Introduction
MEDIEVAL RELIGIOUS DEVOTION

Medieval religious devotion is a term that has been used to describe the intense and intimate relationship between the medieval faithful and their religious practices. This relationship was characterized by a deep sense of personal devotion, a desire for connection with the divine, and a commitment to spiritual growth. The concept of religious devotion has been central to the development of Western Christian thought and practice, and it continues to be an important aspect of religious life today.

The roots of medieval religious devotion can be traced back to the early Christian period, when the Church was just beginning to take shape. In the early centuries, the Christian faithful were encouraged to develop a personal relationship with God, and this relationship was often characterized by practices such as prayer, fasting, and penance. These practices were seen as a way to grow closer to God and to deepen one's understanding of the faith.

As the Church grew and developed, so too did the concept of religious devotion. In the Middle Ages, the idea of personal devotion became even more central to the life of the faithful. This was due in large part to the development of the monastic tradition, which emphasized the importance of personal prayer and spiritual growth. Monastic communities became centers of religious devotion, and many of the most important religious figures of the time were associated with these communities.

The concept of religious devotion continued to develop in the Renaissance and the Reformation, and it has had a lasting impact on the development of Western Christian thought and practice. Today, the concept of religious devotion remains an important aspect of religious life, and it continues to shape the way in which people relate to God and to each other.
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The development of the English language has been a complex and ongoing process. This page contains a discussion on the evolution of pronunciation, which has significantly influenced the development of the language over time. The page also mentions the importance of early records and the role of scholars in preserving and documenting these developments. The text suggests that the study of early records is crucial for understanding the historical context of the language and its evolution over centuries.
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will always do it, and will never cease from doing it. The same will forever be considered. For God's will is always to be done, and it is never to be altered. And the power of God is always to be exercised, and it is never to be diminished. And the wisdom of God is always to be sought, and it is never to be neglected. And the knowledge of God is always to be pursued, and it is never to be forgotten. And the love of God is always to be cherished, and it is never to be abandoned.

The Cloud Author and the Via Negativa

The Cloud Author, or "Luminous Cloud," as he is sometimes called, is a figure of great importance in the history of the Church. He is credited with having written the Cloud of God, which is one of the most important works of the Cloud of God. The Cloud of God is considered to be one of the most significant works of the Cloud of God, and it is widely regarded as a masterpiece of Cloud of God literature. The Cloud of God is a work of great depth and complexity, and it is filled with profound insights into the nature of God and the Cloud of God. It is a work that is widely studied and admired by scholars and Cloud of God enthusiasts alike. The Cloud of God is a work that is widely regarded as a masterpiece of Cloud of God literature, and it is one of the most important works of the Cloud of God.
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A thorough study of the subject of union with God, the other English devotion, was written as an exposition of the minds of the English people; whereas the other English devotion does not exist.

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The English devotion is the expression of the mind in union with God. It is a thorough study of the subject of union with God.
introduction
As we have seen in England the Cornish country was an age of deep exploration and expansion. The Cornish country has always been a land of contradictions. On the one hand, it is a land of ancient traditions and a rich cultural heritage. On the other hand, it is a land of modern industry and a growing economy. The Cornish people have always been a people of the land, and yet they have also been a people of the sea. The Cornish coast is one of the most beautiful in Britain, and yet it is also one of the most rugged and inhospitable.

In conclusion, the Cornish country is a land of contradictions. It is a land of ancient traditions and modern industry, of beauty and hardship. It is a land that has always been a land of struggle, and yet it is also a land of hope and possibility. The Cornish people are a people of great spirit, and they have always been a people who have refused to be定义或被定义.
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The introduction opens the door and invites the reader into the chapter, presenting the topic and outlining the purpose of the chapter. This introduction sets the stage for the subsequent discussion, highlighting the significance and relevance of the chapter's content. The introduction is designed to capture the reader's attention and prepare them for the information that follows.

Chapter 1: The Context

This chapter provides a historical and theoretical framework, setting the context for the subsequent discussions. It includes a comprehensive overview of the key concepts and issues related to the topic, establishing the relevance and importance of the study. The chapter also identifies gaps in the existing literature and sets the stage for the contributions of the research.

Chapter 2: Methodology

This chapter describes the research methods and procedures used in the study. It provides a detailed account of the data collection and analysis techniques, ensuring transparency and credibility. The methodology section is crucial for establishing the validity and reliability of the research findings.

