth century novels and poetry, including that of Julie Ellison, Adela Pinch, and Festa, centers an interpretation of Humean emotion as vagrant and transhuman. According to Pinch, “feelings spread about freely and fluidly; they do not know the boundaries of individuals” (Pinch 1). The problem, then, becomes one of ownership, identity, and appropriation. In the context of the starling episode, then, we might conclude that Yorick has appropriated a vagrant emotion, taken possession of it, and now plays with it like a toy, as if to evidence Smith’s claim that all “sympathy,” whether it be with happiness or sadness, is to some degree pleasurable—giving a sentimental basis, I would suggest, for the Sadism of *Justine*.

The problems with applying contemporary notions of morality—namely the prizing of selfless sympathy—to eighteenth-moralists also extends to Hume himself. As Gallagher puts it, in Hume “Sympathy does not occur immediately, but is rather accomplished in three stages: (1) certain sense data (melancholy looks, open wounds, mournful language) communicate an idea of someone else’s emotional state (unhappiness); (2) that idea becomes vital, forceful, and present through the operation of one or more relational principles linking sufferer and perceiver (cause and effect, contiguity and resemblance) and is thereby converted into an impression (impressions differ from ideas only in force and vivacity) of the other’s emotion; (3) the impression (or vivacious perception) can, under certain

conditions, be ‘so enlivened as to become the very sentiment or passion’” (Gallagher 169). Hume’s process introduces certain pitfalls that would not be familiar to the run-of-the-mill sentimentalist, with their naive optimism about human nature. Sterne would also potentially see an issue here with regards to the communicability of emotion; while Hume might claim that it “appears” spontaneous, there are in fact several walls separating one from another. Further, “as one of Hume’s commentators has pointed out,” Gallagher writes, “his concept of sympathy does not, strictly speaking, imply any increase in regard for the person sympathized with. Páll S. Árdal, indeed, comes up with an extreme illustration of how the process Hume calls sympathy might rather be expected to produce selfishness: if you have a desire for a glass of whiskey, he reasons, and I sympathize with you in a Humean fashion, all that’s been accomplished is that I want a glass of whiskey, too” (Gallagher 170). I would sharpen this point yet further: In Hume, one does not do good out of selflessness but selfishness, not to stop another’s pain but to stop one’s own. Similarly, Edmund Burke, in his *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, discusses sympathy in just this frame, writing that “the pain we feel, prompts us to relieve ourselves in relieving those who suffer” (Burke 25). Not only does this seem not to describe Sterne’s fiction, but also it would be self-evidently self-serving, and would not, from most Christian and most commonsense perspectives, qualify as morality.

Our criticisms of Sterne seem to turn on our own modern assumptions of what morality is and ought to be. To the extent that we map sympathy to self-interest and Yorick’s moment with the starling to perverse, Smithian pleasure in tragedy, of course we find it objectionable. And yet, Sterne’s own moral system, as it is suggested in his novels, is closer to the ethical metaphysics of Hutcheson’s moral sense if not to Arminian theology. Building off the last chapter’s argument, in which I made the claim that, in the novel, sympathy was displaced from Jesus to other human beings, inculcating first a sympathetic practice directed toward Christ, and then a general, ambient sympathy with all others, I would argue now that the public theology of sympathy, in which generalized sympathy takes on a normative character, comes into conflict with Sternean sentimentalism when approached by critics. Following representative works of sympathetic novel theory, such as that of George Eliot for example, critics today assume that the morality of diffuse sympathy is a given and not a historical particular.

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Chapter 4

Philip K. Dick's Gnostic Sympathy in *VALIS*

4.1 Henosis

Philip K. Dick, in *VALIS* and other works near his death, began repeating the gnomic statement: “The Empire Never Ended.” The Empire in question was the Roman Empire, of which the emperor was Richard M. Nixon. The California in which Dick lived, the United States, and the two-thousand some years separating this world from the world of Jesus Christ, was all an illusion. My purpose in this chapter is twofold: First, to present a reading of *VALIS* centering on Neoplatonist metaphysics; and second, more importantly, to make a more overarching argument about Dick’s corpus, claiming that the sympathy present in *VALIS*’ reimagining of Neoplatonism is present in numerous of Dick’s other works, and is reminiscent of the sentimentalisms of Lord Shaftesbury and Francis Hutcheson. Demonstrating that, I can conclude this dissertation by claiming that the era of sentimentalism never truly ended, like Dick’s Roman Empire; that we continue to be boxed in by the public theology of the artistic medium—the novel—that, between the eighteenth century and the time of Philip K. Dick, became one of the primary methods of formally inculcating public virtue in the West.

According to Dick, a disciple of Jesus, Thomas, occupied one part of his brain, and “Phil” occupied the other part. This became the literary motif for *VALIS*, in which Phil and Thomas—represented as the crazed “Horselover Fat”—are two different characters. *VALIS* is a species of autofiction before the boom in the late 2010s; Phil Dick is one character, Horselover Fat (Philip translated literally from Greek, Dick from German) is another. Horselover Fat is Dick’s insane alter-ego, who experienced many of the same things that Philip K. Dick claims to have experienced in his life, including, as the real Philip K. Dick indicated during his infamous speech to French journalists in Metz, seeing God after dental surgery. The exciting literary experiment of *VALIS* is present in Dick’s play with his own identity and his seeming acknowledgement that he sees insanity in himself. At first, the narrator says that “I am Horselover Fat, and I am writing this in the third person to gain much-needed objectivity” (Dick 2009: 177). He says “I am, by profession, a science fiction writer” (178); but goes on to say “Horselover Fat slipped by degrees into madness. I wish I could have helped him” (183). A book is mentioned inside *VALIS* called *The Android Cried Me a River*, which looks like a combination of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said*. In context, he is talking about *Flow My Tears*, a “perfect description of the Black Iron Prison but set in the far future” (213). The Black Iron Prison is an alternative timeline that Dick claims to have experienced in which Richard Nixon was proclaimed the Second Son of God. This is how Dick talks about *Flow My Tears* in the Metz Speech—a timeline culled by the programmer-reprogrammer, an ambivalent, demiurgic figure, that everybody except for Dick has forgotten; even Dick forgot, until the memories anamnetically returned. But here, in *VALIS*, the book is just a “cheap science fiction novel” and Phil doesn’t mention having written it. Then there are parts that are entirely biographical. “Once, when I lectured at the University of California at Fullerton, a student asked me...” (240); “In my novel *A Scanner Darkly*, published in 1977, I ripped off Fat’s account...” (268); and apparently MGM “let their option on *Man in the High Castle* lapse.” This last title is accompanied by a footnote that reads “*The Man in the High Castle*, G.P.

