

‘A TOKENE AND A BOOK’: READING IMAGES AND BUILDING CONSENSUS IN *DIVES AND PAUPER*

Elizabeth Harper

Near the start of the prose dialogue *Dives and Pauper* (c. 1405–10), the eponymous Dives challenges the religious images that he sees venerated in churches and elsewhere: ‘Qherof seruyn þese ymagys? I wolde þey weryn brent euerychon.’¹ Drawing on a set of arguments first formulated by Gregory the Great, Dives’ interlocutor Pauper replies that images have three uses:

Pey seruyn of thre thynggys. For þey ben ordeynyd to steryn manys mende to thynkyn of Cristys incarnacioun and of his passioun and of holye seyntyngs lyuys. Also þey ben ordeynyd to steryn manys affeccioun and his herte to deuocioun, for often man is more steryd be syghte þan be heryng or redyngge. Also þey been ordeynyd to been a tokene and a book to þe lewyd peple, þat þey moun redyn in ymagerye and peynture þat clerkys redyn in boke. (I, 82, ll. 37–44)

The fifteenth-century English readers of this massive treatise on the Ten Commandments would have immediately recognized both sides of this conversation: both the attack on images as idolatrous and the conventional defence of them

¹ *Dives and Pauper*, ed. by Barnum, I, 82, ll. 36–37. All citations of the text come from this edition, hereafter cited in text by page and line number.

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Abstract: This article argues that the arguments defending image-worship in *Dives and Pauper* are designed to rehabilitate, rather than to hereticate, the Lollard sympathizers who make up its implied audience. The author of *Dives and Pauper* does this by casting images as books which must be read and interpreted, rather than as pictures depicting their subjects. This strategy seeks to build consensus among image-venerators and their potential opponents by appealing to their interest in books and their suspicion of the affective devotional practices that frequently surrounded images. The article suggests that the difficulties that scholars have in categorizing *Dives and Pauper* (all call it ‘orthodox’ but feel the need to footnote or qualify that designation) indicates a wider and more interesting variety of ‘orthodox’ stances than has previously been acknowledged.

Keywords: *Dives and Pauper*, Wycliffism, Lollardy, orthodoxy, heterodoxy, iconoclasm, images, sermons, Ten Commandments.

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with which Pauper replies.² Pauper states the Gregorian formulation so clearly and precisely here that modern scholarship has often treated this passage as *the* orthodox formulation for English vernacular literature.³ At the same time, scholars writing about *Dives and Pauper* have long recognized that the treatise itself cannot be categorized as unproblematically orthodox.⁴ I suggest that the difficulty we have in categorizing *Dives and Pauper* has less to do with the content of the text itself and more to do with two other factors. First, the text's dialogic structure promises a confrontation of diametrically opposed debaters (a promise, however, that is never fulfilled). Second, the categories 'orthodox' and 'lollard' themselves are frequently treated as occupying the two extreme ends of a two-dimensional spectrum, with 'reformist' and 'radical orthodoxy' lying in the middle, somewhere near 'conservative Lollard'.⁵ Yet these categories were themselves being generated during the time that the author of *Dives and Pauper* was writing, as Arundel and other powerful ecclesiastics in the English church struggled to regain control of vernacular theological discourse.⁶ My concern is with their endorsement of affective piety, which I define as a constellation of the following interrelated concerns: a sustained focus on the humanity of Christ, understood as his tortured physical body; deep emotional attachment, compassion, and sorrow at his suffering; and meditation structured by entering, in imagination, into scenes of Christ's life in order to witness and sympathetically

² For a more complete history (and extended critique) of the Gregorian formulation of images, see Duggan, 'Was Art Really the "Book of the Illiterate"?', and 'Reflections on "Was Art Really the "Book of the Illiterate"?: A sample of recent scholarship on Lollard iconoclasm might include Stanbury, 'The Vivacity of Images'; Cummings, 'Iconoclasm and Bibliophobia'; Simpson, 'Orthodoxy's Image Trouble'; and Simpson, *Under the Hammer*.

