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Performing the Seven Deadly Sins:
How One Late-Medieval English Preacher did it

Alan J. Fletcher

Some things change very little. As late as the nineteenth century, an Indian summer in English preaching and a time when published collections of sermons were thick enough on the ground to allow us to infer that an avid readership awaited them, we find men like the Rev. Walter Baxendale perpetuating what was, in effect, an ancient tradition. While his awareness of that tradition's antiquity is hard to gauge, his compiling of a Dictionary of Anecdote, Incident, Illustrative Fact, selected and arranged for the Pulpit and the Platform, an anthology of edifying matter arranged alphabetically by subject, would have been a pursuit as much in keeping with the spirit of the second half of the thirteenth century as it evidently was with that of the second half of the nineteenth. Even if one read no further than Baxendale's title — his book was for the pulpit and the platform — one might nevertheless form the impression that one thing he was fully aware of, as also indeed were many of his medieval predecessors, is how much of a performance art preaching might be. Of course, it is self-evident that preaching is likely to be a performance art at any stage in its history, and when, as in Rev. Baxendale's case, many of the narratives of his Victorian exemplum collection come stuffed with sprightly dialogue — an investment which invites, however modestly, dramatic realization in the delivery — preaching is cranked even more assuredly into a performative gear. Baxendale's more famous contemporary, Thomas Hardy the poet, captures the ethos of histrionic preaching that Baxendale's compilation would have gone some way towards encouraging. In the poem 'In Church', a parishioner catches sight of the preacher in the vestry after the sermon. She sees 'her idol stand with a satisfied smile / And re-enact at the vestry-glass / Each pulpit gesture in deft dumb-show / That had moved the congregation so'.

Medieval predecessors of this tradition had grasped the nettle of the preacher as performer without hesitation and had gone further than Baxendale by openly recommending dramatic delivery. The preacher would do well to adopt a suitable
'voice': 'acutam in proferendo, austeram in corrigendo, benivolam in exhortando'
('sharp when expounding, stern when correcting and kindly when exhorting'),
recommended 'Henry of Hesse' in his thirteenth-century De arte predicandi, and by the fifteenth century, the anonymous author of the Aquinas-tract had warmed so thoroughly to the idea of dramatic decorum in the pulpit, to the synchronizing of the sense of the words of Scripture uttered by the preacher with the tone in which he uttered them, that he advised not only on the choice of their inflection (vocally simulating, as appropriate, 'wonder', 'irony and derision', or 'impatience and indignation'), but also on the body language and mimetic gesture that suited them best. For example, God's chilling doom pronounced upon the damned, 'Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem eternum' (Matthew 25. 41), a favourite preaching topic, was to be delivered not only 'with hate', but also with 'turning away of the face'. Here, the preacher would have appeared even more conspicuously 'in role' before his congregation, no matter how local and temporary in the general context of the sermon such a dramatic effect may have been. In short, the preacher was being urged to adopt a persona, and being offered some suggestions about how to body it forth. Once in the pulpit, he was, in practice, on stage.

Some preachers, it is true, shunned certain of the rhetorical embellishments characteristically recommended in the artes predicandi. As a result, they would have foreclosed some of the histrionic postures that those embellishments might otherwise have put into their heads. But my concern here is not with preachers of the sterner sort who set their faces against the more animated reaches of artifice and elocution. If, for the rest, the direct (and indirect) speech of Scripture might be dramatically energized and delivered before congregations 'in role', as we have seen, what of the dialogue that sermon exempla routinely contained? While the artes predicandi express no categorical precept about this of which I am aware, it makes little sense to imagine a preacher, only too ready to deliver Scriptural texts dramatically, abstemiously withholding such delivery from exemplum dialogue. Moreover, that he is hardly likely to have switched off dramatic delivery seems demonstrable from the way in which some exemplum dialogue is written up. Consider, for example, this snatch from a sermon exemplum in which a child and his mother converse in church:

And upon a certen tyme þei were in there chyrche, and faste this childe behelde ever the rode, and seyde to his moder þus, 'Madame, is that a man or a childe that is so nayled up on þonder tree? What menythe it þat he is so arayed?' Sche answerd and seyd, 'Sonne, this is the similitude of Cristis Passion that he
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There are only five cases of 's/he said' deixis of who is speaking in this extract. For the most part, the dialogue tumbles out unannounced. Therefore, unless the preacher delivered himself with a modicum of dramatic differentiation at the very least, the alternation of narrative voice would not have registered smoothly with his congregation. So this short passage – and Middle English preaching has many like it – illustrates how particular sorts of sermon form and content might nudge preachers into dramatically enhancing their delivery. The inherent demands of oratory predisposed the sermon to be a site of performance. Further than this, the dialogic bustle familiar in sermons stocked with exempla or with direct speech in persona inherited from biblical sources bids us consider the possibility of their status as proto-dramatic scripts. This is something of obvious comparative interest to anyone who, like the honourand of this festschrift, is concerned with understanding early drama proper. Furthermore, students of this drama have every a priori justification for taking medieval preaching on board when most medieval plays that survive are evidently the products of that same clerical culture by which preaching was also sustained. A neat epitome of this liaison is seen in the case of the Dominican friar Thomas Bynham of Beverley: in 1423 Bynham, a member of that medieval order of preachers par excellence, wrote the banns of Beverley's Corpus Christi play. But the considerations broached here serve primarily to introduce the sermon published below, and are offered only as the merest preface towards some future assessment of the performative modes of late-medieval English preaching. Properly, this dimension will require full exploration in its own right before it can be compared with what is known of the performative modes of late-medieval English drama. Not until this has been attempted will the two related domains, preaching and drama, begin adequately to illuminate each other.

And finally, by way of introduction, we might note that the sermon below
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would have fitted snugly into the repertoire of a very large corps of medieval preachers, those who were charged with discoursing on the time-honoured topics of Christian catechesis. Such preaching staple, so ancient and familiar, and indeed from 1409 mandatory for many English preachers, might well have benefited from a dramatic dusting down to make it eye- and ear-catching. Since much of the Church's message had remained essentially unchanged over hundreds of years, much of it was eligible for enlivening, dramatic reinvention. One old chestnut of the catechetical programme, the Seven Deadly Sins (as in the sermon below), makes a good case in point. By the late-medieval period, cultural precedents and expectations that the sins should be dramatically vivified, in whatever medium they were presented, were extremely powerful. Not only had they long been paraded in the quasi-dramatic venue that the pulpit afforded, but in drama proper as well: witness the Paternoster plays which, while focusing on another catechetical topos, the Paternoster, appear also to have annexed the Seven Deadly Sins for dramatization in some way. And even in texts of a more readerly sort, the sins might urge towards dramatic life, one of the most telling examples of this being the dramatized confession of the Seven Deadly Sins in Piers Plowman. So the sermon below participates in this tradition of catechetical refurbishment, here figuratively animating the sins as daughters of the devil, and occasionally dramatizing in direct speech utterances typifying particular classes of sinner. Would the preacher have offered himself momentarily as a dramatic icon of those sins about which he preached? Precisely how the sermon may originally have been delivered will, of course, never be known. But if it ever was preached, a dramatic preaching would have both internal and external licence. It is published here for the first time.
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NOTES


4. Caplan, Of Eloquence, p. 57 (the Aquinas-tract). The Doom dialogues of Matthew 25 were, of course, a favourite passage with dramatists too. 'Henry of Hesse' in his De arte predicandi was apprehensive about a preacher's 'digitorum demonstratio nimia; capitis iactatio; oculorum clausura' ('excessive pointing with the fingers; tossing the head; shutting the eyes'; Caplan, Of Eloquence, p. 157, and compare again the Aquinas-tract, Of Eloquence, p. 58).

