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Love's Arrows: Christ as Cupid in Late Medieval Art and Devotion

Barbara Newman



Love is swift of foot;
Love's a man of war,
And can shoot,
And can hit from far.

Who can 'scape his bow?
That which wrought on thee,
Brought thee low,
Needs must work on me.
—George Herbert, "Discipline"

The Bible frequently depicts God as both lover and warrior. But these images stand in tension rather than harmony, so when George Herbert chose to portray divine Love as a "man of war," his source was not biblical but Ovidian. It is Cupid—or his medieval avatar, the *dieu d'Amors*—who shoots from afar with his unerring aim and irresistible darts.¹ In Herbert's deceptively simple stanzas, this warlike god of love has become Jesus Christ, but he is also the vanquisher of Christ, who was himself "brought low" by Love's arrows before presuming to launch them from his own almighty bow. This double rapprochement between Christ and Cupid was not original with the Anglican poet, but derives from a current of medieval piety that originated in the twelfth century and flourished well into the seventeenth.

The Phenomenon of Crossover

In this essay I will revisit the trope of Love's arrows and its corollary, the depiction of Christ in the guise of Cupid, as a superb illustration of the medieval practice of "crossover"—the intentional borrowing and adaptation of courtly themes in devotional art and vice versa.² This phenomenon was once a familiar problem in literary history, and the same kind of exchange is no less

prominent in visual art. But since the 1970s, prevailing theoretical trends have encouraged scholars to maximize the ironic and self-serving aspects of medieval erotic culture, while minimizing its sublime and "ennobling" aspects.³ This critical tendency has obscured the close relationship that older critics used to perceive between the idioms of devotion and *fin' amors*.⁴ In a recent revisionist essay, however, Simon Gaunt acknowledges that "the strategy behind these critical moves was deliberate and largely political": in seeking to demystify medieval love poetry in order to expose its misogyny and homophobia, he and other scholars felt they could ill afford the luxuries of aesthetic pleasure and affective power these texts had afforded to less resistant readers in the past.⁵ Having achieved that goal, Gaunt now questions whether there is any such thing as "purely secular" art to be found in the Middle Ages, and undertakes once again to discover why medieval poets took the theme of erotic love with such intense moral seriousness that they could readily assimilate it to religious devotion.

In response to this question, he proposes that "it is less the worship of the lady . . . that gives the courtly lyric its quasi-religious flavor, than the importance of sacrifice, or what one might call . . . sacrificial desire."⁶ While I will not echo Gaunt's Lacanian interpretation of such desire, I believe his insight is true and goes a long way toward explaining the medieval predilection for Christ as Cupid. The god of love, in most medieval representations, is not the least bit "cute": he is neither the naked winged boy of Classical art nor the putto of the Italian Renaissance.⁷ Dante in the *Vita nuova* called him a "lord of terrible aspect," and so he is—mature, imperious, and with grave power to harm.⁸ The troubadours and their heirs, despite their many moments of self-dramatizing hyperbole and irony, often took the motif of "Love's wounds" with deep seriousness, and it was primarily their obsession with erotic torment, self-surrender, and even death for love that enabled devotional writers, mystics, and artists to translate the fictive god of love so easily into the biblical God who is Love (1 John 4:8). Conventionally defined as a *passio*, a form of suffering, amorous desire was treated by medical writers as a legitimate disease (*amor hereos*),⁹ while religious writers linked it with the *passio* of the Crucified who died to win the heart of his beloved, the human soul—*quia amore langueo* (Cant. 2.5).

Like so many elements in the medieval discourse of love, the motif of divine archery turns out to have a dual provenance: Ovid and the Song of Songs. In Cantic 4:9 the bridegroom laments, or perhaps exults, "You have wounded my heart, my sister, my bride; you have wounded my heart with one [glance] of your eyes" (*vulnerasti cor meum in uno oculorum tuorum*). Here the gaze of the beloved requires no intermediary god but exercises direct agency, smiting the lover's heart with those delicious wounds on which twelfth-century commentators loved to dwell. Ovid, an author savored almost as widely as Solomon, first introduced the Greek motif of Cupid's arrows into Latin literature in a classic passage of his *Metamorphoses*. The poet there described the mischievous god taking aim at Apollo's heart with a sharp golden arrow to arouse love, while striking Daphne's with a blunt leaden shaft to quench it.¹⁰ Through this favorite school-text, the theme made its ubiquitous way into medieval poetry and mythography.¹¹ From the mid-thirteenth century onward, transfixed lovers might be found languishing for the love of God as often as for a lady, and the divine archer was as likely to be the celestial Caritas as the carnal Amor.¹²

In contrast to Cupid, who was always the agent but never the subject or object of erotic love, Jesus as *dieu d'Amors* is all three. Just as in Herbert's lyric, he is both heavenly bowman and lovesick victim, and in his role as victim he inspires that tender-hearted *pitee* which, in courtly lyric and romance, is often the first sign of a woman's love. It required no great stretch of the medieval imagination to interpret Christ's bleeding wounds as *vulnera amoris* and to discern Love's

arrow in the centurion's lance that pierced his heart, opening the salvific fount of blood and water. In a famous pair of miniatures from the Rothschild Canticles, it is the Bride of Christ (a figure interchangeable with Caritas) who actually launches the weapon, aiming it like a javelin at the wound in her lover's side.¹³ Closely linked with the arrow and the sacred lance is a less bloody weapon, the pen of the celestial scribe. As Eric Jager has recently shown, the inscribed heart and the pierced heart are close kin in the poetics of love. Indeed, the same Latin word, *calamus*, designates both the feathered quill and the feathered arrow.¹⁴ In one manuscript of the *Roman de la Rose*, the character Genius, who plays bawdy bishop to the god of love, is represented with a quill pen (or arrow) in lieu of an episcopal crosier.¹⁵

Even more remarkably, the symbolic act of love that concludes the great French poem—the illicit plucking of a rosebud from a virgin's well-protected garden—is ascribed to Christ himself in a devotional text contemporary with the *Rose*. Meditating on the Crucifixion, the Anglo-Latin poet Walter of Wimborne asks what theft Jesus could have committed to deserve a thief's punishment, since he was already the rightful owner of heaven and earth:

Dumtaxat unum est furtum quod fecerat
Jhesus, dum clanculo carnem assumpserat
et furtim uirginis claustrum intrauerat,
quod ipsum etiam sponsum latuerat.

* * * * *

Unam de uirginis rosam rosario
fur insons accipit, et de florario
decerpsit flosculum, Joseph non concio;
an tale facinus est dignum crucio?¹⁶

Yet Jesus did commit one theft
when he secretly put on our flesh
and stole into the Virgin's bedroom,
concealed from even her bridegroom.

* * * * *

The harmless thief plucked one bud
from the virgin's flower bed,
took from her garden a single rose:
did such a crime deserve the cross?

Innumerable texts could be cited to illustrate the bold erotic theology that emerged in such crossover poems. One of the least familiar and most accomplished of them is the *Philomena*, a Latin devotional epic in some 1,131 ornate rhyming quatrains, penned by the prolific English poet and canon, John of Howden (d. ca. 1272).¹⁷ The *Philomena* is a versified *vita Christi*, recounting the mysteries of Christ's Nativity, Passion, and Resurrection. But the poem's epic hero is predominantly a victim: *Christus patiens* meekly suffers all that is done to him by the agency of a more powerful personage, Amor. The Latin noun has an ambiguity that would be difficult to replicate in a modern vernacular, since Amor can be read as a personified virtue but also as the ancient god of love, in direct continuity with Ovid. This divinity is the motivating force behind all that Christ does and suffers in the poem: Amor humbles the King of kings in the Incarnation, pierces his heart in the garden of Gethsemane, binds him to the pillar with chains, imposes the crown of thorns on his head, and eventually nails him to the cross. All these actions manifest the unchallenged dominion Love holds over the heart of God (*Philomena*, strophe 22):

Tuum, Amor, dulce dominium
Sic, sic domat Regem regnantium!
A te vinci vult Rex vincentium,

Ut sic victus vim vincat hostium.

Your sweet dominion, Love, has made
The King of kings so meek, so tame!
The King of conquerors wills to be conquered by
you,
That, vanquished, he may vanquish the violent
foe.

After lamenting the death of Christ, John of Howden invokes Amor once again, asking the love-god in more than two hundred strophes to inscribe every detail of the Passion on his willing heart (strophes 491-92):

Fortis Amor, forti conamine	Mighty Love, with a mighty effort
Cordis mei scribas volumine	Inscribe on the volume of my heart
Carnem natam virenti virgine,	The flesh born of the verdant Virgin,
Roris nantem in nati flumine.	Moistened in the dewy stream of her Son.
Amor scriba, scribe velocius	Like a scribe, Love, swiftly inscribe
Cor petrinum et sis notarius;	My stony heart, and be my secretary;
Scribas ibi ferro profundius,	Deeply inscribe with your iron pen
Agnum ferro confossum fortius.	The Lamb pierced deeply with iron nails.