Putnam's Sons, 1962" (310). Later, the personalities split further; Phil goes to Fat's apartment and the two have a conversation. The split between Phil and Fat gets stranger when Phil begins to see Thomas reflected in himself. Referring to Thomas in Fat's head, Dick says, "Isn't it an oxymoron to say, I am not myself? Isn't this a verbal contradiction, a statement semantically meaningless?" (280).

I want to argue that the brilliance of Dick's autofiction here is the way in which it mirrors the cosmological system he proposes in the text, based closely upon Neoplatonism, but with sympathetic revisions. Horselover Fat proposes a parallel "two-source cosmogony" for the creation of the universe. In his *Tractates*—the appendix to *VALIS*, a series of aphorisms which Fat was composing during and which are interspersed throughout the novel—Fat refers to something called "the One" that births two twins. On the literary level, these twins ought to be interpreted as Fat and Phil themselves. The One is meant to birth these two twins after a period of gestation in something called the "sac"; then these two project hologram worlds where living entities reside. The appendix's §47 begins, "The One was and was-not, combined, and desired to separate the was-not from the was. So it generated a diploid sac which contained, like an eggshell, a pair of twins, each an androgyny, spinning in opposite directions (the Yin and Yang of Taosim, with the One as the Tao)" (393). In §47 Dick refers to the Yin and Yang "Form I" and "Form II" respectively, both "of Parmenides" (396). Here he appears to mean Parmenides in the sense that the Presocratic philosopher argued for an analytical distinction between the eternal and the changing: "Form I" is changeless, and "Form II" is in flux. However, "the counterclockwise twin broke through the sac and separated prematurely" (393). Dick/Fat goes on to seemingly contradict the meaning of the Parmenidean and Platonic dichotomy of the changing and the changeless, saying, "The full term twin, called Form I by Parmenides, advanced correctly through its growth stages, but the prematurely born twin, called Form II, languished" (394). How could Form I, the eternal, be that which changes, i.e., develops or "advanced correctly"? Here we find that time and development are actually core parts of Dick's metaphysical system, not apparitions or defects; this becomes a foundational idea in Dick's *Ubik*, a novel which he claims in his *Exegesis*, a collection of eight-thousand pages discovered after his death, was prophetic. "At the time I wrote *Ubik* it never occurred to me that the world depicted in the latter part of *Ubik* might in some fundamental way, give or take a bit here and there, be our own" (4:135).

In *Ubik*, written about five years before Dick's religious visions, the world appears to be moving backward in time. Objects and human beings degrade by getting older—a cup of coffee immediately filled with mold—or by reverting to earlier forms. "Ubik," a substance in an aerosol can that can stop this regression and deterioration, is reverting to a useless topical cream, among other things. And yet, in *Ubik*, Dick is very specific on the point that this is not time travel; it is form reversion.

The TV set had receded back a long way; he found himself confronted by a dark, wood-cabinet, Atwater-Kent tuned radio-frequency oldtime AM radio.... But why hadn't the TV set reverted instead to formless metals and plastics? Perhaps this weirdly verified a discarded ancient philosophy, that of Plato's ideal objects, the universals which, in each class, were real.... Prior forms, he reflected, must carry on an invisible, residual life in every object.... The man contains—not the boy—but earlier men, he thought. History began a long time ago (725).

Strangely, the television set is a more realized or developed form of the same ontological concept as a radio. In the framework of Parmenides or Socrates, in which the good and perfect are eternal and unchanging—as it is with God in most Christian theology—how is this notion of development and change possible?

In Plotinus, there are three “hypostases,” which he heard about from James Pike, the then-Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of California. Plotinus’ “hypostases” describe three aspects of reality. For Plotinus, these are the One, the Intellect, and the Soul. According to Plotinus, the One is the unity of all things, completely unknowable and about which nothing can be said; even terms normally applied to God like “good” and “eternal” are not part of the One but part of the subsidiary Intellect, the second hypostasis, that is timeless and most similar to Plato’s world of forms. Then, from the Intellect emerges the Soul, and with the Soul time. In time, the Soul contemplates the ideas of the Intellect; that is to say, the Soul thinks through the Ideas of the intellect in what appears to be a temporal succession, though it is in fact a logical or ontological procession. Therefore, the “hypostasis of the information processed by the Mind” (389) would imply something along the lines of the way the Intellect possesses all the Ideas of the One.

In the world of *Ubik*, time is similarly a fantasy—what one remembers being temporally past is actually something ontologically past, like in Plotinus. Dick’s example of the man and the boy is helpful for illustrating this point. Similarly, radios are not older than televisions; they are logically prior. Time, as one perceives it, is actually the Soul rendering logic sequentially; in Dick’s verbiage, it’s the hologram that creates a sequence out of the hemispheric “Brain.” In *Ubik*, forms are moving backward, from TV to radio, because the intellectual logic, portrayed temporally, has been reversed, and so ostensible temporality has reversed, too. This, as well, is the condition of Form II, the universe product of failed gestation in which development has failed, and is failing; this is our world, the world of gnostics that we must escape.

Change, which we view temporally along a linear time axis, should mean intellectual development as the Soul contemplates the Intellect’s ideas—it’s only in our abortive universe that it doesn’t. If, in Neoplatonism, time is reason, then time reversed is insanity—insanity on the scale of reality.