5. The fourteenth-century evidence of the Forma predicandi of Robert of Basevorn is also worth recalling. Basevorn recommended matching vocal inflection to the matter in hand, and invoking Hugh of St Victor, sounded a cautionary note about gesture. The preacher should not stretch his arms out too much as disputants do, or wag his head too much like a madman, or roll his eyes like a hypocrite (Artes praedicandi: Contribution à l'histoire de la rhétorique au moyen âge, ed. by Th.-M. Charland [Paris and Ottawa: De Vrin, 1936], p. 320).

6. In his fourteenth-century De modo componendi sermones, Thomas Waleys recommended private sermon rehearsal before trees and stones (Charland, Artes praedicandi, p. 339). This implies a memorized or partly memorized script and performance style, and comes close to satisfying some formal definitions of acting. (Various of the Church's ministrations have courted theatricality; compare the medieval histrionics at Mass surveyed by T. P. Dolan, 'The Mass as Performance Text', From Page to Performance: Essays in Early English Drama, ed. by J. A. Alford [East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1995], pp. 13-24.)

7. Such dissenting preachers existed both within orthodoxy (compare, for example, those friars who eschewed use of exempla and preached sermons of an austerely Scriptural sort) and without (perhaps most famously in this category in late-medieval England were John Wyclif and his followers).


11. The source materials for understanding the performative aspects of the medieval sermon will probably resolve into three principal categories: i) the precepts on the same contained in the artes predicandi; ii) any indications concerning delivery in sermons themselves or in reports of sermons; and iii) whatever may be deduced from contemporary
texts (including illustrations) in which preaching in progress is represented.

12 In England, the obligation to preach catechesis had been formally enjoined upon curati since the thirteenth century. The Constitutions of Archbishop Thomas Arundel enforced the obligation formidably. For a valuable survey of this topic, see H. L. Spencer, _English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages_ (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 201-07.


15 The sermon, edited from Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS e Museo 180, fols 69v-75, is collated against a version of it found in Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 50, fols 193-99v (L in the apparatus) and in Gloucester Cathedral Library, MS 22, pp. 478-93 (G in the apparatus; for further details on all these manuscripts, see A. J. Fletcher, _Preaching, Politics and Poetry in Late-Medieval England_ (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), pp. 154-59). All expansions have been italicized, and modern punctuation, word division and capitalization introduced. The letters 'u' and 'v' are distinguished according to modern usage. Editorial interventions in the base text are signalled between square brackets. Following the theory of copy text, additions to the base text are regularized to conform with its orthography. Superior angled ticks enclose text which the scribe required to be inserted. Angle brackets enclose conjectural readings where the manuscript is damaged or where simple scribal copying errors have been made. Half brackets enclose material originally copied and then cancelled. In the apparatus, 'om.' denotes 'omitted'.
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A Sermon for the Fifth Sunday After Trinity

f. 69v 'Dominum autem Christum sanctificate in cordibus vestris.' Prima Petri, tercio capitulo. Halow 3e the Lord Criste in 3owre hertis.

As for a proces of pis brefe and schort collacion, 3e schall understonde pat almy3ti God is halowed and worcheopyd in every tru cristen sowle. For in like wise as there is in pe blissed Trinite iij persons and oo God, so 3er is in every truw cristen sowle thre pingis, scilicet, Memoria, Intelligencia et Voluntas. The firste is thi mynde, the secund is thyne understondyng, the third is 3i willying. For like as the Sonne Ihesu commethe of the Fader and the Holy Goste of hem bope, so in the same maner wise understondyng commethe of mynde and 3i willying of hem bothe. And as 3e docturs sey, echon of hem is withe other. So 3en every good cristen man and woman be so disposed pat wolde that Criste scholde be halowed 170r in his sowle, he muste kepe clene the iij partis of his sowle. Firste, he must kepe clene his mynde frome all unclene thow3tw and abhomynabill temptacions, after 3e doctrine of the apostill Peter in the Pistill of pis day where he seythe thus, 'Omnes unanimes in oracione estote, [compacientes], fraternitatis amatores, misericordes, modesti, humiles.' Be 3e, as who seythe, in feythe of [oo] wyll, and in [prayer.] Be 3e everychon sufferyng of other and lovers of brotherhode, mercifull, mylde and meke. And 3is maner of doctryne of the apostill scholde cawse the for to have a clene mynde. The secunde is that [3e] be perfity disposed in luffe and charite. 'Non reddentes malum

