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NEW MEDIEVAL LITERATURES

10 (2008)

Edited by

Wendy Scase, Rita Copeland, and David Lawton

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CONTENTS

Foreword	vii
List of Illustrations	ix
A Taxonomy of Creatures in the Second-Family Bestiary SUSAN CRANE	1
<i>Piers Plowman</i> and the <i>Querelle</i> of the Rose: Marriage, <i>Caritas</i> , and the Peacock's 'Pennies' ISABEL DAVIS	49
The Look of Medieval Ethnography: William of Rubruck's Mission to Mongolia SHIRIN KHANMOHAMADI	87
'Of depe ymaginaciouns and strange interpretaciouns': Sorcery and Politics in Gower's <i>Confessio Amantis</i> MIKE RODMAN JONES	115
Messianic Chivalry in <i>Amis and Amiloun</i> JILL MANN	137
'Among psalms to fynde a cleer sentence': John Lydgate, Eleanor Hull, and the Art of Vernacular Exegesis SHANNON GAYK	161
<i>Mater Litterata</i> : Considerations of Maternity and Latinity in the Post-Medieval Reception of Dhuoda's <i>Liber manualis</i> JUANITA FEROS RUYS	191

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FOREWORD

The essays in volume 10 of *New Medieval Literatures*, as always, engage with matters of immediate cultural and intellectual urgency. Many contributors are concerned with ethical problems, and in particular with relations between humans and the natural world. Medieval ethnographic, philosophical, scientific, and taxonomic discourses, and romance narratives, are analysed in pursuit of this agenda. Two contributors suggest new directions and topics in the still incomplete revision of women's position in literary history. The volume ends with an analytical survey by David Matthews of Middle English specialists' recent 'invasion' of the sixteenth century. While celebrating and explaining this development, this essay also warns of its limitations and dangers.

On behalf of the editors, Rita Copeland, David Lawton, and myself, I am delighted to announce that the next issue of *New Medieval Literatures* (volume 11, 2009) will be a Special Issue on Grammar and the Medieval Schoolroom, edited by Chris Cannon, Rita Copeland, and Nicolette Zeeman. Volume 12 (2010) will return to the usual format, and submissions are invited on any topic that falls within the purview of the journal.

We would like to thank all those who helped to make the current volume. We are extremely grateful to the British Library for waiving the fee for the reproduction, online and in print, of two pages from MS Additional 11283. We are most thankful to our external reviewers who generously gave of their time and expertise to advise us on submissions, and to the contributors for offering their excellent work to *NML*. Finally, our thanks are due to Elizabeth Scase for help with proofreading, to Heather M. Padgen for her meticulous copyediting, and to Brepols, especially Simon Forde, for continued support.

Wendy Scase

unwise love affair. She retorts in two ways. First she drolly considers that there might be other 'miracles' of the *Roman de la Rose* and then, more pensively, imagines a man, known to another of Col's 'compaignons', who:

foy au *Romant de la Rose* comme a l'Evangile; celluy est souverainement jaloux, et quant sa passion le tient plus aigrement il va querre son livre et list devant sa fame, et puis fiert et frappe sus et [...] a chascun mot qu'il treuve a son propos il fiert ung coup ou deux du pié ou de la paume; si m'est advis que quiconques s'en loe, telle povre femme le comperre chier.

(believed in the *Roman de la Rose* as in the gospel. This was an extremely jealous man, who, whenever in the grip of passion, would go and find the book and read it to his wife; then he would become violent and strike her and [...] at every word he finds appropriate he gives her a couple of kicks or slaps. Thus it seems clear to me that whatever other people think of this book, this poor woman pays too high a price for it.)⁸⁴

Not only does she point out that the *Rose* is equivocal enough to offer the discrepant advice supplied to both of Col's 'friends', but she also captures the plot motifs and reversible spirit of the 'Wife of Bath's Prologue', at once funny and thoroughly sad, implicating Col and his 'friends' in the causes of that sorrow.

She also suggests more appropriate reading on love for Col's amorous friend in Boethius and St Bernard. The last of these is one of Langland's own favourites. Indeed, the books suggested by de Pizan and Gerson often seem to be chosen from a list of those in Langland's 'library'. Gerson after all recommends Langland's greatest authorities: SS Augustine and Bonaventure.⁸⁵ Langland and his *querelle* confederates read and cite those books in the service of a conscious project of marginalizing misogamy. And this erudite project is part of another that is still larger: about determining what is decent to be done and said; Langland's work stands, Janus-like between the *Rose* and the *querelle*, ushering in a period of radical ethical reassessment at the centre of which is a discussion of marriage and the sexual life.

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⁸⁴ *Le Débat sur le 'Roman de la Rose'*, p. 140; *Querelle de la Rose*, p. 136.

⁸⁵ *Le Débat sur le 'Roman de la Rose'*, pp. 172–74; *Querelle de la Rose*, p. 151.

THE LOOK OF MEDIEVAL ETHNOGRAPHY: WILLIAM OF RUBRUCK'S MISSION TO MONGOLIA

Shirin Khanmohamadi

The history of the reception of William of Rubruck's *Itinerarium* or *Journey*, a report of his mission to Mongolia in 1253–55, has been marked by both relative neglect and high praise. The *Journey* enjoyed scant contemporary attention and was unknown even to encyclopedists like Vincent de Beauvais, who recorded the earlier Mongolian mission of John de Plano Carpini, and who personally knew King Louis IX, at whose request William made the journey 'ut omnia scriberem [...] quaecumque viderem inter Tartaros' (to put in writing [...] everything I saw among the Tartars).¹ Were it not for the great admiration of Roger Bacon, who copied much of the *Journey* in his *Opus maius* (c. 1264), William's fascinating two-year mission, from the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem through the twin imperial courts of the ruler of the Golden Horde, Baatu (1242–55), and of the Great Khan, Mangu (1251–59),² would probably not have come down to us; its low circulation is suggested, further, by its mere five extant manuscripts, four located in England.³ Though published partially

¹ All citations are from Anastasius Van den Wyngaert's edition of the *Itinerarium*, in *Sinica Franciscana*, 1: *Itinera et relationes fratrum minorum saeculi XIII et XIV* (Florence: Quaracchi-Firenze, 1929), pp. 164–332; all translations are from *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*, ed. by Peter Jackson (London: Hakluyt Society, 1990).

² The term for the Russian and Kazakhstani realms of the Mongolian empire. At the time of William's mission, the vast Asian empire was effectively divided into two realms of rule, one being the Golden Horde and the other eastern Asia far as Cathay; later, in 1258, Persia would be added to the Mongol realm and a third distinct dynasty of Mongolian rulers, the Il-Khans, formed.

³ Further suggesting Bacon's hand in its preservation. See Peter Jackson, 'Introduction', in *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*, pp. 52–53.

by Richard Hakluyt in 1600 and completely by Purchas in 1625, the *Journey* continued its path of relative obscurity, overlooked by historians of its own Franciscan and other orders, even after the discovery and publication of all of its manuscripts by the Société de Géographie of Paris in 1839. At the same time, the *Journey* garnered lavish praise: Purchas called William's account a 'Jewell of Antiquitie', while Sir Henry Yule, the great editor of Marco Polo, wrote of William's book:

[T]he generation immediately preceding his [Marco Polo's] own has bequeathed to us [...] the narrative of one great journey which, in its rich detail, its vivid pictures, its acuteness of observation and strong good sense, seems to me to form a Book of Travels [...] which has never had justice done to it, for it has few superiors in the whole Library of Travel.⁴

Like Yule in the early twentieth century, William's modern commentators have been struck by the vividness of detail and acuteness of observation that informs William's descriptions of Mongolian life, qualities that allow the *Journey* to stand today as a major ethnographic source for medieval Mongolian practices.⁵ Whether for this reason, or on account of the relative reliability its narrator,⁶ studies have tended to treat the *Journey* as a document of hard science rather than a complex narrative object — endowed, as Mary Campbell has put it, with 'a plot and a character'⁷ — and a complex cultural object reflective of a particular mode

⁴ See 'Introductory Notice', in *The Journey of William of Rubruck to the Eastern Parts of the World*, ed. by William Rockhill (London: Hakluyt Society, 1900), pp. xl–xlv.

⁵ See *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, ed. by Christopher Dawson (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), pp. xxi–xxiii; and more recently, Jackson, 'Introduction', especially pp. 47–51.

⁶ Compare the dual authorship and voice of Marco Polo and his collaborator, Rustichello of Pisa, in Marco Polo's *Travels*, or the author of *Mandeville's Travels*, whom Stephen Greenblatt has called 'the fictive body made up of fragments of other bodies' and 'a violation of the presumption of a unitary material body that has produced the text [...] with a travel narrative or an eyewitness history, this presumption is particularly irresistible' (*Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 35, 34).