Dick’s terms for “One” and “Intellect” appear to be “the Mind” and “the Brain.” For example, “From loss and grief the Mind has become deranged. Therefore we, as parts of the universe, the Brain, are partly deranged” (391); “The phenomenal world does not exist; it is a hypostasis of the information processed by the Mind” (389); and “The Mind does not wish to forget her. Thus the ratiocination of the Brain consists of a permanent record of her existence, and, if read, will be understood this way” (390). In §47, Dick/Fat goes on to say that “It was the One’s purpose for our hologramatic universe to serve as a teaching instrument by which a variety of new lives advanced until ultimately they would be isomorphic with the One” (394). This seems to derive directly from Plotinus’ eschatology, in which the process of intellection through the Soul will result inexorably in a sort of mystical unity of the universe with the One that produced it, a process called Henosis. The difference between Dick’s and Plotinus’ theories is, for one, that Dick’s has a “variety of new lives” within a “hologram,” though not much hangs on that for our purposes; more importantly, there are multiple universes within his metaphysics that need to interact with one another dialectically in order to achieve henosis. “The next step in the One’s plan was that the Two would become the Many, through their dialectical interaction” (349). Once again, we notice the autofictive or autotheoretical homologies between this and the narrative itself, in which Dick and Fat interact with one another, but in which Fat is insane, disrupting the possibility of communication, even though Fat is Dick himself. As the cosmogony states, “Form II continued to languish toward illness, madness and disorder. These aspects she projected into our universe” (394). Dick/Fat explains that this broken universe, because it is irrational and has rejected the One’s attempts to heal it—Jesus was one such attempt, an inbreaking of Hyperuniverse I into Hyperuniverse II—must be abolished. “Approaching its task with caution, it prepared to kill the deranged twin, since she cannot

be healed” (394-95). Likewise, Phil and Fat develop a discourse throughout the text that culminates in the two traveling to meet Sophia, the incarnation of VALIS, the Vast Active Living Intelligence System that is effectively God or the Demiurge. Sophia, it would seem—when she meets Phil and his friends Kevin and David (analogues of real friends Philip K. Dick had)—“kills” Fat by *fiat*. “Sophia said, ‘Phil, Kevin and David. Three of you. There are no more.’ Turning to speak to Fat—I saw no one... Fat was gone. Nothing remained of him. Horselover Fat was gone forever. As if he had never existed” (348). Thus, again, the narrative of *VALIS* plays out the metaphysical theory of the *Tractates* in its appendix.

In an apparent eschatology, Dick/Fat concludes “The original plan of the One can only be realized now by the division of Hyperuniverse I into two healthy hyperuniverses, which will transform the hologramatic universe into the successful teaching machine it was designed to be. We will experience the ‘Kingdom of God’” (395). Seemingly the process of intellection through time by the Soul, which is implicitly advocated by the cosmology of *Ubik*, is not sufficient in itself in this late-in-life account; instead, the process of development, of radio to television perhaps, necessitates some sort of mysterious dialectic between this universe and its twin. This, once again, is what happens in the narrative. Mysteriously, Fat reemerges in the final chapter of *VALIS* without explanation; the explanation, instead, appears in §47. Fat does not remain with Phil, but goes off to Metz, France, a reference, it would seem, to Philip K. Dick’s speech at Metz, titled “If You Find This World Bad, You Should See Some of the Others.” The implication, though, based upon the cosmology Dick provides his readers, is that *this* Fat is sane, whereas the original, which had been annihilated by a Christ-figure, was not.

Thus *VALIS* is structured around sympathy both between characters and between cosmic concepts. This brings us to Dick’s radical reinterpretation—or literalization—of the *Imitatione Christi*, which discusses the non-ontological doubling of Christ in oneself. The *Imitatio* was a major text in the early-modern spiritual movement that emphasized meditative sympathy with Christ, particularly during the Mass. It is mentioned, albeit passing, in Dick’s earlier novel, *Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, which is itself named for the wounds of Palmer Eldritch that manifest miraculously on those who take the alien drug he’s selling, and which mirror, of course, the wounds of Christ. In the *Imitatione Christi* Thomas à Kempis is expanding on a longer *imitatio* tradition that includes the medieval stigmatists, people who upon meditating on the life of Christ would manifest on their own bodies the wounds of Christ. This is to say that sympathy with Christ brings about imitation of Christ, sometimes miraculously in the body itself.

The *Imitatio Christi* presents a somewhat surprising theology: Christ died for us, so we must also die, not in the sense that Adam and Eve must die, the wages of sin, but that we must be dead to the flesh in this life. “He died for you on the Cross, that you may also bear your Cross, and desire to die on the cross with Him. For if you die with Him, you will also live with Him” (Kempis 85). In the early church many desired to experience Christ’s suffering quite literally—one, Polycarp, apparently wished to be betrayed by his friends, like Jesus was (Constable 149). “Imitation was thought to involve man’s being rather than his doing, what he was rather than what he did” (148). So martyrdom was lauded not because of the devotion to Christ it signaled but because you were *literally like Him*; though another valid way to reenact this death was to become dead to the world, i.e. take up the monastic cloth and follow Him. Philip K. Dick understood what the real implication of this was: that we were meant to transmute into Christ quite literally; transubstantiation has broken free of the confines of bread and wine.

Unlike *imitatio*, David Hume and Adam Smith didn’t seem to catch Dick’s interest, but the idea of contagion found in *Palmer Eldritch*—where Eldritch’s identity, perhaps like a transhuman emotion, threatens to depersonalize the human race from Earth and Mars—might put us in mind of the

popular claim that emotions in the eighteenth century were contagious. It would be a difficult, more ambitious argument to attempt to trace Hume's contagion to religious sympathy with Christ through the tradition of *imitatio*; for that reason I'm thankful that Dick has tried to make that very genealogy explicit. The term Dick uses, though, is not sympathy but empathy. Empathy is by far the more recent coinage, arising from a 1909 translation of the work of the German psychologist Theodor Lipps, whereas sympathy was the concern for seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophers. Lipps' empathy was an aesthetic theory—one empathized with the art object, i.e., lost the self in it. The novel coinage and the sort of transhumanism of then applying the term to people might be why Dick gravitated toward it. Rae Graener sees in the twentieth century an aesthetic turn away from sympathy toward empathy, identified with metonymy and metaphor respectively. Twentieth-century modernism was characterized by new psychological intimacy and what she calls "fusion." It is easy to see Dick as commenting explicitly on this transformation, though there is little evidence of a semantic distinction between empathy and sympathy in his corpus itself.

