

Introduction

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In Jerónimo Nadal's *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*, a series of 153 Gospel images accompanied by extensive textual annotations and meditations, the author explains the parable of the sower by reference to the incarnation of Christ. He describes the parable's visual force and universal meaning, putting forward the mystery of the Incarnation as the grounds for the parabolic image. He points out, first of all, that the parable of the sower, alone amongst all parables, begins with the injunction to behold: 'But why is it that Ecce is annexed to this parable and no other, just as if to a great and novel thing worthy of admiration?'¹ The answer lies in the principle of parable-formation, that this parable envisages as consonant with the principle of *manifestatio*, the bringing forth of the Word, expressed visibly in the person of Christ. Nadal bases his argument on Christ's use of the verb *exiit*—'went forth'—in the parable's opening line, 'Behold the sower went forth to sow'. The parable of the sower is universal, encompassing all the mysteries figured in the parables of Christ, because it describes Christ the sower going forth in two senses: the eternal generation of the Word, the Son of God, who came forth at the dawn of the days of eternity, and the incarnation of the Word, the Son of Man, who came forth into the world, having been made man in the womb of the Virgin and thence been born as the foremost fruit of the lineage of men. Since the Incarnation is the work of all the Trinity, reasons Nadal, the Word of God was sowing himself in and through this great mystery, which is to say that the parable of the sower, to the extent that it portrays Christ, concerns the self-sowing of the Word. As such, it encapsulates in brief the coming forth of all other mysteries, of all Gospel fruit, and hence, of all parables. Nadal is claiming that the parable of

1 Nadal Jerónimo, *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia quae in sacrosancto Missae sacrificio toto anno leguntur: Cum eorundem Evangeliorum concordantia. Editio ultima. In qua Sacer Textus ad emendationem Bibliorum Sixti v. et Clementis VIII. Restitutus*. (Antwerp, Ex Officina Plantiniana, apud Ioannem Moretum: 1607) 69: 'Sed quid est, quod ad hanc, & ad aliam nullam parabolam adiungitur Ecce; quasi ad rem magnam, novam, & admiratione dignam?' On the image theory implicit in Nadal's readings of this and other parables, see Melion W.S., "Parabolic Analogy and Spiritual Discernment in Jerónimo Nadal's *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia* of 1595", in Stelling L. – Hendrix H. – Richardson T.M. (eds.), *The Turn of the Soul: Representations of Religious Conversion in Early Modern Art and Literature*, Intersections: Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture 23 (Leiden – Boston: 2012) 299–338.

the sower represents the power of self-representation at the heart of all mysteries, Gospels, and parables by which God communicates his discernible presence to humankind. The vocative 'Ecce' is used to indicate that the call to see what this parable bodies forth, in fact applies to all parables: 'Wherefore the *Ecce*, since it belongs to this most excellent parable, from thence appertains to all parables. In other respects, the principle that brings forth the Word of God, affirming its divine manifestation ('manifestationem') in the splendour of sanctity and infinite light of divinity, stands forth visibly in every created word of God and divinely revealed doctrine, so that the divine virtue made visible in that priniple may be put forward for the salvation of souls'.²

As Nadal contends, the generation ('productio') of the Word asserts the principle of making visible ('manifestatio') that likewise expresses itself in every word begotten of God and divinely brought to light. On this account, the productive principle ('ratio productionis') that makes divine virtue perceptible in Christ also makes it discernible in his every word, not least the parables. Parables originate in this logic of divine manifestation, for they consist of words that visibly figure the nature of Christ. Chief amongst the parables, of course, is the parable of the sower: by showing Christ the sower going forth to sow the Word, it signifies—indeed makes visible—the principle of divine generation that binds the production of the Word and the production of parabolic exempla. Or, put differently, it consists of images that portray the very possibility of promulgating the Word by visible means. This process of parable formation, part and parcel of the larger incarnational process of *manifestatio* that represents divine virtue to human sense, provides the basis for Nadal's image theory of the parable, which is implicitly also an affirmation of incarnation doctrine.

