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Domesticity and Medieval Devotional Literature

Catherine Batt, Denis Renevey, Christiania Whitehead

Introduction

Catherine Batt and Christiania Whitehead

The Christian soul is a castle that must be fortified against the attacks of the devil. It has long been acknowledged that the architectural metaphor of the soul as a besieged castle plays a key role in the literary construction of devotional identity in religious literature of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, from Tertullian to Edmund Spenser.¹ Until recently, however, this authoritative focus on 'defensive' constructions of the self has been at the expense of the investigation of alternative spatializations, specifically, the construction of religious interiority as a domestic or household space. That neglect is now beginning to be redressed, in parallel with a growing interest in the political, economic and material dimensions of the medieval household.² This tripartite article contributes to this process of redress; it has its origins in a conversation in which the three of us were intrigued at how the thirteenth- to fifteenth-century vernacular texts we were studying independently all in some way called on (sometimes startling) domestic imagery and reference for devotional purposes; and yet, in different contexts, local similarities might also make for rather different general effects, as the texts engage contrastingly as well as complementarily with metaphors of domestic space.

Barbara Hanawalt and Michal Kobialka, introducing a collection of essays on *Medieval Practices of Space*, remind us that 'space' itself is by no means a given, but is shaped and re-shaped, both historically and experientially, and in the process of our attempt to conceptualize it and to understand how others perceive it: '[t]he practice of space in the Middle Ages

was never homogeneous, but always in flux.³ Hanawalt and Kobiak draw attention to the work of Henri Lefebvre, whose formulation of how we inhabit and perceive space is valuable to our investigations—at least in general terms—for the way in which it acknowledges and incorporates the interrelation of experience and conceptualization. Lefebvre writes of overlapping and fluid categories of 'spatial practice', 'representations of space', and 'representational spaces', which he understands on the level of social practice as, respectively, space 'perceived', 'conceptualized', and 'lived'. Representations of space alert us to the interconnectedness of produced spaces and to the codes one uses to understand them, while representational spaces open up the world of art, in which the realm of the imagination 'makes symbolic use' of physical space.⁴ Most interesting for our purposes is Lefebvre's definition of 'representational spaces' as sites of social and artistic interaction. If one might want to take issue with aspects of the detail of his categorisation (and also interrogate the broad distinction he makes, elsewhere in his work, between medieval 'feudal', and post-medieval 'capitalist' spaces), his method nonetheless illuminates the importance of social relations to constructions of space, an emphasis central to the argument in the first section of our tripartite article. In all our texts, social constructions of space and its perception are integral to the presentation and analysis of tropes of siege and of household, and the ways in which they draw on literary technique and lived experience is intrinsic to their dynamic as devotional writings.

The Christian soul—or heart—is, then, a castle, and it can also be a household space. The following linked considerations examine some of the most extended and detailed developments of this figure to survive in texts of medieval English provenance. Focussing on texts united by their religious dedication, but otherwise very different from one another, these considerations seek to elucidate the ways in which the trope of the household of the soul is moulded by time, genre and didactic purpose, as well as indicating how several of these texts prove amenable to later environments of reception distinctly different from those for which they were first conceived. Opening with a study of the evocation of figurative and physical household spaces in the early thirteenth-century Middle English *Ancrene Wisse* and Latin *De doctrina cordis* (with subsidiary reference to *Sawles Warde*), in a way that especially draws attention to the importance of social relations to spatial practice, Denis Renevey will explore the ways in which these spaces signify within texts premised upon anchoritic and conventual enclosure,

together with the means by which they interact with their envisaged primary audiences of female religious. Catherine Batt's subsequent essay will contrast these clerical and institutional evocations of the moral household with an equivalent figurative episode in the mid-fourteenth-century *Livre de Seyntz Medicines* of Henry, duke of Lancaster, and comment on the different emphases that emerge as a result of Henry's gender, aristocratic and secular social circumstances, and of his relatively more 'personal' motivations in writing. Finally, Christiania Whitehead will focus upon an extended allegory of domestic management in St Bridget of Sweden's mid-fourteenth-century *Liber celestis* (in its fifteenth-century Middle English translation), and will examine the changes that occur when the 'household imaginary'⁵ transfers from its initial application to institutional women readers, to become reanimated by an aristocratic female prophet as an object of divine revelation.

In addition to paying attention to the chronological evolution of this trope, and to its reformulation in response to the variables of textual genre, authorial circumstance and intention, and envisaged primary audience, we shall also locate our analyses with reference to recent debates upon the gendered character of medieval religious writing, enquiring whether the domestic and menial configuration of religious identity in texts initially designed for women religious is intrinsically disempowering,⁶ or whether there is evidence that enables the construction of more nuanced models of reception. We shall also address some further implications of the domestic trope as a tool for shaping religious identity: the interaction between menial activity and contemplative passivity; the assumption of unruly psychological subordinates that require control or policing, and the presence of a degree of tension between material asceticism and spiritual acquisition and hoarding.

Traditional discussions of the social uses of space have tended to take at face value medieval religious writers' insistence that there obtains a stark division between 'close' and 'commune' space (in modern terms, the private and public spheres); between the spaces of religious enclosure and open social commerce (taken to its greatest extreme in anchoritic literature), and between the domestic spaces of the convent and the aristocratic or gentry household. In every instance, our case studies reveal evidence that questions these traditional assumptions. They uncover patterns of permeability and interactivity in and around the anchorhold and the convent, and reveal significant areas of overlap between aristocratic and conventual household practice, and between aristocratic and sacred space. They also demonstrate

that, rather than remaining confined within fixed reading constituencies, many religious texts offering a domestic model of interiority were appropriated in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries by mixed audiences of male and female enclosed, religious, and lay readers. Moreover, the various deployment of similar domestic imagery across different texts alerts us to the theological and spiritual strategies particular to each work. In addition to offering insight into the rich hybridity of late-medieval devotional reading communities, examination of domestic imagery also supports the important idea that, despite appearances, apparently 'feminized' systems of metaphor and models of selfhood quickly proved adaptable to different reading situations and varied audiences, and became credible for use by men as well as women, by lay Christians as well as enclosed.

*Figuring Household Space in Ancrene Wisse and The Doctrine of the Hert*⁷

Denis Renevey

Introduction

At various moments in *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer situates his pilgrims' narratives both in a specific time scheme and in a detailed representational space, the latter marked by the reference to a pilgrimage journey from Southwark to Canterbury. Following the Knight's and Miller's Tales, Harry Bailey, mastermind of the tale competition that supposedly unfolds on the way to Canterbury, invites the Reeve to press on with his own story, with the mention of Deptford as the location on the Southwark-Canterbury axis, which has been reached by the company at round the liturgical hour of prime. Space plays an integral part in the development of the larger narrative which gives coherence to the deployment of the more specific spatial dimensions inherent in each of the Tales. The movement of the pilgrim-characters in the space configured by the Southwark-Canterbury journey is teleologically configured by the sacred dimension of the pilgrimage, whatever the specific intentions and degree of seriousness the characters may have had about their journey. Such a cosmic apprehension of space, interpreted with a broad exegetical palette by the secular Chaucer,

nevertheless shows how the sacralization of space looms large in medieval culture and its literature.

Although, as stated in the introduction, Lefebvre considers the capitalist period for his investigation of space in *The Production of Space*, his concept of space as revealing of social practice is useful to the analysis of the textual production of physical and mental spaces for the practice of religious activities. My analysis of the representation of secular space as social practice in two devotional works of the thirteenth century, *Ancrene Wisse* and *The Doctrine of the Hert*, shows a reversal in the process of the use of the cosmic dimension as defining space in Chaucer; in those works, the reader is invited to consider her/his own role in the cosmic order through the decoding of a mainly secular space, that of the medieval household, which is delineated by a multiplicity of social practices.

Broader contextual approaches to anchoritism, with a study of the possible influences of, or parallels with, the continental feminine religious tradition, as well as the recent interest in the similarities between *Ancrene Wisse* and Latin continental preaching, invite a horizon of reading which suggests the co-existence of an insular tradition dating back to the Anglo-Saxon period, with the continental literature of confession and sermon literature which developed as a result of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) decisions on pastoral reform.⁸ Both traditions need to be taken into account in order to discuss the features of the early Middle English text. According to Bella Millett, it is not impossible that Paris-trained preachers contributed to the revival of vernacular religious literature in the West Midlands, with the introduction of continental preaching practices fused with repackaged insular native preaching resources.⁹

Such new directions make possible a comparative study of the use of space in *Ancrene Wisse*, a South-West Midland text which belonged to the revival of vernacular literature mentioned by Millett, and *De doctrina cordis*, a Latin continental devotional tract attributed to the Dominican cardinal Hugh of St Cher (c. 1200-63) and translated into Middle English in the fifteenth century. *De doctrina cordis* addresses a community of sisters and is, like *Ancrene Wisse*, influenced by sermon preaching practices and the new literature of confession. This relatively understudied text was a medieval devotional best-seller, with more than two hundred manuscripts held in all major medieval European libraries, and translations in French, Italian, Spanish, English, German and Dutch.¹⁰ As its title suggests, the treatise offers guidance about how to prepare one's heart for union with God.¹¹ As an overall study of

the uses of preaching and confessional techniques within those two works goes beyond the limits of this essay, I would like to confine my analysis to one of the recurring tropes of confessional literature, that of the household, considered here as representational space. The activity of cleaning, dusting, and sweeping makes ample use of the household space, as evidenced in *Ancrene Wisse* in a few instances and, more systematically, in *The Doctrine of the Hert*, and Henry's *Livre de Seyntz Medicines*, which will all be discussed later.

But as the two texts I am concerned with in this first part belong to specific but parallel traditions, I would like to consider, first, the anchoritic one, by pointing out textual evidence which helps construct an anchoritic paradigm marked by the politics and the discourse of enclosure in *Ancrene Wisse*. The essay then deconstructs this idealised but overly confined image of the recluse by looking at passages dealing with the representation of space and topography of the household, highlighting how social networks marked the life of the anchoresses for whom *Ancrene Wisse* was written.¹² Textual imagery implying the larger Christian community also contributes to representing the anchoress in a central role, where she is compared to saints and virgin martyrs, the Virgin Mary or even Christ. But below this surface discourse which the author is keen to maintain throughout the text, other traces show that routine daily activities in the anchorhold depend on a set of social practices which require close surveillance and regulation if the attainment of a condition as close as possible to being dead-to-the-world is to be reached. However, the solitary life in *Ancrene Wisse* is not depicted in terms of complete physical isolation. Instead, significant social practices and networks permeate the life of the anchoresses, which are described, to use Lefebvre's terminology, in the 'lived' space of the anchorhold, the latter extending in fact beyond the confines of its architectural boundaries. It may be that this form of spiritual solitude contributed to broadening the readership of the text, to both men and women, religious or lay, who were familiar with Latin or one of the vernacular languages spoken in medieval England.

The Politics and Discourse of Enclosure

The large number of manuscripts (17 extant) in which *Ancrene Wisse* circulated testifies to the surprising popularity of such an apparently specialized religious piece. Changes made to the original version suggest the

existence of a reading public whose way of life and gender did not necessarily match those inscribed in the original. For example, it seems that a male, non-anchoretic public might have been attracted to this text, without any sense of incongruity in digesting passages specifically addressed to female virgins. The evidence provided by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne on the Anglo-Norman version of *Ancrene Wisse*, integrated into a large compilation called the *Compileison*, provides a great deal of information about the ways in which *Ancrene Wisse* was adapted for an audience which may well have included monks, canons, friars of whatever kind, nuns, recluses, and men or women of religion. Wogan-Browne also stresses how the Anglo-Norman compiler did not see the need to change the highly gendered passages dealing with enclosure in particular. Wogan-Browne's paper makes a strong case for the un-enclosing of *Ancrene Wisse* by a consideration of its adaptability outside specifically anchoritic channels.¹³ I would like to pursue this argument about the permeability of enclosure by looking first at internal textual evidence that specifically addresses enclosure; then at the description of the anchoritic household as representation of 'lived' space, in order to argue that this concept serves the construction of a representational space marked by circulation, exchanges, social practice and networks. However much the author of *Ancrene Wisse* deploys anchoritic culture as part of his overall textual strategy, more careful attention to space as an historical category allows for evidence showing how anchoritic culture is based on systems of networks in which anchoresses are shown interacting with the world at large.¹⁴

Although I concur with Christopher Cannon on the shaping influence of *Ancrene Wisse* as material book and the ways in which it determines how the anchoritic body is conceptualized in its rapport with spatial categories—according to the Russian dolls principle— I also contend that emphasis on interchange between those spatial containers which are the Christian community at large, the parish, the village, the anchorhold, the cell and the anchoress's body, reveals awareness on the part of the author about the necessity of permeability within anchoritic culture.¹⁵ Also, one should point out that Guido I's *Consuetudines* and the solitary model of the Carthusian which it constructs, which had a strong impact on the construction of the concept of solitariness in *Ancrene Wisse*, is based on the concepts of an order which considered itself semi-eremical, with relative importance given to social networks and practice.¹⁶ Given the Carthusian influence and the evidence of *Ancrene Wisse* itself, it is worthwhile paying additional attention

to the question of permeability. Our desire for a past that is foreign, exotic, other, and therefore appealing, may have had too great an impact on the way we represent anchoritic culture in general, and the space that it produces. It may account for too rigid an interpretation of some of the information found in liturgical manuals and manuscript illustrations, where notions of impermeability, enclosure and containment are treated formally and ideally. For instance, without wanting to deny the psychological importance of the recitation of the Mass of the Dead which marked the ceremony of enclosure, as is attested by liturgical manuals, we may have been blinded by the fact that, despite this psychological death, the anchoress had to interact with the world in several specific ways for her own physical survival.