³ See, for example, Gibson, *The Theater of Devotion*, pp. 14–15; Kamerick, *Popular Piety and Art in the Late Middle Ages*, pp. 48–49; Aston, 'Lollards and the Cross', pp. 106–07; Gayk, *Image, Text, and Religious Reform*, p. 148. *Dives and Pauper* also shares thematic and theological concerns with *Piers Plowman*; both David Aers and Mark Amsler have studied the texts' shared concern with poverty. See Aers, *Sanctifying Signs*; and Amsler, 'Poverty as a Mobile Signifier'.

⁴ Wogan-Browne and others, eds, *The Idea of the Vernacular*, p. 252; Stanbury, 'The Vivacity of Images', p. 145; Aston, 'Lollards and the Cross', pp. 106–07.

⁵ See, for instance, Havens, 'Shading the Grey Area.' Recent scholarship has complicated this picture by showing that a variety of different critiques and allegiances were regarded as 'Wycliffite' in the fifteenth century (e.g., Hornbeck, *What Is a Lollard?*). Moreover, Mary Raschko has shown that 'orthodox' and 'heretical' texts appeared side by side in devotional manuscripts, suggesting that not all compilers and readers policed the bounds of orthodoxy in the way that modern scholars typically suggest. See Raschko, 'Common Ground for Contrasting Ideologies'.

⁶ Somerset, 'Professionalizing Translation'.

experience his suffering. Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Christ* served as one paradigm for such piety, but images and mystery plays also helped worshippers to visualize the scenes.⁷

I argue that, although the first section of *Dives and Pauper* argues against extreme Lollard critiques of images and for a positive use of images in worship, it does so in a way that complicates the orthodox/heretical binary. I will argue that we should regard the version of image-worship presented in *Dives and Pauper* as *one possible* orthodox formulation, perhaps what Fiona Somerset calls a 'competing orthodoxy' to that legislated by Archbishop Arundel.⁸ For although in this passage Pauper offers all three reasons as valid, in practice both he and his interlocutor focus almost exclusively on the third theory of images, that of images as books for the laity. The writer offers to teach his audience how to read images in a way that seeks to build common ground with his opponents. While he endorses images as effective devotional tools, he also downplays the role of affective piety in religious devotion by emphasizing the distance between the crucifix and the crucified Christ it depicts.

Oppositional Structure, Conciliatory Approach

Dives and Pauper is written as a dialogue between the main characters of the title: Dives, a wealthy and intelligent but theologically uninformed layman; and Pauper, a wandering Franciscan preacher who seems to represent the author's persona and perspective. Beginning with a ten-chapter prologue in which the two characters argue the relative merits of wealth and poverty, the text then moves into a dialogic discussion of the Ten Commandments. *Dives and Pauper* is a key text for the history of vernacular theology because it discusses a wide range of contemporary religious practices and controversies, ranging from image-veneration to the right use of astrology to the proper treatment of unfaithful spouses, and more.

⁷ Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change', pp. 853–55. The literature on affective piety is too extensive to annotate fully. See, among other recent treatments, Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 234–38; Baker, 'The Privy of the Passion', pp. 2–3; Bryan, *Looking Inward*; and McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion*. For the role of Nicholas Love's *Mirror* in enforcing and defining this form of devotion as orthodox, see, among others, Sargent, 'Versions of the Life of Christ'; Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change', pp. 852–56; Aers and Staley, *The Powers of the Holy*, pp. 15–78; LeVert, "Crucifye Hem, Crucifye Hem"; Schirmer, 'William Thorpe's Narrative Theology', pp. 269–70; Karnes, *Imagination, Meditation, and Cognition in the Middle Ages*.

⁸ Somerset, 'Professionalizing Translation', p. 151.