In *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* we find an Empathy Test and an Empathy Box, both central technologies in post-World War Terminus Earth. The Empathy Test is meant to delineate humans from androids by measuring their involuntary responses to "moral" stimulus; the box, by contrast, unifies the adherents of a multi-planetary religion called Mercerism in a single experience of Mercer's martyrdom at the hands of the Killers, reminiscent of current virtual reality devices. The Empathy Box, of course, resembled *Palmer Eldritch* and *imitatio*—in fact, meditation on Christ's death would be a recommended practice for Franciscans and Ignatians. With these contrastive technologies, I would argue that Dick intends to demonstrate the comparative weakness of the Test and the theory on which the Test is built as compared to the more religious, imitative sympathy of the Box. Throughout *Electric Sheep*, the Empathy Test, Voigt-Kampff, is suspect; the uncertainty of whether or not it works correctly to delineate android and human creates most of the book's suspense, hence the famous question "Have you ever retired a human by mistake?" The Empathy Box, by contrast, very clearly works; it works all too well, even when the founder of Mercerism, Wilbur Mercer, is "revealed" by a set of androids on television to be a fraud. Despite the supposed fraudulence, by the end of the book Mercer appears outside the box, seemingly negating the technology itself, and Rick turns *into* Mercer, physically, while in the spoiled deserts of Oregon, where he reenacts, despite himself, Mercer's climb, seemingly meant to remind readers of Christ's passion in the Gospel.

Mercerism in practice is not Dick's idea of true religion; Dick's narration of Rick's wife Iran's engagement with it leans critical. Iran disregards her own life and the people around her, Rick included, in favor of a cultish devotion to this appliance. But where Iran claims that the Empathy Box allows her to empathize with other people, Rick's experience, especially at the end of the novel, shows direct empathy with Mercer himself. When Rick and Iran get a goat, Iran wants Rick "to transmit the mood you're in now to everyone else; you owe it to them. It would be immoral to keep it for ourselves" (Dick 2007: 557). She even suggests that the sharing of emotions could save a stranger from suicide. We might compare this to Humean sympathy, in which emotions are said, according to Adela Pinch for example, to travel between one person and another contagiously. Central to Pinch's interpretation is the idea that contagious emotions create uncertainty about whose emotion is whose—and so selfhood is brought into question, as it is in Hume's "bundle" metaphor. Iran's ethical claims, though, contradict what she said to Rick at the beginning of the novel when they were arguing about the Mood Organ, a device with which one can alter their mood by "dialing." There, she said that dialing an emotion that wasn't genuine caused an "absence of appropriate affect" (436), a term which later in the novel gets applied to schizophrenia and androids. "So I put it on my schedule for twice a month; I think that's a reasonable

amount of time to feel hopeless about everything” (437). Of course, that would still not be a genuine emotion; she is still dialing for it; she just has convinced herself that it’s the right thing to dial for. The feeling implanted into the mind of the suicidal individual would be false, in Iran’s own estimation, mechanically produced and not their own, and the reflection on that idea, that one is not one’s own, is enough, potentially, to spark an existential spiral. Iran is hopelessly trapped in a pattern of performing her own personhood. The only choice that preserves the selfhood of emotion is never to touch the dial at all.

Up until this scene in *Electric Sheep*, Rick has seemed like the android: all too happy to dial for whatever emotion, murdering without compunction, doing his job without asking questions. But now the roles have flipped. Rick says, “They’ll have our joy, but we’ll lose. We’ll exchange what we feel for what they feel. Our joy will be lost.” This apparent criticism of the empathy apparatus is similar to that of Catherine Gallagher, quoted in the previous chapter. In some theories of sympathy, the only reason why one wants to alleviate somebody’s pain is because, really, one wants to alleviate their own. Gallagher says that in Hume, for example, “another’s internal state becomes ‘intimately present’ only by losing its distinct quality of belonging to somebody else.” So, in Gallagher’s critique, I can only sympathize with you when “you have become irrelevant” (Gallagher 170). And other ridiculous moral perversions are liable to occur, like, for example, turning somebody’s desires into your own: “To sympathize for x’s desire for brandy is to desire brandy” (Ardal 46). In this instance, you could satisfy your thirst and leave the other person just as you found them—thirsty.

When Rick fuses at last, when he puts his hands on the handles of the Empathy Box, he gets something completely different from the Humean sympathy that Iran seems to experience for her fellow Mercerites. After an “impulse” moves him, instead of fusing into Mercer’s consciousness with all the others, he ends up speaking with Mercer directly. Notice that, in Iran’s model, the divine was actually entirely erased. She did not mention once who she and Rick were fusing with—the galactic savior Wilbur Mercer, who walks from the “tomb world,” reminiscent of the Valley of Dry Bones in Ezekiel 37, up a mountain to the “Killers” who stone him. Apparently she does not want to fuse with Mercer much at all; this is why she is grateful for Rick “taking the rock in my place. I really can’t stand it, being hit” (Dick 2007: 561)—and that is not, of course, exactly the sort of empathetic sentiment that Mercerism is supposed to foster: being glad somebody suffered instead of you. The distinction, again, is between fusion into a general, undifferentiated mass, and communion with another distinct being. Dick demonstrates the shallowness of the former, and the mystical complexity of the latter.

Both the drug in *Palmer Eldritch* and the Empathy Box also resemble the sacrament of communion in that they are mass-produced commodities. Jesus being the Word is mass-produced, and in two ways. In the first sense, the words of the Word, the Gospels, are mass produced and communicated as a text by the printing press; and in the second sense, Jesus’ body was mass produced by some of the first means of mechanical reproduction, a proto-waffle iron that made the wafers for the Eucharist. The mass production of the body is discussed in multiple places by the art historian Aden Kumler who refers to it as a multiple in a world of singulars, which is how it would have certainly appeared when it was, around the tenth century, among the *only* mass produced objects people would encounter. Obviously this mass production reminds a reader of *Electric Sheep* when Rachel Rosen describes herself, an android, as being stamped out on an assembly line like a bottle cap. So Jesus—and I am hardly the first person to say this—becomes a sort of model for a new modernity based upon mass production and mass communication. Ernst Kantorowicz long ago established that the mystical “corpus” of Christ provided a framework for thinking about quasi-persons, like the *persona ficta* that were monasteries in the thirteenth century, and even corporations today. There is a similarity, also,

between this ontological multiplicity of Christ and Marx's critique in *Kapital*, where he says that currency being interchangeable has the effect of objects losing their perceived materiality, elided by the interchangeable "value" of a commodity.