Recent attention to the subject of female monastic and anchoritic enclosure shows that enclosure as a concept needs to be complemented by those of permeability and networks. The work of Mary Erler on ownership and transmission of manuscripts among female religious communities points to important relationships between nuns and their religious and blood families.¹⁷ The convent gate becomes a site from which exchange becomes possible. Evidence of book ownership among anchoresses is probably even scantier than that for nuns; nonetheless, one may suspect that blood families also played an important role in the purveyance of goods and commodities for solitary recluses or small communities of anchoresses.¹⁸ The defensive, guarded, tone of *Ancrene Wisse* and other anchoritic works towards the outside world occludes in part the necessary contacts which practical aspects of the anchoritic mode of life inevitably forced upon anchoresses. In fact, most passages dealing with enclosure, if read from the other side of the lens, can be used as evidence in support of a space that is permeable and which therefore allows intense networking for those who inhabit it:

Vt þurh þe chirche þurl ne halde ze tale wið namon, ah beo reð þer to wurðmunt for þe hali sacrament þat ze seoð þerþurh. Ant neomeð oðerhwile to ower wummen þe huses þurl, to oþre þe parlor. Speoken ne ahe ze bute ed tes twa þurles. Silence eauer ed te mete. zef oðre religiuse as ze witen doð hit, ze ahen ouer alle. zef ei haueð deore geast, do hire meidnes as in hire stude to gleadien hire feire. ant heo schal habbe leaue forte unsperren hire þurl eanes oðer twien. ant makie sines toward hire of a glead chere. Summes

curteisie is iturnt hire to uuel. Vnder semblant of god is ofte ihulet sunne. Ancre ant huses leafdi ah muchel to beon bitweonen. (pp. 37-8, fol. 17a/18-17b/3)

[Do not talk to anyone through the church window, but hold it in honor because of the holy sacrament that you see through it. And use the house window for talking sometimes with your women; for others, the parlor window. You should not speak except at these two windows.

Always keep silence at meals; since other religious do this, as you know, you above all ought to do it. If anyone has a loved guest, let her have her maid entertain her fairly as though in her place—and she will have leave to open her window once or twice and make signs toward her with a cheerful face. The courtesy of some has turned to their harm. Under the appearance of good sin often lies hidden. There should be a great difference between an anchoress and the lady of a house.] (*AW*, p. 74)

There is indeed a difference between an anchoress and the lady of a house, even if the comparison drawn by the author indicates that similarities can be found as well. In fact, the text's content makes clear that the author is addressing a primary audience familiar with noble or gentry household practices. As Chris Woolgar observes, every decent household would demonstrate its wealth by displaying a strong sense of hospitality, entertaining and feeding guests in the best possible fashion, with as much courtesy as demonstrated, for instance, in the fourteenth-century romance, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.¹⁹ It is quite clear, therefore, that hospitality, an essential Christian value, needs readjusting in the space of the anchorhold and that the textual strategy of *Ancrene Wisse* consists mainly in attuning the noble ladies to a material space for which a new code of conduct is now required.²⁰ Yet the architectural space of the anchorhold, despite obvious differences, creates another household for which practical regulations and networks need to be implemented. The acquisition and assimilation of those new paradigms by the anchoresses are a great concern of the author. They are shaped with reference to secular household practices.²¹

The Anchorhold as Household

Although the anxiety-driven anchoritic background of *Ancrene Wisse* does not allow for profuse and systematic use of household imagery, this imagery, when it occurs, holds several distinct functions. For instance, the last part of *Ancrene Wisse*, 'The Outer Rule', contributes to the shaping of anchorhold activities, to the anchorhold as 'lived' space, by making repeated gestures towards secular household practices:

Ne limpeð nawt to ancre of oper monnes ealmesse to makien hire large. Nalde me lahhen a beggere lude to bismere. þe leaðede men to feaste? Marie ant Marthe ba weren sustren. ah hare lif sundrede. ze ancren beoð inumen ow to Marie dale. þe ure laurd seolf herede. Maria optimam partem elegit. Marthe marthe qð he þu art mucho baret. Marie haued icore bet. ant ne schal hire na þing reauin hire dale. Husewifschipe is marthe dale. Marie dale is stilnesse ant reste of alle worldes noise. þat na þing ne lette hire to heren godes steuene. Ant lokið hwet godd seið. þat na þing ne schal ow reauin þis dale. Marie haued hire meoster. leoted hire iwurðen. ze sitten wið Marie stan stille ed godes fet ant hercnið him ane. Marthe meoster is to feden poure ant schruden as hus leafdi. Marie ne ah nawt to entremeatin þrof. zef ei blameð hire, godd seolf ihwer wereð hire. as hali writ witneð. Contra Symonem, duo debitores et cetera. Contra Martham Maria optimam par. et cetera. Contra apostolos murmurantes. Vt quid perditio hec? Bonum inquit opus et cetera. On oðer half nan ancre ne ah to neomen bute meaðfulliche þat hire to neodeð. hwer of þenne mei ha makien hire large? ha schal libben bi ealmesse ase meaðfulliche as ha eauer mei. ant nawt gederin forte zeouen. ha nis nawt husewif, ah is a chirch ancre. zef ha mei spearien eani poure schruden, sende ham al dearnliche ut of hire wanes. Vnder semblant of god, is ofte ihulet sunne. Ant hu schulen þeose chirch ances þe tilieð oðer habbeð rentes isette. don to poure nehurs dearnliche hare ealmesse? Ne wilni ha nawt to habbe word of a large ancre. ne forte zeouen muchel, ne beo nan þe gnedure. forte habben mare. For hwon

þe gredinesse beo rote of þe gederunge. of hire bitternesse. al beoð þe bohes bittre þe of hire spruteð. Bidden hit forte zeouen hit, his nawt ancre rihte. Of ancre curteisie. of ancre largesce, is icumen ofte sunne ant scheome on ende. Wummen. ant children. ant nomeliche ancre meidnes þe cumeð iswenchet for ow. þah ze spearien hit on ow, oðer borhin oðer bidden hit, makieð ham to eotene wið chearitable chere. ant leaðieð to herbarhin. (pp. 211-22, fols 111b/28-112b/10)

[It is not appropriate for an anchoress to be generous with someone else's alms. Would one not laugh a beggar loudly to scorn who invited people to a feast? Mary and Martha were both sisters, but their lives were quite different. You anchoresses have committed yourselves to Mary's share, which our Lord himself praised: *Maria optimam partem elegit* (Luke 10. 42)—'Martha, Martha!' he said, 'you are much troubled. Mary has chosen better, and nothing will deprive her of her share.' Being a housewife is Martha's share; Mary's is stillness and rest from all the world's noise, so that nothing may prevent her from hearing God's voice. And see what God said, that 'nothing will deprive' you of this share. Martha has her office; leave it to her. You sit with Mary stone-still at God's feet and listen to him alone. Martha's office is to feed the poor and clothe them, like a lady of the house. Mary ought not to meddle in this. If anyone blames her, God himself always protects her, as Holy Writ witnesses: *Contra Symonem, duo debitores, et cetera; contra Martham, Maria optimam partem, et cetera; contra apostolos murmurantes, ut quid perdito hec? Bonum inquit opus et cetera* [In answer to Symon (the Pharisee): 'If a man has two debtors', etc.; in answer to Martha: 'Mary has chosen the best part' etc.; in answer to the apostles complaining 'What is the purpose of this waste?' he replied 'She has done me a good service'] (Luke 7. 36-50; 10. 38-42; Matthew 26. 8-10)

Likewise, no anchoress ought to take more than moderately what she needs. How then can she be generous? She has to live by alms, as moderately as she can, and not accumulate

things in order to give them away. She is not a housewife but a church- anchoress; if she can spare any poor scraps, let her send them quite secretly out of her house. Under the semblance of good, sin is often hidden. And how can those rich anchoresses who cultivate land or have fixed incomes give their alms to poor neighbours secretly? Let her not wish to have a reputation as a generous anchoress, nor become greedier to have more so as to give much away: for when greediness is at the root of such accumulation, because of bitterness all the boughs which sprout from her are bitter. To ask for something in order to give it away is not right for an anchoress. From an anchoress's graciousness, from an anchoress' generosity, sin and shame have often come in the end.

To women and children, and especially to the anchoress' maidens who come and work for you, give food to eat with cheerful charity, even if you must deprive yourself or borrow or beg for it; and invite them to stay with you.] (*AW*, pp. 200-1)

The passage seems to have as reference a pious noblewoman who, by organising feasts for her guests and distributing generously to the poor, may be spiritually following the model of Martha, but whose behaviour is marked nevertheless by typical secular noble household activities. However praiseworthy the spiritual dimension of this activity may be, the anchoress is asked to follow an altogether different, contemplative model: that of Mary, completely devoted to the contemplation of spiritual matters. Some of the comments above, the author states, do not address the original recipients, the three sisters the author knew as their possible confessor and/or spiritual guide. If, according to the *Ancrene Wisse* author, the behaviour of these sisters is exemplary, one cannot infer that their way of life is typical of other anchoresses' behaviour. For example, following the well-known passage of the cat, the author continues with advice to anchoresses who keep animals other than cats:

ladlich þing is hit wat crist hwen me makeð i tune man of
ancre ahte. Nu þenne zef eani mot nedlunge habben hit, loki
þat hit namon ne eili ne ne hearmi. ne þat hire þoht ne beo

nawiht þron ifestnet. ancre ne ah to habben na þing þat
utward drahe hire heorte. (p. 213, fol.113a/3-8)

[It is a hateful thing, Christ knows, when people in town
complain about an anchoress' animals. Now then, if anyone
has to have one, see that it does not bother or harm anyone, and
that her thought is in no way fastened on it. An anchoress ought
to have nothing which draws her heart outward.] (*AW*, p. 201)

Servants, guests, and here, animals, make preservation of physical enclosure impossible. Anchoresses do have other animals than cats, people complain about them, and the author here seems to provide evidence of knowledge of an anchoritic way of life in England which not only speaks against the feasibility of applying physical enclosure, but shows in addition that anchoresses' contact with the outside world is sometimes subject to criticism. Hence, the use of household imagery in *Ancrene Wisse* is a complex one. It is used, firstly, perhaps not so much to warn anchoresses against improper behaviour, but rather, to help them adapt—at least for some of them—pre-enclosure gentry behaviour which they used to perform themselves in the past, or which they used as a model while they were still living in the world. However, the same 'household imaginary' (in Smith's phrase) serves also in the construction of a representation of a system of communities and networks, social and spiritual, in which the anchoress plays an essential role.²² Unlike the first use of the household, which is not without slight negative connotations, the anchoress is provided with tools that help her situate herself precisely in a nexus shaped by the representational space of an abstract household characterized by exchange and interaction.

Confession, Introspection and the Household

A third use of household space in *Ancrene Wisse* appears in the delineation of the inner feelings in the context of confession:

Schrift schal beon ihal. þat is. iseid al to a mon ut of child
hade. þe poure widewe hwen ha wule hire hus cleansin, ha
gedereð al þe greaste on an heap on alre earst, ant schuueð hit
ut þenne. þrefter kimeð eft a3ein ant heaped eft to gederes þat

wes ear ileauet ant schuuēð hit ut efter. Þrefter o þe smeale dust. 3ef hit dusteð swiðe, ha flasekēð weater ant swopeð ut efter al þet oðer. Alswa schal þe schriueð him efter þe greater schuuen ut te smealre. 3ef dust of lihte þohtes windeð to swiðe up, flaski teares on ham. ne schulen ha nawt þenne ablende þe heorte ehnen. (pp. 161-2. fol. 85b/8-18)

[Confession must be whole: that is, sins from childhood on must all be spoken to one person. When the poor widow wants to clear her house, she first of all gathers all the dust in a heap, and then sweeps it out. Then she comes back and heaps what has been left together again, and sweeps it out after. After that, if it is very dusty, she sprinkles water on the fine dust and sweeps it out after all the rest. In the same way, one who confesses must push out the small sins after the great ones. If the dust of light thought blows up too much, sprinkle tears on them; then they will not blind the eyes of the heart.]

(*AW*, pp. 163-4)

As shown by the quotation above, *Ancrene Wisse's* adaptability at using concepts and images—elaborated from Alan of Lille's *Distinctiones*—according to the genre which it incorporates for the fashioning of its eight parts, is well demonstrated in the way in which household space serves in the confessional part to describe the recipient's inner self.²³ Linda Georgianna, followed by Millett and Cate Gunn, has given ample evidence of *Ancrene Wisse's* debt to penitential literature, a genre for which the Friars became the strongest advocates and to whose composition and propagation they contributed in important ways.²⁴

The Doctrine of the Hert is a work that similarly shows the influence of the increase in interest in self-introspection that marked the penitential literature which flourished after the 1215 Canon 21 decision of the Fourth Lateran Council imposing annual confession on all Christians. Unlike *Ancrene Wisse*, *The Doctrine of the Hert*, studied here in its fifteenth-century Middle English translation—and in this sense a reflection of one of *Ancrene Wisse's* French versions, the confessional and penitential *Compileison*—explores domestic imagery at far greater length.²⁵ Specifically, it participates in the construction of what I wish to call the devotional household, a concept that becomes fashionable all over Europe in the late medieval period,

involving the development of a sophisticated allegorization of the heart or the conscience as a household in need of minute attention.²⁶

Household space conceived as a mental image in *The Doctrine* serves then exclusively as a means of configuring the believer's consciousness. The degree to which mental images in this treatise are developed bespeak a strong conviction concerning the pedagogical potential of such imagery, to be used as part of an inner preparation for the exercise of confession:

Of oo þing beware, þou mayst neuer zeve trew rekenyng in confession but zif þou remembre þe long afor as a lordis catour þe whiche schal zeve a rekenyng to his lord. First he rekenet by hym self. Riȝt so schuldist þou do er þan þou come to confession and reken þe defautes by þiself, how þou hast dispendid þi lordis gode þe whiche He haþ lent to þe, þat is, þe giftes of nature, þe giftes of fortune, and þe giftes of grace. Also þou wost wele if a catour schuld zeue trew rekenyng he writeth both þe daies and þe causes in his boke how þat he haþ dispendid his lordis gode. So most þou do; rekene wele þe circumstances of þi synnes wher and how and by what cause þou hast synned and þan go to confession and zeue þi rekenyng to þi lordis auditor, þat is, þi confessour sittyng þer in þi lordis name. (*The Doctrine*, p. 8)

As a mental spatial representation, the house of your heart ('þe hous of þin hert'; *The Doctrine*, p. 9) becomes a dominant image of the treatise, one that enables a careful delineation of consciousness, and which makes possible the further exposition of basic Christian concepts.