Although no name is attached, the author appears to be an unnamed friar who had spent time in the Oxford convent of Franciscans and who was supported at some point by an unnamed, wealthy lay patron.⁹ Eight full manuscripts of *Dives and Pauper* now exist, along with several fragments. They were owned by everyone from lay chaplains in Bury St Edmunds to the Duke of Suffolk to the Abbot of St Albans, and were copied in places as far afield as Portugal. Later, it was among the earliest books that Richard Pynson printed in the 1490s, and was popular enough to occasion a second printing by Wynkyn de Worde in 1496.¹⁰

The dialogic literary structure of *Dives and Pauper* depends on a series of binaries: rich man and poor man, layman and cleric, learned and 'lewyd'. The prologue of the treatise reinforces this set of binaries by initially defending Pauper's authority precisely on the basis of his poverty as contrasted with his interlocutor's wealth.¹¹ As a result, it is tempting to assume that the binary of orthodoxy and heresy also maps neatly onto the text. However, the writer of *Dives and Pauper* avoids such a simple bifurcation by making each of the speakers a relatively well-rounded personality, Dives more so than Pauper. By making the two speakers characters rather than flat mouthpieces for argument, the author foregrounds the complexity of people, rather than the simplicity of entrenched positions.

Although Dives' main role is to question and to receive Pauper's instruction, the questions he asks characterize him as a well-to-do lay person, aware of his social context and anxious to make sense of it.¹² While he expresses a strong desire to conform to his surroundings — 'alle meen, as me thynkyzt, wurshepyn ymagys,

⁹ This patron apparently sponsored his preaching as represented in a set of sermons preserved in MS Longleat 4, partially edited in Willmott, 'An Edition of Selected Sermons from MS. Longleat 4' and discussed in Hudson and Spencer, 'Old Author, New Work'; Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change', pp. 854–57.

¹⁰ 'Introduction', in *Dives and Pauper*, ed. by Barnum, II, lxxx–lxxxiii.

¹¹ The prologue, entitled 'Holy Poverty', exists in two forms. The forms differ particularly in their length and in their understanding of poverty: the longer A version uses the words 'poor' and 'poverty' to refer to the voluntary poverty of fraternal orders, while the shorter B version assumes most or all poverty to be involuntary. However, both versions assume and deploy the sets of binaries described here. See *Dives and Pauper*, ed. by Barnum, II, lxxvii.

¹² The prologue characterizes Dives as a rich man, who must be made to acknowledge that poverty is a way of life superior to his own; the later Longleat sermons, by the same author, seem to visualize an audience with concerns very like those of Dives. Adrian Willmott, whose dissertation remains the only and partial edition of the Longleat sermons, has convincingly argued that the sermons were produced for a female patron (Willmott, 'An Edition of Selected Sermons from MS. Longleat 4', p. 9). This suggests that the author might have been chaplain to a wealthy household, though his precise social status is not clear. See *Dives and Pauper*, ed. by Barnum, II, xxiii; Hudson and Spencer, 'Old Author, New Work'.

and it is wol hard to me but I doo in þat as alle meen doon' — he also connects the First Commandment to contemporary criticisms of image-worship. After noting the proliferation of images 'both in cherche and out of cherche' and the respect paid to them by all, Dives concludes that he is in violation of God's law by idolatry (I, 81, l. 101). He shows an undisguised hostility to images that echoes the more extreme Lollard critiques of image worship. He says he would like to see all the images burned (I, 82, l. 36), a wish associated with Lollards throughout the fifteenth century, for example in the story told by Knighton of the two men who use a wooden image of Saint Katherine for firewood.¹³ Dives also describes critically the emotional displays of his fellow worshippers, who 'staryn and lokyn on þe ymage wyt wepyngge eye [...] heldyn vp here hondys [...] bunchyn here brestys' as they stand in front of sacred images (I, 86, ll. 4–5). They are treating the image as if it were the real thing, he implies. He later complains that the images of saints located in churches are not accurate because they depict the saints clad in luxurious materials when the historical saints wore no such things. Dives' criticism here is in line with a range of Lollard writers who distrusted images because of their mimetic properties, in particular the potential for images to misrepresent their objects.¹⁴ At the same time, however, Dives rarely advances extended or well-developed arguments, preferring to challenge Pauper through a pointed question (or, in one case, a mocking '3a, 3a!', I, 101, l. 45). He effectively conveys a Wycliffite scepticism of images without advancing a full-scale critique.