Nadal is one particularly rich instantiation of the complex interplay of Incarnation—as both doctrine and mystery—and image, as both conceptualized and produced, we had in mind when we organized the conference which produced this volume. The doctrine of the Incarnation, most Western Christians agreed, had been articulated succinctly and authoritatively at the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 CE:

2 Ibidem: 'Quare illud *Ecce*, ad hanc cum attineat excellentissimam, ex eo ad omnes parabolas pertinet. Ceterum, ut ex ratione productionis Verbi Dei, quae manifestationem dicit in splendoribus sanctitatis, & infinita luce divinitatis in Deo; ita in omni verbo Dei creato, & divinitus revelata doctrina, illa extat ratio, ut divina virtus in ea manifestetur & exeratur ad animorum salutem'.

We believe in one God the Father all-powerful, Maker of all things both seen and unseen. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-begotten begotten from the Father, that is from the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father, through whom all things came to be, both those in heaven and those in earth; for us humans and for our salvation he came down and became incarnate, became human, suffered and rose up on the third day, went up into the heavens, is coming to judge the living and the dead. And in the Holy Spirit.³

If the Council articulated a formulation of the relationship between Father and Son that proved both durable and authoritative, that formulation set in motion other, equally potent questions, among them, the relationship between Christ and images, which themselves were beginning to be made across the Christian Mediterranean, between matter and divinity, and the role of the senses in apprehending divinity.

In the eighth century, in his first apology for images, John of Damascus articulated both the aporia of the Incarnation and what, in the West, became the Incarnation's authorization for image-making:

Fleshly nature was not lost when it became part of the Godhead, but just as the Word made flesh remained the Word, so also the Flesh became the Word, yet remained flesh, being united to the person of the Word. Therefore, I boldly draw an image of the invisible God, not as invisible, but as having become visible for our sakes by partaking of flesh and blood.⁴

As John argued so eloquently, in choosing Incarnation, God chose not simply to be visible, but to alter the relationship between divinity and 'flesh', between the Creator and creation, between God and the human body. 'The Son', John wrote, 'is the living, essential, and precisely similar Image of the invisible God'—the Incarnation, according to John, is the originating archetype of image-making. In the West, John's particular conceptualization became authoritative; Thomas Aquinas, among others, rested his own theorization of images upon it. So, too,

3 Pelikan J. – Hotchkiss V. (eds.), *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, Vol. 1: *Early, Eastern, & Medieval* (New Haven: 2003) 159. See also Pelikan J., *The Christian Tradition*, Vol. 1: *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100–600)* (Chicago: 1971).

4 John of Damascus, *On the Divine Images: Three Apologies Against Those Who Attack the Divine Images*, trans. D. Anderson (Crestwood, NY: 1980) 16.

in Western Europe, in a world in which literacy was the purview of a tiny minority, as Pope Gregory I wrote to Bishop Serenus, 'those who do not know letters may at least read by seeing on the walls what they are unable to read in books'.⁵

John of Damascus, and following him, Aquinas, built their arguments for images by invoking the Incarnation; both also knew that 'the Word become flesh' was no fixed concept, self-evident and determined, but singularly generative, engendering debates beginning in the first century after Christ and historically elusive of efforts, such as the Council of Nicaea, at definition. By the time Aquinas took up the Damascene's arguments, moreover, another field of inquiry was also addressing the puzzle of the Incarnation in terms of divinity, human body, and matter. In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council had decreed:

There is indeed one universal church of the faithful, outside of which nobody at all is saved, in which Jesus Christ is both priest and sacrifice. His body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the forms of bread and wine, the bread and wine having been changed in substance, by God's power, into his body and blood, so that in order to achieve this mystery of unity we receive from God what he received from us.⁶