In a Middle English adaptation of this passage, the speaker asks Love to write Christ's sufferings on his stony heart "with nailles and with spere kene." He goes on to equate the pen of the divine scribe with the arrow of the god of love:

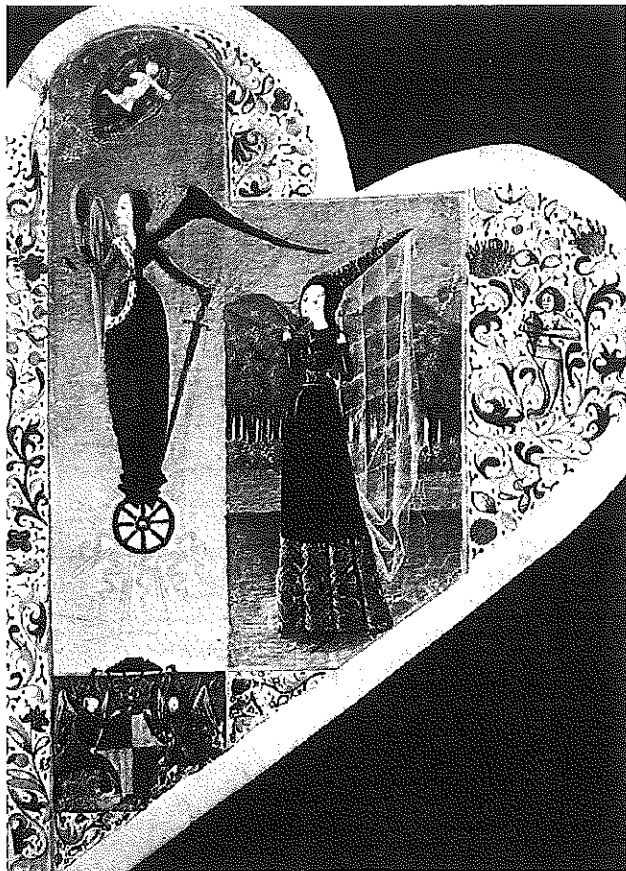
Let now loue his bowe bende,	Let Love now bend his bow
An arwe to myn herte sende,	and send an arrow to my heart
That it may perce to the rote;	that it may pierce it to the core—
ffor such a wounde were my bote. ¹⁸	For such a wound would be my cure.

At the end of his lengthy invocation to Amor as scribe, John inquires more closely into the god's identity (strophes 802-4):

Ipsum Deum fulgentem superis,	You conquered the radiant God himself,
Vinctum, Amor, misisti miseris;	Love, and sent him in chains to wretches.
Et, cum implet quodcunque iusseris,	Since he fulfills whatever you command,
Nonne Deus deorum diceris?	Should you not be called the God of gods?
Sed quis horum maior apparuit?	But which of these appeared the greater—
Deus, an is, qui Deum domuit?	God, or the one who conquered God?
Diffinire liber hic noluit,	This book has no wish to decide the question;
Disputare potest qui voluit.	Let anyone who will debate it.
Istud sciat certa scientia,	Yet let them know with certain knowledge
Quod ambobus una substantia	That the two have but one substance;
Est et concors utrique gloria,	God and Love are united in glory,
Honor unus, par excellentia. ¹⁹	In one sole honor, equal excellence.

In other words, God *is* Amor: the divine archer is his own victim, now begged to puncture his lover's heart with his quill (or arrow) just as his own was pierced by the centurion's spear.

In view of such comprehensive literary treatments, it is no surprise to find that visual artists also took up the theme of Christ as Cupid—and its complement, Cupid as Christ. Some late medieval authors even personally supervised the illustration of their works,²⁰ and given such active exchange between writers and painters, the crossover movement worked in both directions. Markers of divine glory normally reserved for Christ and the saints, such as the crown, the nimbus, the



1. Love and Fortune; Cupid shoots a lady from a celestial mandorla. Songbook [*chansonnier*] of Jean de Montchenu, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. Rothschild 2973, f. 4. Savoy, ca. 1475



2. Christ child with firebrand enthroned in the heart. Hours of Anne of Matfelon, Bourges, Musée du Berry, Ms. Bibl. 2160, D. 327, f. C verso. England, ca. 1440

mandorla, and the presence of kneeling worshipers, might be bestowed on the god or goddess of love.²¹ One late but compelling example occurs in a heart-shaped songbook commissioned by a prominent Savoyard churchman, the *Chansonnier de Jean de Montchenu* (Fig. 1). In this rarity from circa 1475, the god has already returned to his Classical form as a winged infant, yet he takes aim at a court lady from a very unclassical mandorla in the sky.²² Venus, too, might be glorified in a celestial mandorla, as if in mildly sacrilegious homage to the Virgin's Assumption. A Florentine salver or *desco da parto* from about 1400, probably intended as a maternity gift from husband to wife, features the nude goddess in a mandorla adored by six celebrated lovers, just as devout saints might adore the Queen of Heaven.²³

One of the most ambiguous motifs in Love's iconography is the *arbor amoris*, a figure whose precise origins have not been established. Sacred and secular versions both abound. Depictions of the god of love, especially in the *Roman de la Rose* tradition, often show him perched as a sniper in a tree, presumably so he could shoot unseen from a lofty vantage point.²⁴ But the symbol of the *arbor amoris* also had far-reaching Christian connotations, ranging from the genealogical Tree of Jesse to mythological conceptions of the cross as world-tree to allegorical accounts of the virtues

rooted in charity.²⁵ Such iconographic motifs could be subjected to parody. For example, an illustration of the late-thirteenth-century poem *L'Arbre d'Amours* co-opts the familiar Tree of Jesse image, representing the lineage of Jesus, to glorify the conquests of Amor. In a painting from this text, the god of love stands in a treetop with his bow, in the commanding position usually occupied by Christ, while the lower branches support three couples, in lieu of patriarchs or prophets, illustrating the successive stages of a love affair.²⁶ Conversely, however, the arboreal perch customary for the *dieu d'Amors* may have contributed to the puzzling late medieval image of Christ as a naked child in a treetop.²⁷ Initially portrayed only in Nativity scenes, the naked Christ child became a popular subject in a variety of contexts by the fifteenth century. For example, he could be depicted with the classical attributes of Cupid (Fig. 2) or even placed with his amorous weapon in the branches of an *arbor amoris* (Fig. 5).

Christian iconographers borrowed not only Love's bow and arrows, but also such attributes as the firebrand, the pierced heart, and the flaming heart. The burgeoning and closely linked cults of the Holy Name and the Sacred Heart were both implicated in this development. After the Second Council of Lyon in 1274 decreed that the faithful should bow their heads whenever the name of Jesus was uttered at Mass, the pope charged the mendicant orders with promulgating this decree.²⁸ Enthusiastically carrying out the papal will, friars fostered devotion to the Holy Name by disseminating exempla in which various saints were discovered, upon autopsy, to have the name of Jesus or the *arma Christi* literally inscribed upon their hearts. This tale was recounted of Saint Ignatius in the influential *Legenda aurea*, and in "modern" times it was told of the Franciscan Chiara of Montefalco (d. 1308).²⁹ These invisible stigmata of the heart testified to God's power to inscribe his love on the inner self, just as Saint Francis's visible stigmata inscribed Christ's Passion on his flesh for all to see. The devotion to the Holy Name was further inflamed by Henry Suso, who carved the monogram of Jesus on his chest in his own blood and then wrote about it in his autohagiography.³⁰ In this way, the courtly motif of the heart inscribed with the name or image of the beloved was sacralized and assimilated to the "valentine" emblem of the pierced heart, which is still part of our commercial culture. A book of hours from the mid-fifteenth century demonstrates the final stage in this fusion of Christ with Cupid. In the Hours of Anne of Mattefelon, circa 1440 (Fig. 2), a naked Christ child with what appears to be a firebrand is ensconced in an enormous crucified heart, framed by drawings of Christ's wounded hands and feet.³¹ This sacred valentine restores the old pagan iconography of the son of Venus, now firmly identified with the son of Mary.

In the following sections I will examine two special cases of this sacred eroticism: the frequent portrayal of Saint Augustine as a model *fin amant* and (for that reason) a model contemplative, his heart pierced by Love's arrows, and the much rarer representation of the god of love as a six-winged seraph—a motif borrowed from the iconography of Saint Francis receiving Love's wounds. In conclusion, I will speculate on how the motif of Love's arrow came to function by the late Middle Ages as a meta-trope for the sacred image itself.