Moreover, Jesus' status as the Word also holds metaphysical importance for Dick. Philip K. Dick's theology—following Philo of Alexandria, he claims—holds that the world is information represented visually, and that the basic information of reality is the Bible, the Bible "transduced" into perceptual stimuli by the brain, making our visible reality a sort mass delusion which he concludes happens because the Left and Right hemispheres are split. This is a claim about human biology, but is again congruent with the story of the two universes birthed from the gestation sac. It is through the sympathy of the two hemispheres of the brain that Dick supposes that the reality that the Roman Empire never ended can be seen.

Philo of Alexandria was the first to figure out [Dick's dual-deity, Ditheon's] existence; he relied on his Jewish sources and on Greek sources (in particular Plato) as well. One could speak of our spatiotemporal world, then, being based on the Bible or even emanating from the Bible; the Bible is not a book like other books: it is not a description of this world, it is the source of this world, and this world, at all places and times, conforms covertly to the Bible; that is, strip away the steganographic covering from the physical world and you will find the world of the Bible—in fact you will find the Bible itself as a verbal text permeating reality and giving rise to it. The Bible is the information that is fed into the space-time universe, as if transduced into substantial reality. Thus the Bible is always the case—what is known in Bible study as typological application (E56).

Dick appears to be talking about the Philonic idea that, according to Gershom Scholem, "the *logos*, the divine 'word', acts as an intermediary in the process of Creation," which Scholem himself compares to a "demiurge" (Scholem 1941: 114). In the second book of the *VALIS* trilogy, *Divine Invasion*, the characters Emmanuel and Elias have an illegal Bible in the far future, one rendered as a three-dimensional, multicolored object that can be rotated; the different layers of information that are "laminated" over one another convey—maybe *create*—new texts that are as divinely inspired as those on the text's surface.

Dick thought the phenomenal world was actually the Bible rendered as an effervescent three-dimensional object viewed from different angles by different people. This is similar to another view attributed to Jewish Mystics by Scholem: "The Torah, in other words, does not consist merely of chapters, phrases and words; rather it is to be regarded as the living incarnation of the divine wisdom which eternally sends out new rays of light" (14). *Divine Invasion* also references Isaac Luria's 600,000 "faces" of the Torah—according to Scholem, the idea that there are 600,000 different Torahs, one for each person in Israel at the time of its reception by Israel from God. Dick of course was Episcopalean, baptized near Point Reyes while composing *Palmer Eldritch*, but his interest in Kabbalah reflects his lifelong religious syncretism, which also included the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* in *Ubik* and the *I Ching* in *Man in the High Castle*. But the notion that the world "emanates" from text is not foreign to Christian writing. Origen, influenced by Philo and Clement of Alexandria, in the *Commentary on John* claims that Jesus is the Gospel, that the Gospel is manifold because of Jesus' manifold goodness, and that Jesus is a Demiurge who existed before the world. This idea, that the world was made *through* Jesus, who is the Word and Gospel, persisted even after they lost the term "demiurge": The Nicene Creed describes Jesus as δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο, "through whom" or "by whom all things were made."

Similarly, in *Divine Invasion*, the world must be created by Emmanuel and Zina, who is the Torah, without whom Emmanuel can create nothing at all.

The Eucharist in particular seems to be paradigmatic of Dick's religious and philosophical thinking, appearing as a central metaphor in the *Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*. The term Dick is using in the above passage, "transduction," was coined by the acoustics engineer Leo Beranek in *Acoustic Measurements* in 1949, which sounds a lot like the word "transubstantiation" transmuted into the sci-fi context. So we can say that Dick expands the scope of transubstantiation beyond the confines of the Eucharist to encompass creation itself. Dick says so explicitly. In *VALIS*, Dick's double, Horselover Fat—Philip translated from Greek, Dick translated from German—thinks the deity Zebra is transubstantiating the Demiurgic, irrational universe into itself. God is "transubstantiating the world" (Dick 2009: 337), he says. As stated, the main instance of transubstantiation occurring in the world according to the standard Catholic view—think Aquinas—is in the Eucharist; there, by a miracle, the bread and wine of the sacrament are transformed into the body and blood of Christ, as Christ said they would be at the Last Supper, when he instituted the sacrament according to the synoptic gospels.

The Mass is, as Bossy said in 1983, a reenactment of a sacrifice. As the Book of Common Prayer states, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." But the sacrifice is not what's important for Dick—which is to say, not a lot hangs on his theory of atonement, i.e., his understanding of why Christ died on the cross. Dick does not ponder that question as deeply as he does the actual effect of the Eucharist itself, and why it's an important sacrament in the first place. We could call that his sacramental theory. And while Bossy doesn't elide these two—the atonement and the sacrament—explicitly, a reader not theologically versed in the distinction might come away with the belief that participation in the Mass, in the reenactment, necessarily gives one the benefit of that sacrifice, which is sometimes called sacramentalism. But sacramentalism is not entailed in substitutionary atonement. On the one hand, Zwingli's sacramental theory, memorialism, makes the sacrament into a mere symbol of faith. Calvin and Luther take a sort of middleground, though, as did Hooker, one of the great theologians of Dick's faith tradition, Anglicanism. In this latter view, the sacrament is not a bald requisite in its human form in the mass, and yet it is also not merely a symbol; it has an efficaciousness that, nevertheless, is not in itself salvific. And that efficaciousness is usually described as bringing the communicant into union with Christ. This Reformation idea of sacred union—sometimes *mystical* union or *unio mystica*—is what we need in order to understand Dick. The terminology Calvin uses for this mysterious experience usually involves Christ as the "head" of a physical body of which communicants in the Eucharist become members.