⁷ Mary Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 114. The relative lack of attention to the *Journey's* literariness comes into particular relief when compared with the treatment of fellow texts of medieval travel writing like *Mandeville's Travels*, whose complexities of form, variants, and ethnographic representations attract ever more criticism. Recent examples of an empirical approach to the *Journey* include S. Mund, 'Travel Accounts as Early Sources of Knowledge about Russia in Medieval Western Europe from the

of medieval ethnographic thinking and a distinctive ethnographic poetics. The nature and sources of medieval ethnographic thinking and writing are now undergoing scholarly definition and elaboration.⁸ In what follows, I argue that William's ethnographic choices are shaped by the exigencies of medieval 'missionary ethnography': a peculiar, ambivalent and strategic acknowledgement of non-Christian humanity and difference deployed in order to incorporate the non-Christian other into the fold of Christian promise. A number of the most distinctive qualities of this ethnographic work — namely, Rubruck's inter-subjectivity, or interlocking subjectivity, with various encountered non-Christian others, his acute openness to Mongol cultural difference and his unwitting religious syncretism — can be shown to result, however paradoxically, from his great self-extension towards the other in the service of universal Christendom. William's peculiarly visual and painterly language opens the *Journey* to a related, if rarer, investigation: the aesthetics of the premodern ethnographic gaze.

Mid-thirteenth to the Early Fifteenth Century', *Medieval History Journal*, 5 (2002), 103–20; Walter Pohl, 'The Regia and the Hring: Barbarian Places of Power', in *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Carine van Rhijn, M. de Jong, and F. Theuvs (Leiden: Brill, 2001); and Gregory G. Guzman, 'European Clerical Envoys to the Mongols: Reports of Western Merchants in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 1231–1255', *Journal of Medieval History*, 22 (1996), 53–67. Notable exceptions include Campbell, *Witness*, pp. 112–121, which discusses the subjectivity and precocious modernity of William's account; Caroline Walker Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York: Zone Books, 2001), which treats the *Journey's* perspectivalism as part of the discourse of wonder; and Michèle Guéret-Laferté, 'Les Gestes de l'autre', in *Le Geste et les gestes au moyen âge*, Sénéfiance, 41 (Aix-en-Provence: CUER MA, 1998), which highlights the *Journey's* reliance on gestural communication.

⁸ For a comprehensive introduction to medieval Europe's ethnography and its debt to classical sources, see Robert Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales 1146–1223* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), especially pp. 155–210, and *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization, and Cultural Change, 950–1350* (London: Allen Lane, 1993). See also Ferlipe Fernandez-Armesto, 'Medieval Ethnography', *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford*, 13 (1982), 275–86, and Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's recent *Hybridity, Identity and Monstrosity in Medieval Britain: On Difficult Middles* (New York: Palgrave, 2006), especially chap. 1 ('Acts of Separation'), pp. 11–42. A number of scholars have responded to the ethnographic work of *Mandeville's Travels*: see Ian Higgins, *Writing East: The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1997); Suzanne Conklin Akbari, 'The Diversity of Man in the Book of John Mandeville', in *Eastward Bound, Travel and Travellers from 1050–1550*, ed. by Rosamund Allen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 156–76; and Geraldine Heng, 'Eye on the World: Mandeville's Pleasure Zones; Or, Cartography, Anthropology, and Medieval Travel Romance', in *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), pp. 239–305.

William's text is filled with his gazes upon Mongols, and theirs upon him. If the objectifying gazes of ethnographers and travellers in the era of European colonialism have been the object of much deserved critique from within and beyond anthropology, the gaze of premodern European ethnography has received scant theorization. William's missionary gaze — a gaze, as we will see, that requires him to see himself in the eyes of his non-Christian audience — captures and records something quite apart from a safely distanced and objectified Mongol other: a disorienting and dynamic contest between viewing selves and viewed others, in a mode of representation that unsettles the boundary between its cultural subjects and objects, knowers and known within its pages. The *Journey's* destabilization, and interpenetration, of such cultural and religious boundaries attests, moreover, to the rather open and fluid nature of premodern Europe's boundaries with its cultural and religious others generally, and thus to the basic discontinuity between premodern approaches to the East and later Orientalist discourse.⁹

Writing Missionary Ethnography

On the third day after we left Soldaia, we encountered the Tartars; and when I came among them I really felt as if I were entering some other world [aliud seculum]. Their life and character I shall describe to you as best I can.¹⁰

⁹ This essay is part of a book project on the fluidity of premodern Europe's cultural boundaries with its internal and external others as evidenced in the medieval genre devoted to the description of the other, ethnography. The fluidity of medieval cultural and religious boundaries has been theorized by Linda Lomperis in 'Medieval Travel Writing and the Question of Race', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 31 (2001), 149–64; Lomperis argues with respect to 'Christianity' and 'Non-Christian otherness' in Mandeville's *Travels* that 'neither of these identity categories in the *Travels* is stable or entirely separate one from the other' (p. 156). For a recent argument for the interpenetration of Old French literature and literary meaning with cultural and geographic spaces external to Europe, in particular the Arab world, see Sharon Kinoshita, *Medieval Boundaries: Rethinking Difference in Old French Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2006). See also Maria Rosa Menocal's classic study of the syncretism of Andalusian, Provençal, and Italian literature with Arabic culture, with repercussions for all Europe, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1987). Kinoshita and Menocal each insist upon the exceptionalism and difference of medieval relations with the Arab world from modern Orientalist modes.

¹⁰ 'Postquam ergo recessimus de Soldaia, tertia die invenimus Tartaros, inter quos cum intravi, visum fuit michi recte quod ingrederer quoddam aliud seculum, quorum vitam et morem vobis describo prout possum' (chap. 1.14).

William of Rubruck narrates his first encounter with the Tartars, as Europeans called the Mongols, in the language of absolute difference, an entry into an 'aliud seculum', or otherworld. The idea of Mongol alterity had already developed into something of a literary motif by the mid-thirteenth century. Matthew Paris's *Chronica majora* (c. 1240), for instance, links thirteenth-century Mongols with the frightening barbarity of the so-called 'enclosed nations' — popularly believed to be shut in at the 'gates of Alexander' in the Caucasus mountains and to be released upon the coming of the anti-Christ.¹¹ Such an association was hardly unique: medieval writers as diverse as Quilichinus de Spoleto, Rudolf von Ems, Peter Comestor, Roger Bacon, Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, Albertus Magnus, Vincent de Beauvais, and Marco Polo also made the connection.¹² Matthew Paris then proceeds to depict Mongols in the discourse of semi-human barbarism:

The men are inhuman and of the nature of beasts, rather to be called monsters than men, thirsting after and drinking blood, and tearing and devouring the flesh of dogs and human beings; they clothe themselves in the skins of bulls, and are armed with iron lances; they are short in stature and thickset [...] and of great strength; invincible in battle, indefatigable in labour; they drink the blood which flows from their flocks [...]. They have no human laws, know no mercy, are more cruel than lions or bears; they know no other country's language except that of their own, and of this all other nations are ignorant.¹³

In making this depiction, Matthew Paris draws from a stock of high medieval ethnographic ideas on the nature of non-human or semi-human barbarism and monstrosity and their distinction from the category of 'the human', a boundary with which thirteenth-century scholastic as well as popular sources indicate a veritable preoccupation. As John Block Friedman has shown, medieval man's differentiation from the monstrous races, and hence his proper 'measure', was established through the boundary-setting categories of physique, modes of diet, dwelling and habitat, sexual, marital, and childbearing practices, clothing, spiritual life, speech, and defence.¹⁴ The widespread medieval discourse of the wild man

¹¹ 'A detestable nation of Satan, to wit, the countless army of the Tartars, broke loose from its mountain-environed home and piercing the solid rocks [of the Caucasus], poured forth like devils from the Tartarus, so that they are rightly called Tartari or Tartarians': Matthew Paris, *Matthew Paris' English History from the Year 1235 to 1273*, trans. by J. A. Giles, 3 vols (New York: AMS, 1968), I, 312.

¹² W. R. Jones, 'The Image of the Barbarian in Medieval Europe', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 13 (1971), 376–407 (p. 400).

¹³ Matthew Paris, *English History*, I, 312–13.

¹⁴ John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).

and scholastic discourses of the barbarian draw on much the same boundary-setting categories. As Bernheimer and Bartra have shown, an 'ethnography of the medieval wild man' correlates closely with Matthew Paris' depiction of semi-human Mongols: a forest-dweller (thus a literal *silvester homo*) rather than city-dweller, the wild man is a hunter and gatherer, eater of the raw flesh of animals, lacking in knowledge of agriculture or metallurgy, of great physical strength, given to sexual carnality, hairy, warlike, of meagre intellect, lacking human speech, and incapable of knowing God because irrational.¹⁵ Likewise, Cicero's definition of the barbarian, so influential upon future scholastic thinkers like Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, likened the barbarian to 'sylvestres homines', so revealing the basic continuity of ideas between the categories of 'wild men', 'monsters', and the 'barbarian' and that which differentiated these from the 'human'.¹⁶

If William of Rubruck was in all likelihood aware of these popular and scholastic ethnographic currents,¹⁷ it becomes evident upon reading the *Journey* that his own treatment of the Mongols springs from quite different sources and motivations. William's initial language of absolute, unutterable difference gives way to the very opposite aim and promise: 'quorum vitam et morem vobis describo prout possum' (Their life and character I shall describe for you as best I can); Mongolia may be 'quoddam aliud seculum', but William, sent by Louis IX

¹⁵ Richard Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages: A Study in Art, Sentiment, and Demonology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952), and Roger Bartra, *Wild Men in the Looking Glass*, trans. by Carl Berrisford (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), pp. 124–25.