The metaphor of the household for the representation of consciousness elaborates the more general concept of the space of daily experience which 'represents the inner side of a person's life and the inner circle of activities of persons in groups, the estate, the "house", or the "room"'.²⁷ According to Harald Kleinschmidt, that space of daily experience can be represented by a private household.²⁸ In the case of *The Doctrine*, the household is used solely to conceptualize the interiority of a person's life. It is an outstanding example of an extensive development of household space for the configuration of the inner feelings that developed in parallel to, or within, the confessional context. Household space is exploited in minute details, with a stress on the

significance of private, enclosed locations. So the house is easily appropriated as the figuration of the heart, the seat of consciousness, which does not stand as an abstract entity in the medieval period, but is corporeal. The force of the figuration can only be stronger when the household imagery is applied to interiority as physical habitation, the physical organ of the heart.²⁹ The use of the household as a space of exchange and busy negotiation for the interior life marks the latter as a site of bustling mental activity. Hence, the representational space of the household, understood as site of social exchanges, helps shape a mode of contemplation which feeds on an active engagement with household activities. In fact, interactivity is at the heart of the process of defining the self according to Christian paradigms regulated by circulation and exchange. The author of *The Doctrine of the Hert* therefore depicts household space as a site of social negotiations applied to the paradigm of the self, which must be kept under intense surveillance. Ways of cleaning the house are closely associated with confessional practice; that trope appears also in *Ancrene Wisse* and Catherine Batt (below) demonstrates also its subtle use in Henry's treatise. In the *Doctrine*, the household space is furnished with a bed, an eating table, a stool and a candlestick, associated, respectively, with inner peace, penance, judgement and self-knowledge. As Christiania Whitehead notes in *Castles of the Mind*, the confessional context invites expansion of this familiar trope.³⁰ In the *Doctrine*, the devotional household becomes a site in which regulation of circulation is possible. Thus it is an enclosed space, with the primary enclosure of the garden ('close gardyn', *The Doctrine*, p. 12) as a first barrier against unwelcome guests. The dichotomy 'close'/'commune' (*The Doctrine*, p. 13) which here addresses the garden imagery, is an overriding structural paradigm of the treatise. It addresses the notions of private and public spaces and assumes particular, antinomic roles for the characters acceding to those specific spaces. Hence, the self inhabiting the space of the household, unlike the common garden or the common market-place (*The Doctrine*, p. 28), has a way of controlling the circulation of allegorical characters within this particular precinct. If the evidence provided by the treatise, prescriptive by nature, suggests firmly how that space should be filled, it nevertheless leaves the last word to the reader, who has to engage actively with her own self and decide on its own configuration. Unsurprisingly, control of one's own senses is paramount in both *Ancrene Wisse* and *The Doctrine*: the household participates in the presentation of the inner feelings. In the former, the reclusorium as

physical household in which the anchoress is enveloped—which echoes the way in which the textual structure of *Ancrene Wisse* functions according to a similar pattern of envelopes—significantly affects the manner by which household space as imagery is used within the treatise. The *Doctrine*, less focused on the representation of physical space, makes more systematic and rigorous use of the representation of the moral household, so much so that it is possible to explore household performances at great length, especially those taking place in the kitchen.³¹ So, while *Ancrene Wisse* resorts to a multiplicity of images (with the pelican, the *nictycorax* and the sparrow as the principal ones) to create a discussion about the inner feelings and how they should be guarded, the *Doctrine* proceeds differently, making use of household imagery by discussing the need to keep the gates (the five senses) of the household shut to unwelcome visitors (the seven deadly sins):

Thow, þi hous, Sister, be þus yclensed and araied, 3it 3if Our Lord schalle dwelle þerin, þe gates þerof most be kept. The gates þat schuld be kept ben þi fyue wittes, þat is, tastyng, touchyng, seyng, hiryng, and smellyng. By þes fyue gates þe soule goth out to outward þingis and outward þingis cometh into þe soule. The keypyng of þes 3atis is noþing ellis but puttyng away of delectacions of þe fyue wittes. The soule goth outward by þe gates whan sche putteth hir to outward besynes þat longith to actif lif þe whiche schuld ben vsed with gret sadnes and grete drede. (*The Doctrine*, p. 23)

In the second chapter, keeping a vigilant eye out for the enemy's attacks is expressed in an even more defensive light. Household imagery is extended to encompass a besieged castle, with emphasis on the activities of those engaged in the defence of the castle:

Lo, Sistir, se and beholde what aduersary þou hast. Kepe þerfor þe castelle of þin hert fro suche an enmy þat so haþ besegid þe. Considere also and behold how sobirly alle þo þe whiche ben besegid in a castelle lyuen, how litel þei slepe and how selde, and with what drede and with how moche scleythe þei gon out of þe castelle whan þei haue nede, and how sone þei come azen, how oft and how besily þei serche þe wardis

of þe castelle, with what noyse and with what besynes eche of hem exciten oþer to bataile, and zit allebeit þat þei ben þus sorowful and dredful þei syngen oþer whiles on hye vppon þe castelle walles by cause þat her enemys schuld be aferde. Thus schuldist þou do, Sistir, zif þou wilt kepe wel þe castelle of þin hert. (*The Doctrine*, p. 78)

However, unlike *Ancrene Wisse* and Grosseteste's *Château d'amour*, in which the besieged castle as architecture represents the inviolability of the anchoritic body in the former, and describes the invulnerability of the Virgin in the latter, this metaphor of the aristocratic household, which I perceive in the *Doctrine* as a refined variation of the household one, also emphasises space as a social construction, a place of exchange and interaction, rather than as the static and firm conceptualization of a physical object.³² The *Doctrine's* besieged castle is a place of interaction, full of men, women and children:

But oo þing þou schalt wele know, a castelle may not be long kept zif it faile men for to defende it & kepe it. Riȝt so þou maist not long kepe þin hert in trew rest fro þe fende but zif þi þouȝtes ben myȝty ant strong for to withstand hym. Thou wost wele zif wommen or children be in a castelle þat is besegid þei ben sone sent out for þei mow liztly discomfourt hem þat ben within and also for cowardise and fayntise of hert bryng in with somme sotilte preuely her ennemys. (*The Doctrine*, p. 83)

The easy transfer from household to castle space initially supports the ideology of (household) containment as typically female and used by male clerical culture to occlude notions of oppression by those of sacrifice.³³ In addition, Karen Fresco's statement that 'the ultimate instance of female space imbedded in the closed world of the court is the woman herself' corroborates containment ideology.³⁴ If, indeed, the moral household participates in the representation of such ideology in both *Ancrene Wisse* and *The Doctrine*, one needs to be aware that later medieval adaptations of *Ancrene Wisse* and vernacular translations of *De doctrina cordis*, of which our version is an example, were also made for a male readership for whom the feminisation of devotional practices enabled a deeper understanding of their inner feelings.³⁵

In addition, *The Doctrine* is a good example of the complexity involved in the use of domestic space and its activities. The transition from household to castle space leads to a reference to the male world of armoury and horsemanship. Further on, being shaved by the barber serves as image to instruct male and female readers in the principle of obedience to a superior, thus showing that containment ideology is not necessarily perceived in a gendered a manner by the medieval imagination as by the modern one:

It schuld fare by a cloisterer þat is vndir obedience as it doth with a man þat is schauē vndir a barbouris rasoure. Þou wost wele, he þat sitteth vndir a rasoure, he suffret þe barbour to torne his hede now to þat one side, and now to þat oþer side, and now he suffreth hym to open his mouth and now for to lift vp his chyn and alle þis he suffreth lest he be hurte of þe rasoure ȝif he struglid. Riȝt so schuld a cloisterere do. As long as þou art vndir þe gouernaunce of þi souereyne in religion so longe þou art vndir þe handis of a barbour for to schauē away þi synnes. (*The Doctrine*, p. 134)

In this example, a male character is being checked in his movement by the barber. This image again deploys the containment ideology implicit within the household space of the treatise. It insists on subjection, obedience and sacrifice, without making too forceful a use of gender difference to convey its doctrine.

Conclusion

Space, more particularly household space, is an important element in the configuration of the self in late medieval writings. It is also undeniable that the deployment of spatial imagery as a means of containment in writings initially addressed to female recipients is overwhelming. In *Ancrene Wisse*, the ambitious project of delineating both a physical and spiritual horizon makes heavy demands on the way with which household space has to be dealt. Although we have seen that the politics of enclosure and containment loom large in the authorial project, its practical application rather reveals permeability and exchange. On the other hand, *Ancrene Wisse's* use of

household and domestic imagery for the figuration of the inner state stresses containment ideology. A more systematic development of this politics is to be found in *Sawles Warde*, one of the Katherine Group texts associated to *Ancrene Wisse*. Here, household space is used for the development of ideas of subjection and obedience applied to the soul:

Nv is Wil, þet husewif, al stille þet er wes so willesful, al ituht efter Wittes wissunge, þet is husebonde; ant al þet hird halt him stille, þet wes iwunet to beon fulitohen ant don efter Wil, hare lefdi, ant nawt efter Wit.

[Now Will the housewife, who was formerly so wilful, is entirely subdued, completely directed by the guidance of Reason, who is master of the house; and all the household remain at peace, who were so accustomed to be undisciplined and follow the lead of Will, their lady, instead of Reason.] (*Sawles Warde*, pp. 106-7)

Since *Ancrene Wisse* is a multi-function text, serving, among others, as an anchoritic rule of conduct, a liturgical treatise, a confessional manual, a spiritual treatise, a practical guide and an intimate epistolary text, it has to negotiate ways of applying the imagery of the household space to each of its specific parts. That is one of the reasons why it cannot configure as steadily as does *The Doctrine* an interior landscape by means of the household. The devotional household becomes a central paradigm in *The Doctrine*, one whose space is more extensively explored than any other figuration in this Middle English version.

The study of imagined and represented household space that this essay attempts relies upon a perception of space as an active element shaping social practice. It infers therefore that imagined and represented household space hinges on the understanding that space has social significance, that it changes with time and that it is gendered. But what are the relationships between imagined household space and concrete architecture, and the ways in which the real gendered household affects the representation of the devotional one? Although this essay does not offer clear answers, it nevertheless suggests, by its close application of space as an historical category to two religious texts, new lines of enquiry in the study of late medieval religious literature.³⁶

Domestic and Devotional in Henry, Duke of Lancaster's Book of Holy Medicines

Catherine Batt

Denis Renevey's investigations raise important questions about how material and imagined spaces interrelate in early devotional literature, and in the circumstances of its writing. Especially intriguing is the issue of how, in this context, internal and internalised spaces might be marked as 'feminine', and how such spaces, deployed figuratively, might be understood in the reception of texts such as the *Ancrene Wisse* and the *Doctrine*, originally produced for audiences of select female religious, but disseminated to a much broader devotional constituency. Henry, duke of Lancaster (c.1310-61), is a likely consumer of a text such as the Franciscan *Compileison* Renevey mentions, which is one of the channels by which the *Ancrene Wisse*—in the *Compileison*, in synthesis with other devotional material concerning, for example, vices and virtues, penance and purgatory—reaches a wider mixed readership in the later Middle Ages.³⁷ Henry's own colourful contribution to devotional literature, the Anglo-Norman treatise the *Livre de Seyntz Medicines* (*Book of Holy Medicines*), written in 1354, is most well-known (especially among cultural historians) for its extended metaphors of physical wounds as evidence of loss of spiritual integrity and, as the title suggests, of salvation through the medicine Christ offers, in his role as master physician to the abject soul. (The *Ancrene* author also on occasion invokes this ancient trope, for example, in the prayer that the wounds of the Passion might heal the soul wounded by sin [p. 23, fol. 7a.15-19; *AW*, p. 57]; or in discussion of the healing of body and of soul [p. 189, fol. 100a.25-100b.15; *AW*, p. 184]). Henry concentrates on how, while the penitent's wounds figure his spiritual lack, Christ's wounds are themselves salvific, so the imagery exploits this element of Christian paradox.

Other imagery, however, also crowds Henry's fascinating text, in a way that suggests its author is quite at home with the taxonomic methodologies and quasi-encyclopaedic, magpie-like accumulation, and range, of imagery common to popular Latin and vernacular devotional literature on virtues and vices and penitential practice, of which the earlier and later thirteenth-century Guilelmus Peraldus's thirteenth-century *Summa*, and Laurent d'Orléans' *Somme le Roi*, are examples. A third of the way into

the treatise, amid a cluster of intensely detailed figurations of the spiritually troubled penitential self (a self variously represented as a whirlpool, as a fox's hole, and as a market place, which imagery suggests acquaintance with Franciscan homiletic material³⁸), the narrator explains the pragmatic difficulties of confession, by way of an amplified anecdote about the problems of housekeeping.³⁹ The anecdote, which develops into a figuring of the body as a household to be defended, marks the culmination of a brief section within the treatise (pp. 95-103), which is signalled as a digression, and devoted to meditation during the last three days of Holy Week, from Good Friday to Easter Sunday, when—in conformity with the Fourth Lateran Council's prescriptions for the laity to make Easter confession and communion⁴⁰—the narrator receives Christ 'en mon vil corps' [into my vile body] (p. 98). The detailed account of domestic cleanliness Henry offers imaginatively elaborates on the manner of the abject sinner's reception of the body of Christ. In respect of linking cleansing with the confessional, and representing the sinful soul as abject, there are similarities with the procedures of both the *De doctrina* and the *Ancrene Wisse* (as Renevey describes them above), as with other homiletic and instructional literature. By 'claiming' these writings as part of a reconstruction of possible cultural and devotional contexts for Henry's work, and through them considering this example of domestic imagery, one can begin to appreciate the *Livre's* literary debts and to assess the extent and nature of its originality.

When, the narrator says, a great lord visits the house of a humble subject, he sends along everything he needs beforehand, and it remains for the poor host only to make sure that at least the place is clean for his lord's coming, and to make the place as clean as possible: 'come d'un bone balaise bien baler et nettement getter hors toute l'ordure de la meson, et puis laver del eawe chaude pur tuer les puses et faire tout net' [by giving it a good sweeping with a stout broom and completely cleaning out all the house's filth, and then washing it down with hot water to kill the fleas and make everything clean] (pp. 99-100). If the would-be host turns out to be hapless, too weak—'fiebles de soi meismes' (p. 100)—to do this work on his own account, then the lord might send someone in advance to help carry out the necessary tasks.

Certes il lui covendra avoir eide des ascuns qe le seignur
envoie devant pur eider l'oste de appariller l'ostel a poynt

Domesticity and Medieval Devotional Literature

contre lui. Alas a poynt! A poynt ne poet estre, car poynt n'ad de qoi il puisse a ceo poynt ordener a poynt. (p. 100)

[Indeed, (the host) will need to get help from those whom the lord sends ahead to help the host prepare the lodging and make it fit for his arrival. Fit? Alas, unfit! Fit it cannot be, for in no fit time is there anything fit for him to make fit.]