That brief statement, formulated in direct response to Berengar of Tours' eleventh-century challenge to the emerging doctrine on the nature of Christ's presence in the central act of collective worship, sparked three centuries of close, subtle, and heterogeneous discussion.⁷ It sparked as well the struggle to reconcile Christ's 'real presence' with questions of visibility and visuality. New kinds of images emerged in its wake, perhaps foremost, those of the Mass of Pope Gregory, but also, the Godly Mill, which themselves materialized in color and line ways of thinking about Incarnation, specifically in reference to

5 The translation is Celia Chazelle's, "Pictures, Books, and the Illiterate: Pope Gregory I's Letters to Serenus of Marseilles", *Word & Image* 6 (1990) 139.

6 See Tanner N.P., S.J. (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols. (London: 1990) I 230: 'Una vero est fidelium universalis ecclesia, extra quam nullus omnino salvatur, in qua idem ipse sacerdos et sacrificium Iesus Christus, cuius corpus et sanguis in sacramento altaris sub speciebus panis et vini veraciter continentur, transsubstantiatis pane in corpus et vino in sanguinem postestate divina, ut ad perficiendum mysterium unitatis accipiamus ipsi de suo, quod accepit ipse de nostro'.

7 Levy I.C. – Macy G. – Ausdall K. van (eds.), *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Middle Ages* (Leiden: 2012).

the question of presence on the altar, a question of growing intensity in late medieval piety.⁸

Between Nicaea and the Fifth Lateran Council, 'Incarnation' as aporia more than doctrine engendered images, texts, music, objects, scents—forms to engage all the senses, becoming at once the focus and the wellspring for a world that, now in hindsight, we know to have been singularly generative. By 1500, the human body had become implicated in Christian worship at so many levels—as recipient, certainly, but also as performer, in mimesis of Christ's actions and gestures, itself the medium of acts, sounds, gestures, as well as the maker of instruments, liturgical objects and vestments, altarpieces and candlesticks, crucifixes and monstrances. By 1500, Christian Europe was thick with visual, aural, haptic engagements with Incarnation, each one of which materialized dimensions and in materializing, brought attributes, resonances, associations, allusions—and deepened the mystery.

As early as 1437, the Tuscan painter Cennino Cennini, in his *Libro dell'arte*, codified usage of the Incarnation as a meta-pictorial metaphor for drawing and painting, medial processes that transform unseen things ('cose non vedute, cacciandosi sotto ombra di naturali') into things seen discernibly to exist ('dando a dimonstrare quello che non è, sia').⁹ The draftsman and the painter, so argued Cennini, transform spirit into matter, converting mental images housed in the imaginative faculty ('fantasia') into mimetic images fashioned by the master's skilled hand ('operazione di mano').¹⁰ Cennini was responding to a poetic tradition, amongst whose chief exponents were Brunetto Latini, Chiaro Davanzati, and Francesco Petrarca, that drew parallels between poetic invention, construed as a kind of verbal painting, and the mystery of

8 On the Mass of Pope Gregory, see Gormans A. – Lenten T. (eds.), *Das Bild der Erscheinung. Die Gregorsmesse im Mittelalter* (Berlin: 2007); Meier E., *Die Gregorsmesse. Funktionen eines spätmittelalterlichen Bildtypus* (Cologne: 2006); and Bynum C.W., "Seeing and Seeing Beyond: The Mass of St. Gregory in the Fifteenth Century", in Hamburger J.F. – Bouché A.-M. (eds.), *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: 2006) 208–240. On the Godly Mill, see Krueger I., "Das Ulmer Hostienmühlenretabel im Zusammenhang der erhaltenen Hostienmühlendarstellungen", *Ulm und Oberschwaben* 42/43 (1978) 60–84; Lindet L., "Les représentations allégoriques du moulin et du pressoir dans l'art Chrétien", *Revue Archéologique* (1900) 403–413; and Rye-Clausen H., *Die Hostienmühlenbilder im Lichte mittelalterlicher Frömmigkeit* (Stein am Rhein: 1981).