pro malo, vel maledictum pro maledicto, sed contrario benedicentes.' [Not] 3eldyng [ivell] for ivell nother cursyng for cursyng, but on þe contrary wise blissyng.' Now I cowncell 3ow to peyse well þese wordis and set hem fast to þowre sowlis, and so schall 3e lyfe a perftyte lyfe to the plesure of almyti God. The therde is 3e schall kepe clene 3our willyng frome anger and wrathe, and þis fals 1 70v desyre of takyng of vengeaunce. And þen may 3e halow owre Lord Ihesu Criste in 3owre sowlis. 'Quia [in hoc vocati] estis, ut benedicionem [hereditate] possideatis.' For in þis þing [þe] ben calde, þat [þe] schall have the blissyng of almy3ti God be ry3tfull heritage.

But alac, a man may see be dyvers exsampyls that the pepill sett more ioye to þe plesure of the body then for to do þat that scholde be to þe salvacion of there sowlis. For it is so nowadayes, and we have riche prosperite and welpe of body, what synne that ever we use we drede not. For it farithe be moche pepyll of the worlde as it faryd be a man þat had vij dow3ters. And they were feyre, semly and goodly of schape, and goodly to beholde, but they had ivell names and fowle, and becawse of there fowle names þat þei had, thare wolde none honeste man com for to mari withe them ne wed. He see þis þe fadur of hem and kept hem long tyme for þe fowle names. And when the fader understode þat, anone he chawngid þer namys and gafe hem þe gayest names þat he myȝte fynde or eny man kowde perseyve or 1 71r devise. And when that was knowen, then come the pepyll of the worlde and maried withe all vij dow3ters. [Moraliter.] Be this man þat had vij dow3ters is understonde þe devill, and his vij
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40 dow3ters is understonde the vij dedly synnes, the whiche everye cristen creature scholde voyde, and exchewe the felischipe of hem. Consideryng þe fende of þe fowlenes of his fowle dow3ters namys, he hathe chaungid þe names of his dow3ters that were so odius, and now he haþe set hem on the goodlieste namys þat he cowde fynde. The first and the eldeste of þese same vij dow3ters of þe fowle fende of hell Sathanas, sche was cald Pride, þe whiche was a fowle name to hevenly pepill. And for encheson þat þe fende wold mary hyr [to þe] pepill [of þe worlde,] he hathe set on hyr a gay name, and sche is called Honesty, so þat a prowde man or a prowde woman is called an honest man or an honest woman. For nowadayes showe a man be never so prowde, of hert, of speche, of cowtenaunce, pingyn in his hert that there is none so feyre ne so 71v fressche, so lusti, so iocunde, so goodly, so manly, so bewtifull as he is. Women in þere degre withe their gay heddis sett up on heyȝte and ornyd, as it were an unresonabyll beeste, and þer gay bedis withe litill devocion and thereon ryngis full gay; hyr kyrtell sleveles to make hem to seme prayti to synne, and many oper tokens. What, is þat pride? Nay syr, it is clenlynes and honeste. But what schalt þu have for that honeste? Seint lohn seythe in the Apocalips, ['Quantum'] glorificavit se et in [deliciis] fuit, tantum date ei luctum et tormentum.' 'As' moche as he or sche ioyethe hemselfe in delectacion of pride, so moche schall be to hem þe peynes and sorowis in hell worlde witheowten ende. And then þe apostill Petur rehersithe in þe

Pistill of pis day and seythe þus, 'Oculi Domini super iustos et [aures] eius in preces eorum.' The ieene of the Lorde is upon [iustæ] men and his eeris upon the prayers of hem. As who seythe, all prowde pepill alwey disposed in pride, God is ever redy to remyte them to everlasting correccion. And therfore if 3e wil halow 1 72r this Lorde Criste Ihesu that is owre maker and owre Saviovre, let hym be halowed in [jowre] sowlis, and 3e muste be well ware that 3e mary not withe the dowȝter of the devyll, and that is Pride.