Saint Augustine as Model *fin amant*

Alfred North Whitehead once characterized the whole of Western philosophy as a series of footnotes to Plato. It has been observed just as plausibly that the history of Christian theology is a series of footnotes to Augustine. Theologians as diverse as Hugh of St.-Victor, Thomas Aquinas,

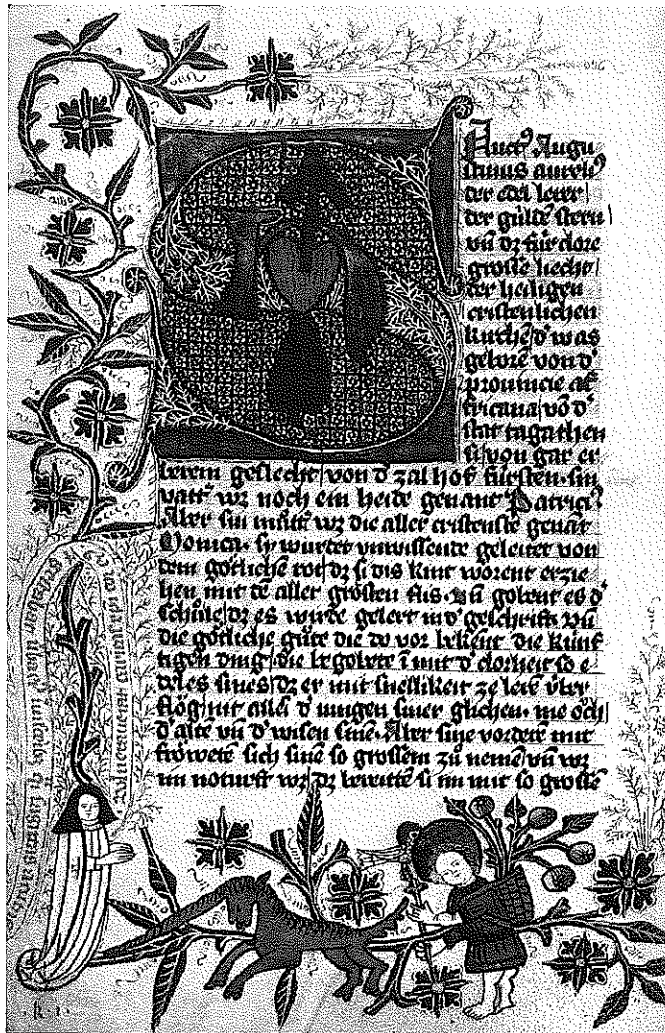
Martin Luther, and John Calvin can all be claimed as Augustinians, for the sheer mass of the bishop's oeuvre—not to mention its richness, variety, and penchant for self-contradiction—makes his influence both inescapable and impossible to restrict to any one theological stance.

When we turn to the subject of love, the very core of Augustine's thought, we can with equal justice trace two diametrically opposed currents in late medieval piety back to the same master. The stern ascetic, Augustine of the moralists, set an unbreachable chasm between the erotic love represented by Cupid (*cupiditas*) and the sacred love portrayed in the Song of Songs (*caritas*). In *De doctrina christiana* he supplied authoritative definitions of these opposing loves: *caritas* is the love of God, self, and neighbor only for God's sake, and *cupiditas* the love of anything at all without regard for God.³² The same contrast recurs in *De civitate Dei*, where the bishop remarks that the ephemeral earthly city is built on "self-love even to the point of contempt for God" (*cupiditas*), and the eternal heavenly city on "love of God even to the point of contempt for self" (*caritas*).³³ D. W. Robertson Jr., an influential translator of *De doctrina*, famously exaggerated the ubiquity of this "two loves" topos in courtly literature, but it is true that one cannot read very far in medieval monastic or pastoral writing without coming across some form of it.³⁴

Yet there was a second medieval Augustine, the Augustine of the mystics—a contemplative theologian beloved especially for his *Confessions* and *De Trinitate*. This Augustine, far from eschewing the secular idiom of love, seems ironically to have been the first Latin writer to assimilate Christ to Cupid.³⁵ In a purple passage from the *Confessions*, just as familiar in the late Middle Ages as his dichotomizing texts, Augustine gave the God of his conversion the signature attribute of the pagan love-deity, confessing that "you had shot through my heart with the arrow of your charity, and I bore your words deeply fixed in my entrails."³⁶ This sentence was paraphrased in a responsory for the saint's feast day on August 28, inspiring monastics to take Love's arrow as a subject for their own meditations and prayers; and it was cited by Jacobus de Voragine in the *Legenda aurea*, guaranteeing a diffusion far beyond the readership of the *Confessions*.³⁷ The passage was so frequently illustrated that it came to supply the saint with his defining emblem, the pierced heart.³⁸ In a German life of Saint Augustine, copied and illustrated by a nun of Strasbourg in 1480 (Fig. 3), the heart-piercing arrow of love doubles as the letter I in the sacred monogram of Jesus, IHS. In the lower left corner a praying nun, perhaps the scribe herself, utters the responsory based on the *Confessions*: "Vulneraverat caritas Christi cor eius, Et gestabat verba eius in visceribus quasi sagittas acutas" (The charity of Christ had wounded his heart, and he bore [Christ's] words in his entrails like sharp arrows).³⁹ Two additional symbols of this piercing love embellish the lower margin: a barefoot Christ child with a cruciform staff, and a unicorn with an enormous horn.

Augustine's arrow-of-charity metaphor was so often echoed that, as the centuries passed, many of the numerous prayers and meditations inspired by it came to be associated with the bishop himself. One of the earliest of these texts was a *Liber meditationum* now ascribed to John of Fécamp (d. 1078). In it "Augustine" prays:

by those saving wounds of yours, which you suffered on the cross for our salvation, from which flowed that precious blood by which we have been redeemed: wound this sinful soul for which you deigned even to die. Wound her with the fiery and potent dart of your exceeding great charity. . . . You, the chosen arrow and the keenest sword, can penetrate the tough shield of the human heart with your power. Transfix my heart with the spear of your love so that my soul may say to you, "I am wounded by your charity," and let abundant tears flow day and night from that wound of your love.⁴⁰



3. Love's arrow as the letter *I* in the monogram of Jesus. Life of St. Augustine, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Ms. germ. qu. 1877, f. 2v. Strasbourg, 1480

In the first half of the twelfth century an Augustinian canon, Hugh of St.-Victor, penned the brief but magnificent treatise known as *De laude caritatis*, which influenced John of Howden and many others. This rhetorical tour de force, deeply Ovidian in its imagery, rewrites Caritas as a kind of celestial Venus who brought Christ low with her arrows, just as Cupid had once triumphed over Jove and Apollo:

O Charity, great is your power! You alone were able to draw God down from heaven to earth. How mighty is your chain by which even God could be bound, and man who had been bound broke the chains of iniquity! . . . We were still rebels when you compelled him, who obeyed you, to descend from the throne of his Father's majesty and take on the weakness of our mortality. You led him bound in your chains, you led him wounded by your arrows, so that man should be all the more ashamed to resist you when he sees that you have triumphed even over God. You have wounded the Impassible, bound the Invincible, dragged the Changeless One down, made the Eternal One mortal.⁴¹

Hugh in this passage carries Augustine's metaphor to extremes but at the same time reverses it, making Christ himself the first and paradigmatic victim of Love's archery. Given the high medieval fascination with this theme, it is understandable that another of Hugh's widely copied treatises on love, the *Soliloquium de arrha animae* (*Soliloquy on the soul's bridal gift*), should have been ascribed to Augustine in at least ten manuscripts, a sign of his growing reputation as the patron saint of passionate lovers.⁴²

Another of the twelfth-century pseudo-Augustines was Gilbert of Hoyland, a Cistercian continuator of Saint Bernard's *Sermons on the Song of Songs*. Like many devotional writers, Gilbert conflated the Ovidian image of Love's arrows with the notion, found in both the Song of Songs and chivalric romances, that Love pierces the heart through the gaze of the eyes. "Would that he might multiply such wounds in me, from the sole of my foot to the crown of my head, that there might be no health in me! For health is evil without the wounds that Christ's gracious gaze inflicts."⁴³ These metaphorical wounds of love might in turn be identified with Christ's bleeding wounds, especially the side-wound produced by the "arrow" of the centurion's (or Charity's) spear. Another Cistercian of the mid-thirteenth century, Gérard of Liège, used these passionate writings by Gilbert—which he took to be Augustine's—to characterize the saint as a kind of romance hero, *li anguisseus damours*, who could serve as an exemplar for monks and beguines. "Augustine, the man driven to anguish by love, was keenly aware of [its power] when he said, 'Mighty and almighty is the passion of love! It is indeed powerful, because it renders the spirit possessed by it powerless over itself.'"⁴⁴

Augustine's own writings, together with the medieval texts ascribed to him and the many hagiographic accounts, stimulated a fervent cult of this saint as model of all devout lovers. This devotion first became prominent in Gérard's own milieu, as one element of the monastic and beguinal piety that flourished in the Low Countries throughout the thirteenth century. Juliana of Mont-Cornillon (1193–1258), said to have been a fine Latin scholar in her youth, loved the works of Augustine and Bernard, another celebrated *fin amant*, above all other saints.⁴⁵ Bernard's copious writings, like Augustine's, had been augmented with numerous pseudonymous works, many of which treated the theme of love. In a mystical *cursus honorum*, aspiring contemplatives were encouraged to begin their spiritual lives by meditating on the humanity of Christ, especially his infancy and Passion, before moving onward and upward to his divinity, with the mystery of the Blessed Trinity as a *ne plus ultra* of divine insight. If Bernard furnished the prime model of devotion to Christ's humanity, Augustine was the unquestioned teacher of Trinitarian contemplation. Thus when the nun Ida of Léau (or Goorsleeuw) immersed herself in Augustinian readings from the lectionary one Christmas, she became so jubilant as she pondered the life of the Trinity that "her soul was steeped in joy, her spirit kindled with joys so great that she almost feared she would lose her mind."⁴⁶ Hadewijch of Brabant, also at Christmas, experienced a vision of herself and her beloved Augustine as two great eagles devoured by a phoenix, representing "the Unity in which the Trinity dwells, wherein both of us are lost."⁴⁷ More than a century later, Henry Suso held an exalted colloquy with his spiritual daughter, Elsbeth Stagel, on the same themes of the Trinity, the Unity, and the soul's joyous annihilation in the abyss of God. Although his discourse owes much to Meister Eckhart, it is Augustine whom he cites as his authority on such matters.⁴⁸ At a more popular level, exemplum collections include a legend that Augustine's heart, preserved in a precious reliquary, leapt for joy whenever the Trinity was mentioned or the Sanctus chanted.⁴⁹