9 Cennini Cennino, *Il libro dell'arte, o Trattato della pittura*, ed. C. Milanesi (Florence: 1859) 2. On Cennini's incarnational discourse of art, see Kruse C., "Fleisch werden—Fleisch malen. Malerei als 'incarnazion'. Mediale Verfahren des Bildwerdens im *Libro dell'arte* von Cennino Cennini", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 63 (2000) 305–326.

10 Cennini, *Libro dell'arte*, ed. Milanesi, 2.

the Incarnation. Implicit in this paragone is the notion that the poet fashions words from flesh, not flesh from words, whereas the painter represents bodily what poetic metaphors may only convey by virtual means. Based in the analogy of image and incarnation, Cennini's conceits continued to circulate, in one form or another, from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries.

In the Christian tradition, this potent analogy attaches to Augustine's conception of the spiritual image, as codified in Book 12 of *De Genesi ad litteram* (*On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*).¹¹ Composed as an appendix to his great treatise on the first three chapters of Genesis and their historical, as opposed to allegorical or figurative, meaning, Book 12 concerns the interpretation of Paradise, or the third heaven, described by Paul in 2 *Corinthians* 12:2–4. How does this Paradise, Augustine invites the reader to ask, relate to the Paradise of Genesis, and further, how does the knowledge of Creation and of the Creator, available to Adam and Eve before the Fall, relate to the knowledge of heaven and earth and of God available to us? What sorts of knowing can the natural body exercise, and how is the knowledge thus produced to be differentiated from the episteme of the spirit (*spiritus*) and the *noesis* of the intellect (*intelligentia*)? The answers to these questions form part of a larger philosophical and theological project pursued jointly in *De Genesi* and *De Trinitate* (*On the Trinity*): Augustine attempts to explain how the incorporeal soul actively participates in the life of the material body, and he analogizes to this essential continuity of body and soul, the connection between human being and Godhead. This connection is ultimately licensed by the mystery of the Incarnation.

In Augustine's mature theory of sensation, the concept of *spiritus* serves to designate the part of the soul that mediates between its sensitive and intellectual parts, and thus, between body and soul on the one hand, soul and divinity on the other. Augustine relies upon vision (and to some extent hearing) to clarify the nature of these parts and their mediating functions: sensory objects impress themselves upon the senses, giving rise to sense impressions that then rely upon the *spiritus* to provoke the faculty of sensation. The *spiritus* transmutes these impressions into visual images, picturing them so that the soul may know and ultimately judge and interpret what the body has seen.

11 On Augustine's conception of *spiritus* and spiritual image-making, see Miles M.R., "Vision: The Eye of the Body and the Eye of the Mind in Augustine's *De trinitate* and *Confessions*", *The Journal of Religion* 63 (1983) 125–142; and Melion W.S., "In sensus cadentem imaginem: Varieties of the Spiritual Image in Theodoor Galle's *Life of the Blessed Father Ignatius of Loyola* of 1610", in Boer W. de – Göttler C. (eds.), *Religion and the Senses in Early Modern Europe*, *Intersections: Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture* 26 (Leiden – Boston: 2013) 63–107, esp. 97–105.

Sensation proper results from this creative act of the soul: the *spiritus* provides the *imago* (image) that alone is susceptible to the soul's higher faculties of knowing and remembering. Under normal conditions, the three kinds of vision—corporeal, spiritual, and intellectual—are interlinked hierarchically: without spiritual vision, the corporeal vision of external objects would be imperceptible, for sensation derives from the activity of the *spiritus*, and without intellectual vision, the spiritual vision of likenesses would be fruitless, for these images could be known and remembered, but neither evaluated nor interpreted.