The secunde dowȝter was calld Envy, but now she is called Iusticia, þat is [Ryȝtwysnes] for an envius man or an envius woman. For they will stody and seche in there myndis be dyvers mens falsly to make his neyȝbor or his even cristien to lese there wordly gooddis. And ever he seythe it is ryȝtwysly done, thowȝe it be as fals as God is truw.

The therde dowȝter [was] calde Ira, [Wrathe, but now sche is calld Virilitas, þat is to sey, Manhode, for] he that is a fracer or a bracer, a grete swerer or a grete vyȝter, soche men ben calde manly men. Pis is a fals wyle and a soltell of the devyll, þat be these mens, þat is to sey, be þe chawnchyng of there names, he wyll wed all his dowȝters to the pepyll of þe world, and so he hathe almooste. And owte of þis wicked synne of envy commethe bacbyting and fals slaunderynge. 'Invidia que fecit Caym occidere fratrem suum Abel.' Envy was cawse that Caym slowȝe his brober Abel. Envy was cawse that Iacob sonnys I 72v solde there owne brother Ioseph inte Egipt and so forsoke hym. And envy was the cawse
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that the Iewys betrayed Crist. And so I sey that soche pepyll fallythe presisely into bacbityng and slawnderyng. To þe which maner of pepyll the apostyll seythe in the Pistill in thys same maner, 'Qui enim vult vitam diligere et videre dies bonos, coherceat linguam suam a malo et labia sua ne loquantur dolum.' He that wyll [lyfe and see good dayes, let hym constreyne] hys witt and his tong frome ivell, and his lippis to speke non ivell ne gyle ne no maner of falshede. 'Declinet autem a malo et faciat bonum; inquirat pacem et sequatur eam.' Bow every man frome ivell and do good, all 3e sleers of men withe 3owre tongis, and amende 3owre lyvis. Seke pes and perfyte lyffe and so schalt þu halow Criste in thi sowle. Wherfore I may sey as I seyde at the begynnynge, 'Dominum autem Cristum sanctifice in cordibus vestris.' Halow 3e þe Lord Criste in 3owre herttis.

The iiij th dow3ter was called Slowpe, and þat is turned [now] into another name and is calde Impotencia, [þat is to sey, Unmy3ty,] and that I prove as thus. If case be þat I 73r a man wolde sey to a grete slogard and to a grete slepar, 'Whi whilt not þu arysse up on the Sondayes and on other festyval dayes and come to the chyrche and þe fe 

a duw attendaunce to the devyne servyce of God and to all his seyntis?' Anon he wyll make his excuse and sey, 'I am olde', or 'sekelยย, or 'the weder is colde and I am feblyl', or he wyll excuse hym and sey, 'I have a grete howsolde', or [ells he hape] sum odur ocupacion to do. But for all these excusaciones, and a man wolde come and hyre hym or hyr and wolde gyfe good wagis, then wolde they ley all excusadons aparte and come to þer devyne servyce acوردyng to there duty, where God
commawndythe every creature and seythe þus, 'Memento quod diem [sabbati] sanctifices.' Have mynde that þu halow thi holy day.

The vth dow3ter was called Luxuria, Lecheri. And for þe devyl wold have hyr maried well, he called hyr Luffe. And so if a lecherus man be chalengid of his vicius lyvyng and fowle synne, anon he wyll excuse hym be som sotel mene and sey it is not so, and swere horribly, 'I do it more for luffe then for enyþing ells.' For herdily, he þat muste 'be' <in the> 'worlde must' have lufe. This same synne of lechery destroyed Salamon, Sampson, David, and oþer moo. Wherfore Peter seythe in þe Pistill, 'Vultus autem Domini super facientes mala.' God wyll be redy withe his correcc/on ever upon soche wicked lyvers usyng soche ivell lyvyng.