¹⁶ Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 21. Aquinas's definition of barbarism, also influential, is distinctive for its emphasis upon the presence of written language in particular: 'Hence barbarism is appropriately manifested by this sign, that men either do not live under laws or live under irrational ones, and likewise that among certain peoples there is no training in writing' (Aquinas, *Commentary on the Politics*, in *Medieval Political Philosophy*, ed. by R. Lerner, trans. by E. Fortin and P. O'Neill (New York: Free Press, 1963), pp. 305–06.

¹⁷ Apart from Isidore and Solinus, compilers of Pliny's monstrous races, William's ethnographic ideas cannot be grounded in any specific textual tradition. Textual traces in the *Journey* itself only assure us of his knowledge of the Scriptures and the Franciscan Rule, Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, Isidore and Solinus, and the *Aeneid*. Although William mentions the important mission of Carpini once in his text (XIX.5), his misspelling of the name as 'John of Policarpo' together with a lack of evidence that he ever met Carpini in Paris after his mission (as he did Bacon and King Louis) have suggested to some editors that William of Rubruck did not in fact know of either Carpini or his earlier text. See Jackson, 'Introduction', p. 40 n. 4. Van den Wyngaert, *Sinica Franciscana*, lists Carpini and his companion Benedict the Pole as sources for William of Rubruck, p. 213.

to describe what he sees there, is intent on describing just what kind of other-world it is. What follows is a thorough investigation of the life and customs of the Mongols, prompting Roger Bacon to call William's report the 'De Moribus Tartarorum' in his *Opus maius*.¹⁸ Deploying much the same categories that were being invoked in medieval Europe to differentiate humans from nonhumans (notably, categories that would emerge as staples of modern ethnography's 'manners and customs' discourse),¹⁹ William devotes consecutive chapters to the dwellings, diet, clothing, hunting, laws, marriage and burial rites, religion, women's work, and other social customs of the inhabitants of the Mongol empire.

But William does not deploy the categories as tests for Mongol humanity. When Mongolian social structure and customs fall within modes of living and practice deemed inhuman or subhuman according to the ethnographic classifications of his day, William rarely uses the opportunity to condemn the observed practices. Instead, he applies the classifications emptied of their moral implications for Mongolian society. For instance, William describes a clearly nomadic culture in his depictions of Mongolian habitats; if Mongols do not live in caves, rivers, or forests, nevertheless, William is aware, 'nowhere have they any "lasting city"' (chap. 2.1). But in William's hands, the nomadic nature of Mongol life does not negate its order; instead, he closely details the internal logic and structure of movable courts such as that of Baatu:

Baatu's [...] dwellings had the appearance of a large city stretching far out lengthways and with inhabitants scattered around in every direction for a distance of three or four leagues. And just as every one of the people of Israel knew on what side of the Tabernacle to pitch their tent, so these people know on what side of the residence [curia] to station themselves when they are unloading the dwellings. For this reason the court is called in their language *orda*, meaning 'the middle,' since it is always situated in the midst of his men. (chap. 19.4)

William discovers in Baatu's court not the prescribed aimlessness and unreason of nomadic society, but precisely the opposite: an internally consistent method of dwelling, an order worthy of the Israelites, betrayed even in the (he presumes, equally logical) native language. Similarly, Mongol hunting and gathering become less a sign of barbarity than a well-honed skill worthy of description:

¹⁸ *The 'Opus maius' of Roger Bacon*, ed. by J. H. Bridges, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897–1900), I, 400–01; II, 368, 371, 376, 383. See also Jackson, 'Introduction', pp. 53–54.

¹⁹ For instance, Peter Kolb's 1719 account 'of the several Nations of the Hottentots' includes in its description of their 'manners and customs': 'Their Religion, Government, Laws, Customs, Ceremonies, and Opinions; Their Art of War, Professions, Language, Genius'. See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 41.

When they intend to hunt wild animals, they gather in great numbers and surround the area where they know wild beasts are to be found, gradually converging until the animals are enclosed in the middle in a kind of circle; then they shoot them with their arrows. (chap. 5.3).

When William speaks of the assortment of small animals which constitute the Mongol diet, including mice, dormice, marmots, and conies, he does not malign the flesh-and-milk diet, but praises Mongol skill in acquiring such prey: 'They have many other little creatures besides which are good to eat and which they are quite able to tell apart' (chap. 5.1). And far from berating the Mongol tongue as incomprehensible or impure — the hallmark of barbarian discourse, evident in Matthew Paris's Mongol description — William takes pains to describe the numerous non-European writing systems — Chinese, Tibetan, Tangut, Arabic, and the Uigur — at work in the Mongol empire (chap. 29.50), and expresses open admiration for those who speak such local languages.

William, in other words, goes out of his way to affirm Mongol humanity, eschewing in all but rare instances the varied discourses of dehumanization available to him in favour of an affirmation of Mongolian humanity and reason. The logic of William's representational choices becomes clear when viewed in light of the exigencies and assumptions of the aim to convert non-Christians, well represented in the approach of Innocent IV, the great sponsor of thirteenth-century missions to Mongolia.²⁰ First among these is the assumption of non-Christian rationality: for as Augustine had long ago asserted, to be human required rationality as well as mortality,²¹ and as the missionary well knew, no pastoral outreach would be possible, required, or desirable for those who fell outside of or below such a standard. The assumption of non-Christian rationality is beautifully attested by William's manoeuvrings at the great interconfessional debate at Caracorum between Buddhists, Muslims, Nestorians, and Latin Christians, to which I will turn in some detail later.²²

²⁰ For a discussion of Innocent IV's policies and innovations with respect to the conversion of non-Christians abroad, see James Muldoon, *Popes, Lawyers, and Infidels: The Church and the Non-Christian World 1250–1500* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979).

²¹ 'If these [Plinian] races are included in the definition of "human," that is, if they are rational and mortal animals, it must be admitted that they trace their lineage from that same one man, the first father of all mankind' (Augustine, *City of God*, trans. by Henry Bettenson (New York: Penguin, 1984), XVI.8).

²² While R. W. Southern credited 'the dialectical superiority of the Latins' with William's rhetorical success at this 'first world debate in modern history between representatives of East and West', it may be noted that dialectical argument assumes reasoning opponents, rendering

At the same time, William's relative tolerance of practices falling outside of Latin Christian norms and usage in the *Journey* ought not be naively attributed to his, or the salvational aim's, celebration of difference as such. Rather, as William's most enthusiastic reader and preserver Roger Bacon recommended in the *Opus maius*, the detailed knowledge of the other that William sets out to record in the *Journey* is precisely required for the aim of conversion:

He who is ignorant of the places in the world, lacks a knowledge not only of his destination, but of the course to pursue. Therefore whether one sets forth to convert unbelievers or on other matters of the Church, he should know the rites and conditions of all nations [ritus et conditiones omnium nationum] [...] for very many have been foiled in the important interests of Christianity because they were ignorant of the distinctions in regions...they have also met with countless dangers, because they did not know when they entered the regions of believers, or of schismatics, Saracens, Tartars, tyrants, of men of peace, barbarians [barbarorum], or of men of reasonable minds.²³

The modern history of anthropology tells of the leading role played by missionaries in the formation of the anthropological discipline at the mid-nineteenth century, when missionaries' descriptive tracts of Asia, Africa, and the Americas served as essential data for theorizing by armchair anthropologists. Here, in Bacon's thirteenth-century tract, the roots of the long collaboration between the study of the other, as anthropology is often defined, and missionary work is laid bare: one must, simply put, know the other in to convert him.

But, if, as is generally agreed, the medieval discourses of barbarism and the later projects of European colonization assumed and required pagan irrationality and inhumanity, the discourse of conversion and the project of universal salvation, supported by thirteenth-century missionaries and their sponsors like Innocent IV, required much the opposite. Early colonial history reveals that the heyday of the missionary approach to the other was not long lived: studies of late-medieval and early-modern European expansions abroad narrate a decline in Europeans' interests in converting and saving the pagans with whom they were coming into increasing contact. This trend is already visible in the fourteenth-century experiment in colonizing the Canary Islands, in which the arguments of humanists and missionaries in favour of peaceful conversion of natives eventually gave way to the

the debate equally demonstrative of Latins' assumptions of non-Christian rationality; see his *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), pp. 47–51.

²³ *The 'Opus maius' of Roger Bacon*, trans. by Robert Belle Burke, 2 vols (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1928), I, 321; *Opus maius*, ed. Bridges, I, 301–02.

brutal measures advanced by conquerors, colonists, and the canonists.²⁴ Already in the fourteenth century, then, the medieval salvational paradigm, and its investments in the rational non-Christian, were giving way to a more secular and less inclusive paradigm promising civilization, and its remnant, the 'savage', as the new sign of the other; as Columbus wrote to Ferdinand and Isabella in the Letter to the Sovereigns, there were no monstrous men to be found in the Americas, only savages.²⁵

This is in essence the argument advanced by anthropologist Johannes Fabian in his book *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object*. There he argues that whereas the premodern salvational scheme acts in ways essentially inclusive and incorporative of its others, that is, pagans, whom it seeks to save by conversion, modernity's projects of civilization and progress by definition require the exclusion of its other, the savage, whom they must leave behind: whereas 'the pagan was always *already* marked for salvation, the savage is *not yet* ready for civilization'.²⁶ For Fabian, the project of conversion represents a unique and essentially premodern moment in the history of approaches to the other. The ample medieval discourses of dehumanization that we have glimpsed show that medieval approaches to the other can hardly be cast as always inclusive, and such generalization risks reductivity. Nevertheless, as I hope to show in the remainder of this essay, William's ethnographic practice and poetics in the *Journey* bear out Fabian's intuition about the likely differences of a premodern ethnographic poetics, and more particularly, of the difference of the premodern ethnographic gaze upon the other.