Augustine's image theory, like that of Cennini, clearly derives from the theology of the Incarnation, and a strong case can be made for the theological basis of aesthetic doctrine, as applied both to sacred and to secular image-making, throughout the early modern period. Conversely, image theory is brought to bear in texts and images on the Incarnation, as an heuristic and hermeneutic device that aids in the difficult task of assessing how and why the Word was made flesh in Christ the image of God. In their homiletic and exegetical texts, for example, the great reformers Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Menno Simons, along with Jesuit theologians such as Petrus Canisius, constantly make use of visual, indeed pictorial, analogies to reflect upon the nature of Christ and unfold the Old Testament prophecies, themselves highly visual, that prefigure his coming. The incarnational link between theology and image-theory, precisely because it seems so ubiquitous and informs so much art, art theory, and religious writing—catechetical, meditative, and dogmatic—has been taken for granted but little studied by historians of art, literature, and religion, and nor has it received sufficient attention from theologians and cultural historians.

This book consists of five subsections that point up various inflections of the relation between image-making and incarnation doctrine. Section 1, "Representing the Mystery of the Incarnation", comprises four essays that pose a crucial question about the representability of this fundamental mystery: how were the divine essence and material substance, the spirit and flesh of Christ to be portrayed as co-present and indivisible? Herbert Kessler demonstrates that one way of answering this question involved formulating a new iconography for Christ or, better, a new mode of picturing him—the so-called *Majestas Domini* dating from the ninth century, as exemplified in the First Bible of Charles the Bold. Although his essay (like that of Mark Jordan) deals with medieval rather than early modern material, the issues it explores, especially the incarnational significance of mimetic images juxtaposed to geometrical diagrams, resonate so fully with other essays in the volume (Geert Warnar's, Agnès Guiderdoni's, and Dalia Judovitz's, for example) that it seemed

appropriate to utilize it as a prolegomenon to what follows. The Touronian and Carolingian versions of the *Majestas Domini*, as Kessler shows, body forth the theological argument that Christ the incarnate Word fulfills, in a typological sense, the promise of salvation implicit in the image of God the Creator of all things, who appears elsewhere in such manuscripts. Positioned at the 'mid-point' of the universe, Christ is identified as the *medietas* ('mediating center') where the circular zones of heaven and of earth meet, their circumferences coalescing at his *umbilicus* ('umbilical cord', i.e., navel). His medial position, midway between heaven and earth, between mimesis and abstraction, functions as analogue to his incarnational status as the Mediator between God and humankind, between spirit and flesh, who grants access to his redemptive presence in and through the sacrament of the Eucharist that he himself instituted.

Klaus Krüger ascertains by reference to the explicitly medial status of Antonello da Messina's *Virgin Annunciate* and Gianlorenzo Bernini *Capella Fonseca*, how the aesthetic effect of the image qua image was seen to mediate between the polarities paradoxically reconciled by the mystery of the Incarnation. The pictorial status of the image stands proxy for the condition of divine manifestation, in which the unimaginable Logos becomes discernible, the infigurable becomes representable, the ineffable, expressible. For Antonello, various kinds and degrees of indeterminacy—the synthesis of *imago* (icon) and *historia* (history), of description (*Zustandsbild*) and narration (*Ereignis*), of felicity and solemnity—combine to represent an event, the Annunciation, that is seen and yet not seen (given the angel Gabriel's absence), in analogy to the great mystery, the Incarnation of the Logos, that transpires in the flesh and yet remains unimaginable. For Bernini, the painting of the Annunciation embedded within sculpted registers of stone and bronze makes an issue of the incarnate Word's newfound visibility, as visualized in the meditative imaginary of Fonseca himself.

Jaime Lara reveals very different intersections of incarnational doctrine and representation when transposed to the Spanish New World. Taking a number of Aztec images, he shows the ways in which missionaries drew on them to make intelligible the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, even as those images brought new connotations to flesh and eating. So, too, at mid-century, indigenous artists and Spanish missionaries began using materials native to Mexico to render 'bicultural and bivisual' images, such as crucifixes in which the body of Christ was composed of corn. Such images translated the doctrine of the Incarnation at many levels, including the host as tortilla.