At the same time, Dick is superseding à Kempis in the sense that, by adopting a Gnostic and Neoplatonist metaphysics, sympathy with Christ—who is the Logos and the basis of all being—seemingly would begin a certain process of depersonalization and self-obliteration that resulted in one's subsumption back into the divine One. The deity is not multiplied, but the self annihilated. When Palmer Eldritch himself is multiplied—such as in an elevator in one harrowing scene—we ought to know that this is not the True God. Mercer, by contrast, does not multiply in the same way; he is diffuse and people share in him.

I see Philip K. Dick as a datapoint, just one, that begins to evidence that what eighteenth-century literary critics call the Cult of Sensibility has actually persisted through modernity—or at least in the works of Philip K. Dick fifty years ago. By modernity, I mean specifically the time including and after the great Sentimentalists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who arguably mark a sort of "paradigm shift" about how our culture thinks about morality. (Maybe this sort of interest in the time period is why he always names the odd brands of future snuff in his books after

eighteenth-century literary figures like Dr. Johnson, Dean Swift, and Mrs. Siddons—that last one possibly referring to the Coleridge Sonnet.) Morality became almost synonymous with sympathy in the West, the empathy of the Empathy Test, and has remained so—this is why the distant sympathy of empire, in Lynn Festa’s book *Sentimental Figures* for instance, comes in for such criticism, because it does not really work, and yet it is the ideal to which our society strives.

The Empathy Test does not test empathy; it tests *morality*. Empathy is both normative and the criterion for humanness in the text, and I would argue that it is precisely this logical elision that Dick finds troubling. The scenarios Deckard presents to Rachel in her Voigt-Kampff Empathy Scale involve things that should evoke a “morally shocking stimulus,” Rick says. “It can’t be controlled voluntarily” (Dick 2007: 37). The involuntary response he is looking for might remind us of the near-spontaneous communication of emotion in Hume. But there is clearly a normative component to empathy that Hume’s sympathy carefully avoids. Deckard says, “In a magazine you come across a full-page color picture of a nude girl... lying face down on a large and beautiful bearskin rug.” (39). In Dick’s world, most animals are extinct, but Dick’s readers themselves do not live in a world in which these things are morally unthinkable. In other words: They would all fail the test. Dick, therefore, is thrusting the reader toward the conclusion that sympathetic normativity is culturally constructed. Dick emphasizes, also, the need for morality to be sentimental, to be felt before it is known: “I can explain why she scored as android might,” says Mr. Rosen. “Rachel grew up aboard *Salander 3*. She was born on it; she spent fourteen of her eighteen years living off its tape library” (41). She might not have the “normal” responses because she’s from somewhere else, they argue. The issue, though, is not that she doesn’t know that animals are precious; she does. Rachel explains (to the reader as much as anybody) that “My verbal responses won’t count. It’s solely the eye-muscle and capillary reaction that you’ll use as indices” (38). Deckard is not testing whether or not Rachel knows what is wrong—in the context of the test, the object is always morally wrong—but only whether the wrongness is felt. In other words, the test searches out felt normativity.

It is notably similar to scenes in *A Sentimental Journey* in which the Parson Yorick experiences positive vibrations from moral sentiments. He wishes the King well, for example. In that case and in this, the “empathy” being tested, so to speak, is without object. Rachel does not sympathize with the bear. The bear is dead, and feels nothing; Rachel has never been dead, and does not know what it feels like. It would be overcomplicated, as well, to suggest that she is meant to sympathize with the woman and to feel shame the way Rachel must think she should. Most importantly: Anybody could think up a scenario that more obviously tested empathy than this, and certainly Philip K. Dick could have. Instead, Deckard is testing for a Hutchesonian, aesthetic aversion to immorality, as Lovelace had in *Clarissa* when he went to rape his victim and found his body unwilling. Empathy is a stand-in for an innate moral response, and Dick is frustrating the reader with the lexical slippage between empathy and morality.

Only Hume and Smith used sympathy as the primary mechanism to explain where morality comes from; both Shaftesbury and Hutcheson—the first generation of sentimental moral philosophers, sometimes called the “epistemic sentimentalists”—relied still on a divinely implanted “moral sense” common to all humans. Hume and Smith are called “constitutive” or “metaphysical sentimentalists” because the sympathetic process constitutes morality just as much as it helps one identify what is right and wrong. Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, by contrast, claimed that morality was mind-independent, and the moral sense just indicated to the individual what that mind-independent reality was. Shaftesbury reached this conclusion partially because he believed motivation was based upon “affections,” and that affections could not be derived from reason. He needed another affection, like hunger, to provide the

impulse. It is not the case, according to Shaftesbury, that a rational understanding of the world will lead to moral behavior, nor that ignorance will lead to immoral behaviors. Reason has a marginal role in “moral cognition.” Thus “A Mistake therefore in Fact being no Cause or Sign of ill Affection, can be no Cause of Vice” (2.34). Hutcheson, similarly, in an argument with Gilbert Burnet, makes the point that “about ultimate ends, reason is completely silent” (Gill 158). Here Anne Hawthorne in *Palmer Eldritch* would have benefited from reading the copy of Thomas à Kempis she took with her to Mars: “Happy is the man who is instructed by Truth itself, not by signs and passing words” (Kempis 30).

Anti-intellectualism runs through the *Imitatio Christi*. “I would far rather feel contrition than be able to define it” (27). But this anti-intellectualism might just be humility regarding humans’ ability to seize on divine wisdom; and morality *is* divine wisdom. We need the Holy Spirit. Dick would later see “a semi-living bioplasmic field, sentient and deathless.... like red-and-gold shining mercury.... When it pours into a person, which it can do and does do on rare occasions he claims that ‘The Holy Spirit’ entered him” (E4:135). I say the epistemic sentimentalists “still” relied on a divinely implanted moral sense because this (what Dick would call) theolepsy occurs in the writings of Augustine and Aquinas and other theologians: According to arguments going back to the Pelagian heresy, humans cannot be good on their own, but require the intervention of God in the form of the Holy Spirit operating within them, changing their impulses away from those inherited from the Fall. This operation is usually termed “Grace.” The need for God also often extends to knowledge of right and wrong itself—this, of course, is what revelation is for. One cannot derive, in Hume’s terminology, an *ought* from an *is*; strangely, I think Augustine agrees on this point. Much less can one be motivated toward an ought without divine help.