Pauper, seen as a literary character, is a flatter character than Dives. Perhaps this is because he expounds the author's views: because his voice must be more authoritative, it is less individual than that of Dives.¹⁵ His primary goal is to bring Dives into conformity with the official doctrines of the church. To do this, he marshals Scripture and a variety of patristic and scholastic sources. However, he does so in a way which shows respect for Dives as a thinker and as a person; and since the readers of the work are also positioned as listeners to Pauper, the text

¹³ For a discussions of the incident recounted in Knighton's *Chronicle*, see *Dives and Pauper*, ed. by Barnum, II, 24, n. 82 and a more extended analysis in Stanbury, 'The Vivacity of Images'. See also Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, pp. 165–66, 301–07; Aston, 'Lollards and the Cross', pp. 101–03.

¹⁴ See Gayk, *Image, Text, and Religious Reform*, p. 19.

¹⁵ The writer apparently sees Pauper as the literary version of himself: he characterizes himself as a poor friar, while clues in the text suggest that the author is a Franciscan who had spent time in the convent at Oxford. Evidence to support this includes the defence of poverty that introduces the entire work; a discussion of shoes vs. sandals elsewhere in *Dives and Pauper*; and his use of books found only in the Oxford convent of Franciscans at that time. See *Dives and Pauper*, ed. by Barnum, I.1, pp. xxiv–xxv.

approaches them in the same authoritative but respectful way. Even Dives' most extreme opinions do not provoke the indignation and defensiveness we see in some other official reactions to Lollard ideas: when Dives expresses the wish that images be burnt, for instance, Pauper responds impersonally by answering the intellectual question that Dives has raised.¹⁶ Although Dives' position here is identifiably Lollard, Pauper never calls it heresy nor does he react to the emotional content of the utterance. Brought together, the characterization of both Dives and Pauper results in a dialogue in which Dives raises challenging questions about contemporary theology and practice, and in which Pauper responds in an authoritative but notably not authoritarian way.

This conciliatory approach structures Pauper's entire intellectual project. The very project of a vernacular treatise on the Decalogue shows a belief that lay people can and should understand scriptural interpretation, while the dialogic structure provides the open-ended give-and-take of conversation as an appropriate model for such understanding. Absent from the text are references to Pauper's audience as 'symple soules', 'lewde men & women & hem þat bene of simple vndirstondyng', and those 'whiche as chyl dren hauen nede to be fedde with mylke of lyzte doctryne' which famously characterize the proem of Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Life of Christ*.¹⁷ Instead, Pauper shows confidence in his audience's ability to understand complex theological issues in the vernacular. For instance, his first argument hinges on the wide semantic range of the Middle English word 'wurschepe'. Citing the cherubim on the ark of the covenant and the tabernacle, he contends that God has not forbidden images *per se*. What is forbidden, says Pauper, is rendering to them one particular form of worship, which he immediately glosses, not once but twice within the space of a paragraph: 1) 'to settyn here feyzt, her trost, here hope, here loue and here beleue in hem' (I, 82, ll. 24–25); and 2) 'wurshepyn hym and louyn hym and trostyn in hym abouyn alle thyngge and noo thing wurshepyn but hym or for hym, þat al þe loue and wurshepe þat we doon to ony creature be doon princepaly for hym and arettyd to hym' (I, 82, ll. 27–30). His argument hinges on the distinction between *dulia* and *latria*, concepts that were well-known in scholastic discussions of worship but which had not been much discussed in vernacular texts until the posting of the Twelve Conclusions in 1395.¹⁸

¹⁶ Contrast, for instance, the depiction of Arundel in *The Testimony of William Thorpe*, ed. by Hudson, pp. lv, 24–93.

¹⁷ *Nicholas Love's Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, ed. by Sargent, p. 10, ll. 5–6, 14–15, 23, 28, 36. I am not making any argument here about a direct relationship between *Dives and Pauper* and Nicholas Love's *Mirror*. But I think the contrast is illustrative.

¹⁸ See *Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards*, in *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, ed.

Pauper also distinguishes between praying *to* an image and praying *before* an image, a distinction that will be discussed below. These fine distinctions assume intellectual sophistication and subtlety on the part of his hearers.