Matthieu Somon examines the pictorial devices marshaled by Charles Le Brun in his nativity scene, the so-called *Silence*, to evoke the transcendent and ineffable mystery of the Incarnation. Le Brun, as Somon argues, constructs a

complex visual analogy for the Incarnation: just as the newborn child's radiance is paradoxically enhanced by the shadows partially obscuring him, so Christ the incarnate Word combines in himself both divine and human attributes, the former indiscernible, the latter discernible to the human intellect. The Virgin's distinctive gesture, which calls for silence in the face of the mystery, constitutes an acknowledgment, based in the negative theology of Pierre de Bérulle, that speech is inadequate to the task of understanding the conjoined humanity and divinity of Jesus, whose dual nature is best evoked by painting's power to reveal even while concealing what it purports to show.

Section II, "Imago Dei and the Incarnate Word", investigates how the status of Christ as the image of God was seen to license various kinds and degrees of sacred image, both material and spiritual. Mark Jordan sketches a network of terms—'imago', 'convenientia', 'manifestatio'—that Thomas Aquinas used in the *Summa*. Jordan reveals each word's connections to other terms and through those connections the richness of Thomas's thinking on the Incarnation and the sacraments. Jordan takes the reader past Thomas's well-known and traditional argument—that the Incarnation authorized images—to show a theology of manifestation. In so doing, he helps us better to understand Thomas's conceptualization of the relationship between the Incarnation, as historical fact, and the sacraments, as vivid manifestation. In Thomas's 'very compositional structures', Jordan shows, 'both incarnation and image have, at their center, a notion of the manifesting event'.

Niklaus Largier considers how 'the incarnation, the unity of man and God beyond all representation, turns for Henry Suso into the condition of the possibility of a visual poetics that emphasizes the aspect of bare figure'. That bare figure, understood in relation to Suso's teacher Meister Eckhart's apophatic theology, is beyond all hermeneutics and as such, at once overcomes the natural power of images and grounds the soul's assimilation to Christ. Largier explicates Suso's notion of going 'through the images beyond the images', identifying three moments in the function of the image: allegorical, affective and sensual, and conformational. He closes with a meditation on a poetics of dis-imagination oriented toward the incarnation's unity of god and man.

Lee Palmer Wandel situates John Calvin's *Institutes* in late medieval visual culture, in order to tease out dimensions of Calvin's understanding of the Incarnation as revelation that were silenced by sixteenth-century iconoclasm. She draws on two images to invoke that world and to suggest something of the multiple conceptions of time that retables imaged forth in their representations of the Incarnation. In them, revelation was not a single event, the Incarnation was not an historical moment. As in the medieval liturgy, revelation and Incarnation are neither narrative nor eternally present. Against these two images, Calvin's particular formulation of the visibility of God, the visibility of

revelation—not only in the person of Christ but also in all Creation—acquires greater precision. So, too, these two images make clearer Calvin's particular understanding of the sign: not a convention that can be 'read', but a mystery inviting consideration.

Geert Warnar offers a close analysis of Jan Provoost's enigmatic *Sacred Allegory*, proposing that it purports to represent the mystical experience of *visio Dei* which allows the votary to see God, even in this life. Such vision, as distilled by Provoost, is purely reflexive, for it elides any distinction between seeing God and being seen by him. The intercessory presence of Christ the incarnate Word enables this contemplative relation between divine vision and the 'one-fold eye' that the painting attempts both to describe and diagram. Provoost's incarnational imagery, as Warnar makes evident, closely parallels the distinctive visual tropes employed by Jan van Ruusbroec in his *Spiegel der eeuwigher salicheit*.