Given their roles as model lovers of God, it is fitting that Augustine and Bernard should ap-



4. Man of Sorrows with Saints Augustine and Bernard pierced by Love's arrows. Devotional compendium, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. fr. 17115, f. 156r. Metz, early fourteenth century



5. Christ in Gethsemane with the Virgin and Saint Augustine, the Christ child with a lance, and Saint Augustine with Love's arrow. Workshop of Daniel Mauch, Buxheim Retable, Ulmer Museum, inv. 1922.5109. Ulm, early sixteenth century

pear together, flanking Christ as the Man of Sorrows, in a French historiated initial of the early fourteenth century (Fig. 4).⁵⁰ Each saint appears with an arrow from the *dieu d'Amors* aimed at an opening in his habit, cut to display a mystical side-wound resembling Christ's. A more complex rendering of the motif appears in a retable from Ulm (Fig. 5), commissioned for the Cistercian nunnery of Heggbach. This panel offers an allegorical vision of Christ in Gethsemane attended by his mother and Saint Augustine, who is identified by a crosier, a book, and his distinctive attribute



6. Saint Augustine's vision of the Trinity. Fra Filippo Lippi, predella panel from *Madonna di S. Spirito* (Barbadori Altarpiece), 1437. Florence, Uffizi

of the pierced heart. Between the praying Christ and the attending saints is an idiosyncratic version of the *arbor amoris*, bedecked with instruments of the Passion including an oddly horizontal *tau* cross. In its branches is perched a naked child, identifiable as Christ by his cruciform nimbus, with a scroll paraphrasing Suso: "I will pluck roses and bestow many sorrows on my friends."⁵¹ It is as if the immortal infant Christ waits to shower blessings—which is to say, sufferings—on the two saints even as they commiserate with the historical adult Christ. Between the innocent Child's legs, however, is a huge phallic lance pointed backwards—the same lance of divine love that wounded Christ's heart on the cross and now runs parallel to the arrow in Augustine's heart. This weapon marks the infant God as still an avatar of the god of love, that dangerous arboreal sniper, however chaste and chastened he may now appear. Though Gothic in iconography and style, this early-sixteenth-century work looks forward to the Baroque eroticism of Bernini's *Ecstasy of Saint Teresa*, a simpler and more dramatic statement of the same idea.

As we have seen, Augustine's reputation as a passionate lover of God was enhanced by his sublime contemplations of the Trinity. In a unique predella panel from Fra Filippo Lippi's Barbadori Altarpiece, commissioned about 1437, the saint's erotic passion is inspired precisely by his Trinitarian vision (Fig. 6).⁵² A handsome, tonsured Augustine, wearing a friar's habit, is seated at an elaborate writing desk surrounded by books, but he is not reading them. Instead, with his gaze fixed on an apparition of the Trinity in the form of three cherubic faces surrounded by an aureole, he records his vision on a scroll as if scarcely aware that he is writing. Three long arrow shafts, one for each divine Person, stick firmly in his heart. Another friar enters the study from the left, his hands raised in astonishment at the saint's condition. In this painting divine Love visibly pierces Augustine's heart through the gaze of his eyes, but what the diagrammatic vision actually represents is the sight of his mind's eye. Since the theologian never in fact characterized the Trinity in pictorial terms, the radiant emblem before his face must be meant to evoke the imageless *visio intellectualis*, the saint's highest category of vision, which by definition eludes the painter's



7. Saint Augustine's conversion: an angel brandishes three arrows. Zanobi Strozzi, antiphonary, Florence, Museum of San Marco, f. 1r. Mid-fifteenth century

art. It is the spectator, not the saint, who has need of this imaginary form.⁵³ But for the viewer of the painting, the Trinitarian emblem represents Augustine's intellectual contemplation as surely as the arrows represent his love. The panel thus links his stature as the greatest of the Church's doctors with his unequaled capacity for amorous vision.

The triple arrows recur in a slightly later miniature by the Florentine painter Zanobi Strozzi, a follower of Fra Angelico (Fig. 7).⁵⁴ This illumination from an antiphonary decorates the *L* initial (*Letare, Jerusalem*) for the first vespers of Augustine's feast day. In it we see the young Augustine reading in a garden just prior to his conversion, his face upturned to listen to the unseen children's voices chanting "tolle, lege" (take and read). In the upper left corner an angel—or Amor—brandishes three arrows aimed at the young man's heart. While the angel's presence is traditional in this narrative scene, ordinarily he either holds a book or himself recites the words "tolle, lege."⁵⁵ Strozzi's substitution of Love's arrows for Love's words appears to be unique. He has thereby conflated the famous garden scene from *Confessions* VIII.12 with Augustine's arrow metaphor and his fame as an expositor of the Trinity. Within its liturgical context, the meaning of this image is clear enough, yet so too is a certain crossover sensibility. The youthful saint, represented in secular

The artist's winged putti, paired off in amorous couples, offer a semipagan commentary on the scene of sacred eroticism.⁵⁸

The God of Love and the Seraphic Christ

One of the most curious instances of crossover can be seen in two manuscripts, related iconographically but not textually, in which the god of love is depicted as a six-winged seraph. In a troubadour *chansonniere* from northern Italy, written during Dante's lifetime, songs by seven Provençal poets are illustrated with a set of unusual marginal drawings.⁵⁹ The first and most amply represented of these poets is Folc of Marseille (d. 1231), whose own life is a remarkable case study in crossover.⁶⁰ Although prolific and successful as a troubadour, Folc (also called Folco or Folquet) stopped composing songs around 1195, after the death of his patrons and his lady. Around 1200 he became a Cistercian monk at Le Thoronet; in 1205 he was named bishop of Toulouse and in that capacity played a role in the Albigensian Crusade which so effectively crushed the culture of southern France. It seems fitting then that the poetry of Folc, who served first *Amors* and then Christ as his god of love, should have inspired one of the most ambivalent of all images of this deity. His *canso* "Ben an mort mi e lor" laments the speaker's fate of being compelled to flee what pursues him (*Amors*) while pursuing what flees him (his lady). The marginal sequence (Fig. 9) reads from left to right, beginning with the sorrowful poet and ending with the reluctant lady. *Amors* appears twice in the form of a seraph with three faces and a crown: at left he is quiescent, but in the center he flaps his wings vigorously, "creating psychic disturbance."⁶¹

While the god of love is often depicted with a crown and a single pair of wings, he has six wings only in this *chansonniere* and one other manuscript, to be discussed below, while the three faces are unique to the Italian songbook. They inevitably suggest the Trinity (cf. Fig. 6), just as the six wings recall the cherubim and seraphim of sacred iconography (see, e.g., Mary Carruthers, "Moving Images in the Mind's Eye," in this volume). A few folios later, the seraphic *Amors* strikes



9. *Amors* in the form of a six-winged seraph. Troubadour *chansonniere*, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms. M.819, f. 56r. Padua, late thirteenth century



8. Giovanni Sagrestani, *Saint Augustine Writing on the Heart of Santa Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi*, Florence, San Frediano in Cestello. Circa 1702

garb, could just as well be a melancholy poet-lover brooding in a *locus amenus*; and the angelic marksman, though he lacks the telltale bow, stalks his amorous prey from the same position as the insouciant Cupid in a contemporary *chansonnier* (Fig. 1).