Deictic Poetics

Ambivalently, the conversion aim locates the other in a state of difference from the self even as it enfolds him within a salvational scheme accorded all humanity. Incorporation, inclusion, embrace are metaphors that suggest spatial relations between the selves and others of conversion, and I want now to consider the way in which the conversion aim affects the spatial and visual representation of encounter in premodern ethnographic writing. William's preoccupation with

²⁴ This point is made eloquently by Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, *Before Columbus: Exploration and Colonisation from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic 1229–1492* (London: Macmillan, 1987).

²⁵ Friedman, *The Monstrous Races*, p. 199.

²⁶ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 26.

visual matters throughout his ethnographic tract lends his text unusually well to an examination of premodern visual culture.²⁷ An attention to visual descriptions and to scenes of looking between selves and others in the *Journey* reveals an ethnography characterized by the subjective markers of deixis (from *deiknōnein*, 'to show'), distinguishing it sharply from the much-critiqued objectifying 'ethnographic gaze' of travellers, natural and social scientists who write in the service of colonial domination in later centuries.

'Our experience of things here in the earth we owe to vision [...] hearing causes us to believe because we believe our teachers, but we cannot try out what we learn except through vision.'²⁸ So Roger Bacon characterized the visual sense, and upon reading the *Journey*, he no doubt appreciated William of Rubruck's practice of much the same philosophy therein. For William considers as certain only what he has witnessed himself and frequently calls into question the veracity of received sources of authority such as Isidore and Solinus. In the course of his investigations, William dispenses with the popular medieval myths of Prester John ('nobody knew anything about him'; chap. 17.2), and of monsters ('such things have never been sighted, which makes us very much doubt whether [the story] is true'; chap. 29.46).

William, furthermore, marks many of his observations of culture and nature with statements indicating his eye-witnessing of them. His description of Chinese medicine is typical: 'their physicians are well versed in the efficacy of herbs and can diagnose very shrewdly from the pulse. But they do not employ urine samples, not knowing anything about urine: this I saw [vidi] [for myself], since there are a number of them at Caracorum' (chap. 26.9). William of Rubruck's explicit alignment of the visual sense with the gathering of cultural and natural information suggests the coincidence of visual empiricism and social science from their beginnings. Renaissance scholars such as William Ivins have noted the confluence of the rise of the sciences of botany and anatomy in the sixteenth century and certain technologies of vision in the pictorial arts, such as the woodcut, printings from etchings, and Albertian pictorial perspective.²⁹ Even before the so-called

²⁷ Vision is indeed over-determined in William's text: it is at once a source of his authorial legitimacy, the privileged sense of his empiricism, a communicative substitute for many failures of language plotted by the text, a means of supplementary illustration, a form of religious tutorial and invocation to God, a dangerous inducement to sin, and perhaps most interestingly, a painful source of self-scrutiny from the viewpoint of the other.

²⁸ *Opus maius*, trans. Burke, II, 419–20.

²⁹ William M. Ivins, *On the Rationalization of Sight*, Metropolitan Museum of Art Papers, 8 (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1938, repr. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo, 1973), p. 13.

rationalization of space of the early-modern period, we see the intimate link being forged between looking and the act of cultural description and categorization in medieval ethnographic texts such as William's. Roger Bacon similarly accorded vision privileged rank among the senses in the acquisition and testing of human knowledge, calling it 'the flower of the whole philosophy', through which 'and not without it, can the other sciences be known'. Indeed, further indicating the contemporary interest in the boundaries of the human, Bacon asserts that the visual sense alone distinguishes 'human wisdom' from the knowledge of beasts: 'If, moreover, we should adduce taste and touch and smell, we assume a knowledge belonging to beasts.'³⁰ Thus Bacon tantalizingly connects the endeavour of knowledge acquisition via vision to the very definition of man, doubling the link between vision and anthropology: not only is cultural science established by visual description and investigation, but it is the act of looking which in turn constitutes man as such, and as the proper object of his own anthropological enquiry.

The many failures of language described and enacted within William's *Journey*, neatly juxtaposed with the keenness of William's observational gaze among the Mongols, lends support to Bacon's view of the relative poverty of non-visual senses. This is a text that paradoxically announces the inefficacy and inadequacy of language at every turn. In scene after scene, William either explicitly faults language and its transmission or, more disturbingly, implicitly announces its failure by allowing an uneasy silence to fall upon the scene of his narration. At each of William's appearances at court, readers observe a familiar ritual: William's interrogation regarding the contents of Louis IX's letter to Sartach, the son of Baatu — on account of his reputed Christianity — and William's reiteration of these contents in nearly identical language, to seemingly little avail. If such oral examination calls into question the purpose of the written missive in the first place, so too does its frequent misinterpretation along the way.³¹ William's continual attempts to confine the contents of the letter and mission to the preaching of the faith, to carve a space neither diplomatic nor military for himself and his cohorts in Mongol lands, routinely fall on deaf ears and are finally met with damning silence at the court of Mangu. There, having been asked to leave the territories, William requests permission to return to Mongolia on future missions: 'At this he [Mangu] fell silent [tunc ipse tacuit] and

³⁰ *Opus maius*, trans. Burke, II, 420.

³¹ As on the route from Baatu's court to Mangu's, where the letter takes on a troubling new meaning: Louis' request for Mongol military aid against the Saracen enemy (chap. 27.11).

sat for a long while as if in thought. The interpreter told me not to say any more; but I was waiting anxiously for his response. At last he said, "You have a long journey ahead" (chap. 34.7). William's speech problem is partly attached to the marginal voice accorded the missionary in Mongolia, as he knows: 'From that moment there was never any time or place in which I could have expounded the Catholic faith to him. For a man may say in his presence only as much as he [the Chan] chooses, unless he is an ambassador' (chap. 34.4); hence William's final self-defeating recommendation to Louis is that preachers no longer be sent to the Mongols.

When William is in a position to preach the Christian message, it nevertheless rarely meets its addressee. In the course of two years among the Mongols, 'we baptized there a total of six souls', he writes near the end of his narrative. William's interpreter, Homo Dei, or Abd'ullah,³² all too frequently fumbles the message of God: in an impromptu debate with Buddhists met with on the way to Mangu's court, William finds that his interpreter, 'tired and incapable of finding the right words, made me stop talking' (chap. 25.8); at Mangu's court, William's interpreter 'in no time [...] grew tipsy' (chap. 28.15). William concludes his otherwise triumphal rhetorical performance at the great debate at Caracorum, where he represents himself as having cowed the Buddhists or *tuins* and the Saracens into seeming acquiescence to Christian viewpoints, on a note that casts doubt on all earlier accomplishments:

There was present an old priest of the Iugur sect, which holds that there is one God but nevertheless makes idols; and they [the Nestorians] had a long discussion with him, relating everything down to the coming of Christ in judgment, and also using analogies to explain the Trinity to him and to the Saracens. Everybody listened without challenging a single word. But for all that no one said, 'I believe, and wish to become a Christian'. When it was all over, the Nestorians and the Saracens alike sang in loud voices, while the *tuins* remained silent; and after that everyone drank heavily. (chap. 33.22–23)

It would seem that hearing falls short even of Bacon's limiting assessment of its powers in the *Opus*, causing no one 'to believe' in contexts of conversion such as this, where it matters most. The debate at Caracorum calls into question hearing's efficacy for conserving and reproducing the knowledge of 'authorities' in multi-lingual, multi-faith contexts and rather foregrounds the cultural specificity of the production of knowledge and ideas about faith. When William does attempt to bridge these cultural gaps during the debate, he is most successful when he thinks visually, rather than with language.

³² See Peter Jackson, 'Appendices', in *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*, app. 1, p. 279.

William's problem with language in the *Journey* extends, in the final analysis, beyond specific moments of translation, the problem of unfamiliar tongues, or differences of authorial communities. Sometimes, he is simply at a loss for words, in any language. Early on, he makes what seems an innocuous comment in declaring of his encounters with Tartars: 'We were all right as long as we were in the wilds, but I cannot put into words [non possum exprimere verbis] the tribulations I suffered whenever we came to their encampments' (chap. 13.4). These sort of statements, of not being able 'exprimere verbis', accumulate in the course of his narrative, bearing with them an additional element: the requirement of illustration as supplement to otherwise inadequate discourse. In a section describing women's dwellings, he writes, 'the married women make themselves very fine wagons, which I could describe to you only by drawing — and indeed I should have drawn everything for you had I known how to draw' (quas nescirem vobis describere nisi per picturam, immo omnia depinxissem vobis si scivissem pingere; chap. 2.4). William's search for the right descriptive words often yields visual metaphors, as when he writes:

On sighting Baatu's camp, I was struck with awe. His own dwellings had the appearance of a large city stretching far out lengthways and with inhabitants scattered around in every direction for a distance of three or four leagues.