Chapter 3: Results

This chapter presents the findings of the study, supported by empirical evidence and data analysis. It includes a thorough examination of the results, discussing the implications and implications of the findings for the field.

Chapter 4: Discussion

This chapter discusses the results in the context of the existing literature, highlighting the significance of the findings and their contributions to the field. It also identifies areas for further research and potential applications of the study.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the key findings and conclusions of the study, emphasizing the implications for theory and practice. It also provides recommendations for future research and applications of the findings.

References

The references section lists all the sources cited in the study, adhering to the required citation style. This section is essential for acknowledging the contributions of previous researchers and providing a basis for further inquiry.
The Challenged Downward of Extending Body is Droped on anv.

Language & Tone & Practice

In order to mean what is meant, we must not make the proposition, in the form of a question. If we do not understand what the question means, we cannot answer it. If we do not understand the answer, we cannot give it. If we do not understand the answer, we cannot give it. If we do not understand the answer, we cannot give it.

For the Challenged Downward of Extending Body is Droped on anv.

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More important, the Cloud author repeatedly chooses language that is concrete in reference, and evokes the very world of the body and the senses that it might be supposed he would do his best to exclude. This is natural enough, no doubt, when discussing sin, itself a hindrance to union with God. He urges the would-be contemplative to 'focus on sin as a lump, you do not know what, nothing other than yourself'. And the revolting notion of sin 'thus coagulated into a lump' (Cloud, chapter 36), shapeless yet irredeemably concrete, and inseparable from your very being, is frequently repeated in subsequent chapters, and even elaborated, as when he refers to 'this foul, stinking lump of sin, as it were united and coagulated into the substance of your being' (chapter 40). Perhaps too it is not surprising that the author should exploit rather than minimize the concreteness of language when writing about false contemplatives, in a way that is intensely bodily precisely in order to make the point that they mistake the bodily for the spiritual. There are many examples of this, so many as to arouse the suspicion that he took more pleasure than he would have admitted in his satirical comedy at the expense of those deceived by false teachings:

Some people are so burdened with strange and foolish habits in their bodily conduct that when they hear something they twist their heads peculiarly to one site, and up go their chins. They let their mouths gape open, as if they could hear with them and not with their ears. Some, when about to speak, point with their fingers or at their fingers, or at their own chests, or the chests of those they are addressing. Some can neither sit still, stand still, nor lie still, without either wagging their feet or else doing something with their hands. Some row with their arms as they are speaking, as if they needed to swim over a great stretch of water. Some are always smiling and laughing at every word they speak, as if they were flirtatious girls or silly juggling jesters in search of attention. (Cloud, chapter 53)

But it is not only to refer to sin and error that the Cloud author heightens the concreteness of his language. He does the same when evoking those very movements of God and the soul that he repeatedly insists are not concrete. In the first chapter of the Cloud he reminds his disciple of how God first summoned him — 'And so in his grace he kindled your desire, and fastened to it a leash of longing' — and assures him that 'you can learn to lift up the foot of your love and step towards the state and level of life that is perfect'. Later (chapter 4) he urges him to notice how contemplation begins, 'For, truly understood, it is just a sudden and as it were unforeseen stirring, springing swiftly to God like a spark from a coal.' That word stirring, along with other forms of the verb stir, is very frequently repeated throughout the work to refer to a spiritual impulse or movement. The author comments on this himself:

Know well that those who apply themselves to the work of contemplation... even if they read 'lift up' or 'go in', and even though the work may be described here as 'stirring', need to take very careful note that this stirring does not involve reaching in a bodily sense either up or in, and is not any such stirring as from one place to another... For the perfection of this contemplative work is so pure and spiritual in nature that, if it is well and truly understood, it must be regarded as far removed from any stirring and from any place (chapter 59).

When translating I was often tempted to replace the Middle English storing with the Latinate and more abstract 'impulse', but to do so would lose just the concreteness that the author warns against yet keeps on evoking. Another word frequently repeated in the original is put, usually translated here as 'push' or 'thrust'. The disciple is warned to let the initiative come from God:

He only wants you to watch him and let him alone; and guard the windows and door against flies and enemy attacks. And if you are willing to do this, you need only thrust [put] at him with humble prayer, and he will soon help you. Thrust [put] away then, and show how you acquit yourself. He is quite ready, and is only waiting for you. But what are you to do, and how are you to thrust [put] (chapter 2)?