The over-worked pun conveys, through its simultaneous awkwardness and inventiveness, the speaker's urgent awareness of his dependence on God's help to remedy his own spiritual lack.⁴¹ Henry compares himself to the wicked and inadequate host, and the ugly and wretched home is his soul, opened up to Christ, although it is not worthy to receive Him. He contrasts his own evil with his guest's goodness and, continuing the household metaphor, expresses the hope that his evils have been ousted, at least for a time, just as, in anticipation of a great lord's visit, one clears a house of unnecessary furniture. A thoughtless return to old routines, however, has unfortunate consequences:

quant le signur s'en va, les ostiementz sont remys ariere en son lieu come ils estoient et sovent de pire aray q'ils devant ne feurent, et plus encombrent l'ostiel; et si revient le chat, et set la ou le seigneur sist, qi s'en estoit fuy hors de pour. Tresdouz Sires, les ostiementz sont les maveis pechés qe sont en moy comme les oustielemens de la pour meson qe sont ore remuez, jeo espoir, par vostre grace, un poy hors de moi [. . .] (p. 101)

[And when the lord leaves, the furniture is put back in its place, as it was, and often in worse order than it was before, and it clutters up the home more; and then the cat—who had fled outside in fright—returns, and sits there where the lord sat. Most sweet Lord, the furniture is the wicked sins that are within me, like the furniture of the poor house, which are cleared away a little now, I hope, by your grace [. . .]]

Henry begs God, whose grace displaces the movable goods that are his sins, to put his mark at all the entrances to the house, so that the furniture should not be returned, and so that the cat, by which we must understand the devil, should not again take his place.⁴²

Henry provides a confirmatory and somewhat repetitive gloss for his text. The sweeping of the house represents the discipline with which he must clean his body, soul and heart for God. That is, one must constrain and chastise the flesh by means of penance, as if with a rod. The scalding water of regretful tears, meanwhile, expels the 'fleas' that are sins and devils. The mark that will protect the doors are the instruments of the Passion, and so the body's orifices (and senses), imagined as the 'doors' of the body, will meditate on the events and nature of Christ's sacrifice, and thus attune themselves to His suffering, and make penitential restitution. The ears will hear and remember the account of the Passion, and the eye too will look upon the image of Christ crucified. The nose will abandon the pleasures afforded by the sweet perfumes of this world, in order to smell instead the filth of the mud that was thrown in Christ's face at the crucifixion. Meanwhile, the tongue will rehearse the events of the Passion, just as the hands will strike the penitent's breast in acknowledgement of his sins, and also join together to ask for mercy. His feet too will go on pilgrimage and ask for mercy on account of the Passion. In sum, says Henry, kneeling in devotion before the cross, he will learn to love God completely and with all his heart. Indeed, the narrator insists, the heart, as the central entrance to the house that harbours the soul, is that which has most need to be signed and marked with the arms of the Lord, as all the traffic for the soul passes through it. Mindfulness of the Passion will keep the heart pure, and the devil will not dare to step into the place again. Henry concludes with an aside on the poor design and troublesome inconvenience of a house with so many entrances, so difficult to protect (p. 103).

As with much of Henry's treatise, it is difficult to trace an exact parallel for the working-through of this image, though of course cleansing is everywhere a recognised image of spiritual renewal, from the Old and New Testaments, to its reworking in modern poetry (of which Jean Binta Breeze's 'Spring Cleaning', which draws on Psalm 22 (23), is just one example⁴³). The figuring of the body as architecture (in this section, elaborated from the housecleaning motif), is a recurrent feature of Henry's text and, previous to this passage, he has already presented the recalcitrant spiritual self as a fortress subject not only to potential attack from outside, but also to the tyranny of a disorderly household. In this earlier episode, Lady Sloth, the most fully realised of the text's personifications of sin, appears initially as a reluctantly received guest, who has managed to appropriate for herself the

role of unruly hostess in the castle of the self. Blocking the path of Sin—'Ja ne vous hastietz tant, car une altre foize vous vendra il meultz a poynt; et alons nous dormir et manger et boire' [Don't be in such a hurry, for another time you will be better prepared, so let's go sleep and eat and drink] (p. 59)—she plies him with drink, and prevents his expulsion through the mouth by way of confession, because in his drunkenness he is incapable of finding the door.

Renevey notes above how the earlier *Sawles Warde's* treatment of the body as household emphasises the need for obedience and subjection. The casting of Reason as husband and Will as recalcitrant wife in this earlier psychomachia deploys conventionally approved male-female social relations as a model of spiritual order and self-regulation. That Henry casts his Will as male, and enamoured of Lady Sloth, arguably complicates this presentation of internal strife. And where the immensely popular *De doctrina cordis* (and its Middle English translation, *The Doctrine of the Hert*) glosses as the sinner's 'weak thoughts' (p. 83) the image of women released from a besieged castle for fear they might somehow draw in the enemy, Henry's own image of his spiritual self as a castle besieged by sin stoutly identifies his masculine military 'self' as source of treachery and self-betrayal (pp. 65-6). While the *Livre* can certainly be fully conventional in respect of 'male/female' imagery—for example, the narrator characterises his flesh as the 'mother' of his sins (p. 88)—Henry perhaps refocuses the traditional associations of male with order (as opposed to female and disorder) in these instances so as to align his examples more closely with the abject, sin-wounded, male body that serves as his principal image.

In the same vein, Henry's deployment of housekeeping imagery casts him as maladroit host turned cleaner. The Dominican Laurent d'Orléans' *La Somme le Roi* also figures the heart as a house, an image its earlier-fourteenth-century Middle English translation, the *Ayenbite of Inwit*, reproduces, in an account of the weeping repentance of King David (as a figure of the penitent Christian sinner) that elaborates on the imagery of the Psalms. If the *Ancrene Wisse* image Renevey discusses, of confession as assiduous house-sweeping, offers precedent for Henry's image, it is perhaps the *Somme*, in one of its versions, that has provided Henry with the image of a domestic animal as index of changes to household order:⁴⁴

Tex larmes chacent le deable fors dou cuers aussi comme
liaue chaude chace le chien de la cuisine. Apres la repentance

doit venir la confession. Cest la bone chamberiere qui netoie
lostel & giete toute lordure hors au balai de la langue si
comme parole Dauid ou sautier.⁴⁵

zueche tyeares driueþ þane dyeuel uram þe herte: ase þet hote
weter cacheþ þane hond out of þe kechene. Efter þe
uorþenchinge ssel come þe sssifte þet is þe guode chomberier
þet clenzeþ þet hous and kest out al þe uelþe mid þe besme of
þe tonge. huerof spekeþ dauid ine þe sautere. & *meditatus sum*
*cum corde meo & excercebar & scopebam spiritum meum.*⁴⁶

[such tears drive the devil from the heart, as hot water chases
a dog out of the kitchen. After repentance comes confession,
which is the good chamberer that cleans the house and throws
out all the filth with the broom of the tongue, about which
David says in the Psalter: 'and I meditated with my own heart
and I was exercised, and I swept my spirit.']

The sweeping metaphor also features in the *De doctrina / Doctrine*, which I
want to concentrate on in preference to the *Summae*, because of the ways in
which Henry's text resembles it, in method if not in structure, although it is
written primarily for a female religious community. A work such as the *De*
doctrina helps explain the allusive, on occasion apparently random, train of
Henry's argument. The *Doctrine*, like Henry's text, makes reference to
internal and external domestic architecture familiar to gentry and aristocratic
households, as also to castle imagery, as has been noted briefly above.⁴⁷ In
each text, pious selfhood is figured and meditated upon by means of
architectural imagery, of communities imagined interacting within those
spaces, and of an intriguing fragmentation and anatomization of the body.

Henry's book, which he presents as having been written in short
episodes, when he could snatch the time—at one point he mentions the slow
progress he is making (p. 98)—falls into two main sections. The first
enumerates the wounds / sins of his body (this part introduces both the figure
of the body as a castle, its entrances breached by sin, and also the image of
the dirty household), and the second phase describes the remedies for his sin,
provided by the Virgin Mary, the nurse par excellence, and Christ her Son,
the doctor whose own wounds supply healing medicine. The image Henry
constructs throughout is that of an abject sinner, his body a corrupt and
failing receptacle for his fallen soul. The seven chapters of the *De doctrina /*

*Doctrine*⁴⁸ describe the preparation of the heart for God, and, in its minute attention to aspects of household maintenance, this latter text startlingly and elaborately figures the devout heart as flesh to be cooked in preparation for Christ the guest—suffering the 'fire' of obedience to one's institutional rules, and being 'larded' with charity, that Christ might receive it. The heart's cooking is an appropriate response to Christ's own sacrifice, his 'rost(ing) vppon þe spite of þe cros' (pp. 36-8). Denis Renevey discusses the culinary detail of this account in terms of an emergent language of interiority for female religious.⁴⁹

While Henry also demonstrates an interest in cooking, in his treatise the culinary emphasis is on Christ, whose incarnation, and melting and burning Passion, constitute the chicken soup of holy love that is the medicine for the convalescent soul that turns to God after the ravages of the devil. Henry glosses the enclosing of the chicken in the earthenware pot in the making of soup as a metaphor of the incarnation, and the releasing of its nutritious juices, to Christ's Agony at Gethsemane, testimony of his overwhelming love of humankind:

lequel douz suour et gouttes, tresdouce Sires, jeo vous requer
[. . .] qe jeo en puisse avoir ore a man grande bosoigne, pur
moy revigourer et faire fort pur recevoir toutes les autres
medicines qe eider me poent. [. . .] (p. 195)

[which sweet drops and perspiration, most sweet Lord, I
entreat you [. . .] I may now have in my great need, to restore
me to health and strengthen me to take all the other medicines
that can help me. [. . .]]

D. Vance Smith claims that it is specifically the medieval *male* body that is 'caught between production and representation', and that: '[m]an not only provides a tablet onto which a significant world can be inscribed but also produces a world that becomes significant'.⁵⁰ The language of such as the *De doctrina / Doctrine*, however, suggests that female religious selfhood is no less supple and various in conceptualization, in the way it can construct both body and external world as objects for devotional meditation. Moreover, the rigour with which this earlier text works through its imagery of the penitential self exposes both Henry's debt to this kind of literature,

and the distance between it and his own, arguably more 'curtailed', penitential discourse.

The *Doctrine's* deployment of the image of the cleansed house is slightly different from, and perhaps more focused than, Henry's; the household image takes on incremental power in the treatise, and also has an introductory role for the extended description of the soul's reception of Christ, which culminates in an account, in Chapter Seven, of what it calls the 'ecstatic' love between Christ and the Soul (pp. 143-56).⁵¹ The author also (and unlike Henry) supplies specific narrative and scriptural contexts for the housekeeping image and its development (as Denis Renevey and Christiania Whitehead show). The honoured guest is defined as Christ the warrior (the Middle English retains the citation in Latin of the image of the bloodied man from Isaiah 63. 1) who must be made welcome after his struggle to save humankind. The nun is urged to 'make clene þin house of þin hert' (p. 6) for this guest. She must sweep the house of her soul and her heart with the broom of 'Fear of the Lord', as both Solomon and Augustine teach. Afterwards, like David, searching her conscience, she sweeps the 'filth of the house' away with the broom of her tongue through confession, washing her soul/house with the water of contrition (*Doctrine*, p. 7). The domestic image is further developed by analogy with the story of the Good Woman who makes ready a room for the prophet Elijah. As Renevey's analysis has already mentioned, the guest-room contains a bed, a dining-table and a stool, and a candlestick (already in use): the bed figures peace; the table, penance; the stool the conscience's self-judgement, and the candle, one's own spiritual awareness. As with Henry's text, the coda to this image is the need to make the house of the soul secure by constant vigilance at the gates of the five senses.

Each text, the *Livre* and the *Doctrine*, uses the room as an illustrative tableau to form part of a rhetoric of instruction. As Christiania Whitehead has noted in her investigation of devotional evocations of the household, these authors are 'revitalizing the taxonomies' of piety for the devout.⁵² (For devotion in effect comes down to meditation on a series of lists; the seven deadly sins; enumeration of the virtues necessary to counter these vices; the redemptive force of Christ's Passion considered through the number of his wounds; the joys of the Virgin Mary, and so on.) At the same time, the *de Doctrina* appears to be more attuned to the specifics (and consequences) of household organization than is Henry's account. The section just outlined, for example, also mentions the nun's confessor as having the role of a spiritual

accountant. As Christiania Whitehead has also pointed out, the idea that the 'stool' in that allegorical room stands for the practice of self-criticism, is illuminated by knowledge of 'chapter-house tribunals where the convent's official visitor passes judgement on the sisters' misdemeanours'.⁵³ In the *Doctrine*, moreover, imagery of the household and of military service (another scriptural trope on which the author expounds), run together in the later declaration of our obligations to Christ (p. 66), to whom we are bound in the same way as household servants and soldiers are bound to their lord.

The investigation of interior space as devotional mnemonic and as rhetorical stratagem, a piece of memory work, reminds us of the dangers of literal-mindedness. It is perhaps too easy to assume that domestic imagery is targeted uniquely at female religious, especially when one considers the ratio of men to women employed in household service in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.⁵⁴ Past commentators on Henry's work seem eager to account for his knowledge of (for example) wounds and their medical treatment, or his insight into castles under siege, from his long war-service, but do not suggest that mention of floor-sweeping confirms that one of the most powerful men in mid fourteenth-century England had to do his own dusting.⁵⁵ There is, however, a certain temptation to view the differences between the *Doctrine* and the *Livre* accounts in terms of gender (whether of author or apparent intended audience). Henry's declared attitude to housework is that evident inadequacy in face of the task will lead to someone else taking pity and completing the work themselves; the Good Lord himself comes to the aid of the weak and feeble penitent. The *Doctrine*, meanwhile, distinguishes sharply between the servant who cleans properly and the servant who throws new rushes down in a hopeful way, in an attempt to disguise the lack of attention to the task (p. 8). It might be amusing to interpret Henry's version as a timeless anecdote about masculine aversion to housework, but the differences between the two texts' use and development of the image also articulate a difference at the level of devotional engagement.