(Quando ergo vidi curiam Baatu expavi, quia videbantur proprie domus eius quasi quedam magna civitas protensa in longum et populis undique circumfusa usque ad tres vel quatuor leucas.) (chap. 19.4)

When he encounters 'Scatacai's wagons loaded with dwellings', he uses the following simile to describe (and resolve) the apparent contradiction of a movable city, in a clear rejection of the received dichotomy between nomadism and city-dwelling: 'I felt as if a great city were on the move towards me (videbatur michi quod obviaret michi civitas magna; chap. 10.1). In these moments and many others in William's text, pictures work where language fails.³³ Readers of the *Journey* are supplied with so many communicative and supplemental pictorial scenes, some of them like self-enclosed vignettes, as when William's colleague, 'without my knowledge [...] ran to Bulgai, the chief secretary, and conveyed to him by means of signs that he would die were he to make that [final return] journey' (innuens ei per signa quod moreretur si iret viam illam) back across Mongolia (chap. 36.14). Finally, at Mangu's court, it is the appeal of pictures that accomplishes William's work, conveying the word of God:

³³ See also Gueret-Laferté, 'Les Gestes de l'autre', to this effect. Gueret-Laferté suggestively analyses the ambiguity and flexibility of gestures as opposed to words in a number of provocative kneeling scenes before the Mongol emperors (pp. 244–47).

I went into the oratory holding the bible and breviary to my breast, and I bowed first to the altar and then to the Chan [...]. The Chan had them bring our books — the bible and the breviary — and enquired keenly what the pictures meant. The Nestorians gave him whatever answer they chose, as our interpreter had not accompanied us inside. When I had appeared before him on the first occasion, too, I held the bible in front of me, and he ordered it brought to him and examined it at length. (chap. 29.20)

As such narration makes clear, the unique power of the visual is not lost on William.³⁴

Not only do pictures and visuality work to reach William's audience where language otherwise falters, but these visual scenes reach their targets in a very particular way. For in each of these illustrative scenes or visual tutorials, we find the subject-viewer of the scene, William, represented as an object within the frame of description. In the passage above, William is seen gripping the breviary and the Bible before an observing Mongol emperor. In the illustration-scenes where visual language supplemented William's otherwise 'loss for words', William in a like manner makes his own subjectivity and emotions part of the message, locating himself as an inextricable part of the scene he is setting: 'I felt as if a great city were on the move towards me'; 'I was struck by awe'; 'which I could describe to you only by drawing — and indeed I should have drawn everything for you had I known how to draw'. Alongside the eye-witnessed, visual empiricism upon which William insists, we have scenes that expose the very subjectivity of the eye as it is witnessing. Alongside descriptions of alien practices, we find scenes that mix self

³⁴ There is an extensive literature on the relative efficacy of images over language in preaching the Christian faith; see Margaret Caviness, 'Biblical Stories in Windows: Were They Bibles for the Poor?' in *The Bible in the Middle Ages: Its Influence on Literature and Art*, ed. by B. S. Levy (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1992), pp. 103–47; Hans Belting, *The Image and its Public in the Middle Ages*, trans. by M. Bartusis and R. Meyer (New Rochelle, NY: Caratzas, 1990); and Herbert L. Kessler, 'Pictorial Narrative and Church Mission in Sixth-Century Gaul', *Studies in the History of Art*, 16 (1985), 75–91, and 'Pictures as Scripture in Fifth-Century Churches', *Studia Artium Orientalis et Occidentalis*, 2.1 (1985), 75–91. Notably, William of Rubruck's patron, Louis IX, seems to have been particularly sensitive to the persuasive power of images. As his famous biographer Jean de Joinville reports, having been visited in Cyprus by envoys from Mongolia just before the launch of his, the seventh, crusade: 'By these men his Majesty sent the King of the Tartars a tent arranged for use as a Chapel — a very costly gift indeed, for it was made throughout of fine scarlet cloth. Moreover, in the hope of making our religion appear attractive to the Tartars, the king had ordered for this chapel a series of little figures carved in stone, representing the Annunciation of our Lady, and all other subjects relating to the Christian faith' (Joinville and Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusade*, trans. by M. R. B. Shaw (New York: Penguin, 1963), p. 198). On the subject of Louis IX and images, see Daniel Weiss, *Art and Crusade in the Age of Saint Louis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

and other, subject and object, within the very same frame of description, quietly disrupting any notion of their clear separation.

The notion of their separation is one on which modern ethnographic practice is founded, as its various critics have argued. Timothy Mitchell has characterized the work of the ethnographer's eye upon colonial Egyptian lands and subjects as one operating from a stable viewpoint outside the frame, such that the viewer-ethnographer is entirely absent from the production of the descriptive scene, and has instead assigned himself a space of his own invention from which he can safely gaze without being gazed at in return.³⁵ Mary Louise Pratt has similarly characterized the work of travellers' 'imperial eyes' upon eighteenth-century African landscapes: 'Unheroic, unparticularized, egoless, the eye seems able to do little but gaze from a periphery of its own creation.'³⁶ In focusing on the gaze of ethnographer-travellers, Mitchell and Pratt are at once forging a deeper critique: the fictional creation of the effect of objectivity, and the disavowal of subjectivity, in modern ethnographic works is effected by the systematic removal of the trace of the subject from the scene of description.³⁷ Such removal of the looking subject-author, these critics argue, creates not objectivity, but rather the 'objectness' of those being gazed at. In Mitchell's words, 'to establish the objectness of the Orient, as something set apart from the European presence, required that the presence itself, ideally, become invisible'.³⁸ The removal of details that anchor the scene to an observing self is, moreover, integral to the denial of coevalness, or the denial of the simultaneity of ethnographer-subject's time and native-object's time, which in turn allows for the object-other's spatial distancing from the observing ethnographer — in short, for processes of objectification and dehumanization.³⁹

³⁵ Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988; repr. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 24–26.

³⁶ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 60.

³⁷ As James Clifford has written, while 'the ethnographer's personal experiences, especially those of participation and empathy, are recognized as central to the research process [...] they are firmly restrained by the impersonal standards of observation and "objective" distance.[...] The subjectivity of the author is separated from the objective referent of the text' (Clifford, 'Partial Truths', in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. by J. Clifford and G. Marcus (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1986), pp. 1–26 (p. 13)).

³⁸ Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, p. 26.

³⁹ Fabian, *Time and the Other*, throughout.

These processes are not consistent with the work of incorporation that characterizes the conversion aim and salvational discourse, and, as we might expect, William's ethnographic practice works in a very different way. William incorporates the spatial and temporal coordinates of the self within the scene of looking in a way radically at odds with the construction of a stable viewpoint outside the frame or a ubiquitous and yet invisible gaze that is unreturnable by the viewed-object. Instead, William's ethnographic practice may be characterized as 'deictic':

The wider class of deixis [...] includes all those particles and forms of speech where the utterance incorporates into itself information about its own spatial position relative to its content (here, there, near, far off), and its own relative temporality (yesterday, today, tomorrow, sooner, later, long ago). Deixis is utterance in carnal form and points back directly (deiknonei) to the body of the speaker.⁴⁰

According to art historians such as Norman Bryson, quoted here, modern Western painting, much like modern travel and ethnographic writing, 'is predicated on the disavowal of deictic reference, on the disappearance of the body as the site of the image'. The techniques of realism in Western painting share with modern ethnographic practice the placement of the moment of the gaze outside duration and the disappearance of the viewing subject. Bryson juxtaposes the 'logic of the gaze' of modern Western painting with what he calls that of the 'glance', at work in, for instance, traditional Chinese painting: while 'painting of the glance addresses vision in the durational temporality of the viewing subject [...] the gaze of the painter arrests the flux of phenomena, contemplates the visual field from a vantage-point outside the mobility of duration, in an eternal moment of disclosed presence'. Where the gaze is 'vigilant, masterful, spiritual', the glance is 'subversive, random, disorderly'.⁴¹

In Bryson's painterly terms, William's eye upon Mongolia and the Mongols is more properly a 'glance' than a 'gaze', filled as its operation is with the self-anchoring markers of deixis. William's landscape, far from being stripped of natives and of their various activities — 'fetching water, carrying baggage, driving oxen, stealing brandy, guiding, interpreting' — as critiqued by Pratt, is peopled with precisely such activities: Mongols translating, if imperfectly, hoarding and stealing food, making 'comos', defecating publicly, and indeed driving oxen. William's emotions, including the 'unofficial, *sub rosa* messages of hostility,

⁴⁰ Norman Bryson, *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 88–89.

⁴¹ Bryson, *Vision and Painting*, p. 93.

collusion, rebellion, and lust' conveyed by the glance, suffuse his descriptions and narrations.⁴² We have already glimpsed a few of these — awe, amazement, feelings of inadequacy as a painter — but his text offers many such others, as when on more than one occasion his frustrations mount such that he calls for the destruction, in the form of crusade, of the very same people he has journeyed so far to save. A final way in which William's ethnographic poetics reflects deixis is perhaps the most striking: his depiction of himself in the gaze of his Mongol hosts, in a number of disorienting scenes of self-objectification in the text. Perhaps the aesthetics of incorporation are nowhere more on display than in these disturbing scenes, which, far in excess of mixing subjects and objects in a single frame, trouble the presumption of their distinct and differing vantage points.