Christopher Wild brings to light the incarnational logic that underlies pre-Enlightenment emblematic theory and practice in Germany. The Pauline metaphors of grafting implicit in the term *emblema* contributed to the notion that the emblematic *pictura* is a bodying forth of the 'living spirit' encoded in the emblem's textual components. Like the Aristotelian relation between matter and form, the emblem's picture and texts were conceived as mutually generative, on the model of the mutual ingrafting of humanity and divinity made possible by the mystery of the Incarnation. Moreover, as Wild reveals, the *pictura* was construed as emergent, not fixed, and its point of origin comparable to dynamic rhetorical processes, such as *enargeia*, *energeia*, and *evidentia*, which produce unmediated visual effects.

Section III, "Literary Figurations of the Incarnation", investigates the verbal production of images having to do with the divine and human nature of Christ. Agnès Guiderdoni offers a reading of Pierre de Bérulle's *Discours de l'état et des grandeurs de Jésus* (1623), preliminary to a longer study she is pursuing. In particular, she attends here to his consideration of painting as it was informed by and itself offered a metaphor for the Incarnation. Bérulle distinguished between human painters, whose efforts would always fail, and Christ, between efforts to render that which was seen and the divine painting of the soul, which was itself at once a negative gesture—the erasure of sin—and the true representation of Christ in the soul. She also shows us how Bérulle's discussion of painting implicitly accords printing a more positive value.

Bart Ramakers discusses a remarkable group of *comparaties* ('dramatized comparisons') by the Flemish *rederijker* Cornelis Everaert, focusing in particular on the play comparing the Virgin Mary's spiritual qualities to the natural properties of light. As the play progresses, the central character of this

performative analogical exercise, *Ymagineirlic Gheest* ('Imaginative Mind'), comes more fully to realize Mary's plenipotency, learning how to envision her as Mediatrix, first experimentally, then exegetically. Her intercessory efficacy, argues Everaert, derives from her crucial participation in the mystery of the Incarnation, true source of the light that now illuminates the world. The fact that Imaginative Mind was born blind, serves to emphasize that spiritual vision must be brought to bear, if the Marian votary wishes truly to appreciate the Virgin's luminous virtue.

Michael Randall considers the central role of interpretation in Jean Molinet's *Roman de la rose moralisé*. He teases out Molinet's understanding of interpretation—and the essential dependency of correct interpretation on the Incarnation—through a juxtaposition of Molinet's text and the fifteenth-century painting, attributed to the Van Eyck workshop, which scholars have named *The Fountain of Life*. Each in its own medium takes up the implications of the incarnate Word for reading the world and its languages, symbolic, allegorical, metaphorical. Each articulates its conceptualization of interpretation through the construction of an opposition between Ecclesia and Synagoga, between those who are formed and informed by the doctrine of the Incarnation and those who are not. Text and image both participate in a late medieval incarnational hermeneutic.

Section IV, "Transformative Analogies of Matter and Spirit", delves into some of the ways that material properties and processes, in their effects on the beholder, were analogized to the incarnational merging of matter and spirit, humanity and divinity, hypostatized by Christ. Ralph Dekoninck calls attention to the 'incarnational dynamic' at play in Caravaggio's *Madonna dei pellegrini*: just as the Word, in becoming flesh, made the divine humanly present, so Caravaggio, by painting at the threshold between art and nature, the sacred and the profane, corporeal and imaginative vision, produces an emergent effect of presence that seems more to incarnate the Virgin and Child than merely representing them. The larger context for this liminal effect was the cult of Loreto, centered on the house where Mary once lived in Nazareth. The Santa Casa was revered as a tangible relic or, better, reliquary of the great mystery that transpired within it, and consequently, it also functioned as a 'metonymic allegory' of Mary, who sheltered in this place while sheltering the incarnate Word within her body.