In a late Baroque painting by Giovanni Sagrestani (1702), the same Augustine whose heart was once pierced by Charity's arrows becomes a scribe impressing Christ's love on a female heart (Fig. 8). Sagrestani's painting glorifies Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi (1566–1607), a Counter-Reformation mystic who twice experienced visions in which Augustine wrote the words "*Verbum caro factum est*" on her heart—first in letters of blood and then in gold.⁵⁶ In continuity with medieval nuns, the Italian Carmelite thought of Saint Augustine as the ultimate contemplative lover. Not only did she regard him as her spiritual father, but she declared that he had penetrated even deeper into divine love than Saint John, because the evangelist merely wrote the sacred gospel of the Incarnation whereas Augustine had expounded its meaning.⁵⁷ In this scene of mystical inscription, the bishop becomes a chosen instrument of the god of love, while the quill that opens Maria Maddalena's heart again recalls the traditional arrow as well as the lance that pierced Christ's heart.

the poet's heart not with an Ovidian arrow, but with a lance, the same weapon we have seen linked with the amorous wounding of Christ. In such a case it is virtually impossible to determine whether the artist meant to confer an aura of genuine sacredness on *Amors* or to unmask him as a blasphemous parody of the true God. Sylvia Huot's description seems apt: "The portrayal of Love as an angelic figure, seraphic or otherwise, is undoubtedly a means of representing its power as an abstract entity, an overwhelming spiritual force that can work for either good or evil."⁶²

Neither Folc nor any other troubadour in this manuscript provides a visual description of the god of love, let alone one that matches the painter's unique creation. Angelica Rieger has proposed that his model was a didactic figure of the six-winged cherub which, in Alan of Lille's treatise *De sex alis cherubim*, symbolizes an array of virtues.⁶³ But such cherub diagrams, widely used as mnemonic devices, themselves helped to shape an iconographic motif much closer in spirit to the troubadours' god of love. In late-thirteenth-century Italy, the likeliest model for the *chansonniere* painter would have been Saint Francis receiving the stigmata from Christ, who appeared to him in the form of a crucified seraph. The saint's vision on Mount Alverno quickly became a topos in Franciscan art, but his experience could be depicted in a variety of ways.⁶⁴ Sometimes, as in Giotto's celebrated frescoes, rays of light proceed from each of Christ's five wounds to impress stigmata on the corresponding parts of Francis's body. In other representations, however, the rays travel directly from Christ's gaze to his servant's (Fig. 10). Since the stigmata are nothing more nor less than *vulnera amoris* borne by Christ's lover, this version accords with the old idea that Love wounds by way of the beloved's eyes: "vulnerasti cor meum in uno oculorum tuorum." Jacobus de Voragine explained the miracle by speculating that, through the power of the imagination—the *vis imaginativa* of medieval psychology—the image of the wounded Christ impressed itself so forcefully on the mind's eye that it was subsequently able to imprint itself on the saint's very flesh.⁶⁵ In any case, the six-winged, seraphic Christ whose gaze had such power to wound his lover already bears a resemblance to the six-winged *Amors* of the *chansonniere*, who pursues and eventually pierces the hapless poet.

The other image of seraphic Love occurs in a French romance of the mid-thirteenth century, the *Roman de la Poire*, written by an obscure poet who revealed his name, Tibaut, in a rebus. The *Poire* is indebted to a more celebrated romance, Guillaume de Lorris's *Roman de la Rose*, for its allegorical treatment of the psychology of love. In this case, it is the text itself that describes *Amors*, in the god's own words, as a deity with six wings:

Por ce que des amanz sui li souverains diex,
sui ge assis si plesans devant Fortune tiex,
en .VI. eles volanz com ange esperitiex.

Plus faz de mes talenz que ne fet hom
mortiex.⁶⁶

Because I am the sovereign god of lovers,
I am seated thus pleasantly before Fortune,
Flying with six wings—spiritual, like an
angel.

I do just as I please, more than any
mortal man.

In contrast to the *Rose*, the god of love in the *Poire* does not shoot the poet. Instead, much later in the text, he shoots the lady. But the Parisian illustrator, combining the datum of a six-winged *Amors* with the god's traditional archery, represents a seraphic figure shooting from on high at two lovers, impaling each with an arrow through the heart (Fig. 11).

Tibaut has not yet finished with the god of love. His allegorical narrative continues with an evocative scene in which the lady plucks a pear from a tree, bites it with her "teeth whiter than



10. Saint Francis receiving the stigmata from Christ in the form of a seraph. Gradual, Montalcino, Archivio Comunale, Ms. 5, f. 181v. Italy, second half of the thirteenth century

ivory," and gives it to the poet, who also eats. "Never since Adam bit the apple," says Tibaut, has there been such a fruit, for the pear is at once "poisonous and wholesome," causing effects both good and evil.⁶⁷ This fruit, because of its shape, was an obvious symbol of female sexuality and pregnancy. It may also have been intended to recall the episode of stolen pears in Augustine's *Confessions*, which many readers have taken to symbolize the youthful scholar's illicit sexual indulgence.⁶⁸ At any rate, as soon as he tastes the fruit the poet begins to suffer all the pains, along with the sweetness, of love. Like his precursor in the *Rose*, he falls completely beneath the sway of *Amors*. Given Tibaut's erotic rewriting of the Fall in this scene, the six-winged deity is once again profoundly ambiguous. Since the poet-lover is tempted into his misery by a fruit, *Amors* cannot help but recall the biblical serpent. Yet his winged form suggests a different personage—the cherub with the flaming sword who "guards the way to the Tree of Life" (Gen. 3:24). Tibaut describes the god as having six wings because he is "a spiritual being, like an angel" (*com ange esperitiex*)—but whether fallen or unfallen, we do not know. Such images may well represent what Alcuin Blamires called "a creative encounter between Platonising lyricism, and the Catholic proclivity for relishing blasphemy without any concomitant alarm lest faith be diminished."⁶⁹ As in the troubadour *chansonnier* from Padua, the god of love's appropriation of sacred attributes makes him both more numinous and more dangerous.



11. *Amors* as a six-winged seraph shoots two lovers. *Roman de la Poire*, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. fr. 2186, f. 1v. Paris, ca. 1260–70

Finally, with an image from the *Exemplar* of Henry Suso, we return full circle to the seraphic Christ of Saint Francis. In open homage to the Poverello, Suso's *Life* describes a spiritual vision in which he beheld "the likeness of the crucified Christ in the form of a seraph."⁷⁰ An illustration from the well-known Strasbourg manuscript (Fig. 12) depicts the friar kneeling in prayer before this vision. He had been asking Christ to teach him how to suffer, so the inscriptions on the seraph's wings exhort him to receive suffering willingly, bear it patiently, and learn to suffer as Christ did. Suso's head is crowned with a lover's chaplet of roses, signifying torments freely accepted, while in lieu of an arrow his heart bears the inscription of the Holy Name, a token of his self-imposed martyrdom.⁷¹ These courtly elements testify to a crossover mentality that is not yet present in the iconography of Saint Francis. Like the medieval Augustine, Suso gladly adopts the posture of the *fin amant* (or *minnende Seele*) and accepts suffering for his Beloved as a gift, offered and received in the loving mutual gaze he exchanges with the seraph. Needless to say, Suso's Christ crucified on the Tree of Life is hardly equivalent to the *dieu d'Amors* perched in the tree of knowledge of love, with its sweetly poisonous fruit. Yet neither is their relationship a simple binary opposition, a moralistic typology of Good and Evil, such as we might find in pedagogical diagrams of the *arbores virtutum et vitiorum*. Rather, a set of shared presuppositions about love

heart. Ruth Cline, in an erudite source study, traced this refinement on the motif of Love's archery to the Arabic poets of al-Andalus.⁷² But it was popularized in twelfth-century France through the *Roman d'Enéas* and the works of Chrétien de Troyes. In Chrétien's *Yvain*, the hero is smitten by *Amors* as soon as his eyes light on the lady of the fountain:

[Amors] si dolceman le requiert que par les ialz el cuer le fiert. ⁷³	Love's pursuit's a gentle art: through the knight's eyes she strikes his heart.
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In *Cligès*, similarly, the knight Alexander marvels at Love's strange archery:

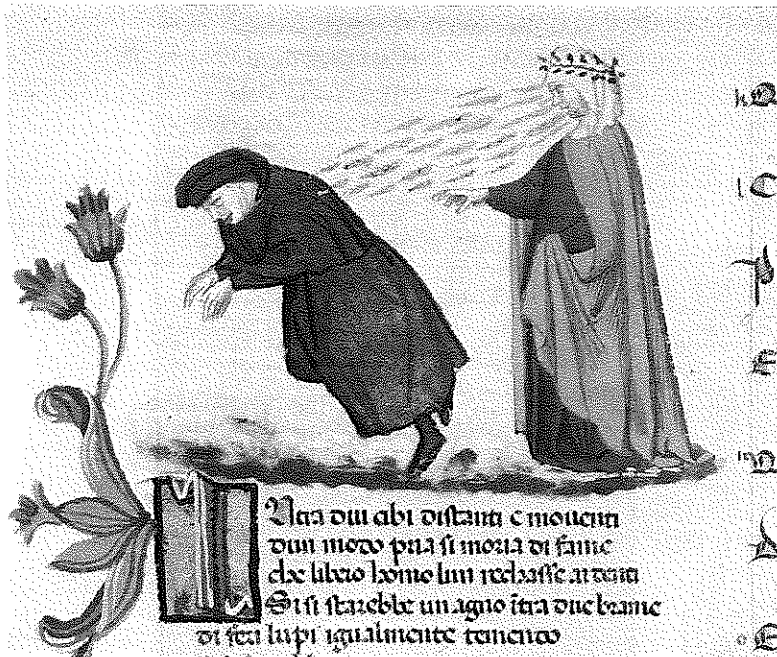
Par l'uel? Et si nel t'a crevé? An l'uel ne m'a il rien grevé; Mes au cuer me grieve formant. Or me di donc reison, comant . . . ? De ce sai je bien reison randre: Li iauz n'a soing de rien antandre Ne rien n'i puet feire a nul fuer; Mes c'est li mireors au cuer. ⁷⁴	How through the eye the arrow rushed and left the eye unhurt, uncrushed. If through the eye the arrow pressed, why is there heart pain in the chest . . . ? I can explain: the eye won't try to understand the reason why and could not do so from the start but is the mirror of the heart.
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Influential as Chrétien's romances were, the *locus classicus* for this iconography is the *Roman de la Rose*. The first of the two *Rose* poets, Guillaume de Lorris, describes the archery of the *dieu d'Amors* taking aim at the hapless Amant:

Li diex d'Amors, qui l'arc tendu Avoit touz jors mout entendu A moi porsivre et espier . . . Il a tantost pris une floiche Et quant la corde fu en coche Il entesa jusqu'à l'oreille L'arc qui estoit fort a merveille, E trait a moi par tel devise Que parmi l'oel m'a ou cors mise La saiete par grant roidor. ⁷⁵	The god of Love, who never ceased To spy and stalk me as he pleased, . . . Took up and bent his mighty bow, From his quiver chose an arrow, Drew the bow straight back to his ear, And fired with taut string, vision clear And flawless aim. His potent dart Sailed through my eye to pierce my heart.
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This passage was *de rigueur* for the numerous illustrators of the *Rose*. Some painters cut to the chase and lodged the arrow in the heart, while others depicted the scene literally, with the shaft piercing the lover's eye.⁷⁶

Unlike manuscripts of the *Rose*, sacred art never represents a divine arrow directly striking the beholder's eye, for God is not a visible object like the beloved lady. Nevertheless, even this erotic motif finds its echo in the greatest of all crossover works. Dante's *Paradiso*, which is at once an ascent to the beatific vision and the apotheosis of *fin' amors*, plays continually on the theme of Beatrice's gaze. The light of her eyes fills the poet with amorous joy, even as it did during her earthly life, but at the same time her regard is literally a divine force that propels him through the celestial spheres toward the throne of God. A particularly telling instance of the gaze occurs at the end of canto IV. Dante has just addressed Beatrice as the "beloved of the First Lover" (O amanza del primo amante), and she is about to enlighten him on the mystery of free will and destiny. But first she subjects him to the full radiance of her divine gaze, which he cannot yet endure:



13. Dante staggers beneath the radiant gaze of Beatrice (*Paradiso* IV). Padua, Seminario, Ms. 67, f. 208r. Padua, early fifteenth century

Beatrice mi guardò con li occhi pieni
 di faville d'amor così divini,
 che, vinta, mia virtute diè le reni,
 e quasi mi perdei con li occhi chini.⁷⁷

Beatrice gazed at me with eyes so full
 of the sparks of love, and so divine,
 that, vanquished, my strength gave way,
 and with eyes cast down, I was nearly lost.

The poet here might be any lover abashed by the sight of his lady's beauty—yet in this case, the two are discussing theology in heaven, and the *faville d'amor* really *are* divine. An early-fifteenth-century manuscript from Padua presents this scene (Fig. 13) with the same literalism that French illuminators of the *Rose* sometimes lavished on the arrow in Amant's eye. The laurel-crowned Beatrice launches a whole volley of sparks from her sacred gaze, overpowering her lover as surely as the intellectual vision of the Trinity pierces Augustine's heart (Fig. 6), or the gaze of the seraphic Christ imprints the stigmata on Francis (Fig. 10). Although Dante does not actually say that he turned away from Beatrice, he uses the idiom that his strength "gave way" (*diè le reni*, or "turned its back"), and the artist has literalized this expression to show the poet staggering as if about to fall, as he seeks to flee from the unbearable gaze of Love. At this early point in the *Paradiso*, the image might recall God's solemn warning that no one can behold his face and live; so, as a special favor, he permits Moses to see his back (Exod. 33:18–23). Similarly, the poet's vision at this point in his pilgrimage is not strong enough to gaze on *l'ultima salute* face to face. Yet the radiance of Beatrice's eyes looks forward typologically to the beatific vision: Dante will not be ready to approach the face of God until he can bear the force of his lady's gaze without flinching.

In the literature of *fin' amors*, Love's arrow is a metaphor for the physical beauty of the beloved, which afflicts the lover with painful yearning. This point is made explicit in the *Roman de la Rose*, where the barb of beauty—the first of the god's five arrows—remains fixed in the lover's heart even after he removes its feathered shaft. In the case of divine love, the metaphor may

seem less appropriate, since the beauty in question is invisible. Yet one of the most frequently cited functions of religious art was to set the unseen object of worship before the mind's eye in order to arouse affection in the heart. Like a metaphorical arrow fired by the hand of God, the devotional image itself was meant to pierce the beholder's heart through the eye, setting it afire with love for invisible beauty by means of the beauty and pathos that could be seen. Pathos was at least as important as beauty, for late medieval artists often strove to represent the Crucified in his death pangs with "no form or comeliness, . . . no beauty that we should desire him" (Isa. 53:2). Yet pity could awaken love just as effectively, and visual images might serve as well as actual visions to puncture a heart with what Julian of Norwich called the "three wounds" of contrition, compassion, and longing for God. Her own experience provides a case in point, proceeding from the physical sight of a crucifix to a spiritual vision of the dying Christ to the final, triumphant knowledge that "love was his meaning."⁷⁸

Despite a long-standing theological bias in favor of imageless contemplation, not to mention the periodic outbreaks of iconoclasm among reformists, the ever-growing popularity of devotional images testified to an axiomatic truth about love that everyone simply "knew." Andreas Capellanus, as good an authority as any, had in the late twelfth century defined love as "a certain inborn suffering derived from the sight of and excessive meditation upon the beauty of" the beloved.⁷⁹ So self-evident was this truth that Andreas had even raised as a *quaestio* whether blind persons were capable of loving. Faith might come through the hearing of the ear, as Saint Paul had asserted (Rom. 10:17), but love arose from the eye's attraction to beauty. In consequence, the more Christianity came to define itself as a religion centered on the arousing and ordering of love, the more indispensable it found images.⁸⁰ Nor is it a coincidence that the iconoclastic fervor of the Reformation accompanied a spiritual reorientation toward faith—"the conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1)—rather than love, the adoration of things seen. It is no wonder, then, that the late Middle Ages, the most iconographically fertile and creative period in all of Christian history, cherished such a predilection for the trope of Love's arrows.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank John Fleming, Jeffrey Hamburger, Richard Kieckhefer, Marit MacArthur, William Paden, Katharine Park, and Nicholas Watson for their helpful comments and references.

Notes

1. In medieval exegesis of one biblical passage, Isa. 49:2, Christ himself is figured as a "chosen arrow" in the Father's quiver. See B. McGinn, "Tropics of Desire: Mystical Interpretation of the Song of Songs," in *That Others May Know and Love: Essays in Honor of Zachary Hayes*, ed. M. Cusato and F. E. Coughlin (St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1997), 133–58. The motif of divine archery also occurs elsewhere in the Bible, e.g., in Psalm 38:2, Lamentations 3:12–13, and Job 6:4 ("the arrows of the Almighty are in me"). But these passages deal with divine wrath and punishment rather than love, and are independent of the tra-

ditions investigated here. Their iconographic echoes are rather to be found in such subjects as the Last Judgment and the martyrdom of Saint Sebastian.

2. In chapter 4 of my book *God and the Goddesses: Vision, Poetry, and Belief in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 2002), I discuss the motivations of crossover art and some feminine counterparts of Christ as Cupid: the medieval representations of Caritas, Frau Minne, and Dame Amour as mystical Venus-figures.

3. But see now C. S. Jaeger, *Ennobling Love: In Search of a Lost Sensibility* (Philadelphia, 1999). The tendency to-

ward irony is well represented by S. Kay, *Subjectivity in Troubadour Poetry* (Cambridge, 1990), and M. Camille, *The Medieval Art of Love: Objects and Subjects of Desire* (New York, 1998).

4. See, for example, C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (Oxford, 1936); P. Dronke, *Medieval Latin and the Rise of European Love-Lyric*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1965–66); N. Perella, *The Kiss Sacred and Profane: An Interpretative History of Kiss Symbolism and Related Religio-Erotic Themes* (Berkeley, 1969).

5. S. Gaunt, "A Martyr to Love: Sacrificial Desire in the Poetry of Bernart de Ventadorn," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31 (2001), 477–506, at 480.

6. Gaunt, "Martyr to Love" (as in note 5), 482.

7. E. Panofsky, "Blind Cupid," in *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (New York, 1939), 95–128 and figs. 69–106; C. Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto* (Chapel Hill, 2001). See esp. chap. 2, "Spirittelli d'Amore."

8. Dante, *Vita nuova*, 3 ("uno segnore di pauroso aspetto"), ed. V. Cozzoli (Milan, 1995), 26.

9. M. F. Wack, *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages: The Vitaticum and Its Commentaries* (Philadelphia, 1990).

10. "[Amor] sagittifera prompsit duo tela pharetra/diversorum operum: fugat hoc, facit illud amorem;/quod facit, auratum est et cuspide fulget acuta,/quod fugat, obtusum est et habet sub harundine plumbum" (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 1.468–71, ed. W. S. Anderson [Leipzig, 1977], 16).