Seeing as Other: The Missionary's Gaze

William's keen gaze renders him as sensitive to how he is being seen by those around him as to what he is himself seeing in the course of his mission. His sensitivity to the gaze of others upon him and his Christian cohorts is evidenced in several passages, of which I will limit my analysis to two. Upon dismounting at the court of Mangu, William and company are exposed to immediate scrutiny:

People gathered round us, gazing at us as if we were freaks, especially in view of our bare feet, and asked whether we had no use for our feet, since they imagined that in no time we would lose them. And this the Hungarian explained to them, telling them the rules of our Order.

(Et cum circumdarent nos homines et repicerent nos tamquam monstra, maxime quia eramus nudis pedibus, et quererent si nos non indigeremus pedibus nostris, quia supponebant quod statim amitteremus eos, ille Hungarus reddidit eis rationem, narrans eis conditiones Ordinis nostri.) (chap. 28.4)

Franciscans at the court of Mangu, William shows us in scenes like this one, are a source of wonder and consternation, requiring humanization and cultural contextualization lest they themselves be taken as 'monstra' to those eagerly regarding them.⁴³ In doing so, William registers his awareness of what a strange

⁴² Bryson, p. 94. Similarly, Clifford writes: 'States of confusion, violent feelings or acts, censorship, important failures, changes of course, and excessive pleasures are excluded from the published account' (*Writing Culture*, p. 13).

⁴³ Caroline Walker Bynum aptly locates this scene in the wider perspectivalist tendencies of medieval travel and wonder literature, which sometimes turns a 'gently ironic comment' upon Latin Christianity itself, here Franciscan ascetic practice (*Metamorphosis and Identity*, pp. 55–56).

sight he and the members of his order make as guests in a far eastern empire with few diplomatic ties to the Latin West, where Christianity competes from a marginal position with several other, both monotheistic and non-monotheistic, faiths. Clear-eyed about this marginality, he knows he must greet and welcome rather than shun the gaze of uncomprehending and mocking outsiders if he is to attract them to the faith he preaches; this is the sort of regard upon the faith that William must seek if he is to be successful missionary in Mongolia.

But as we also glimpse from the scenes above, the gazes of Mongolians upon the strangeness and differences of Latin Christians are often uncomfortable and destabilizing for the Christian self. Nowhere is this uneasy dynamic of the Mongols' at once disorienting and welcome gaze upon Christian missionaries more acutely evident than at William's appearance at Baatu's court. Having characterized his entrance into the pavilion of Baatu with the threshold language marking 'otherworld' entries ('and when I came among them I really felt as if I were entering some other world'), William completes the scene with a picture of his own alterity in the eyes of his Mongol hosts:

Then he conducted us before the pavilion, and we were warned not to touch the tentropes, which for them represent the threshold of the dwelling. We took up our stand there, with bare feet, wearing our habits but with our heads uncovered, and presented quite a spectacle for them.

(Tunc duxit nos ante papilionem, et monebamur ne tangeremus cordas tentorii quas ipsi reputant loco liminis domus. Stetimus ibi nudis pedibus in habitu nostro discoopertis capitibus, et eramus spectaculum magnum in oculis eorum.) (chap. 19.5)

William here shows himself able to step into the viewpoint of his Mongol hosts and project himself in their eyes — 'in oculis eorum'. Remarkable though this is, William extends himself much further still in the course of this imperial interview. After being ordered to speak and advising Baatu that he be 'absolutely sure that [he] will not possess the things of Heaven without having become a Christian — For God says, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned"' — William is answered with 'a slight smile' by Baatu and the laughter of the Mongols in attendance, who, he says, 'began to clap us in derision' (inceperunt plaudere manus deridendo nos; (chap. 19. 7). His interpreter is palpably uncomfortable and afraid; William reassures him and forges on, waiting for the restoration of silence. After some more questions, including ones regarding his and his colleagues' names and the status of his country vis-à-vis war with the Saracens, comes this scene:

he made us sit down and had us given some of his milk to drink — they make much of it when someone drinks *comos* with him in his own dwelling. While I sat gazing at the ground, he ordered me to raise my face, as he wanted to have another look at us — or possibly with witchcraft in mind, since they view it as a bad omen or sign, or foreshadowing evil, when someone sits in their presence with his head lowered as if he were sad, and especially when he leans his cheek or chin on his hand.

(fecit nos sedere et dare de lacte suo ad bibendum, quod ipsi valde magnum reputant, quando aliquis bibit cosmos cum eo in domo sua. Et dum sedens respicerem terram, precepit ut elevarem vultum, volens adhuc nos amplius respicere vel forte pro sortilegio, quia habent pro malo omine vel signo vel pro mala pronostica quando aliquis sedet coram eis inclinata facie quasi tristis, maxime cum appodiat maxillam vel mentum super manum.) (chap. 19.8)

In this stunning scene, we find encapsulated the complex dimensions of the uneasy and precarious dynamic of vision in the context of preaching and conversion. William portrays his sadness — another emotion anchoring himself deictically in the scene — after what has been a cruel and unsuccessful exposure to multiple would-be converts at the court of Baatu. But the very means by which he delivers this self-portrait shows up the complex layering of perspectives in the scene: we know he is sad from his depiction of himself as 'sitting gazing at the ground' (sedens respicerem terram) — a gaze upon William from an external viewpoint. It soon becomes evident that the viewpoint William is occupying is that of Baatu, who 'ordered me to raise my face, as he wanted to have another look at us' (adhuc nos amplius respicere). But William's sadness is embedded in further mediated glances: 'or possibly [Baatu ordered me ...] with witchcraft in mind, since they view it as a bad omen or sign [...] when someone sits in their presence with his head lowered as if he were sad' (inclinata facie quasi tristis). William, William tells us, is possibly provoking Baatu to order him to raise his head, because Mongols do not appreciate it, for reasons not entirely known to William, when someone lowers his head in their presence, especially while leaning his cheek and chin on his hand, as we might guess William was doing before being directed to stop. We have here a picture of William, abject from sadness before the gaze of Baatu, from the viewpoint of his Mongol host, a picture that is only completed — the head leaning on the hand — within a note about Mongol superstitions.

William is clearly objectifying himself here in the eyes of the Mongol other — what better way than to freeze himself into an instantaneous image (which would have disappeared forever, had he not, like a photographer, caught and 'developed' it for our viewing pleasure)? But much more is at work in this representational strategy. For it is William who is doing the portraying, and just as he is not held back by derision at court, neither will he seemingly allow himself to be held back

by his apparent emotional distress in this scene from continuing with the work of conversion by gleaning whatever cultural information about Mongol customs he can in the process. We learn that Mongols view the offering of *comos* as a meaningful gesture of hospitality, and that some form of superstition attaches to assuming the bodily position William has inadvertently assumed before a Mongol emperor. William is still the subject-ethnographer here, even if also an object in his own depiction. Ever the subject-author, William has composed a highly complicated and mediated descriptive scene, which is more like a set of pictures within pictures than a linear narrative. His memorable self-portrait comes to us as an image of an image of an image: his words provide King Louis with a picture of his goings-on at Baatu's court, which contains within it a picture of Baatu's gazes upon William, which is itself rendered, through William's ethnographic intervention, as a picture of William in an abject pose, staring at the ground.

At no point does William the missionary-ethnographer turn away from a gaze, even when it alienates him from himself or renders him a fixed object-as-image. In this dynamic, perspectival dance, it is finally impossible to say who has the final glance, or occupies the privileged vantage point. Instead of a single, dominant gaze, we have a series of competing and reciprocal ones — William has prepared us for as much at the outset of this interview when he notes that 'he [Baatu] regarded us with a keen gaze, as we did him' ([respexit] ergo nos diligenter et nos eum; chap. 19.6). The flow of force is also reciprocal: William may be objectified by the Mongols, but in never ceasing to note down important cultural information, he returns the favour, collecting valuable knowledge about these would-be Christians for future, if not present, use. Neither William nor his hosts are entirely fixable or objectifiable; rather, according to William's representation, the two participate in a dialogic contest of agency and passivity, seeing and being seen, in which either one may occupy either position at any given moment.