Reindert Falkenburg enumerates the many representational ambiguities in Hieronymus Bosch's *Mass of St. Gregory* from the Prado *Epiphany Triptych*, showing how they serve to adduce the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, cumulatively dissolving the distinction between *signum* and *res*. The projective motion orchestrated by Bosch—from background to foreground, from artifice

to *praesentia realis*, from ‘altarpiece in an altarpiece’ to living apparition—stages the incarnational ‘entanglement’ of divinity and humanity made manifest in the person of Christ. Falkenburg argues that the relation between the Crucifixion scene that actually seems to take place above the altar and the Man of Sorrows standing before St. Gregory should be seen as typological, in that Christ fulfills the past historical event by actively intervening in the sacrifice of the Mass, thus entering the world of the beholder.

Dalia Judovitz interprets the complex interaction of light and shadow in two nocturnes by Georges de La Tour—the *Newborn Child* and *Adoration of the Shepherds*—as figurations of the Incarnation. In both paintings, effects of occultation and adumbration, combined with the conspicuous absence of sacred attributes, emphasize that the Incarnation entailed the fundamental concealment of Jesus’s divinity by his human flesh and material circumstances. La Tour therefore represents this ‘mystery of mysteries’ by circumventing it: he fashions a meta-discourse on painting’s spiritual limitations, and, paradoxically, thereby challenges the beholder spiritually to discern the transcendent mystery that exceeds the scope of the painter’s mimetic art.

Walter Melion takes up the manuscript prayerbook composed circa 1610 by Martin Borschman, subprior of the Cistercian monastery in Gdańsk Pomerania, which contains 221 engravings, 115 by the Wierix brothers of Antwerp. The engravings, pasted or bound into the book, together with the accompanying prayers, invite meditation on the Incarnation by dissolving the page into the person; various material and medial processes—printing, pasting, cutting, and binding—function as templates for the relationship of the votary and Christ. The jointly visual and verbal apparatus also encourages the votary to meditate on the form, function, and meaning of paper, its transformation from soiled fabric to blank surface, its particular texture, weight, and density, and its potential as metaphor for spiritual forming and printing. The exercitant is urged to consider correspondences—between paper and person, between artisan and monk—that themselves reinscribe the order’s emphasis on the bodily and manual expression of humility, its particular mode of enacting the Incarnation.

Section v, “Visualizing the Flesh of Christ”, considers the relation between the Incarnation and the Passion, asking how the mystery of Christ’s birth was viewed through the lens of his impending sacrifice. Colette Nativel expounds the incarnational argument of Rubens’s Trinitarian epitaph, painted for Judoca van der Capelle in memory of her recently deceased husband. The iconography, as she indicates, diverges from a traditional Throne of Mercy: not only does the painfully disfigured and foreshortened body of Christ project emphatically into the space of the viewer, but, even more surprisingly, God

the Father, in his embrace of the Son, takes the form of a Pietà. This Marian allusion underscores the functional connection between the mysteries of the Incarnation and Passion of Christ, who was born of the Virgin at the behest of the Trinity, in order that humankind might finally be redeemed through his self-oblation. Rubens, as Nativel further reveals, was responding to the Marian theology of the Discalced Carmelites, as well as to the veristic Christology discernible in meditative texts by Alfonso Paleotti, Hugo Grotius, Carolus Scribanus, Sidronius Hosschius, and others.

Haruko Ward analyzes the stories of St. Catherine of Alexandria as they were redacted in Kirishitanban ('Christian edition'), books published by Jesuit presses in Japan, for their representation of the Incarnation. She deploys multiple lenses to read the stories: the Jesuit tradition of the *Spiritual Exercises* and their particular practices of visualization and imagination; the complex problems of translation from Christian Europe to Buddhist Japan; gender theories as they illumine the Kirishitanban's elision of the distinction between Catherine's speech and acts and Christ's, particularly Catherine's martyrdom and the Passion. Ward shows that the practice of reading these stories exercised the imagination of the votary, inviting a chain of incarnation from Christ, through Catherine, to the votary and her community.

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