11. For Cupid/Amor in mythography, see J. Chance, *Medieval Mythography: From Roman North Africa to the School of Chartres, A.D. 433–1177*, 2 vols. (Gainesville, Fla., 1994); T. Tinkle, *Medieval Venuses and Cupids: Sexuality, Hermeneutics, and English Poetry* (Stanford, 1996); R. Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Reading Myth: Classical Mythology and Its Interpretations in Medieval French Literature* (Stanford, 1997).

12. Conflation of the two was still possible as late as 1893, when the sculptor Sir Albert Gilbert designed his memorial for the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, meant as an allegory of Christian charity, in the form of a naked winged boy with a bow. Gilbert miscalculated, however, for his statue—in London's Piccadilly Circus—is universally known as Eros (Dempsey, *Inventing* [as in note 7], 4–5).

13. J. F. Hamburger, *The Rothschild Canticles: Art and Mysticism in Flanders and the Rhineland circa 1300* (New Haven, 1990), 72–77, pl. 5.

14. E. Jager, *The Book of the Heart* (Chicago, 2000), 78.

15. S. Huot, *The Roman de la Rose and Its Medieval Readers: Interpretation, Reception, Manuscript Transmission* (Cambridge, 1993), 298–99.

16. Walter of Wimborne, *Marie carmina*, stanzas 586, 590, in A. G. Rigg, ed., *The Poems of Walter of Wimborne* (Toronto, 1978), 270–71.

17. John of Howden, *Philomena*, ed. C. Blume, *John Hovedens Nachtigallenlied über die Liebe unseres Erlösers und Königs Christus* (Leipzig, 1930). See also Jager, *Book of the Heart* (as in note 14), 108–11; A. G. Rigg, *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature, 1066–1422* (Cambridge, 1992), 208–15.

18. *Meditations on the Life and Passion of Christ*, lines 1629–32, ed. C. d'Evclyn, EETS, O.S. 158 (Oxford, 1921),

43. Abridged from this text is the lyric "Thesu that hast me dere I-boght," no. 91 in *Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century*, ed. C. Brown, rev. G. V. Smithers (Oxford, 1952), 114–19. Cf. *Philomena*, strophe 620: "Telum arcus Amoris iaciat/Et saxosum cor sancte feriat."

19. This passage is indebted to Hugh of St.-Victor's *De laude caritatis*, discussed below: "O caritas . . . Nescio enim si forte maius sit te Deum dicere, an Deum te superasse. Quod si maius est, etiam hoc libenter et fiducialiter de te dicam: 'Deus caritas est, et qui manet in caritate, in Deo manet et Deus in eo'" (1 John 4:8). *L'Oeuvre de Hugues de Saint-Victor I*, ed. H. B. Feiss and P. Sicard (Turnhout, 1997), 196 [also in PL 176:975A–B]. The German poet Lamprecht of Regensburg (ca. 1250) similarly identifies God with Lady Love: "Diu minne ist got, got ist diu minne,/einz ist in dem andern inne" (*Tochter Syon*, lines 3192–93, in *Sancti Franciscan Leben und Tochter Syon*, ed. K. Weinhold [Paderborn, 1880], 445).

20. These included Guillaume de Machaut, Christine de Pizan, and Francesco Barberino (*Documenti d'Amore*). See M. Müller, *Minnebilder: Französische Minnedarstellungen des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts* (Cologne, 1996), 191–92.

21. Müller, *Minnebilder* (as in note 20), 172–94.

22. *Chansonier de Jean de Montchenu*, ed. G. Thibault and D. Fallows (Paris, 1991); D. D. R. Owen, *Noble Lovers* (New York, 1975), 129; Jager, *Book of the Heart* (as in note 14), 84–85.

23. For competing interpretations, see Camille, *Art of Love* (as in note 3), 32–33, and A. Blamires, "The 'Religion of Love' in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* and Medieval Visual Art," in *Word and Visual Imagination: Studies in the Interaction of English Literature and the Visual Arts*, ed. K. J. Hölting et al. (Erlangen, 1988), 11–31, fig. 4. On maternity salvers generally, see J. M. Musacchio, *The Art and Ritual of Childbirth in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven, 1999).

24. Müller, *Minnebilder* (as in note 20), 185–88 and figs. 29, 64, 115, 117; Panofsky, "Blind Cupid" (as in note 7), fig. 75; Camille, *Art of Love* (as in note 3), 40, fig. 29.

25. E. S. Greenhill, "The Child in the Tree: A Study of the Cosmological Tree in Christian Tradition," *Traditio* 10 (1954), 323–71; U. Kamber, ed., *Arbor amoris, der Minnebaum: Ein Pseudo-Bonaventura-Traktat herausgegeben nach lateinischen und deutschen Handschriften des XIV. und XV. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1964).

26. Müller, *Minnebilder* (as in note 20), fig. 34; Camille, *Art of Love* (as in note 3), 122, fig. 108.

27. Suggestions of this motif first appear in two Grail romances: Wauchier's continuation of Chrétien de Troyes's *Perceval* (ca. 1190–1200) and the prose *Didot Perceval* (before 1227). In his quest Perceval comes upon a mysterious child in a tree, who offers him guidance and then suddenly disappears. While the child is never clearly identified, he is allied with the mysteries of the Grail and may represent the infant Christ. See Greenhill, "Child in the Tree" (as in note 25), 324–26.

28. M.-A. Polo de Beaulieu, "La Légende du cocur inscrit dans la littérature religieuse et didactique," in *Le "Cuer" au Moyen Âge: Réalité et sénéfiance* (Aix-en-Provence, 1991), 299–312, at 310.

29. For Ignatius, see Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. W. G. Ryan (Princeton, 1993), vol. 1, 140–43; for Chiara of Montefalco, see A. M. Kleinberg, *Prophets in Their Own Country: Living Saints and the Making of Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Chicago, 1992), 155–56, and K. Park, "The Criminal and the Saintly Body: Autopsy and Dissection in Renaissance Italy," *Renaissance Quarterly* 47 (1994), 1–33.

30. H. Suso, *Life of the Servant*, chap. 4, in *The Exemplar*, trans. F. Tobin (New York, 1989), 70–71.

31. The Christ child in this woodcut holds a knotted scourge in his right hand and what seems to be a torch in his left, although a later colorist has painted it green, perhaps taking it for another kind of flagellum. On the wounded heart, see C. Raynaud, "La mise-en-scène du coeur dans les livres religieux de la fin du Moyen Âge," in *Le "Cuer" au Moyen Âge* (as in note 28), 313–43.

32. "Caritatem uoco motum animi ad fruendum deo propter ipsum et se atque proximo propter deum; cupiditatem autem motum animi ad fruendum se et proximo et quolibet corpore non propter deum" (Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* III.16 [CCSL 32 (Turnhout, 1962), 87]).

33. "Fecerunt itaque ciuitates duas amores duo, terrenam scilicet amor sui usque ad contemptum Dei, caelestem uero amor Dei usque ad contemptum sui" (Augustine, *De ciuitate Dei* XIV.28 [CCSL 48 (Turnhout, 1955), 451]).

34. D. W. Robertson Jr., *A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives* (Princeton, 1962). For a nuanced review of this problem, see Tinkle, *Medieval Venuses* (as in note 11), 9–41.

35. Origen had already characterized Christ as Eros in the Greek tradition. See F. J. Dölger, "Christus als himmlischer Eros und Seelenbräutigam bei Origenes," in *Antike und Christentum: Kultur- und religionsgeschichtliche Studien*, vol. 6 (Münster, 1950), 273–75.

36. "Sagittaueras tu cor nostrum caritate tua, et gestabamus uerba tua transfixa uisceribus" (Augustine, *Confessiones* 9.3 [CCSL 27 (Turnhout, 1981), 134]).

37. Hamburger, *Rothschild Canticles* (as in note 13), 76; P. Courcelle, *Les Confessions de Saint Augustin dans la tradition littéraire: Antécédents et postérité* (Paris, 1963), 322; Jacobus de Voragine, *Golden Legend* (as in note 29), vol. 2, 117. Jacobus's biography of Augustine is one of his longest and quotes liberally from the *Confessions*.

38. L. Réau, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien*, vol. 3 (Paris, 1958), 150–51.

39. J. F. Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists: The Visual Culture of a Medieval Convent* (Berkeley, 1997), 118–19. For a later example of the pierced-heart monogram, see J. F. Hamburger, "La Bibliothèque d'Unterlinden et l'art de la formation spirituelle," in *Les Dominicaines d'Unterlinden*, vol. 1 (Colmar, 2000), 158.

40. "Rogo te per illa salutifera vulnera tua, quae passus es in cruce pro salute nostra, ex quibus emanauit ille pretiosus sanguis quo sumus redempti, vulnera hanc animam peccatricem, pro qua etiam mori dignatus es, vulnera eam igneo et potentissimo telo tuae nimiae charitatis. . . Tu sagitta electa, et gladius acutissimus, qui durum scutum humani cordis penetrare tua potentia uales, confige cor meum jaculo tui amoris: ut dicat tibi anima mea, Chari-

tate tua vulnerata sum; ita ut ex ipso vulnere amoris tui uberrimae fluant lacrymae nocte ac die" (John of Fécamp, *Liber meditationum*, chap. 37 [PL 40:935]). For the attribution, see A. Wilmart, "Deux préfaces spirituelles de Jean de Fécamp," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 18 (1937), 3–44; J. Leclercq and J.-P. Bonnes, *Un maître de la vie spirituelle au XIe siècle: Jean de Fécamp* (Paris, 1946), 39–41.