William's uncomfortable and disorienting acts of self-objectification — striking though they may be as representational practice — may again be grounded in a clear cultural and referential system, again that of the conversion aim. For the scene above enacts in practice what was being theorized in Europe with regard to the reflexivity of the conversion endeavour, complete with its visual manifestations. In such Dominican and Franciscan preaching manuals as Humbert de Romans's *Liber de eruditione praedicatorum* (c. 1263), thirteenth-century preachers were being taught to regard themselves as public display objects and to see themselves as they were being seen — not only in the eyes of God, as the tradition of *speculatio* had held for Benedictines and Cistercians, but increasingly in the eyes of their fellow human beings. As such, as Dallas G. Denery has recently

shown, Dominican and Franciscan training books routinely urged 'the adaptation of the preacher's self-presentation (of his gait, his demeanour, even of his vocal inflections and vocabulary) to the demands and needs of his audience'.⁴⁴ Aron Gurevich similarly makes the claim for audience-adaptive preaching throughout the medieval period, within local European settings: 'Preachers, who strove to penetrate the mind of each listener, could achieve this only by adapting to their audiences.'⁴⁵ Indeed so self-consciously delineated and increasingly codified would the art of preacherly gesture and gesticulation become that art historians like Michael Baxandall have located in late-medieval preaching manuals subtle and precise clues to the gestural vocabulary of Renaissance masters such as Leonardo and Botticelli.⁴⁶ Likening the preacher to a host who must prepare a meal for his guests, Humbert de Romans offers hundreds of sample sermons to suit different occasions, and lists over seventy discrete types of audiences, including divisions according to age, gender, class, education, and type of sin, among others. Considerable flexibility of message may be required to reach some audiences, he warns: 'There is no single exhortation which is suitable for everyone, because men are not all held by the same kind of morals. Often, what helps one man harms another.'⁴⁷ Although Humbert does not address the problem of non-Christian audiences like the ones William encounters abroad, his fellow Dominican, Thomas Aquinas, does. Noting in Book 1.2 of the *Summa contra Gentiles* the difficulty of answering those who 'do not agree with us in accepting the authority of any Scripture, by which they may be convinced of their error', Aquinas recommends the following set of audience-dependent approaches:

Thus, against the Jews we are able to argue by means of the Old Testament, while against heretics we are able to argue by means of the New Testament. But the Mohammedans and the pagans accept neither the one nor the other. We must, therefore, have recourse to the natural reason, to which all men are forced to

⁴⁴ Dallas G. Denery II, *Seeing and Being Seen in the Later Middle Ages: Optics, Theology and Religious Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 79.

⁴⁵ See his anthropologically influenced study, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception*, trans. by J. M. Bak and P. A. Hollingsworth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 2–3, and throughout.

⁴⁶ Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 61–71.

⁴⁷ Humbert de Romans, *Liber de eruditione praedicatorum*, in *Opera de Vita Regulari*, ed. by Joachim Berthier, 2 vols (Rome: Befani, 1888), pt IV, chap. 18 (II, 421–22): 'non una eademque cunctis exhortatio congruit, quia nec cunctos par morum qualitas astringit. Saepe namque aliis officium quae aliis prosunt'; quoted in Denery, *Seeing and Being Seen*, p. 24.

give their assent. However, it is true, in divine matters the natural reason has its failings.⁴⁸

Different texts and rhetorical strategies may be needed for different religious groups, Aquinas advises the missionary. But as Humbert de Romans notes, and William of Rubruck surely appreciated, preachers must not rely solely on words; rather, preachers must strive for salvation 'in any way they can. And sometimes this is achieved better by good conduct than by words'.⁴⁹ William's final interview before Mangu, in which the latter chastises wayward Christians and exempts only William on the basis of his consistently exemplary conduct, reveals the extent to which William took seriously the power of his example among the Mongols.

Thirteenth-century preachers were further admonished to remember that all settings were potential preaching settings, and thus the work of adaptation to others was never done. As such, the preacher was to regard himself as a thoroughly public being, always in the public eye, under the many gazes of potential converts and confessors, as well as the ubiquitous gaze of an all-knowing God. Novices were similarly cautioned by authors of manuals for novices, such as the thirteenth-century Franciscan David of Augsburg: 'At no time should you ever be careless or secretive, rather you should always maintain yourself with discipline and chastity in sight, taste, touch and in everything else, as if you were being watched by someone.'⁵⁰ The gazes of the preacher and the convert are reciprocal; 'raised above the crowd', the preacher occupies a privileged vantage point for both observing and being observed. Visible to all, he is subject to the scrutiny of all, finally, even to his own; when alone, Humbert de Romans writes, the preacher must make of himself his own audience in order to test the honesty of his self-presentation.⁵¹

The gazes of preachers in the service of God's work feature considerable disorientation to the preacher-self, then, requiring the destabilizing ability to see the self as other, in two ways — seeing how one is being seen from without, in

⁴⁸ *Summa Contra Gentiles, Book One: God*, trans. and ed. by Anton C. Pegis (New York: Doubleday, 1955; repr. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), p. 62.

⁴⁹ Humbert, *Liber*, pt VII, chap. 35 (II, 455): 'Item, praedicatorum interest procurare salutem aliorum modis quibus possunt. Quandoque vero melius procuratur per bonam conversationem quam per verbum'; quoted in Denery, *Seeing and Being Seen*, p. 27.

⁵⁰ 'Numquam ita securus sis et absconsus, quin ita disciplinate et caste te habeas in visu, gestu, tactu, et in omnibus aliis, ac si ab aliquo videreris': David of Augsburg, *De institutione novitiorum*, pt I, chap. 16 (p. 298) in Bonaventure, *Opera Omnia*, 15 vols (Paris: Vives, 1868), vol. XII; quoted in Denery, *Seeing and Being Seen*, p. 9.

⁵¹ Denery, *Seeing and Being Seen*, pp. 16, 27–29.

public display, and learning to scrutinize one's self as one would any other. Indeed, given such a regime of inspection and introspection, the self of the preacher is thoroughly other-mediated, much like William's portrait of himself leaning on his hand at the court of Baatu. The successful preacher must also remain 'other-oriented', that is, ever-ready to adapt to the demands of ever new and differing audiences he comes upon in the course of his travels. As Denery points out, whereas the goal for earlier monastics had been assimilation of self to order, the goal of the preaching friars was far more open-ended, and involved adaptation to a limitless variety of preaching settings.⁵²

The requirement of such constant adaptation and improvisation on the part of preacher towards his audience and setting means that, in practice, the work of conversion requires more extension of self towards other than theories of conversion generally stress.⁵³ William's travels and notes certainly confirm this. We have already observed William's willingness to see as others see at the court of Baatu. The same ability accounts for much of William's success at the famous debate between the faiths at Caracorum, where he engages in the rhetorical equivalent of 'seeing as other'. There, William appeals to the 'natural reason' of Buddhists and Muslims in ways Aquinas might have approved, but in doing so, displays remarkable strategic flexibility in the way he positions Christianity among these other faiths. In pre-debate practice with his fellow Christians, the Nestorians, William asks 'how they wished to proceed' (*qualiter vellent procedere*) and when the Nestorians there recommend debate with the Saracens first, William responds, "This would not be a good method," I explained, "since the Saracens agree with us in saying that there is one God and therefore provide allies with us against the *tuins*." As between monotheistic and non-monotheistic non-Christians, monotheistic non-Christians such as the Saracen Muslims are Christianity's allies — already an improvised system of flexible, audience-dependent and contingent affiliation comes into view. (And one, indeed, that proves efficacious at the debate: William purposefully opens with the nature of God, and by the time he is through with the *tuins*, the Saracens declare they no longer want to debate him.) But William stretches himself much further in the course of these preparations:

⁵² Denery, *Seeing and Being Seen*, p. 16.

⁵³ But see Aron Gurevich's insistence upon the central role of 'dialogue-conflict' at the interface of official Christianity with popular belief throughout the medieval period, as evidenced in ecclesiastical literature including preaching manuals (*Medieval Popular Culture*, pp. 5, 6–7, 12, and throughout).

'Let us rehearse' [*experiamini*], I suggested, 'to see how you will handle yourselves against them. I shall take the part of the *tuins* and you maintain the Christian view [*Ego assumam partem tuinorum, et vos sustinete partem christianorum*]. Now I belong to their sect, and let us assume that they deny the existence of God: prove that he does exist'. (For there is a sect there which asserts that any soul or any power in anything is the god of that thing, and that God does not exist otherwise.) But at this point the Nestorians were incapable of proving anything, but could only relate what Scripture tells [*non sciverunt probare aliquid, nisi solum narrare quod Scriptura narrat*]. 'They do not believe in the Scriptures', I said: 'if you tell them one story, they will quote another' [*Dixi: 'Ipsi non credunt Scripturis, si vos narretis unum, et ipsi narrabunt aliud'*]. Then I advised them to let me be the first to meet them [the *tuins*], since should I be worsted they would still have an opportunity to speak, whereas if they were worsted I should not receive a hearing afterwards; and they agreed. (chap. 33.11)

What first strikes us is William's idea of rehearsal by role-play: he will be the Buddhist, the Nestorians the representative Christians, suggesting, however inadvertently, that religious identities are not fixed or absolute subject positions, but are rather object-like, capable of being occupied or vacated as need be. Such a religious subject will likewise be capable of flexible movement between different subject positions. The provisional flexibility of subjectivity having been established, William demonstrates that the belief systems of the other can be, indeed must be, wholly assumed as one's own in order to be answered persuasively. This is precisely the same conclusion as that reached by Aron Gurevich in his study of the official ecclesiastical literature's ambivalent but necessary engagement with pre-Christian popular world view: 'As a matter of fact, the efficacy of this type of literature depended on the degree to which the authors were able to enter into the thought-structure of their audience.'⁵⁴ Critiquing the Nestorians for being unable to reach outside of Scripture in order to prove the existence of God and therefore 'incapable of proving anything', William points out (much like Aquinas) that the Scriptures are mere fictions from the viewpoint of those outside the Christian tradition — 'if you tell them one story' (*si vos narretis unum*) — worse, fictions without inherent primacy over others in the context of multi-faith debate — 'they will quote another' (*et ipsi narrabunt aliud*). Christians must extend themselves beyond the stories of Scripture that form the core of their beliefs if they are to convince those who do not already believe those stories. This perhaps simple

⁵⁴ 'Here is an ecclesiastical literature which, because it is directed to the illiterate mass of simple people, and therefore oriented towards their minds, is in turn strongly influenced by them. Intentionally or not, these texts are "infected" by folklore' (my emphasis) (Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture*, p. 5).

realization on William's part is impossible without his performing the rather uncomfortable and disorienting manoeuvre of stepping outside his own shoes, beyond his own vantage point upon the world, in other words, beyond his Christian subjectivity. The skill which allows him to strategize so deftly how to reason at this inter-faith debate is the same one which William exhibits before the imperial eyes of various Mongol rulers: an externalization of his own subjectivity, and the occupation of viewing positions not his own, in the service of the conversion aim. These uneasy skills are, we see from contemporary literature, part of a successful preacher's repertoire.