The vjth dow3ter is Gloteny, for the whiche many ar damned and ben in hell. But þis name is turned nowadayes into a feyre name and is cald Good Felischipe. For he þat is a riatowre and a revelowre and a grete hawnter of the tavere or the ale howse, and a grete waster of his gooddys, then is he callyd a good felow. So at the last he wastiþe bothe Godis part and the worldis. Pis þe understonde well inowþe that he þat usiþe soche revell is callid a good felow, 'Quorum deus venter est.' For his bely is his God. Wherfore þe apostill in þe Pistill seythe, 'Quis est qui vobis noceat si boni

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emulatores fueritis? Who is that schall dismay 30w or disese 30w if 3e be sewars or lovers of goodnes? As who seythe, what fende schal disceyve 30w if 3e wyll leve pis fowle synne 1 74r of gloteny and lufe the feyre vertu of abstinence?

The vijh dow3ter and the laste, sche was callyd Covetise, but the fende hathe chawngyd her name, and he callythe hyr Elemosina, Almes Dede, and that I preve as pus. A covetose man and a covetose woman rekyte not how they done, so they may have tresour of the worlde and for to labor to have good be extorcion and be comberus menys, some be fals whey3tis and fals mesurs or oder untru menys, as in biying and sellyng and soche maner of fals weyes. And so if he be put to examinacion, he wyll sey, 'I wyll have a preste to syng for me when I am gone', or, 'I wyll gif a boke or a chalis to the chyrche, or a bell, or a vestiment, and so schall I be prayed fore every Sunday, or I wyll do some other good dede like to the same.' So all soche disposed pepil may be likened to Iudas Skariot, that traytowr that betrayed Criste. For he made marchauntise be fals menys when that he solde Cristw persone, and so solde hymselfe to the devyll bothe body and sowle. [For] as Seynt Paule witnessithe, 'Stipendia enim peccati mors [est.]

The rewarde that soche covetise pepyll schall have for per 1 74v offence [schall be] everlastyng damnum worlde witheowten ende in the fyre of hell. And perfore, if we wyll have owre Lord Ihesu Criste owre Saviowre halowyd in owre

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sowlis, pen must we make a clene defors betwene us and þe vij dowȝters withe dwȝ contriscion. And then wil owre Lorde Ihesu Criste sey unto us, 'Si quis diligit me, sermonem meum servabit, et Pater meus diligit eum, et ad eum veniens, et mansionem apud eum faciemus.' 'Whosoever lovye the me', Criste seythe, 'do after my techynge, and my Fader schall lufe hym, and we schall come to hym, and make in him our dwellyng place'.

[The holy doctur] Seynt Austen tellythe, in libro Confessionum, that ther was a man had led his lyfe in extorcion and in lechery, and in many other myslyvyngis. And at the laste day when he scholde dye, his curat was withe hym and gave hym good cowncell, ffor he thowȝte the synner was contrite for his synne. And so the seke ever wept. So [when] pis preste saw pis man scholde dye, he requered þe sowle be the powere of almyȝti God owre maker and owre Saviowre, that he scholde apere to him agayne after the naturall lyfe was departed here from þe body, and so he dyd. And þe sowle l 75r come aȝene in the moste fowleste wyse þat eny man myȝte see withe stynke and fyre and grete multitude of fendis, and so he aperyd in horribyll peynes. And þe preste asked hym what he was, and he seyde, 'The sowle of the body that þu desired to come aȝene to þe.' And the preste seyde, 'How doist thu'? And he seyde, 'I
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am damned to hell for evermore for all my contrisc<ion that I had. For I thowȝt and if myȝte have lyvid, in certen I wolde have ben as ivell as ever I was before. And as for my wepyng that I wept, was for incheson pat I scholde dye, and not for my synnes that I dyd here in erthe. And therfore byd all thi childern beware be me, and every man in his degré, for the well of þer owne sowlys.'

So in like wise þu muste forsake thi synnes withe contrisc<on [of hert, confession of mowthe and satisfaccion in dede, for] the sekenes of þi sowle. 'Sed et si [quid] patimini propter iusticiam, beati.' But loke þe suffer this for ryȝte disposicion, and þen þe schall be blissed. And if þe be blissed then þe halow Criste in sowre sowlis, be þe whiche þe schall com to the ioye and blisse that never schall have ende. Amen. Et cetera.