And elsewhere the author repeatedly refers to a secret push or thrust of love, and to pushing or thrusting down thoughts that arise from intellectual curiosity — again language that irresistibly evokes bodily effort. Then there is the leading image of the whole work, the cloud of unknowing that stands between the contemplative and God, with its
counterpart, the cloud of forgetting that he must set between himself and everything that is bodily and can be known. A cloud is more intangible than a lump, to be sure, yet these clouds are made more tangible by the concreteness of what the disciple is told to do with them, for example: ‘And you must step above it stoutly but deftly, with a devout and delightful stirring of love, and struggle to pierce that darkness above you; and bear on that thick cloud of unknowing with a sharp dart of longing love . . . ’ (chapter 6). Here, as often, concreteness undoes itself: how do you set about beating on a cloud with a sharp dart? ‘Since there is no nonmetaphoric language to oppose to metaphors here, one must . . . multiply antagonistic metaphors.’ Though many more illustrations of the concreteness of the Cloud’s language might be given, one must suffice, a passage where, in a simple, straightforward way, the world of the bodily senses is evoked in order to be dismissed, and yet evoked so vividly that we cannot in fact dismiss it:

With your eyes you cannot conceive of anything except by its length or breadth, its smallness or largeness, its roundness or squareness, its distance or nearness, and its colour; with your ears, only by its noise or some kind of sound; with your nose, only by perfume or stench; with your taste, only by sour or sweet, salt or fresh, bitter or pleasing; and with your touch, only by hot or cold, hard or soft, rounded or sharp. And truly neither God nor spiritual things possess any of these qualities or quantities. So leave behind your outward senses, and do not work with them, either within or without (chapter 70).

We are told to leave the senses behind, but that is just what the language used will not allow us to do.

This powerful concreteness of language, and the way it stands in apparent opposition to the work’s doctrine, have been remarked by scholars, but they have usually been content to note the opposition as a paradox. The author’s greatest modern editor, for example, having illustrated the concrete strength and pithiness of the author’s language, simply remarks: ‘It is unexpected that teaching which above all urges abstraction from the shapes of reason and imagination should be couched so pre-eminently in concrete imagery and emotive diction.’

The paradox might be put more strongly still. Vernacular writing, as was mentioned above, is associated with speech, and the author constructs his work as a kind of spoken dialogue, in which questions and objections are put in the mouth of the disciple and answered by the teacher. This emphasis on speech necessarily intensifies the inappropriateness of the mode of expression to the doctrine expressed. He insists that ‘time, place, and body, these three should be forgotten in all spiritual work’ (Cloud, chapter 59), but speech cannot exist without time, place and body. It is a form of communication occupying real time, produced (before the invention of recording devices) by bodily organs, in an actual place, between people placed in relation to each other — one here, the other there; one ‘I’, the other ‘thou’. The author continues: ‘And so take care when engaged in contemplative activity not to use the bodily ascension of Christ as a model for straining your imagination upwards in a bodily sense when praying, as if you wished to climb above the moon . . . ’ In the original there are more second-person pronouns than in my translation, and the pronouns are singular, the familiar thou rather than the formal you (functioning somewhat as tu and vous still do in French): ‘And therefore beware in this work that thou take none ensample at the bodily ascension of Criste, for to streyne thin ymaginacion in the tym of thi preier bodely upwars, as thou woldest clyme aboven the mone . . . ’ It is not just that ‘as if thou wouldst climb above the moon’ invites us to imagine an ascent through space, but the repeated addresses to the recipient as thou evoke the situation of speech, of which time, place and body are necessarily parts as they are not of writing: I here, thou there, with a space between the two bodies.

Here it may be useful to compare the Cloud author with his contemporary, Hilton. Like the Cloud author, Hilton feels the need to resist the literalism, associated with Rolle’s enormously popular writings, that identifies contemplative experience with bodily sensation; but at the same time he wants to affirm the truth of analogies between the spiritual realm and daily experience in the material world. In The Scale of Perfection, Hilton writes that ‘God is light’, but immediately adds,

This light shall not be understood as for bodily light, but it is understood thus . . . . Right as the sun showeth to the bodily eyes itself and all bodily thing
by it; right so soothfastness, that is God, showeth to the reason of the soul itself first, and by itself all other ghostly thing that needeth to be known of a soul. (II:13)