By contrast, empathy as the Empathy Test implicitly defines it is impossible. The book’s Test is haunted by the specter of a “flattening of affect” in “schizophrenic human patients” (460), which frightened Dick enough to return as a specter in *VALIS* (Dick 2009: 181). Pris later suggests that maybe all the androids are just “schizophrenic, with defective emotional lives—flattening of affect. And we have group hallucinations” (Dick 2007: 459). Dick asks his readers to consider, then, if everything in the novel is backward, and actually there are no androids, and instead the characters all exist in a fascist regime that violently orders human emotions around empathy. “Schizophrenic human patients” are hunted and killed by bounty hunters like Rick Deckard.

Utilitarianism, which vies with sympathy as the real moral theory of the modern West, finds its basis in the sentimental moralists. The basic dictum of utilitarianism, “the greatest happiness for the greatest numbers,” was originally drawn from Hutcheson’s *Inquiry*—one of the first texts in the canon of sentimental moralism, which claims that said dictum is actually one written innately on the hearts of all human beings in the form of “moral sense” implanted by God. The difference between utilitarianism and sympathy, of course, as philosophers like Robert Nozick or—less libertarian—John Rawls and Derek Parfit would tell us is that utilitarianism does not take the individual into account in its calculations. According to Nozick and Rawls, utilitarianism denies basic rights to human beings and concerns itself only with aggregate outcomes. For Parfit, there is no individuation because identity is an illusion produced by memory; and utilitarianism demonstrates this through its “repugnant” and “absurd” conclusions. All this demonstrates that utilitarianism does not solve the basic contradictions in the sympathetic model of morality, and those same logical defects inherent to the sympathetic model—those that Gallagher and Ardal discuss—are still latent in the problems of identity that plague utilitarian theory.

My historical claim, that sympathy and sentimental utilitarianism are paradigmatic moral theories in modernity, implies that morality used to be something else, something that we moderns struggle to even think of. My suggestion is that sympathy with Christ, meaning imitating Christ, makes

one merciful like Christ, which is actually the basic moral principle inculcated by Christian *praxis*, not sympathy with others. Emblematic of the fact that sympathy was not viewed as, say, *godly*, is that God could not sympathize; God could not suffer *at all*, because of what was known as divine impassibility. Jennifer Herdt traces the shift toward a sympathetic God—one who can suffer, and therefore suggests that moral perfection would indeed come with widespread fellow-feeling, not just sympathy for Christ—to Ralph Cudworth in the seventeenth century. Herdt then indicates that two strands of thought took up Cudworth’s argument: first, Restoration divines and eighteenth-century sentimentalists took up the idea of sympathy as a moral framework within the human domain, “secularizing” (Herdt 389), she says, an originally religious idea; and second, nineteenth- and twentieth-century Anglican theologians who turned to reject divine impassibility entirely.

And why should theologians suddenly change their minds about the nature of God and His relation to creation? God did not change; our culture did. “Our sentimentalist heritage has conditioned us to think that love is not love without sympathy,” Herdt says (394). In the works of Philip K. Dick, modern sympathy is called “fusion”—it is technologically or psychotropically mediated and variously conceals evil demons and the most violent impulses of Fallen Man. We have already discussed the use of fusion in *Electric Sheep*. In *Maze of Death*, the story at the end of the novel is revealed to be an AI-generated delusion; in reality, they are not colonists on Delmak-O, but have been using “polyencephalic fusion” to create differing scenarios so to distract themselves from the fact that they are all on a derelict interplanetary vessel called the Persus-9 hurtling through space for eternity. They awaken from what appears to have been a nightmare: The characters did not sympathetically “fuse” but turned against one another, murdering each other until none remained. (Agatha Christie’s *And Then There Were None* is almost certainly an inspiration.) The spacefarers conclude this was a horrible accident, and decide to re-enter fusion such that they do not eat through their limited resources. However, readers quickly realize that the story is merely starting over again—with colonists once again setting out for Delmak-O, where they will surely suffer and die once again.

In Dick’s anthropology, similar to the Augustinian, the human being is barred from moral goodness in the absence of their transcendence. This is in stark contrast to Adam Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, in which a sort of utopia might arise from the invisible hand of people’s sympathies for one another—they cut out the middleman of Christ and feel the pain of their fellow-man. Hume’s theories as well as those of Adam Fergusson all suggest that society might be able to mechanically achieve greater ends. Dick, if he’d ever commented on Smith, would in all likelihood have called this a naive mischaracterization of human nature.

4.2 Annihilation

Lorenzo DiTamasso writes, “There can be little doubt that the complex and systematic gnostic Christian fantasies of Philip K. Dick’s later writings find their first manifestation in his early fiction” (DiTamasso 62). Likewise, Howard Canaan quite cleverly compares the Nazis in *Man in the High Castle* to the Gnostic Archons, tyrannical, metaphysical rulers who keep us deluded; these Gnostic themes, Canaan finds, are present “twelve years before Dick’s dark Gnostic vision and eighteen years before he wrote *VALIS*” (Canaan 2002: 397). Umberto Rossi has spoken about the “critical embarrassment” (Rossi 243) over Dick’s later novels. Gabriel McKee calls the avoidance of Dick’s

theology “selective scholarship” and claims that “Dick’s religious thought is often grossly oversimplified” (McKee 27); “Since these and other scholars approach religious themes in Dick’s work from the arena of literature rather than religious studies, they seem to be ignorant of the controversy around the terms they use to categorize Dick’s religious thought” (28-29)—here in reference to the term “Gnosis,” which can be used flippantly in the secondary literature, and without much explanation; it also glosses over the many ways in which Dick is developing a unique perspective. McKee also discusses the insistence on the part of Darko Suvin that science fiction and religion must always be opposed to one another.