In the course of his travels, William adapts to his environment in ways that he probably never imagined he would at the outset, but that are either expedient for his wider aim, or that happen unwittingly, irrespective of his will. Again, Gurevich's readings of medieval popular Christianity are instructive:

[T]he paradox of medieval culture [...] lies in the fact, documented in the intersection of popular culture and the culture of educated people, that Latin writings of scholars and teachers contain substantial elements of non-literate folklore tradition *almost against their author's will*.⁵⁵

While William upbraids Nestorian Christians for their syncretic mixing of Christianity with local practices and beliefs such as polygamy, in practice, he himself participates in a number of ceremonies at which the Christian faith is adapted to local needs, such as when, at the court of Mangu, William participates in a drinking ceremony in which Christian blessings are occasionally inserted (chap. 29.22), or when he notes the obligation of Christians to participate in the consecration of white mares in a herd, a Shamanistic ritual (chap. 35.4). At one moment in his narrative, William expresses considerable anxiety about whether or not to attend a ceremony involving idolatrous practices at Mangu's court. Revealing the complex calculus behind the accommodation and adaptation of the preacher, he writes: 'I reflected a good deal as to what I should do myself, whether to go or not [...] I chose to go, even though I should be observing them engaging in practices that were riddled with superstition and idolatry. And all I did there was pray out loud for the whole church' (chap. 30.8). William here connects his

⁵⁵ My emphasis. Gurevich goes on to ask probing questions we might well put to William of Rubruck as he preached in Mongolia: 'How can these levels combine and penetrate each other within a single mind? What transformations do they suffer in this confluence?' (*Medieval Popular Culture*, p. xvii). As Gurevich later reasserts, authorial intention is frequently thwarted in dialogic engagements with unofficial views, which 'break through' anyway and express what the author 'could not have consciously disclosed' (p. 7).

fear of exposure to corrupting practices to the act of observing them, in so doing, reflecting an anxiety about vision characteristic not of the perspectivist tradition of Roger Bacon, but of moralizing approaches to vision epitomized in the *De oculo morali* (c. 1260–1306) of Peter of Limoges. In this highly popular treatise, Peter of Limoges stresses the need for active, internal censoring on the part of the subject-viewer if he is to avoid the harmful moral effects of external visual stimuli before him.⁵⁶ The fear expressed by such cultural documents as the *De oculo morali* is that of the power of vision to seduce the self away from the self, a testament of the consciousness of the power, equally, of worldly contamination upon the self, and of the seen upon the seer, in thirteenth-century society. Wandering preachers were particularly, perhaps uniquely, vulnerable to such dangers, and indeed Humbert de Romans advised that a preacher 'wash away any defilement that he has incurred and repair anything that has got broken' in the process of preaching,⁵⁷ a ritual cleansing of self also performed by the 'pilgrim' John Mandeville upon his return home after exposure to so much worldly 'diversity'.⁵⁸

In the *De oculo morali* and in William's testimony above, the fear of the effect of the world upon the self is expressed as the consciousness of the dangers of seeing in the world, of seeing 'as other' in precisely the way that preaching at the same time requires. The power of vision in the context of preaching was understood to cut both ways in the thirteenth century, that is, to attach equally to seer and seen, subjects and objects of the conversion aim. This returns us to the differences of the premodern ethnographic gaze from its modern counterpart, and of the power relations of cultural information gathering in the interests of conversion on the one hand and of colonization and empire on the other. In the text of William of Rubruck's *Journey*, instead of a European imperial gaze upon the Eastern peoples whom the text scrupulously describes, we find neither objectified Mongols, nor viewing subjects entirely distinct from their viewed objects. The reciprocal gazes of conversion and its work of incorporation ideally require much the opposite: the humanization of would-be converts, and conversely, the

⁵⁶ David L. Clark, 'Optics for Preachers: The *De oculo morali* by Peter of Limoges', *Michigan Academician*, 9 (1977), 329–43.

⁵⁷ Denery, *Seeing and Being Seen*, p. 45.

⁵⁸ 'And yee schulle vnderstonde yif it lyke you that at myn hom comynge I cam to Rome and schewed my lif to oure holy fadir the Pope and was assoylled of alle that lay in my conscience of many a dyuerse greuous poynt, as men mosten nedes that ben in company dwellyng among so many a dyuerse folk of dyuerse secte and of beleve as I haue ben': *Mandeville's Travels*, ed. by M. C. Seymour (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), chap. 34. Seymour's is the most recent critical edition of London, British Library, MS Cotton Titus C.xvi (c. 1400).

making of a public display object out of a preacher who must extend himself, whatever the subjective risks, towards the other — an ever-changing audience — in the name of salvation.⁵⁹ Jean Paul Sartre, an early theorist of the gaze, characterized the modern visual regime in the following way: '[T]he one who casts the look is always the subject and the one who is targeted is always turned into an object [...] objectification is the *telos* of the look.'⁶⁰ But as we see in William's ethnographic account of Mongol culture, in a visual regime governed by the conversion aim, incorporation rather than objectification may well be the *telos* of the look, with rather different results. Unlike the objectification of humans under an invisible ethnographer's eye that we find in later 'scientific' ethnography, the gazes of William's missionary-ethnography suggest a greater fluidity in the relation between the viewers and viewed, the subjects and objects, of ethnographic encounter in the premodern era, and the inter-subjective nature of cultural knowledge production in this still precolonial era of European contacts with Asia and its inhabitants.

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'OF DEPE YMAGINACIOUNS AND STRANGE INTERPRETACIOUNS': SORCERY AND POLITICS IN GOWER'S *CONFESSIO AMANTIS*

Mike Rodman Jones

Dicebatur enim eundem fratrem cereas fecisse effigies, Regis uidelicet et eiusdem Alicie, quibus, per herbarum potentium succos et incantamina sua loquens ut quondam fecit ille magus famosissimus, rex Egipti Nectanabus, effecit ut dicta Alicia potuit a rege quicquid uoluit optinere.

(It was said, furthermore, that this brother had made wax effigies of the king and Alice, and that, as once that infamous magician Nectanebus king of Egypt had done, he used these with the juices of magical herbs and his words of incantation to enable Alice to get whatever she wanted from the king).¹

To telle soth riht as I wene,
I wot noght o word what ye mene.
(vi.1363–64).²

In the midst of his narration of the events of the Good Parliament (1376), the prolific chronicler of St Albans, Thomas Walsingham, described a remarkable and rather colourful episode. A Dominican friar in the employ of

⁵⁹ Such a stringent requirement no doubt left a wide gulf between practice and theory, as indicated in William's own occasional, frustrated calls for crusade upon the Mongols.

⁶⁰ Quoted from Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 87–88. Jay himself, notably, explored medieval intersubjectivity as an implication of the optical theory of extramission, a potentially participatory view of subject-object relations prevalent in the ancient and medieval world that intertwined viewer and viewed in the visual process; see *Downcast Eyes*, pp. 30, 45. In medieval criticism, Sarah Stanbury has argued for an intersubjective blurring of subject-object boundaries at work in amatory discourse: 'One can argue, rightly I think, that the use in Book 1 [of *Troilus and Criseyde*] of ocular iconography affords Chaucer a flexible tool for depicting intersubjectivity, the experience, central to the ethics of the Western love tradition, of loss of boundaries' ('The Lover's Gaze in *Troilus and Criseyde*', in *Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde: Subgit to all Poesye*, ed. by R. A. Shoaf (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1992) p. 231. Blurring of self-other boundaries is, of course, less startling and bears different implications in a discourse about merger, such as amatory discourse, than in one about religious, racial or ethnographic difference, such as ethnography.

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¹ *The St Albans Chronicle: The 'Chronica Maiora' of Thomas Walsingham, 1: 1376–1394*, ed. by John Taylor and Wendy R. Childs, trans. by Leslie Watkiss (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), pp. 46–49.

² All references to the *Confessio* are to *The English Works of John Gower*, ed. G. C. Macaulay, Early English Text Society, e.s. 81, 82 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1900–01; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).