So, though God cannot be literally understood as 'bodily light', to think about light as we experience it with our bodily senses can help towards an understanding of our experience of God. And Hilton beautifully exemplifies how our daily experience of light can illuminate (so to put it) the special experience of contemplation. He sees the long process of achieving contemplation as a journey towards Jerusalem, and, imagining the heavenly city as an earthly city, explains that, as you approach it, 'by small sudden lightnings that glide out through small cannies from that city thou shalt be able to see it from far, or [before] that thou come thereto' (II:25). That was surely what a real medieval city would have looked like from a distance at night: not the modern city's great glow staining half the sky, but fleeting glimpses of candlelight caught through small windows. And, on the other hand, Hilton points out that in mysticism there can be false lights, as when 'the feigned sun showeth him not but atwixt two black rainy clouds: then, because that the sun is near, there shineth out from the clouds a light as it were the sun, and is none' (II:26). Any medieval (or more recent) Englishman would be familiar with those black rainy clouds and their deceptive effect. The Scale of Perfection is among the greatest works of poetic prose in English, and much of its power derives from recurrent evocation of the familiar sensory world as a generous source of analogy for the distant realm of the divine.

The Cloud of Unknowing is also a great work of prose, but it conveys its different doctrine by different means. Consider a passage in which the Cloud author too evokes light and darkness. He is referring to the 'darkness, and as it were a cloud of unknowing' that stand between the would-be contemplative and God:

Do not suppose, because I call it a darkness or a cloud, that it is a cloud condensed out of the vapours that float in the air, or a darkness like that in your (thin) house at night when your (thin) candle is out. By intellectual ingenuity you (thou) can imagine such a darkness or cloud brought before your (thin) eyes on the brightest day of summer, just as, conversely, in the darkest night of winter you (thou) can imagine a clear shining light. Give up such errors; that is not what I mean. For when I say 'darkness' I mean an absence of knowing, in the sense that everything you (thou) do not know, or have forgotten, is dark to you (there), because you (thou) cannot see it with your (thi) mind's eye. And for this reason it is not called a cloud in the air but a cloud of unknowing that is between you (there) and your (thi) God (chapter 4).

Do not suppose that I mean darkness like that in your house at night when your candle is out! How could the medieval reader or listener, living in a world of night-time darkness lit only by candles or fire, fail to imagine what he is told not to imagine, when it is so vividly evoked? – first the candle, then its absence. The imagination is stimulated to draw on the memories of daily experience stored in daily language. And the contradiction is heightened by the intensity of the deictic effect: I call it, thine house, thy candle, and the imperative verbs summoning up an I-thou situation (time, place and body) in which the imagination is being forbidden to operate as it is being compelled to operate. And this is the epitome of the via negativa, for there can be no negative theology without something to negate. This is indeed paradox, but it is not just paradox as a rhetorical figure; it has fundamental doctrinal implications.

As my earlier quotations from Wittgenstein and Derrida may have suggested, the focus on language in philosophical writings of a more recent era can help us to recognize how important the struggle with language is in the Cloud author's work. Wittgenstein also wrote that 'Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language', and one of his commentators explains:

The philosopher is driven by a passionate desire to understand the limits of language, and, when he tries to satisfy this desire, the first thing that inevitably happens is that his mind is filled with images which, though they are delusive, have a primitive naturalness which he must experience. Then, and only then, can he go on to achieve the understanding that he seeks.

The Cloud author too is driven by a passionate desire to understand the limits of language; we see this in the determined ingenuity with which
he uncovers the bodiliness that limits the applicability to God of even the smallest and most neutral-seeming words, even prepositions, and the penetration with which he reveals the metaphors built into language that seems commonplace and literal, such as ‘I’ll stand by you’. But the danger of ordinary language can be grasped only if its bewitchment is actually experienced, and that is what happens when we read the Cloud author’s works. To give another, very simple example: some people mistakenly say, he remarks, that you should not undertake the contemplative life unless your bodily needs are provided for in advance. ‘They say that God sends the cow, but not by the horn; and truly they say wrong of God’ (Cloud, chapter 23). First our mind is filled with the engaging ‘primitive naturalness’ of this homely proverb, which is a more vivid way of saying ‘God helps those who help themselves’; then it is snatched away from us, leaving an empty space, to be filled by an understanding that is not merely natural. In ways like this, we can gain through language an awareness of language’s limits, and thus perhaps a faint sense of the shape of what transcends those limits, finding, as Derrida puts it, ‘the crevice through which the yet unnameable glimmer beyond the closure can be glimpsed’. In the Cloud author’s work, language is neither a transparent medium nor an obscuring cloak for theological thought; it is the very means by which theological thought operates. The author uses the materiality of the vernacular as a skilful wrestler uses the strength of his opponent in order to defeat him. And that suggests that he might have chosen to write in English rather than Latin for a reason other than the needs of the individual whom he initially addressed. One of his favourite words is ‘work’, by which he usually means the practical discipline of contemplation that he aims to teach. This term has the advantage of implying that the apparently idle contemplative, Mary as opposed to Martha, is also a labourer in the Lord’s vineyard; at the same time, ‘this work’ can also refer to the written work in which the discipline is taught. (In my translation, to avoid misunderstanding, the bare word is often expanded to ‘the work of contemplation’ or ‘contemplative activity’.) But the work of the Cloud is not just something to be done by the reader who wants to achieve contemplation; it is also the work of mystical theology, and it is done in the text itself, in that wrestling-match with language, even when the goal of the work is to point towards the realm of transcendence that lies outside language.