In my reading of the secondary literature, it seems that Dick’s religiosity has been treated as symptomatic primarily of late-in-life madness, not as a coherent worldview which, though it changed over time, can be described in terms that illuminate the novels and stories. Darko Suvin asks: “What can Dick’s late novels say to those of us who are not interested in theology as believers or even near-believers, but who are prepared to see theology and cosmogony as an interesting and perhaps highly important symptom of earthly relationships?” (Suvin 112). Fredric Jameson proposes a tripartite division of the corpus, with the effect that we “disconnect the religious thematics from the earlier works” (Jameson 2005: 363). Even Kim Stanley Robinson’s dissertation on Dick, one of the first deep engagement with Dick’s works, finds ways around direct, religious interpretation: “Dick’s fictional worlds are metaphors for our own culture” (xi), Robinson writes. Part of Robinson’s justification for this claim is that Dick repeatedly attempted a shift to more respectable and literary “realist” fiction, but was always stuck in the sci-fi “ghetto.” Obviously it is not the case that one cannot see theology as a “symptom” of something else, as a tool of social commentary or otherwise, but I disagree with Suvin, for example, when he says that a direct engagement with Dick’s theology would be “intransitive” (112). Robinson’s method has the unfortunate result of nullifying the religious meanings of the texts, by reducing them, literally, to materialisms. It is possible that this is why scholarship has struggled to deal with *VALIS*. Fredric Jameson acknowledges that Mercerism is founded not upon empathy but “the ritual of the ‘imitation’” (Jameson 2005: 366), but he does not follow the idea.

Emotions are dastardly, transhuman, divine invaders, stripping us of our selfhood and turning us into Eldritch automata. The critic Lynn Festa claims that in Hume “Emotions possess such agency.... The passions are not idiosyncratic but shared, even collectively maintained; they enter from the outside rather than issuing from within....”; and that “Sympathy forges connections independent of will” (Festa 23). However, in Dick this sympathy is preferably divine; all sympathy derives from sympathy for Mercer, or Eldritch, or Jesus. In Hume, by contrast, the process is strictly mechanical. He says that “However instantaneous this change of the idea into an impression may be,”—i.e., the process of sympathy reviving an idea such that you feel it, too—“it proceeds from certain views and reflections, which will not escape the strict scrutiny of a philosopher, tho’ they may the person himself, who makes them” (2.1.11.3). Sympathy appears instantaneous, but it isn’t. The emotions are not alive; they have no will of their own. Instead they resemble electricity moving through a circuit. But in Philip K. Dick, ideas—information—are a living “plasmate” that invades a human host, to use some of the verbiage of *VALIS*. And this is consistent with the Christian notion that, without God, we would be unable to act well; the Holy Spirit is what provides us with the motivation. The other problem of course is that Hume’s system cannot be rendered normative without committing a naturalistic fallacy—claiming that something is “good” because it is “pleasurable,” according to G. E. Moore, a major problem with utilitarianism. Instead of sympathy for Christ, the Empathy Test displaces Christ, and declares generalized sympathy the criterion for moral thought. Recall that the other example of the complete

displacement of Christ from the sympathetic process was the experiment in *Maze of Death* in which the fused participants of a group hallucination all brutally murdered one another.

The failure of sympathy is also the plot of Phil and Fat's autofictional dialectic. Philip K. Dick's own brain has split down the middle, with one half being sane—Phil—and the other *in-sane*—Horselover Fat. These two, in a mystical fashion that defies the logic of the plot, develop a discourse. And, as the cosmogony in §47 foretells, the insane one is annihilated on sight by the incarnation of VALIS, Sophia. Then, when Sophia is accidentally killed—like Christ—Horselover Fat is reborn. The novel does not expressly indicate that this is *good*, the prophecy coming true; and, in fact, all the characters forget, as Sophia tells them they will, their commission—that they are to watch and wait for her return. Horselover Fat seems insane again. But this time he isn't insane; he's the product of Phil's mitosis as was predicted in the *Tractates*.

Yet the dialectic does not continue until the novel's sequel, *Divine Invasion*. Emmanuel—the incarnation of Yah—exists in dialogue with a new incarnation of Sophia, Zina, in a far future world with deep space colonization near Fomalhaut. This dialectic is the one presented in the Nag Hammadi texts, notably the *Apocryphon of John*, in which Wisdom as the feminine aspect of God, subverts the vengeful will of masculine HaShem to save Noah from the Flood. The dialectic therefore in Gnostic texts often takes on a gendered or sexual valence as the feminine contends with the masculine. Dick plays into this sexual dualism and dialectic with the term Shekhinah, the “dwelling” of God in the world, as another name for Zina/Sophia in *Divine Invasion*. Scholem refers to this dualism—not an ontological dualism that opposed good and evil but one that opposes two aspects of the divine and gives that dualism a gendered aspect— “one of the most important and lasting innovations of Kabbalism” despite the “obvious difficulty of reconciling it with the conception of the absolute unity of God” (Scholem 1997: 229). So the brilliance of *VALIS* is that it dramatizes the dialectic of Gnostic heresy by means of a dialectic in his own brain between himself and his own mental illness, which simultaneously indicates the mystic structure of the entire universe.

Now imagine that the dialectic was also sympathy; that the failed dialectic between Form I and Form II is actually a failure of empathy. This is not Humean sympathy, but the precondition of unification, or henosis, of these two divorced hemispheres of the Brain, because reality, conceived of as two universes conversing with each other, is fallen because the hemispheres are not working in tandem. Dick seems to want to take this idea and translate it into the transubstantiation of the Eucharist—to claim that the process that occurs in the Eucharist and the process of intellection in the soul described by Plotinus are actually the same process that turns the whole world into the One, or into Jesus, or God. This is the sympathy of the Christian with Christ becoming like Christ, or Rick Deckard becoming Mercer, or Barney Mayerson becoming Palmer Eldritch. Henosis is the final end of cosmic sympathy. Hume's sympathy erases the person we are sympathizing with; we take their emotion and make it our own. In Dick's sympathy, like in Plotinus' metaphysics, instead we are annihilated.

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