The *Doctrine* outlines the whole process of confession in preparation for the soul's deep knowledge of Christ. Conventionally in doctrinal texts the remedies for sins are virtues, and the soul is instructed in charity. The plan of the *Livre*, however, locks Henry's narrative persona into an abject relation with Christ and with Mary that, while not ignoring the importance of the penitent sinner's volition, and his responsibility to try to do good in future, nonetheless emphasises dependence on higher powers. While there is room

for Henry to deplore his sins and express his regret for them, in dwelling primarily on the remedies of divine grace, the treatise offers little imaginative space for individual self-willed spiritual improvement, for all its stress on human responsibility. If, as Renevey suggests above, the *Ancrene Wisse* and the *Doctrine*, by means of the 'feminisation of devotional practices' that they represent as religious texts, offer the potential, to a male lay readership, of a 'deeper understanding of . . . inner feelings', there may also be the potential to use such imagery to register a certain spiritual recalcitrance. Henry deploys this imagery in such a way as to 'regulate' his soul and his devotions, but in context the imagery also works to circumscribe and delimit the nature of that devotional experience, to mark the reach of Henry's spiritual understanding or, at least, the reach of the experience he is willing to make public.⁵⁶

Although governed by its primary conceit of the 'wounded sinner', Henry's text contains, as mentioned above, a wide range of imagery. Renevey usefully draws attention to how the *Ancrene Wisse*, as a 'multi-function text', figures its household imagery more variously, and less consistently, than does the *Doctrine*, and he suggests that, in its complex negotiation of spiritual and physical spaces, a certain 'permeability' inheres in its central idea of enclosure. Henry's text, while not so obviously 'multifunctional', partakes in an analogous (although not identical) 'permeability' with respect to its overlaps of—rather than any specific distinctions between—religious and material spaces and practices, and gains its special appeal (especially for cultural historians) in its highly realised engagement with historical detail. Such overlaps speak to other mergers, for example, those between religious and aristocratic, and between male and female, communities. Even within historical religious communities, one's domestic arrangements might be complicated, in that one might in effect belong to more than one household. Isabella, sister to Henry, was first a nun, and then prioress, at Amesbury, yet she appears to lead the life of an aristocrat as much as of a nun. R. B. Pugh extrapolates from a brief record of her personal household accounts, recovered for some months of 1333-4, when she was (notionally at least) at Amesbury, that she leads a life 'hardly distinguishable from that of a lay person'.⁵⁷ The life of Isabella as it emerges here accords with what Jocelyn Wogan-Browne has construed, on both historical and literary evidence, for life at Wilton in the fifteenth century: 'in a prestigious nunnery institutional life was routinely a version of upper-class household and family living—including over-generous hospitality', and it is

not unusual to find 'great ladies modifying institutional culture to their family values and styles'.⁵⁸ In this fourteenth-century documentary example, Isabella employs men to do her accounts and to look after business for her; she buys ginger and spices, pays for New Year and Christmas entertainments, makes generous gifts of clothes to friends, and gives to the poor and to lepers. (Disappointingly, the accounts do not record any book-purchases, although other documentation notes that Edward III bought 'a book of romance' from her, in 1335⁵⁹). She keeps greyhounds, and shares hunting interests with Sir Hugh de Audley of the local gentry. Pugh seems rather shocked at how many days' absence Isabella takes from her convent to visit family and friends.⁶⁰

A particularly intriguing aspect of Isabella's lifestyle, however, is the implicit perception of the boundaries of permissible behaviour. By virtue of birth she runs a separate aristocratic household within her convent as a matter of course, but when she *does* live as a nun, she evidently sees herself as bound by convent rules. Record exists of the papal grant to Henry (in August, 1344) of his petition 'that religious of either sex and seculars may eat flesh meat at the table of his sister Isabella'.⁶¹ That Henry goes to the trouble of seeking permission on this count suggests that there exists a sense of demarcation and of decorum on the part of aristocratic religious and of their families. Institutional life and the life made possible by an independent income and extra-conventual family networks co-exist by means of mutual respect for rule and custom. I stress Isabella's 'dual' lifestyle because I want to suggest both that there are intersecting audiences for religious writings, and that to live with such arrangements might accustom one to view apparently 'realist' textual details as themselves pragmatic fictions.⁶²

To return to this image of the household operative in these devotional texts: Christiania Whitehead makes a valuable point when she notes that male writers tend to invoke scriptural authority for their use of household imagery and domestic parable for literature often written for women, whereas women writers tend to use domestic allegories that are detached from specific biblical reference, because they are authorized by the women's visionary status.⁶³ This observation helps to locate the anomalousness of Henry's own text, between the ordered exposition of the writer for religious communities, and the inspired narratives of mystics. Henry, while his imagery might recall scriptural precedent (as when the broom sweeping one clean of sin puts one in mind of Psalm 76 [77]), rarely 'authorizes' his *Livre*

with biblical or other references (and the extant manuscripts, with only some Latin marginal noting of passages on the deadly sins, and some index-marks, themselves contain no explanatory marginal glosses or references). Instead, Henry seems pragmatically to borrow from homiletic, devotional, and encyclopaedic materials, which may, to greater and lesser degree, be supplemented by further details from personal experience, to which he gives a spiritual commentary, laying claim not to any visionary (or even explicit didactic) status, but offering a rueful exposition of his own sinfulness.

In terms of material evidence for Henry's religious practices that extended beyond visits to immediate relatives, there is record of a 1349 papal permission for him to visit the Minoreesses at their Aldgate convent in London, in the 'company of [ten] honest persons'.⁶⁴ In the following century, the convent's Abbess, Christine St Nicholas, will bequeath a copy of the early fifteenth-century *Doctrine of the Hert* to the women of this community.⁶⁵ I have yet to trace any contemporaneous copy of the *De doctrina* to those institutions with which Henry is most readily associated—for example, Amesbury, the Franciscan foundation at Aldgate, or the Newarke Hospital and College (which survives as Trinity Hospital, Leicester), which his father endowed and which he extended in the 1350s.⁶⁶ At the end of his book, Henry identifies what looks like a reading circle for what he has just written; motivated by the desire to make a general confession of his wickedness, 'to God and all the world' (p. 240), Henry says he is also responding to the urging of 'some of my good friends', to write a treatise which in effect becomes a modest part of their own devotions; those who finish the book are asked to say three Our Fathers and Three Hail Marys for him. The textual and material evidence together suggest that certain (if highly privileged) fourteenth-century secular groups may avail themselves of various forms of pious interaction and constitute themselves, whether informally or institutionally, and for different periods of time, as devotional communities. There is increasing interest in documenting and examining the interaction of lay and religious female spirituality, especially for the later-fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁶⁷ The example of Henry, duke of Lancaster, suggests that mixed aristocratic circles adapt and rework modes of learning and devotional practice more commonly associated with female religious (even if, as I have argued, Henry does not fully develop the spiritual capital of such literature). Certainly, as Teresa Tavormina's excellent introduction to Henry's work demonstrates in its collation of the

documentary evidence, his own text seems to have been available to men and women, monastic and aristocratic secular, alike.⁶⁸

Henry's work finds currency after his lifetime and in other contexts.⁶⁹ Chaucer's *Summoner's Tale* may well be paying homage to Henry's anecdote of the cat-as-the-devil in an ill-ordered household; in Chaucer's account, the grasping friar, visiting the housebound parishioner Thomas, settles himself down to enjoy hospitality:

'Thomas,' quod he, 'God yelde yow! Ful ofte
Have I upon this bench faren ful weel;
Heere have I eten many a myrie meel.'
And fro the bench he droof away the cat,
And leyde adoun his potente (stick) and his hat,
And eek his scrippe, and sette hym softe adoun.⁷⁰

If Chaucer here assumes specific knowledge of Henry's deployment of the cat, he is adding an enriching dimension to the familiar domestic space of fabliau, in order to figure the Friar as worse than the devil. This intertextual reference reminds us that reading and writing in general do not respect religious or secular situations as 'boundaries', but find inspiration and continuity in their constant recontextualisation.

Accumulating Domestic Stores in the Middle English Translation of St Birgitta's Liber celestis

Christiania Whitehead

The organisational metaphor of the household community appears within a number of thirteenth-century and fourteenth-century Latin, Middle English, and Anglo-Norman devotional treatises, most notably, as discussed above, the Early Middle English *Sawles Warde* and the *Ancrene Wisse*,⁷¹ the *De doctrina cordis*, a sizeable Latin treatise of French provenance, directed to an audience of nuns,⁷² and Henry of Lancaster's Anglo-Norman *Livre de Seyntz Medicines*. The metaphor of the household is the topic under investigation here. However, it is worth noting that at the same time that the *Sawles Warde* focuses upon tensions within the household community—the frictions

between husband and wife, the intractability of the household servants—danger from without is never very far away. The four daughters of God descend to help guard the treasure of the household and exhort vigilance against an external enemy. Similarly, while the *Ancrene Wisse* may be excavated to reveal evidence of an anchoritic household, as Denis Renevey shows above, nonetheless, the majority of the architectural metaphors of the text remain those of fortification and besiegement. The soul is a recalcitrant lady housed in an earthen castle. The anchoress should not raise her head above the battlements of her house, lest she be struck in the eye by the arrows of the devil.⁷³ In its first chapter, the *De doctrina cordis* offers its readers a vivid, extended allegory of the household as a device for structuring the Christian consciousness.⁷⁴ Nonetheless, later chapters continue to reanimate, albeit in far briefer ways, commonplace emblems of the soul as an besieged castle, encircled by cohorts of the devil, and dependent on its spiritual champion, Christ.⁷⁵ As Catherine Batt has shown, Henry of Lancaster's mid-fourteenth-century *Livre de Seyntz Medicines* pairs the figure of the body as a castle whose defences are threatened by sin with the image of the disordered household, within its first section.

In other words, all these texts maintain a simultaneous awareness of the ancient allegorical commonplace of spiritual fortification. At times they make use of this commonplace to supply the more unparalleled architectural metaphor of the household with a recognisable frame of reference. At times, their brief inserts are simply concessions to devotional spatial conventions. Nonetheless, since they do demonstrate this awareness, their decision to focus upon the allegory of the household needs to be viewed as an informed and deliberate one, consciously differentiated from the commonplace motif of psychological fortification. It is also a relatively innovative choice, in that the trope of the household seems not to have been used in any extended way much before the early 1200s.⁷⁶ In what else does this choice consist? In the case of *Sawles Warde*, it would appear to consist in a decision to picture the soul as the site of fraught, contending psychological impulses—of domestic tension—as against the old, unitary image of the soul pitted against external opposition; a possible acknowledgement of the new faculty psychology gathering momentum in Paris. In the case of the *De doctrina cordis* and its Middle English derivative, it would appear to consist in a decision to give increased attention to the self-cleansing and self-preparatory activities of the soul in the purgative phase of its spiritual evolution. The soul scrubs itself

out and amasses the requisite furnitures to receive Christ. It prepares a meal in the 'kitchen' of its conscience for Christ, comprised from its own spiritual motions of penitence and self-mortification. Both images can be explained as vivid and ingenious ways of propagating the self-scrutinizing penitential apparatus enjoined by the fourth Lateran Council, and rehearsed in numerous thirteenth-century penitential manuals.⁷⁷

There are obviously more examples. What it seems that the majority share in common is a revised appreciation of the soul, tending away from vigilance and from passive anticipation of the spiritual champion, Christ, toward a model that is notably more proactive and self-reliant. Vices, like germs, are controllable through various self-operated practices of cleaning. When Christ comes, in the *Doctrina*, it is to benefit from the spiritual furnitures we have prepared, and from the meal of penitential mortification we can set before him. Henry of Lancaster, of course, hopes that God will be good enough to send emissaries of grace to help organize his unworthy household. Perhaps this new intervention anticipates theological developments in the latter part of the fourteenth century, placing greater weight upon the human need for God's grace.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, Henry fully acknowledges the extent to which the expulsion of sinful dirt and fleas must depend upon the self-enjoined disciplines of penance and tearful contrition. In other words, the emphasis in these devotional allegories of the household remains firmly premised upon self-cleansing, self-acquisition, self-rehabilitation.⁷⁹ Christ's final residence is troped as the arrival of a prized guest, as an occasion for festivity and feasting, in which we are able to bring to bear luxurious, even aristocratic hospitality. It is *not* envisaged as a release from captivity. The emphasis has changed. Castle warfare has given way to an allegorical culture of conspicuous welcome.

Domestic allegories such as *Sawles Warde*, *Ancrene Wisse* and *De doctrina cordis* take an essentially didactic tack, instructing the anchoresses, nuns, and beguines, who constitute their primary reading audiences.⁸⁰ The domestic trope is enrolled as a homiletic tool, facilitating the formation of a Christian identity. As such, this trope tends to be founded upon a scriptural verse or parable, such as the parabolic sayings of Christ, urging the advisability of sweeping a house against evil spirits, or of guarding household valuables against burglars,⁸¹ or the Old Testament story of the old woman who readied her home to receive Elijah the prophet in the first Book of Kings.⁸² Henry of Lancaster's *Livre de Seyntz Medicines* acts as a

contrasting case. Positioned anomalously, as Catherine Batt notes above, 'between the ordered exposition of the writer for religious communities, and the inspired narratives of the mystics', it makes only occasional attempts to link its moral figurations to scriptural precedents, perhaps as a consequence of the lay and aristocratic circumstances of its composition.

But what happens when the domestic trope is passed over into a different kind of discourse? When it is removed from clerical or devout lay composition and passed into the domain of female prophecy?⁸³ When gender and circumstance reverses, and the figurative household is commandeered, not by a cleric or a male aristocrat, but by a married woman? Not to give homiletic instruction to a select readership of variously enclosed females, but to relay the words of God to a potentially universal Christian public? Obviously, it becomes incontestable. As such, it may no longer require the authority provided by scriptural precedent, since it is directly validated by God. Rather than acting to shape the consciousness of the late medieval female reader, and to proclaim it domestic, menial, hospitable, culinary, it is claimed directly by a woman to assist her in her act of self-construction.⁸⁴ Rather than offering its readers a model of domestic community that presupposes some kind of active engagement—participation in a mixed routine for those living in the world, a more active and charitable monasticism—but which still assumes a basically coterie audience with the individual dedication to pursue such extended visualizations, it redirects itself to carry a potentially universal application, inset within a prophetic discourse addressed to popes, prelates, religious, and the kings and magnates of secular Christian society.