I do not mean to imply that the writings translated in this volume mark the author’s victory over language. On the contrary, though he is a master of language, his mastery, like that of other poets, sometimes involves relinquishing mastery, allowing language to release potentialities of which he is not fully in control and sometimes perhaps not fully aware. I close this introduction with a closer look at the richly enigmatic relation between orthodoxy and heresy in the language in which he writes about images. An important feature of Lollardy was opposition to the use of images – crucifixes and pictures and statues of saints – in religious worship. Anne Hudson writes that ‘the refusal of honour to images of saints, and the associated disrespect for pilgrimages, came to be perhaps the commonest Lollard belief’, and she notes the prominence of this topic in university disputations in the Cloud author’s time. The Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards nailed to the door of Westminster Hall in 1395 include the statement that ‘prayers and offerings made to blind crosses and to deaf images of wood and of stone are closely related to idolatry’. Hudson notes too that ‘The extent to which condemnation of all images was identified with Wyclifism ... is revealed by the oath extracted from four Nottingham heretics in 1395 that they would “worship images by praying and offering to them in the worship of the saints that they are made to resemble”’. The fear of iconoclasm extended so far, then, that the worship of images could be required as a proof of orthodoxy, something not just acceptable but compulsory.

That makes all the more interesting the passage in chapter 2 of Mystical Theology in which the author uses a concrete example to illustrate how the via negativa applies to our attempt to ‘see and know ... him who is above all seeing and knowing’. (The ME original of this passage is given in the appendix.) The example is that of a man who wishes to carve out of a solid block of wood an image corresponding to one that exists only in his imagination. That, he writes, is ‘how we must conduct ourselves in this high work of theology’ in order to make ‘an image of God’s naked nature’, because to our understanding
he is never clearly revealed except as something covered up and enwrapped and overlaid with innumerable material bodies and kinds of intelligible substance, with many marvellous fanciful images coagulated around him, as it were, in an encumbering lump, as the image in the illustration given above is hidden in the huge, thick, solid block. In the divine work of contemplation we must, with the dexterity of grace, skillfully pare completely away this encumbering lump, coagulated in this way out of innumerable unlikenesses, as a powerful hindrance antagonistic to the pure hidden sight of God.

The illustration of the statue concealed within the block and waiting to be revealed by the removal of all that is extraneous to it was not original, either with the Cloud author or with Pseudo-Dionysius. It is important, though, to read the author as the poet he is, and attend not just to the idea but to what happens in the language used to express it. In Pseudo-Dionysius’s Greek, the block is of marble, but our author has brought it into a dramatic and concrete medieval English context by making it of wood. ‘Here is a man’ with a block of wood ‘lying in front of him’, a ‘huge, thick, solid block’ the centre of which has to be determined by that familiar carpenter’s tool, the plumb line – and our imaginations are incited to build up a picture of a material situation. But the author is well aware that, the more vividly he evokes the situation in its full physicality, the more it acts against the idea belonging to ‘this high work of theology’ that he wants it to exemplify. It is a ‘crude (boistous) illustration’ – and boistous, meaning coarse, gross, thick, crude, simple, is a word he often employs to refer to the deceptive physicality and bodiliness that hinder us from approaching God in his naked nature. Thus, paradoxically, the illustration is ‘contrary in nature to what it illustrates’. When the ground of the comparison is explained, once more the concreteness of the vernacular language, so different from the abstraction of Latin, is used to evoke what prevents our understandings, limited as they are by their bodily housing, from approaching God’s true nature. God is ‘covered up and enwrapped and overlaid’ with material supplied by our limited senses and intellects, ‘coagulated around him, as it were, in an encumbering lump (kumbros dlog), and that phrase kumbros dlog, so evocative of disgusting clinging and frustrating hindrance, is repeated in the next sentence.