Most importantly, Pauper advances his arguments by drawing on Lollard ideas and phrases to build consensus between himself and Dives. This can be seen in several parts of the text. First, rather than simply defending the entire set of image-related practices, he affirms certain contemporary practices — prayer before the image — as in accordance with scripture and doctrine, while singling out others — prayer to the image — as ‘ydolatrie [...] a synne al azens resoun and azens kende’ (I, 86, ll. 8–10). As Margaret Aston points out, this line of thought reflects a set of careful arguments made in the early 1370s by William Woodford, a Franciscan opponent of Wyclif, who affirmed the threefold justification of images but emphasized that worship was due to Christ, not to the images of him, and again, that worship was performed before, not to, the image.¹⁹ Like Woodford, Pauper opposes Thomas Aquinas position that *latría* is due both to Christ and to the cross on which he died. In contrast, Archbishop Arundel is described as having upheld this Thomistic position against both William Thorpe and Sir John Oldcastle.²⁰ In affirming some practices while decisively rejecting others, Pauper avoids taking up the most extreme positions in the debates of the time. In so doing, he seeks to create common ground between himself and his interlocutor. If they can agree on what idolatry looks like, they may be able to reach agreement on more tenuous subjects.

Pauper also builds consensus by invoking Lollard phrases and ideas. Both Dives and Pauper reference the materials of the cross as ‘stok or stoon’ (I, 85, l. 52; p. 89, l. 48; p. 90, ll. 4, 19), a formulation that appears in the *Twelve Conclusions* and elsewhere in Lollard criticisms of image-worship.²¹ He also affirms that ‘þe

by Hudson, p. 27. See also Aston, ‘Lollards and the Cross’, pp. 103–07; and Kamerick, *Popular Piety and Art in the Late Middle Ages*, pp. 22–27.

¹⁹ For an extended discussion of these debates, see Aston, ‘Lollards and the Cross’, pp. 102–07. For more about William Woodford, see Jones, ‘Lollards and Images’, pp. 40–41; and Doyle, ‘William Woodford, O.F.M., and John Wyclif’s *De Religione*’.

²⁰ *The Testimony of William Thorpe*, ed. by Hudson, pp. 56–61; Pollard, *Fifteenth Century Prose and Verse*, pp. 187–88 <<http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001371931>> [accessed 26 July 2013]; Aston, ‘Lollards and the Cross’, pp. 101–03. In the Longleat sermons, the author reports that convicted heretics were being made to kiss a holy image and swear to worship it as a condition of being pardoned — a move effectively equating image-adoration with orthodoxy itself. The author condemns such conditions as idolatry.

²¹ *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, ed. by Hudson, p. 27; Jones, ‘Lollards and Images’, pp. 33, 36. Lollards, in turn, appropriated it from earlier English-language discussions

shap of man is a croos, and as he heng vpon þe croos he was a verey croos' (I, 87–88, ll. 6–7) in order to affirm that orthodox worshippers honour Christ in honouring the cross. Several texts from later in the fifteenth century show Lollards making a similar equation between the cross and the human body itself. Both Sir John Oldcastle and Margery Baxter are reported as extending their arms to make their bodies into a living cross and identifying their own cruciform bodies as 'the very [true] cross', in explicit rejection of painted crucifixes.²² *Dives and Pauper* dates from before either of these trials, but similarity in language suggests that the author of *Dives and Pauper* knew of this strand of Lollard rhetoric and wove it into his own arguments. Invoking Lollard ideas allows him to approach his imagined dissenting audience from points of consensus rather than points of opposition.

Reading the Book of Imagery

The most substantial way that *Pauper* seeks to create consensus is by exploiting the Gregorian triad of memory, emotion, and book. I have already mentioned the familiar passage setting out this triad in Middle English. What is noteworthy is the way that both *Dives* and *Pauper* focus on the third member of the triad, the metaphor of image as book. This metaphor was old, standard, and unimpeachably orthodox. It appealed to conservatives as well as to many moderate Lollard writers.²³ In this text, moreover, it seems to appeal to both members of the dialogue. *Dives*' first question in chapter 2 is how to read 'þe book of peynture and of ymagerye', and he will steadfastly continue to talk about images using only

of Old Testament idol-worship in less controversial contexts. The *Middle English Dictionary* entry for 'stok', definition 3a, provides a series of quotations for this usage in which the context seems equally divided between discussions of pagan idolatry and criticisms of contemporary practice. Stanbury, 'Vivacity of Images', discusses the relationship between ideas about pagan idolatry and heretical iconoclasm in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.