In order to add flesh to these bones, and to go some way towards substantiating these general claims, I would like to direct the remainder of this discussion towards a specific, yet largely overlooked, prophetic allegory of domesticity: the extended allegory of domestic stores spread over four chapters in the second book of the *Liber celestis* of St Bridget of Sweden.⁸⁵ My intention will be to suggest that this allegory acts to revise existing images of the domestic in accordance with its 'author's' female gender and marital status;⁸⁶ also, that it can be excavated to reveal tension and confrontation; tension, in relation to the thread of self-reproval and castigation running through the saint's revelations, and confrontation, vis-à-vis the allegorical stratagems and norms of the Swedish clerical establishment.

To enter into greater detail, as is well-known, Bridget's opus of revelations consists largely of an exhaustive number of brief allegorical visions, shown to her by Christ or by Mary, and no sooner shown than explained. Many of these allegories purport to offer a divine perspective upon contemporary issues—the pope's residency in Avignon, the war between England and France, the matter of the Swedish crusades to Russia in the late 1340s. Many more comment upon the Christian duties and shortcomings of various estates in society, in particular, the knightly class, Bridget's own class. Still more deliver ominous pictures of the moral dereliction of the contemporary church and demand urgent reform. Many of these allegorical visions utilize and revise relatively standard allegorical *exempla* culled from the preaching repertoire.⁸⁷ To return for a moment to the discussion that opens this essay, many visions comment upon contemporary crises and weaknesses within the church by utilizing the familiar tropes of the assailed castle or the figurative temple. In view of this continuity, it seems fair to describe Bridget's literary method in many instances as a method of translation, in which allegorical figures coined by preachers and utilized within manuals of religious instruction are reassessed as *divine* allegories, embellishing an incontestable narrative dictated by God to direct and admonish mankind.

On many occasions Bridget appropriates commonplace preaching tropes and *exempla* to serve her visionary purpose. Yet, on other occasions, she is equally prepared to voice her prophetic message by reference to seemingly artless, or 'non-scholastic' domestic scenes. To reutilize two brief examples that Bridget Morris alludes to in passing in her recent biographical monograph upon the saint—on one occasion Bridget describes how Christ likens her soul to a cheese that requires cleansing within the cheese-vat of her body: 'þi saule [. . .] is to me swete and delitabill as a chese',⁸⁸ while on another, St Agnes appears in a vision and tells how God is a washerwoman:

þat puttes a clothe þat is no3t clene in swilke place of þe water whare, through mouinge of þe water, it mai be clenner and whitter, and 3ete sho takes heede þat þe watir drowne no3t þe clothe. So God suffirs þaim þat he loues in þis werld be in disese of tribulacion and pouert, þat þai be clenner and more abill to blisse. And 3it he kepis þaime, þat nowþir to grete disese ne heuenes fordo þaime.⁸⁹

It is worth noting, as an addendum, that, whereas the clerical author of the *Doctrina* provides his female reader with the menial tasks of sweeping and scrubbing the chamber of her heart to receive a knightly guest, the female author of the *Liber* transposes the chore to a heavenly household and envisages God's purification of the soul as an act of female domestic labour.

It has proved tempting to wish to relate examples such as these to the local circumstances of Bridget's own domestic experience and oversight. To summarise some well-known biographical details—born into the aristocracy near Uppsala, and married at thirteen to a leading member of the council of state, much of Bridget's early life was spent carrying out the traditional functions of a *châtelaine*: mothering children, supervising brewing, baking and dairy labour, and overseeing the management of her husband's rural estate.⁹⁰ However, I would like to hold to the phrase '*seemingly* artless and experiential', in that, in our more extended domestic example, I think we will need to recognise the way in which apparently artless local detail can be unpackaged to reveal more sophisticated stratagems of construction.

The domestic example in question is located in the second book of the *Liber*, and in all probability dates from the period succeeding Bridget's widowhood and consequent transfer to the Cistercian house of Alvastra; the period in which she also received the visionary call bidding her identify herself as a bride of Christ.⁹¹ In this book, in the course of an extended vision, Christ appears and describes three houses that he desires to share with his spouse.⁹² The first must contain food: bread, not of the eucharist, but of a 'gude will'; the water of the forethought of worship; and the salt of godly wisdom, which has nothing in common with academic wisdom:

For þare is som so simpill þat þai can no3t on right maner sai
one Pater noster, and anopir hase grete conninge and mikill
litterature. Is þis Goddes wisdome? Forsothe nai! For devine
wisdome is noht alloneli in litterature, bot it is in a clene hert
and gude life.⁹³

The second house must contain textiles: linen signifying peaceableness towards God and mankind; wool, signifying deeds of mercy, and silk, drawn from worms, that signifies the abstinence that springs from the memory of sin. Interestingly enough, this instruction is preceded by a short digression in

which the Virgin quotes from St Lawrence's meditation upon the passion: 'þe lorde Iesu Crist was naked and scorned. Howe semis it me þan to were precious and delicate clothinge?'⁹⁴ The third house must contain vats, tools and farm animals. The first vat for storing sweet liquids such as oil, water, and wine signifies morally profitable thoughts; while the second, for storing bitter liquids such as mustard and meal, represents the evil thoughts through which one becomes aware of one's own moral frailty. These vats are stored alongside a plough of reason, and an axe of discretion, with which Christians need to examine their daily intentions and to cut away arrogant accretions. The third house must also contain agricultural beasts of confession that bear the soul towards God and invigorate its good works.

Once these houses have been designated and filled with goods, they need to be protected by sturdy doors and locks so that spiritual enemies cannot enter the premises and cause mayhem. Consequently, Christ instructs his spouse to install a door of hope, swinging between hinges of despair and presumption, a lock of charity, strengthened by wards of dread, fervour, and diligence, and a key for this lock, consisting in a heartfelt desire to be with God.

þe kei of swilke a desire closes God in þe saule and þe saule in God. þe husband and þe wife—þat menes God and þe saule—alloneli sall haue þis kei, þat God mai haue fre entre to delite himselve in þe vertuse of þe saule, and þe saule to com to God when it likes.⁹⁵

There are several main points I would like to make in response to this revelatory allegory. First, by contrast with earlier domestic allegories and, I would suggest, as a consequence of her gender and married status, Bridget significantly shifts the parameters of devotional domesticity. Directing themselves towards anchoritic and monastic audiences, *Sawles Warde* and the *Doctrina* depict scenes of marital friction, or of hospitality and culinary process, that are essentially communal and monastic in implication. Marriage is presented as a tense and turbulent process one might do well to avoid, or it remains without presence. In his *Livre de Seyntz Medicines*, Henry laments his vice-ridden, disreputable interior household, but there is no suggestion that lordly marriage acts either as the source or the solution to his difficulties. Instead, as the treatise advances, the dominant figurative language becomes

one of spiritual healing; the tarnished household is reimagined as the moral illness of the soul. Bridget reinscribes a positive picture of marriage—the marriage between Christ and his bride, Bridget—into the centre of figurative domestic life. Obviously, this has to do with her wish to work on her own new identity—to probe deeper into the figurative daily realities of what it might mean to be a bride of Christ. It is also apparent that it contains some refraction of her own background of marriage to Ulf Gudmarsson, and the stocking, ordering and oversight of their country estate in the Närke province. As such, since Bridget writes of the condition of spiritual brideship in terms so akin to those of physical married existence among the landowning aristocracy, physical marriage and the virginity traditionally associated with spiritual brideship implicitly coalesce, a conclusion that accords well with Bridget's general desire to rehabilitate marriage from its traditional position at the base of the triad of sexual conditions.⁹⁶

Bridget's allegory, picturing God and the soul taking delight with one another in the three houses they have stocked with goods, gives a homely slant to the condition of mystic marriage, and rehabilitates the potential for perfection in physical marriage. As such, the text and its meditation upon Christian interiority, using material space and domestic circumstance, is implicitly made available to a more mixed Christian public than earlier domestic allegories presupposing readerly adherence to anchoritic regimes. And, as has been well-charted, vernacular versions of Bridget's revelations were read far beyond the confines of Bridgettine monasteries in fifteenth-century Europe, in particular, in England.⁹⁷

Bridget inscribes marriage into the figurative domestic sphere. But she also recrafts marriage, and the marital household. Whereas earlier, predominantly monastic writers upon spiritual marriage tend to elaborate the sensual and erotic aspects of the mystic marriage between God and the soul, describing, as it were, the honeymoon part of things, and never really moving beyond that,⁹⁸ Bridget, the mother of eight children, and busy châtelaine of a Swedish country estate for the twenty-eight year duration of her marriage, fascinatingly recrafts marriage as a sphere of material acquisition, of conspicuous preservation and consumption, in which the married couple take their pleasure, not by gaining entry into some allegorical depiction of the bedchamber, but by unlocking the door of hope into larders, cellars, linen closets, and stable buildings, and contemplating, perhaps even enumerating, their abundant material stores. The contrast with the equally aristocratic

Henry of Lancaster, who views furniture as sinful clutter and sees a virtue in emptying rather than in hoarding, is pronounced.

'Bourgeois' would be an inappropriate word to use in this context, as would 'mercantile'. Bridget was a member of traditional landed aristocracy. Nonetheless, there seems to be something extraordinarily forward-looking, something anticipatory of social shifts to come, in Bridget's decision to configure aristocratic marriage, not by reference to courtly and chivalric systems of manners, but by reference to reams of wool and linen, and vats of oil, and grain, and wine. In many ways, the episode anticipates the neat domestic interiors, with their chests and dressers and reams of cloth, that frame religious subject matters in urban, fifteenth-century Flemish art.⁹⁹

Bridget constructs marriage as a site of material acquisition, in which satisfaction resides in the contemplation of adequately stocked storehouses. She constructs an image of the spouse, in which it is suggested that it is her zealous preservation of household wealth and conscientious oversight that is best designed to gain her the approval of her divine husband. Aristocratic marriage in the early years of the fourteenth century frequently contained similar emphases. Bridget's own marriage, aged thirteen, was an arranged one, politically expedient to her family—a worldly and a practical arrangement. Morris relates how, in many places in her revelations, Bridget maintained this awareness of the realistic character of marriage—advising a betrothed woman on how to obtain as much as possible for her dowry; elsewhere naming material property and a male heir as the true fruits of a good marriage.¹⁰⁰

Nonetheless, there is a tension; there is a conflict. We should recall the Virgin's passing reference to St Lawrence, who scorned 'precious and delicate clothinge', in the midst of an allegorical validation of hoarding silk and wool. Elsewhere in her revelations, Bridget presents herself as having provoked God by her weakness for fine food and clothing.¹⁰¹ During her marriage, we are told how, having had a luxurious bed made up for her, she was reproached for her vanity by Christ, and took to sleeping on straw and bearskins instead.¹⁰² And after her husband's death, we are told how she receives a vision in which she is instructed to distribute his household goods amongst the poor, since the pleasure he had taken in those objects had caused him to sin.¹⁰³

Whereas menial domesticity—sweeping, scrubbing and roasting chickens—provides a set of uncontroversial signifiers in treatises such as *De*

doctrina cordis; the allegory of domestic abundance, of conspicuous hoarding, is laced with more unstable and uncomfortable subtexts, opposing asceticism to abundance, material derision to material satisfaction. In one way, these sub-indicators of asceticism serve as a reminder of the ultimately immaterial, or figurative character of the vision described. Yet, in another way, they destabilize the authority of the allegory, suggesting awkwardly that Bridget's vision of the 'gostly' husband and wife in amongst their silks and their wine flagons may simply pander to the aristocratic status quo. In other words, rather than acting to reinforce itself, as is the case with many of Bridget's other visions, ascetic subtexts within and beyond this allegory of domestic circumstance succeed unusually in *detracting* from its divine authority.

In addition to destabilizing its divine sources of authority, Bridget's allegory of the three houses also succeeds in questioning some more gendered and institutional loci of authority. In many ways, many of the details of the allegory are scrupulously orthodox. Confession and the confessor duly make their appearance. However, two small deviations from standard significations—Christ insists that the bread to which he refers is not 'þe brede on þe awter', but the bread of good will which is wholly unrelated, and that the salt of divine wisdom is not to be confused with the wisdom of those who enjoy 'grete conninge and mikill litterature'—additionally betray a very palpable dissatisfaction on the part of the saint with a clerical hermeneutics in which bread is always eucharistic, and wisdom, Latinate and book-bound—in which, in effect, everything always refers back to a sacramental practice or to an exegetical interpretation.

This process of interpretative fine tuning, whereby Bridget evokes, but then backs away from, accepted allegorical significations, can be glimpsed on several instances within her visionary corpus. On one occasion, for example, during a visionary conversation with the Virgin, Bridget makes the eminently forgivable mistake of comparing the Virgin to Solomon's temple—a homiletic and exegetical commonplace.¹⁰⁴ However, having then gone on to elaborate upon this comparison in considerable detail—the pavement represents Mary's stability of conduct, the walls, her imperviousness to reproof—she is finally brought up short by the Virgin, who demands testily: 'whi likkens þou me to þe tempill of Salamon?'¹⁰⁵ and goes on to suggest that a parallel with the mother of the temple's sovereign priest would be a far more fitting comparison. The Virgin's interjection is brief, but its implication is far-reaching. Essentially, it suggests, in exactly

the same way as Christ's modification regarding the bread and the salt, that the stock similitudes employed in sermons and in commentary may be flawed and fallible. It suggests, in effect, that standard ecclesiastic hermeneutics fall short of mystical revelation, and need to be subjected to a process of divine fine-tuning that can only be accessed through God's chosen visionaries.¹⁰⁶

The bread in the storehouse is *not* Christ's body on the altar. The salt in the sack has nothing in common with academic wisdom, with 'grete conninge and mikill litterature'. As such, imbued with such scepticism regarding book knowledge and, by extension, clerical intellectualism, ought we not to view Bridget's detailed construction of affluent rural domestic circumstance in the second book of her revelations, as a conscious attempt to formulate a domestic language of spirituality, an innovative finding of Christ in the home, untouched by the 'bookish' and more ecclesiastically-oriented formulae of the Christian allegorical tradition?