41. "Magnam ergo uim habes, caritas. Tu sola Deum trahere potuisti de celo ad terras. O quam forte est uinculum tuum, quo et Deus ligari potuit et homo ligatus uincula iniquitatis dirupit. . . Adhuc nos rebelles habuisti, quando illum tibi obedientem de sede paterno maiestatis usque ad infirma nostre mortalitatis suscipienda descendere coegisti. Adduxisti illum uinculis tuis alligatum, adduxisti illum sagittis tuis uulneratum, ut amplius puderet hominem tibi resistere, cum te uideret etiam in Deum triumphasse. Vulnerasti impassibilem, ligasti insuperabilem, traxisti incommutabilem, eternum fecisti mortalem" (Hugh of St.-Victor, *De laude caritatis* 10–11, ed. Feiss and Sicard [as in note 19], 194).

42. R. Goy, *Die Überlieferung der Werke Hugos von St. Viktor* (Stuttgart, 1976), 277–329.

43. "Talia in me utinam multiplicet vulnera a planta pedis usque ad verticem, ut non sit in me sanitas. Mala enim sanitas, ubi vulnera vacant quae Christi pius infligit aspectus" (Gilbert of Hoyland, *Sermones in Canticum Salomonis* 30.2 [PL 184:156B]).

44. "Hoc enim bene senserat et cognouerat Augustinus, li anguisseus damours, qui dicebat: O potens et prepotens passio caritatis. Iure enim potens, quia animum quem possederit sui ipsius efficit impotentem" (Gérard of Liège, *Quinque incitamenta ad deum amandum ardentem*, III.3.1, in "Les Traités de Gérard de Liège sur l'amour illicite et sur l'amour de Dieu," ed. A. Wilmart, *Analecta regimensia: Extraits des manuscrits latins de la reine Christine conservés au Vatican* [Rome, 1933, repr. 1966], 223).

45. *Life of Juliana of Mont-Cornillon* I.6, trans. B. Newman (Toronto, 1988), 33.

46. *Ida the Gentle of Léau: Cistercian Nun of La Ramée*, 52b, trans. M. Cawley (Lafayette, Ore., 1998), 55–56. The translator of this anonymous vita suggests that the "Augustinian" reading which most captivated Ida was in fact pseudo-Augustine.

47. Hadewijch, Vision 11, in *Complete Works*, trans. C. Hart (New York, 1980), 289–90.

48. Suso, *Life of the Servant*, chap. 52 (as in note 30), 197.

49. F. C. Tubach, *Index Exemplorum: A Handbook of Medieval Religious Tales* (Helsinki, 1969), no. 415; Jean Gobi, *Scala coeli*, ed. M.-A. Polo de Beaulieu (Paris, 1991), 392, no. 524; Polo de Beaulieu, "La Légende" (as in note 28), 299.

50. J. F. Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* (New York, 1998), 134–38.

51. "Ich wil rosen brechen und vil liden uf min frund trechen" (Hamburger, *Visual and the Visionary* [as in note 50], 252).

52. The predella panels are at the Uffizi; the altarpiece itself has been at the Louvre since 1814. See J. Ruda, *Fra*

Filippo Lippi: *Life and Work with a Complete Catalogue* (London, 1993), 112–14, 392–96, and pl. 64.

53. This point is made even more subtly in an altarpiece from the Augustinian monastery of Neustift (ca. 1460–70). One panel depicts two closely linked scenes: at left, Augustine sits at his writing desk, so absorbed in contemplation that he fails to notice a widow who has come up from behind to speak with him. At right, as Augustine celebrates Mass, it is the widow herself who sees a three-faced apparition of the Trinity, similar to that in the Lippi panel, and thus comes to understand the object of the saint's meditation (J. Courcelle and P. Courcelle, *Iconographie de Saint Augustin*, vol. 2, *Les Cycles du XVe siècle* [Paris, 1969], 115, pl. 72).

54. Courcelle, *Les Confessions* (as in note 37), 651–52, pl. 10.

55. J. Courcelle and P. Courcelle, *Iconographie de Saint Augustin*, vol. 1, *Les Cycles du XIVe siècle* (Paris, 1965), pls. 57, 72, 89; vol. 2 (as in note 53), pls. 70, 81.

56. V. Puccini, *The Life of St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, a Carmelite Nun* (London, 1687), 58–59; Jager, *Book of the Heart* (as in note 14), 94–97.

57. "Selected Revelations," in *Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi*, trans. A. Maggi (New York, 2000), 129, 67.

58. For Giovan Paolo Roffi's 1669 portrait of Maria Maddalena herself as a painter, ecstatic and blindfolded, see K. Barzman, "Cultural Production, Religious Devotion, and Subjectivity in Early Modern Italy: The Case Study of Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi," *Annali d'Italianistica* 13 (1995), 295, fig. 1.

59. S. Huot, "Visualization and Memory: The Illustration of Troubadour Lyric in a Thirteenth-Century Manuscript," *Gesta* 31 (1992), 3–14. The manuscript is New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms. M.819. See also A. Rieger, "Ins e.l cor port, dona, vostra faiso': Image et imaginaire de la femme à travers l'enluminure dans les chansonniers de troubadours," *CahCM* 28 (1985), 385–415.

60. See N. M. Schulman, *Where Troubadours Were Bishops: The Occitania of Folc of Marseille (1150–1231)* (New York, 2001).

61. Huot, "Visualization" (as in note 59), 8. The six-winged *Amors* appears nine times in this manuscript. Five of the illustrations accompany the poems of Folc; the other four illustrate songs by another monk-troubadour, Gausbert de Poicibot.

62. Huot, "Visualization" (as in note 59), 8.

63. Rieger, "Ins e.l cor port'" (as in note 59), 402–3. For the cherub diagrams, see U. Ernst, *Carmen figuratum: Geschichte des Figurengedichts von den antiken Ursprüngen bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters* (Cologne, 1991), 656–59; C. Frugoni, *Francesco e l'invenzione delle stimmate: Una storia per parole e immagini fino a Bona-*

ventura e Giotto (Turin, 1993), figs. 8, 61.

64. Frugoni, *Francesco* (as in note 63), offers a comprehensive study.

65. Jacobus de Voragine, *Sermo* 264 (third sermon on St. Francis), from *Opus sermonum de sanctis per anni circulum* (Augsburg, 1484). I thank Katharine Park for this reference.

66. Tibaut, *Le Roman de la Poire*, lines 25–28, ed. C. Marchello-Nizia (Paris, 1984), 4.

67. Tibaut, *Roman de la Poire*, ed. Marchello-Nizia (as in note 66), 20–24.

68. Augustine, *Confessiones* 2.9–18, CCSL 27 (as in note 36), 21–26; M. O'Rourke Boyle, *Divine Domesticity: Augustine of Thagaste to Teresa of Avila* (Leiden, 1997), 3–26. In Chaucer's "Merchant's Tale," the young wife May and her lover consummate their adultery in a pear tree in the presence of May's blind husband.

69. Blamires, "Religion of Love" (as in note 23), 23–24.

70. Suso, *Life of the Servant*, chap. 43 (as in note 30), 168–69.

71. Hamburger, *Visual and the Visionary* (as in note 50), 257–61.

72. R. Cline, "Heart and Eyes," *Romance Philology* 25 (1972), 263–97.

73. Chrétien de Troyes, *Yvain, ou, Le Chevalier au lion*, lines 1369–70, ed. J. Nelson and C. W. Carroll (New York, 1968), 80–81; *Yvain, or The Knight with the Lion*, trans. R. H. Cline (Athens, Georgia, 1984), 38.

74. Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, lines 699–712, ed. W. Förster, 4th ed. (Halle, 1921), 20; *Cligès*, trans. R. H. Cline (Athens, Georgia, 2000), 21.

75. Guillaume de Lorris, *Le Roman de la Rose*, lines 1681–95, ed. D. Poirion (Paris, 1974), 83; my translation.

76. S. Lewis, "Images of Opening, Penetration and Closure in the *Roman de la Rose*," *Word & Image* 8 (1992), 215–42; H. Arden, "The Slings and Arrows of Outrageous Love in the *Roman de la Rose*," in *The Medieval City Under Siege*, ed. I. Corfis and M. Wolfe (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1995), 191–206.

77. Dante, *Paradiso* IV.139–42, ed. J. Sinclair (Oxford, 1961), 66.

78. Julian of Norwich, *Shewings*, ed. G. R. Crampton (Kalamazoo, 1993): chap. 2 (the three wounds) and chap. 86 ("love was his meaning").

79. Andreas Capellanus, *De amore* I.1; *The Art of Courtly Love*, trans. J. J. Parry (New York, 1941), 28.

80. See now K. Kamerick, *Popular Piety and Art in the Late Middle Ages: Image Worship and Idolatry in England, 1350–1500* (New York, 2002), and S. Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment in the Middle Ages* (New York, 2002). These volumes appeared after the present essay was substantially completed.