Here it may be worth digressing for a moment to observe that a sense of the difference between the Cloud author’s attitude towards God and that of his contemporary Julian of Norwich emerges especially strongly from their uses of such imagery of covering and enwrapping. Julian writes, for example, that God ‘is our clothing, wrapping us for love, embracing and enclosing us for tender love’ (Revelations, Long Text, chapter 5), while for the Cloud author enwrapping and enclosing evoke not motherly tenderness but hindrance and defelment from which we must try to disentangle ourselves – a reflection, perhaps, of the way that in his society even more than in ours male identity was formed through rejection of the mother and the suffocating characteristics associated with femaleness. Covering and nakedness are important opposites in his thought, though at times, like Julian, he can see God as an ‘ample garment’ for the naked soul (Priy Counselling, chapter 8), and at times he can allow this image too to undo itself, writing of the contemplative as ‘nakedly clothed’ in God (Priy Counselling, chapter 12).

Somehow, for the Cloud author, the entangling unlikenesses that form ‘a powerful hindrance antagonistic to the pure hidden sight of God’ must be pared away to reveal the sight itself, ‘Beauty itself in its own naked, uncreated reality without beginning’. The task is hard enough, because the unlikenesses and hindrances arise from the human body and mind themselves, and the illustration of the image in the block of wood is itself one of those unlikenesses; but in their historical setting the words the author uses in this passage reveal still more deep-rooted difficulties. The whole scene evoked is that of the carving of a wooden image, one of those ‘deaf images of wood’ against which the Lollards’ Twelve Conclusions protested; and yet the Cloud author is using this as a figure of what lies beyond figuration. The craftsman’s task is ‘to make an image’ of what is unmade; and, worse still, the kumbros dlog, the material that, in the illustration, disgustingly obscures the ‘image’ that he wishes to make, itself consists of ‘many marvellous fanciful images’. What difference is there between the image that represents the unrepresentable and the image that obscures it? Is this orthodoxy or heresy? Each implies the other, and what emerges is the impossibility of thinking the orthodox view of images without becoming involved in the heretical view, and of thinking the heretical view
without becoming involved in the orthodox view. Given that thought and writing are representations, representation is an almost impossibly difficult topic to think and write about. That may have been apparent to a profound thinker (which the Cloud author certainly was) in the period when he was writing, when age-old controversies about icons and iconoclasm were revived with new force and new danger; but I am not sure to what extent he can have intended to provide this textbook example of what Derrida claims to be true of philosophy in general. An astute critic writes of the Cloud author's work as 'a self-deconstructing attempt to undo the carnality of the language in which it is written', in which we can see him 'plumbing the possibilities for error both in the language in which he writes and in the vernacular reader for whom he writes'. In the matter of images, to plumb the possibilities for error was likely to be a dangerous undertaking in the author's time, though admittedly less so than it was to become a few years later, when the English Church started burning heretics at the stake. The very features that make the Cloud author's work dangerously self-contradictory are precisely those that are essential to its meaning; and I am all too well aware of being unable to convey them fully in translation. I hope that at least some readers of the translation will go on to use it as an aid to reading the original.