The image of domesticity comes in a number of guises in Latin and vernacular devotional literature, emphasizing by turns the relational, hospitable, communal, and acquisitional. When it is voiced by a woman who purports to derive her authority directly from the divine, I would suggest that it is voiced rather differently to its articulation in more homiletic texts. When it is voiced by a *married* woman, I would suggest that it configures marriage, and domestic property within marriage, very differently to its voicing in treatises geared towards coterie readerships in the female religious life. Nonetheless, what all these allegories and devotional episodes share in common is perhaps finally more important than what divides them. In their different ways, they testify to the idea that domestic, everyday space can be sacred space; that, troped with different kinds of virtue and penitential intention, it can be the place where one encounters Christ, as guest, as husband, as lover. As such, they add an important additional strand of evidence to established, but still ongoing, researches into the devotional shift from exclusively cloistered to lay and mixed forms of spirituality, and into the character and textual stratagems of the books of guidance that form and nurture that spirituality.

Conclusion

Christiania Whitehead

In a late series of interviews and talks, Michel Foucault lists four major 'technologies' by which human beings develop knowledge about themselves, and enumerates his increasing preoccupation with the fourth:

[The] technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.¹⁰⁷

Following these three essays, considering the trope of the soul or heart as a household in a variety of pre-modern textual locations, it may prove fruitful, finally, to evaluate this trope in the light of Foucault's crystalline definition. The configuration of the heart as a household, alternately an object for serene satisfaction or rueful despair, arguably constitutes an overlooked 'technology of the self', specific to medieval Christian culture, in which the self, modified in a certain direction by author and reader working in tandem, is constructed as a private yet social place, prone to moral dirt and external contamination, and in need of constant surveillance and cleansing. An appropriate degree of figurative domestic oversight—the policing of the senses and psychological self-disciplining, allied with stringent moral hygiene—creates the right conditions for transformation (significantly located as external rather than internal in Christian ideology—the soul is the recipient, not the agent) in the form of the arrival and residency of Christ, enabling communion with the divine.

After offering initial comments on what a 'technology of the self' might entail, Foucault goes on to trace an evolution in the ways in which we think about our self, from Greco-Roman philosophy to early Christian monasticism. Having sketched the Hellenistic recommendation to 'care' for the self by, for example, retreat, regular self-examination, and autobiographical letter-writing, Foucault suggests that Christian monastic culture innovates a far more disjunctive and inherently contradictory

'technology of the self', in which the self must continually be confessed (that is, verbalized, to God or to a confessor) as a pre-condition of necessary self-renunciation.¹⁰⁸ The self is articulated, on an ongoing basis, in order to be put aside.

Now, obviously, Foucault's overarching theorizations need to be subjected to considerable historical fine-tuning (not least, by tracing the respective trajectories of the history of confessional practice and of self-abnegation); nonetheless, once again, they initially appear very illuminating for the devotional trope in question. The interior domestic space of the self must be swept out, emptied of sinful clutter, by the act of confession. The old detritus of compromised thought and action must be expelled—new green rushes must be strewn—the self must be reconstituted afresh. In these didactic and devotional texts, the act of confession would indeed appear to be an act of self-rejection or ejection, communicated through the trope of spring-cleaning and house-emptying.

But is this the whole story? Foucault proposes the disjunctive, ongoing renunciation of the self as a central monastic paradigm, and identifies as an (initially) eighteenth-century phenomenon—and a clear rupture with earlier practice—the articulation of a 'disclosure of the self' that does not involve self-renunciation.¹⁰⁹ I would suggest that, on closer inspection, the domestic trope of interiority actually unfolds to reveal readings of the devotional self that give due place to stability, permanence and continuity. The *Livre de Seyntz Medicines* and the *Doctrine of the Hert* require the periodic expulsion of dirt through confession, to be sure. But after everything has been swept out and confessed, the household of the self is still there, not gone. It is simply sweeter, fresher and better operated than before (or in Henry's case, there is the rueful realization that the dirt and domestic beasts are likely to re-establish themselves soon!) In the same section that the *Doctrine* writes about expelling dirt through the medium of sweeping, it also speaks of *acquiring* basic domestic furnitures—a bed, a food-table, a candlestick, and a stool. Putting *out* the self, via speech, is conjoined with *determined self-construction*, within the same allegorical linguistic field. Bridget (still engaged obliquely with confession in that she relates her visions to her confessors) only acquires and does not expel. Her model of the self, received unarguably via vision, is one of scrupulous, laudable acquisition—a domestic and contemporary reinterpretation of the parabolic treasure *laid up* in heaven. But, as we have seen, Bridget often proposes to

correct or re-nuance the homiletic commonplaces that she receives. Here, she dispenses with the penitential convention of self-rejection or ejection (sweeping out the soul with the broom of the tongue), and instead stresses the cumulative stocking and securing of the self in terms of household goods and virtues. Bridget 'confesses' an interiority that is *built up* and equipped to a point of repletion for the enjoyment of the divine spouse rather than an interiority that has, perennially, to be renounced.

Moving then from monastic and anchoritic instruction, through lay devotional writing, to female vision, it would seem that the complementary yet distinct allegories of domestic devotional selfhood within these texts can fruitfully be examined as 'technologies': allegories that present their recipients with a prescriptive imagination of the form of their inner, Christian selves. Nonetheless, a close investigation of these tropes arguably reveals a more stable and continuous reading of the 'confessing' self than Foucault is prepared to allow, qualifying the violent rejection of the self (the broom of the tongue) by inseting it within a broader discourse of domesticity in which the inner space of the self is identified as the 'home'—always improvable, yet equally, always the same—in which cleaning gives way to a psychological culture of acquisition, drawing in a profusion of the moral furnitures and utensils necessary for salvation.

NOTES

¹ For two recent studies of the architectural metaphor in religious and other medieval literatures, see David Cowling, *Building the Text: Architecture as Metaphor in Late Medieval and Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Christiania Whitehead, *Castles of the Mind: A Study of Medieval Architectural Allegory* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003).

² See C. M. Woolgar, *The Great Household in Late Medieval England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); *The Medieval Household in Christian Europe c.850 - c.1550: Managing Power, Wealth and the Body*, ed. by Cordelia Beattie, Anna Maslakovic and Simon Rees Jones (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003).

³ *Medieval Practices of Space*, ed. by Barbara A. Hanawalt and Michal Kobialka, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p. x.

⁴ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), pp. 29-40.

⁵ The phrase derives from the title of D. Vance Smith's recent monograph, *The Medieval Household Imaginary* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

⁶ Quoting Max Horkheimer, Felicity Riddy draws the conclusion that such texts: 'encourage the female reader to internalize "the necessity to curtail her freedom in a life of domesticity" [. . .] and "to call this curtailment sacrifice rather than oppression"'. 'Preface', in *Medieval Household*, ed. by Beattie et al., pp. 129-35 (p. 133).

⁷ My contribution to this joint article forms another triptych, with two of my own essays: 'Early Middle English Writings for Women: *Ancrene Wisse*', in *Readings in Medieval Texts: Interpreting Old and Middle English Literature*, ed. by David Johnson and Elaine Treharne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 198-212, explores that text's notions of communities and social networks; 'Household Chores in *The Doctrine of the Hert*: Affective Spirituality and Subjectivity', in *The Medieval Household*, ed. by Beattie et al., pp. 167-86, addresses household, and in particular kitchen, imagery, in *The Doctrine of the Hert*. (See also: 'L'imagerie des travaux ménagers dans *The Doctrine of the Hert*: Spiritualité affective et subjectivité'. In *Il Cuore. The Heart. Micrologus* 11, ed. by A. Paravicini Bagliani (Florence: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2003), 519-53. References to the primary literature (in brackets following quotations) are to the following editions: *Ancrene Wisse*, edited from MS. Corpus Christi College Cambridge 402, ed. by J. R. R. Tolkien, EETS, o.s. 249 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962); *Anchoritic Spirituality: Ancrene Wisse and Associated Works*, trans. by Anne Savage and Nicholas Watson (New York: Paulist Press, 1991) (referenced in the body of the text as *AW*); Mary Patrick

Candon, *The Doctrine of the Hert*, edited from the Manuscripts with Introduction and Notes' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Fordham University, 1963); *Sawles Warde*, in *Medieval English Prose for Women: Selections from the Katherine Group and Ancrene Wisse*, ed. by Bella Millett and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 86-109.

⁸ E. J. Dobson, *The Origins of Ancrene Wisse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976); among her numerous contributions to *Ancrene Wisse* studies, see Bella Millett, 'Women in No Man's Land: English recluses and the development of vernacular literature in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries', in *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150-1500*, ed. by Carol M. Meale, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 86-103; see also Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Analytical Survey 5: "Reading is Good Prayer": Recent Research on Female Reading Communities*, *New Medieval Literatures*, 5 (2002), 229-97; Elizabeth Robertson, *Early English Devotional Prose and the Female Audience* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990).

⁹ Bella Millett, 'The Ancrene Wisse Group', in *A Companion to Middle English Prose*, ed. by A. S. G. Edwards (Cambridge: Brewer, 2004), pp. 1-17. Of the seventeen manuscripts in which versions of, or extracts from, *Ancrene Wisse* are found, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 402 (the manuscript Tolkien edits), probably written no earlier than the 1230s, and definitely not before 1224, in the West-Midland area, serves as my primary evidence.

¹⁰ G. Hendrix, *Hugo de Sancto Caro's Traktaat De Doctrina Cordis: Handschriften, Receptie, Tekstgeschiedenis en Authenticiteitskritiek*, 2 vols (Louvain: Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Théologie, 1995), I xxviii.

¹¹ Renevey, 'Household Chores', esp. pp. 167-8.

¹² I treat this aspect at greater length in Renevey, 'Early Middle English Writings'.

¹³ I here draw on Jocelyn Wogan-Browne's talk, 'Unenclosing *Ancrene Wisse*', given at the 'Anchorites, Wombs and Tombs' Conference, Gregynog Hall, Newtown, 5-7 July 2002, and thank her for generously making her paper available to me. Some of that material appears in an essay written with Nicholas Watson, 'The French of England: the *Compileison*, *Ancrene Wisse*, and the idea of Anglo-Norman', in a special issue, on 'Cultural Traffic in the Medieval Romance World' edited by Simon Gaunt and Julian Weiss, of the *Journal of Romance Studies*, 4 (2004), 35-59.

¹⁴ See Alexandra Barratt, 'Anchoritic Aspects of *Ancrene Wisse*', *Medium Ævum*, 49 (1980), 32-56. Lefebvre speaks, for instance, of a farm as a space implying social networks. The farm houses a family from a particular country, region. This farm is inserted into a particular landscape. Whether beautiful or poor, it is an undertaking as well as a product, which corresponds of course to a certain type. But the farm is nevertheless

also part of nature. It is, Lefebvre writes, an intermediary object between undertaking and product, nature and work, the symbolic and the meaningful. Does the farm give birth to a space? Yes. Is this space natural or cultural, immediate or mediated (by whom? for what?), given or fictitious? Both. See *The Production of Space*, pp. 82-4. This simple example shows the complexity of discerning all the connections such an object immediately implies. The same questions can be asked of the anchorhold, resulting in a similarly complex set of answers.

¹⁵ Christopher Cannon, 'The form of the self: *Ancrene Wisse* and romance', *Medium Ævum*, 70 (2001), 47-65. See also Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture: Virginity and its Authorizations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Mary C. Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

¹⁶ Barratt, 'Anchoritic Aspects', pp. 37-8.

¹⁷ Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety*, p. 27.

¹⁸ In addition to Erler, see David N. Bell, *What Nuns Read: Books and Libraries in Medieval English Nunneries* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1995); see also Vincent Gillespie, 'The Book and the Brotherhood: Reflections on the Lost Library of Syon Abbey', in *The English Medieval Book: Studies in Memory of Jeremy Griffiths*, ed. by A. S. G. Edwards, Vincent Gillespie and Ralph Hanna (London: The British Library, 2000), pp. 185-208; see also the introduction to *Corpus of British Medieval Catalogues 9. Syon Abbey*, ed. by Vincent Gillespie, with *The Libraries of the Carthusians*, ed. by A. I. Doyle (London: The British Library, 2001), pp. xxix-lxv.

¹⁹ For more information on the medieval household from a historical perspective, see Woolgar, *The Great Household*. On hospitality, see especially pp. 21-29; on food and drink, see pp. 111-35.

²⁰ On the medieval household, see Woolgar, *The Great Household*; see also D. Vance Smith, *Arts of Possession*.

²¹ In addition to hospitality, food and drink, other interesting parallels can be drawn between the anchoritic household and the great medieval household. Dietary concerns, relationships with servants and animals, the specific function of particular rooms, all provide interesting evidence. See Woolgar, *The Great Household*.

²² On the importance of communities in *Ancrene Wisse*, see Renevey, 'Early Middle English Writings'.

²³ Savage and Watson, *Anchoritic Spirituality*, p. 389.

²⁴ Linda Georgianna, *The Solitary Self: Individuality in the Ancrene Wisse* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981); Bella Millett, 'Ancrene Wisse and the

Conditions of Confession', *English Studies*, 80 (1999), 193-215; Cate Gunn, 'Ancrene Wisse: A Modern Lay Person's Guide to a Medieval Religious Text', *Magistra*, 8 (2002), 3-25.

²⁵ This confessional and penitential version is found in Cambridge, Trinity College, MS 883 (R.14.7), and dates from the late-thirteenth/early-fourteenth century. For a description of the manuscript, see *Ancrene Wisse*, ed. by Robert Hasenfratz, TEAMS (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 2000), p. 32.

²⁶ Eric Jager, *The Book of the Heart* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 120-56.

²⁷ Harald Kleinschmidt, *Understanding the Middle Ages: The Transformation of Ideas and Attitudes in the Medieval World* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), p. 34.

²⁸ Kleinschmidt, *Understanding the Middle Ages*, p. 34.

²⁹ Riddy, 'Preface', pp. 129-33.

³⁰ Whitehead, *Castles of the Mind*, pp. 122-8.

³¹ Renevey, 'Household Chores', pp. 176-7.

³² Christiania Whitehead, 'A Fortress and a Shield: The Representation of the Virgin in the *Château d'amour* of Robert Grosseteste', in *Writing Religious Women: Female Spiritual and Textual Practices in Late Medieval England*, ed. by Denis Renevey and Christiania Whitehead (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), pp. 109-32, esp. pp. 113-17.

³³ Felicity Riddy, 'Preface', p. 133.

³⁴ Karen L. Fresco, 'Gendered Household Spaces in Christine de Pizan's *Livre des trois vertus*', in *The Medieval Household*, ed. by Beattie et al., pp. 187-98, esp. p. 194.