COMMENTARY

1 Dominiun autem: I Peter 3. 15, part of this Sunday's epistle (I Peter 3. 8-15), is chosen as the sermon's theme.

3 proce: The word is a stock piece of preaching terminology. The 'process' usually summarizes the matter to be treated in the following discourse.

4-9 The comparison of the three elements of a man's soul to the Trinity is ancient, and frequently exploited by late-medieval English preachers (compare, for example, its use in the sermon for the first Sunday in Lent in the collection edited by G. Cigman, Lollard Sermons, EETS, os 294 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 124, lines 115-17). It also often appears in vernacular accounts of the five Inward Wits (see P. S. Jolliffe, A Check-List of Middle English Prose Writings of Spiritual Guidance (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974), pp. 74-76, for a corpus of these). Ultimately, the comparison derives from St Augustine, De Trinitate (Patrologia Latina 42, col. 984), and it was widely taken up by later writers, such as Isidore (Patrologia Latina 82, col. 271), Alcuin (Patrologia Latina 100, col. 566) and Bernard (Patrologia Latina 183, cols 667-69). The fourteenth-century Dominican preacher John Bromyard included the motif in his Summa predicantium under Trinitas (British Library, MS Royal 7. E. iv, fol. 580, col. a), and from here it would have found its way to other late-medieval preachers. Before Bromyard, it had also attracted the attention of Thomas Aquinas; such influential attention would have ensured its further promotion (see I. Hislop, 'Man, the Image of the Trinity, according to St. Thomas', Dominican Studies, 3 (1950), 1-9).

14-16 Omnes unanimes: I Peter 3. 8. The words 'in oracione estote' are additions to the Vulgate.

19-20 Non reddentes: I Peter 3. 9.

25-26 Quia in hoc vocati estis: I Peter 3. 9. Readings which make no sense are emended from the Vulgate.

31-38 This exemplum of the seven daughters of the devil and their marriages was to become a clerical commonplace, though in its original form the story was somewhat different from that told here. Early versions speak of nine daughters, who were not
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linked specifically with the Seven Deadly Sins. (P. Meyer, 'Notice du MS Rawlinson Poetry 241', Romania, 29 (1900), 54-58, discusses the appearance of the motif in the preaching of Jacques de Vitry, Odo of Cheriton and Adam de la Vacherie, but none resembles the treatment afforded in this sermon.) As might be expected of any commonplace, it is prone to variation, and the variation here is wholly conceivable. Gower tells how the Seven Deadly Sins were the daughters of Sin and Death in his Mirour d'Omme (The Complete Works of John Gower, ed. by G. C. Macaulay, 4 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899-1902), I, 5-6, lines 205-76), though from where he derives this moral genealogy I have not discovered. Bromyard in his Summa predicantium under 'Falsitas' mentions sins in general as the daughters of the devil, which are married to many and made acceptable by the alteration of their names (British Library, MS Royal 7. E. iv, fols 174v, col. b - 175v, col. a). While the Bromyard passage generally resembles that of this sermon, its correspondences are not strict enough to suggest that it was an immediate source. However, what is at least clear is that by the fourteenth century, the motif as it appears in this sermon had essentially taken shape (compare also its appearance in the unpublished fifteenth-century Middle English sermon collection in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 95, fol. 100r-v).

48-50 For ... as he is: The syntax is imperfect. There is no second verb to balance the initial concessional clause.