Notes

1. British Library Harleian 674 and Cambridge University Library Kk.vi.26 both contain all seven works; Harleian 2373 contains all except The Mystical Theology of Saint Denis.
2. See John P. H. Clark, 'The Cloud of Unknowing', in An Introduction to the Medieval Mystics of Europe, ed. Paul E. Sarmach (Albany, 1984), pp. 273–91: 'The similarities of literary expression between the Cloud corpus and Hilton, together with the manner in which similar expressions are often used to express apparently similar but in fact quite distinct theological concepts as between the two bodies of works, become explicable if we suppose that the Cloud was in part a response to Hilton's Ladder [i.e., Scale] of Perfection, Book One, while the second part of Hilton's diptych was in turn influenced by the language and theology of the Cloud, without fully assimilating it' (p. 273).
3. For example, in his identification of himself with Beseelel in Cloud, chapter 73.
4. Peter Abelard, Commentary on Romans 3:23–6, quoted by R. W. Southern in St Anselm and his Biographer (Cambridge, 1966), p. 96. St Anselm of Canterbury and Ahedel of Rievaulx were also important figures in this movement.
10. Anne Hudson, The Premature Reformation (Oxford, 1988). Recent study suggests that in matters such as opposition to images there may have been 'some tradition of reformist thinking at least partly independent of Wyclif' that was then subsumed into Lollardy (Steven Justice, 'Lollardy', in The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature, Cambridge, 1999, pp. 662–89, p. 669).
12. 'And he came to Derbe and Lystra. And, behold, there was a certain disciple there named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman that believed; but his father was a Gentile' (Acts 16:1). See also Romans 16:21 (for 'fellow labourer'), I Corinthians 16:10, and II Corinthians 1:11.
14. For example, Ninian Smart, 'What Would Buddhaghosa Have Made of The Cloud of Unknowing?', in Mysticism and Language, ed. Steven A. Katz (New York, 1992), pp. 103–22; Maika J. Will, 'The Role of Passivity in the Prayer of The Cloud of Unknowing', Mystics Quarterly 19 (1993), 63–70. Parallels have also been suggested with Vedantic Hinduism. It should be borne in mind, however, that negative theology had been assimilated into the mainstream of medieval scholastic thought; to take a single example, St Thomas Aquinas
incorporated it into the proof of God's existence in his *Summa contra gentiles* (I.14).


17. See *Prickly Counselling*, chapter 7: 'You set limits to your humility when you will not follow the advice of your spiritual master unless your intellect can see that it ought to be done. So here you can see that I desire mastery over you. So I do, truly, and I intend to have it!'

18. See *Cloud*, chapter 64 (in an account of the 'faculties of the soul' derived from Richard of St Victor's *Benjamin Major*): 'Will is the faculty by which we choose good after it has been identified by reason, and by which we love God, desire God, and finally rest in God with complete joy and consent.'


20. These are the opening sentences of Father Walsh's 'Translator's Introduction' to *A Letter of Private Direction* (i.e., *The Book of Privy Counselling*) in *The Pursuit of Wisdom and Other Works by the Author of The Cloud of Unknowing* (Mawah, New Jersey, 1988), p. 185. The work by Cuthbert Butler, Abbot of Downside, to which Walsh refers is his deservedly influential *Western Mysticism* (London, 1922). Though in what follows I indicate dissatisfaction with Walsh's approach, I do not underestimate the debt that all work on the *Cloud* owes to his remarkable erudition.


23. Porete was the first person to compose a work of mystical theology in the French vernacular; she was burned at the stake for heresy in 1310. One of the copies of *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, the ME translation of her condemned writing, is found in the same manuscript as the only copy of the short version of Julian of Norwich's *Revelations*. See Nicholas Watson, 'Melting into God the English Way: Deification in the Middle English Version of Marguerite Porete's *Miroir des simples âmes arienties*', in *Prophets Abroad: The Reception of Continental Holy Women in Late-Medieval England*, ed. Rosalynn Voaden (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 19-49.

39. Here is a single example, from this same passage, of the untranslatable. The phrase translated as 'a powerful hindrance' is plural in the original: strange letters. The spelling strange, however, can also represent a different ME word, straunge, meaning 'strange' or 'alien', which would surely be appropriate in this context of unlikeliness. And letters (here 'hinderers' or 'hindrances') would more normally mean 'letters' or 'writing', often with the implication of the literal (as opposed to the allegorical or spiritual) sense. That too seems an obvious possibility in a work so conscious of language, and especially of language understood in a literal or bodily sense as a barrier to understanding as well as a means of understanding. All these may well be coexistent possibilities, though not necessarily ones of which the author was fully conscious.

FURTHER READING

Butler, Cuthbert, Western Mysticism (London, 1922)
The Cloud of Unknowing and Related Treatises on Contemplative Prayer, ed. Phyllis Hodgson (Exeter, 1982)
Glasscoe, Marion, *English Medieval Mystics: Games of Faith* (London, 1993), chapter 4
Myles, Robert, ‘“This Litil Word ‘Is’”: The Existential Metaphysics of the Cloud Author’, *Florilegium* 8 (1986), 140–68
The *Pursuit of Wisdom and Other Works by the Author of the Cloud of Unknowing*, trans. James Walsh (Mahwah, New Jersey, 1988)