³⁵ On late-medieval adaptations of *Ancrene Wisse*, for instance, see Nicholas Watson, 'Ancrene Wisse, Religious Reform and the Late Middle Ages', in *A Companion to Ancrene Wisse*, ed. by Yoko Wada (Cambridge: Brewer, 2003), pp. 197-226.

³⁶ See also Cordelia Beattie and Anna Maslakovic, 'Introduction', in *The Medieval Household*, ed. by Beattie et al., pp. 1-8.

³⁷ See Watson and Wogan-Browne, 'The French of England', for a synopsis of the *Compileison*, together with an account of its potential audiences. They note the text survives in full in two fourteenth-century manuscripts (p. 42).

³⁸ See similar imagery in *Fasciculus Morum: A Fourteenth-Century Preacher's Handbook*, ed. and trans. by Siegfried Wenzel (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989).

³⁹ *Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines: The Unpublished Devotional Treatise of Henry of Lancaster*, ed. by E. J. Arnould, Anglo-Norman Text Society, 2 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1940), pp. 99-103. Subsequent references are given in the text, by page-number.

⁴⁰ Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols (London: Sheed and Ward, 1990) I 245.

⁴¹ See also, my "'De celle mordure vient la mort dure": Perspectives on Puns and their Translation in Henry, duke of Lancaster's *Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines*', forthcoming in *The Medieval Translator* 10, ed. by Jacqueline Jenkins and Olivier Bertrand (Turnhout: Brepols)

⁴² Douglas Gray notes the equation of cat and devil here as both 'something of a shock' in terms of the passage's 'literary "realism"', and as 'appropriate' to a cat's destructive nature: see his 'Notes on Some Medieval Mystical, Magical and Moral Cats', in *Langland, the Mystics and the Medieval English Religious Tradition: Essays in Honour of S. S. Hussey*, ed. by Helen Phillips (Cambridge: Brewer, 1990) pp. 185-202 (pp. 197-8).

⁴³ Jean Binta Breeze, *Spring Cleaning: Poems* (London: Virago, 1992)

⁴⁴ Other mentions of the 'cleansed' soul carry their own allegorised elaborations; an Anglo-Norman meditation on the Passion in the later thirteenth-century MS Dublin, Trinity College 374 (apparently composed for a religious audience), fols 58va-67ra, imagines the newly washed 'house' of the confessed soul being adorned with the 'flowers' of virtue (fols 65vb-66vc). (Tony Hunt is preparing an edition of this poem). The poem Robin F. Jones edits as 'An Anglo-Norman Rhymed Sermon for Ash Wednesday', *Speculum*, 54 (1979), 71-84, from MS Dublin, Trinity College 312, specifies the necessary removal of spiders and a toad; these represent the seven deadly sins, with the toad as pride, pp. 79-80.

⁴⁵ British Library, MS Additional 28162, fol. 94ra.

⁴⁶ *The Ayenbite of Inwyt*, ed. by Pamela Gradon, 2 vols, EETS, o.s. 23 (London: Oxford University Press, 1866, reissued 1965), I 171-2.

⁴⁷ See also Renevey, 'Figuring Household Space', above, and Renevey, 'Household Chores', ed. by Beattie et al.

⁴⁸ For reasons of accessibility, I shall refer to the Middle English translation of the Latin text, *The Doctrine of the Hert*, ed. by Candon. All future references to this text are by page-number in the body of the essay.

⁴⁹ Renevey, 'Household Chores', pp. 176-9.

⁵⁰ D. Vance Smith, 'Body Doubles: Producing the Masculine Corpus', in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler (New York: Garland, 2000), pp. 3-19 (p. 15).

⁵¹ Barry Windeatt presents an abbreviated edition of this section in his anthology, *English Mystics of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 253-8.

⁵² Whitehead, *Castles of the Mind*, p. 119.

⁵³ Whitehead, *Castles of the Mind*, p. 124.

⁵⁴ See C. M. Woolgar, *The Great Household*, p. 34 and passim, on the predominance of male servants at this time.

⁵⁵ Kenneth Fowler, *The King's Lieutenant: Henry of Grosmont, First Duke of Lancaster 1310-1361* (London: Elek, 1969), for example, considers that knowledge of the dressing of wounds must come from 'his personal experiences' (p. 193), as must details about the administration of market-places, jousts, tournaments, sieges and hunting (p. 195). In this Fowler echoes E. J. Arnould, *Étude sur le 'Livre des Saintes Médecines' du duc Henri de Lancastre* (Paris: Marcel Didier, 1948), pp. xcvi-cviii. For sieges, see Winthrop Wetherbee, 'Chivalry under Siege in Ricardian romance', in *The Medieval City Under Siege*, ed. by Ivy A. Corfis and Michael Wolfe (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1995), pp. 207-23 (p. 209). R. M. T. Hill, however, in 'A Soldier's devotions', *Studies in Church History*, 17 (1981), 77-84 (pp. 80-1), suggests that the household preparations might indeed be a childhood memory of a great household on the move.

⁵⁶ Andrew Taylor offers a slightly different reading of the evidence in identifying a spiritual 'pigheadedness' in Henry, in his 'attach(ment) to his own sinful body'. See his 'Reading the Body in *Le Livre de Seyntz Medecines*', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 11 (1994), 103-18 (p. 115).

⁵⁷ R. B. Pugh, 'Fragment of an Account of Isabel of Lancaster, Nun of Amesbury, 1333-4', in *Festschrift zur Feier des zweihundertjährigen Bestandes des Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchives*, ed. by L. Santifaller, 2 vols (Vienna: Druck und Kommissions-verlag der Österreichischen Staatsdruckerei, 1949-51), I (1949) 487-98 (p. 489).

⁵⁸ Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'Outdoing the Daughters of Syon? Edith of Wilton and the Representation of Female Community in Fifteenth-Century England', in *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in Late Medieval Britain: Essays for Felicity Riddy*, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Rosalynn Voaden, Arlyn Diamond, Ann Hutchison, Carol M. Meale, Lesley Johnson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), pp. 393-409 (pp. 406, 408).

⁵⁹ Juliet Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1982), p. 51.

⁶⁰ Pugh, 'Fragment', p. 490: 'Isabel . . . held her episcopally enjoined claustration not worth an oyster'.

⁶¹ *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland, Petitions to the Pope, Vol. 1, A.D. 1342-1419*, ed. by W. H. Bliss (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1896), p. 78.

⁶² For an example of a medieval acceptance of 'realist' detail that also has to undergo some accommodation, however, see C. M. Woolgar's discussion of a manuscript portrayal of the female gatekeeper (which would have been extraordinary in a medieval

household) in the account of Ish-bosheth's death in 2 Samuel 4. 5-7: *The Great Household*, pp. 34-5.

⁶³ Whitehead, *Castles of the Mind*, p. 118.

⁶⁴ *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers*, p. 166. In 1359, Henry, who already has papal licence to enter houses of religious men 'with a suite of twelve', now asks for an extension of the same for 'houses of religious women', and this is granted on 6 June; see *Calendar of Entries*, p. 341.

⁶⁵ Now Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.14.15. See Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety*, p. 19.

⁶⁶ For an account of the Newarke hospital, see A. H. Thompson, *The History of the Hospital and the New College of the Annunciation of St. Mary in the Newarke, Leicester* (Leicester: Leicestershire Archaeological Society, 1937).

⁶⁷ See Felicity Riddy, "'Women talking about the things of God": a late medieval sub-culture', in *Women and Literature in Britain*, ed. by Meale, pp. 104-27; Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety*, passim; Wogan-Browne, 'Recent Research on Female Reading Communities', pp. 229-97.

⁶⁸ M. Teresa Tavormina, introduction to her translation of an extract from 'Henry of Lancaster: *The Book of Holy Medicines (Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines)*', in *Cultures of Piety: Medieval English Devotional Literature in translation*, ed. by Anne Clark Bartlett and Thomas H. Bestul (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), pp. 19-26 (p. 21).

⁶⁹ For suggestions about Middle English literature's—namely, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight's*—knowingness about, and invocation of, Henry's book, see M. Thiébaux, 'Sir Gawain, the Fox Hunt, and Henry of Lancaster', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 71 (1970), 469-79; W. G. Cooke, D'A. J. D. Boulton, 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: A Poem for Henry of Grosmont?', *Medium Aevum*, 68 (1999), 42-54; Francis Ingledew's book-length study is forthcoming.

⁷⁰ *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 130, ll. 1772-77. Gray also draws attention to the cat's role in the *Summoner's Tale*, 'Notes on Some Medieval . . . Cats', p. 202.

⁷¹ *The English Text of the Ancrone Riwle*, ed. by Mabel Day, EETS, o.s. 225 (London: Oxford University Press, 1952).

⁷² For a facsimile of the Latin text of *De doctrina*, see *Le manuscrit Leyde Bibliothèque de L'Université BPL 2579, témoin principal des phases de rédaction du traité De doctrina cordis, à attribuer au dominicain français Hugues de Saint-Cher (pseudo-Gérard de Liège)*, ed. by G. Hendrix (Gent: [n.p.], 1980). For an edition of the early fifteenth-century Middle English translation of this text, see Mary Patrick Candon, *The Doctrine of the Hert*. Since, for the allegory in question, the Middle English version

of the treatise follows the Latin very closely, subsequent quotations will be taken from this edition, giving chapter and page number.

⁷³ *The English Text of the Ancrene Riwe: Ancrene Wisse*, ed. by Tolkien, pp.198-200. *Ancrene Riwe*, ed. by Day, pp. 26-7.

⁷⁴ *Doctrine*, 1. 6-25.

⁷⁵ See, for example, *Doctrine*, 2. 77-80.

⁷⁶ Although the allegory of the household is not developed extensively before the 1200s, I have tentatively enumerated similarities between the image of the household in *Sawles Warde* and a short passage in Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Job*, in which the husband and wife, and sons and maids within a household are identified as the various psychological faculties constituting the human mind. Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job*, ed. by M. Adriaen, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 143, 143A, 143B (Turnhout: Brepols, 1979-85), I 30, 32, 35. See Whitehead, *Castles*, p. 121.

⁷⁷ See Robert N. Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe, c.1215-c.1515* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 26-33.

⁷⁸ See, for example, the emphasis placed upon God's grace in the parable of the vineyard in *Pearl. Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl, Cleanness, Patience*, ed. by J. J. Anderson (London: Everyman, 1996, repr. 2002). *Pearl*, IX-XII.

⁷⁹ See my more detailed discussion of household imagery in the *Doctrina*, in Whitehead, *Castles*, pp. 122-8.

⁸⁰ For an innovative discussion of the *Doctrina's* possible address to communities of beguines, see Renevey, 'Household Chores'.

⁸¹ Luke 11. 24-26; 12. 33; 12. 39.

⁸² I Kings 17.

⁸³ For a comprehensive discussion of the female prophetic voice in the late Middle Ages, see R. Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices: The Discernment of Spirits in the Writing of Late-Medieval Women Visionaries* (York: York Medieval Press, 1999).

⁸⁴ For a discussion of the shaping of the 'feminine' in male-authored late-medieval religious texts, see Anne Clark Bartlett, *Male Authors, Female Readers: Representation and Subjectivity in Middle English Devotional Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

⁸⁵ Throughout this discussion, I shall refer to the fifteenth-century Middle English translation of Bridget's revelations, *The Liber celestis of St Bridget of Sweden*, ed. by R. Ellis, EETS, o.s. 291 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), which follows the earlier Latin text closely in the passages under discussion. In all instances, I shall cite book and chapter, page and line numbers. A discussion of the influence of this translation upon fifteenth-century English devotional practices can be found in R. Ellis, "'Flores ad

Fabricandam . . . Coronam": an investigation into the uses of the Revelations of St Bridget of Sweden in fifteenth-century England', *Medium Aevum*, 51 (1982), 163-86. The most important recent book on St Bridget is Bridget Morris, *St Birgitta of Sweden* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999).

⁸⁶ The indeterminate character of St Bridget's authorship arises from the extensive early editing of her visions by her confessor, Alphonso of Jaen.

⁸⁷ Morris, *Birgitta*, p. 72.

⁸⁸ Bridget, *Liber*, 1. 33, 60/14.

⁸⁹ Bridget, *Liber*, 3. 30, 244/9-15.

⁹⁰ Morris, *Birgitta*, ch. 2.

⁹¹ Morris, *Birgitta*, ch. 3.

⁹² Bridget, *Liber*, 2. 24-27.

⁹³ Bridget, *Liber*, 2. 25, 182/19-23.

⁹⁴ Bridget, *Liber*, 2. 26, 183/30-32.

⁹⁵ Bridget, *Liber*, 2. 27, 189/9-33.

⁹⁶ Morris, *Birgitta*, pp. 42-3.

⁹⁷ See discussions of readership and influence in; Ellis, "'Flores ad Fabricandam'"; F. R. Johnson, 'The English Cult of St Bridget of Sweden', *Analecta Bollandia*, 103 (1985), 75-93; *Prophets Abroad: The Reception of Continental Holy Women in Late-Medieval England*, ed. by Rosalynn Voaden (Cambridge: Brewer, 1996).

⁹⁸ St Bernard of Clairvaux's sermons upon the *Song of Songs* are easily the best-known example of this brand of spiritual sensualism.

⁹⁹ Good examples of this new artistic emphasis upon urban, middle-class interiors, often allied with religious subject matter, include Jan van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Marriage*, National Gallery, London; Robert Campin, *Heinrich von Werl Triptych*, Museo del Prado, Madrid, and *Mérode Altarpiece*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Rogier van der Weyden, *The Annunciation*, Louvre, Paris; Petrus Christus, *St Eligius in his Workshop*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

¹⁰⁰ Morris, *Birgitta*, pp. 43-4.

¹⁰¹ Morris, *Birgitta*, p. 45.

¹⁰² Morris, *Birgitta*, p. 53.

¹⁰³ Morris, *Birgitta*, p. 61.

¹⁰⁴ Bridget, *Liber*, 3. 29. An example of the homiletic use made of this similitude can be found in Alan of Lille, *Sermones octo. Sermo II: In Annuntiatione Beatae Mariae*, PL 210, col. 202A-D.

¹⁰⁵ Bridget, *Liber*, 3. 29, 241/30-1.

¹⁰⁶ For a more extended discussion of this point, see Whitehead, *Castles*, pp. 130-1.

¹⁰⁷ *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, ed. by Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), p. 18.

¹⁰⁸ *Technologies*, pp. 40-9.

¹⁰⁹ *Technologies*, p. 49.