51-53 The syntax again is imperfect. The unit consists only of a list of attributes, without a main verb. Women's dress was a favourite topic for sermon censure. The 'horned' headdress was a favourite target, for not only was it one of those superfluous, and highly conspicuous, adornments which, according to the preachers, was worn in pride to incite lechery, but it also gave its wearer the appearance of an 'unresonablyll beeste' (line 52), and thus confounded the reason that was held to be humanity's hallmark. (For further examples of the clerical attack on this headdress, see G. R. Owst, Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England, 2nd rev. edn (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961), pp. 390-404.) Though the garment was fashionable between the reigns of Henry IV and Henry VI (H. Norris and O. Curtis, Costume and Fashion, 4 vols (London and Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1924-38), II, 437-44), this is not in itself adequate evidence that this sermon is a fifteenth-century composition; Bromyard in the fourteenth century had already objected to 'cornua' (see his Summa predicantium under 'Bellum' and 'Luxuria'), and they were criticized earlier still, in a satirical English quatrain that appears in a thirteenth-century Latin sermon manuscript (A...

55-56 Quantum glorificavit: Revelation 18. 7. Corrupt readings are emended from the Vulgate.


67 for . .. For: The co-ordination here is clearly awkward.

72 fracer . . . bracer: The word 'fracer' is not recorded in either the Oxford English Dictionary or the Middle English Dictionary. Both record a form 'facer', however, meaning 'bully', which has the appropriate sense. Possibly the -r- in 'fracer' has been erroneously intruded in anticipation of that in the word 'bracer'. This word is also noteworthy. No senses suitting its context here are recorded in the OED or the MED, and it would appear to be a word that both dictionaries have missed. It is probably related to the verb 'brace' (OED, 'Brace', v.2, 'to bluster, domineer; to assume a defiant attitude').

77 Invidia . . . Abel: The quotation may derive from some commentary on Genesis (Theodore cited in the Glossa ordinaria on Genesis 4 speaks of Cain's 'fraternorum bonorum operum invidia', for example; see Biblia Sacra cum Glossa Ordinaria et Postilla Nicholai Lyrani, 6 vols (Lyons, 1589), I, col. 117), but I have not determined an exact source.

82-83 Qui enim vult: I Peter 3. 10.

85-86 Declinet autem: I Peter 3. 11.

89 Dominum autem: I Peter 3. 15.

93-98 The interrogation of the sluggard and his responses may owe something to precedents in the summae confessorum (and compare below the interrogations of lechery, lines 104-07, and covetousness, lines 127-30, possibly prompted by the same tradition).

101-02 Memento: Exodus 20. 8. The Vulgate reads 'ut' for 'quod'.
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107 For herdily . . . lufe: The manuscript is difficult to interpret, and the insertion of <in the> at line 107 is purely conjectural. The line of script comes to an end at 'muste', and the next one begins with 'have lufe'. The scribe, realizing that the line he wrote was unsatisfactory, added in the right-hand margin next to 'muste' the word 'be' plus a caret mark to note his omission. In the left-hand margin he continued the insertion, but because the manuscript has been trimmed, only the words 'worlde must' are now visible. If we may assume that the words of his insertion which originally appeared in the left-hand margin were written consecutively, then there were not many of them, since even after trimming, the pages of the manuscript do not seem to have been greatly reduced from their original width. The presence of 'muste' and 'must' suggests that homoioteleuton, not a faulty exemplar, caused the omission.


117 Quorum deus: Philippians 3. 19.

118-19 Quis est: I Peter 3. 13.

128 to syng: That is, to sing Mass.

133-34 Stipendia enim: Romans 6. 23.


143-58 The ascription of this exemplum to Augustine is incorrect. I have not traced its source.

159-60: Note here the three stages of a full act of penance, a commonplace of pulpit and confessional teaching.

160-61 Sed et si quid: I Peter 3. 14. The vernacular rendering of this citation in this manuscript, which is retained in the edited text, is closer to the proper Vulgate reading of 'si quid', from which the text of this manuscript and its congeners LG have had to be emended. Note that LG readings show some awareness of the meaning of the rejected Latin 'si quis', since they are respectively 'who some ever' and 'who so ever'. It is grammatically impossible to construe 'si quis' and 'patimini' together, but this has been done in LG. There may be an indication here that the scribe of the present
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manuscript (who was also the copyist of LG) has a very elementary knowledge of Latin, and that he is making an imperfect correction on the strength of it in LG.