²² For discussions of this gesture from a political perspective, see Beckwith, *Christ's Body*, pp. 70–73; Aers and Staley, *Powers of the Holy*, pp. 55–57. On the other hand, chapter 28 of the *Book of Margery Kempe* includes the detail of the resolutely anti-Lollard Kempe stretching her arms wide while weeping in Jerusalem, a gesture scholars usually interpret as bodily identification with the crucifixion (see, for example, Beckwith, *Christ's Body*, pp. 81–82). Other Lollard texts oppose images with the image of God embodied in the human being, without, however, overtly juxtaposing the crucifix with the cross-shaped man or woman. See *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, ed. by Hudson, pp. 27, 83–88, 179–82; and Aston, 'Lollards and the Cross', pp. 102, 108.

²³ Gayk, *Image, Text, and Religious Reform*, pp. 18–21.

this metaphor, repeatedly describing them as nothing else 'but a book and a token to þe lewyd peple' (I, 90, ll. 22–23; I, 91, ll. 1–2). Pauper likewise concentrates on the decoding of images, explaining to Dives how to 'read' them, focusing on their symbolic rather than their representational qualities, and downplaying the mimetic qualities that make them so troublesome. The process he describes for interpreting them is more akin to reading than it is to anything else. Likewise, he spends most of chapter 3 comparing the 'lewyd' man's gaze upon the image to the priest's fixed gaze upon the mass book, which provides the words for prayer but is not itself an object of prayer. In doing so, Pauper is trying to build on the Lollard preference for books over images, showing how the two work in similar ways and accomplish similar purposes.

The book metaphor allows Pauper to connect with Lollards in another way as well. By emphasizing the symbolic aspect of images, Pauper is able to sidestep certain elements of the affective piety tradition, in particular the strands of the tradition that encourage imaginative entry into the events of the Crucifixion as a bystander. This is most evident in Pauper's treatment of the crucifix, which forms his first, most direct answer to the question of 'how [to] rede in þe book of peynture and of ymagerye' (I, 83, ll. 51–52). It matters that Pauper begins with crucifixes: Dives has asked about images in general. But crucifixes hung in every English parish church, stood at crossroads and town centres, and appeared in books of hours; no other image would have been so familiar to fourteenth- and fifteenth-century worshippers — or so contested by those who saw their veneration as idolatry. In short, by choosing to start with the crucifix, Pauper offers the cross as a paradigm for how to approach all images.

According to Pauper, reading the cross leads ultimately to repentance and gratitude: 'Quanne þu seeist þe ymage of þe crucifix, thynke on hym þat deyid on þe cros for þin synne and þi sake and thanke hym of his endeles charite þat he wolde suffryn so mechil for the' (I, 83, ll. 2–5). What follows is a detailed explanation of how to read each visual detail of the image. In fleshing out the answer to this question, Pauper draws on the tradition of Good Friday sermons, which would have been broadly familiar to both the ostensible listener Dives and to the wider audience of the treatise.²⁴ He goes through Christ's body, first describing each wounded part of Christ's body in sensory language and then bidding the viewer to understand the wound as representing, standing in for, and correcting the sin committed by the viewer's corresponding organ (hand, side, head, and so forth). The following paragraph, chosen more or less at random, is representative of the entire passage:

²⁴ For an overview of the genre of Good Friday preaching, see Johnson, "'The Hard Bed of the Cross'"; and Johnson, *Grammar of Good Friday*.

Take heid be þe ymage how his hed was crownyd wyt þe garlond of thornys tyl þey wentyn into þe brayn and þe blod brast out on euery syde for to dystroyze þe heye synne of pryde þat shewyt hym most in mannys hed and wommanys, and make an ende of þi pryde. Take heid also be þe ymage how hese armys weryn spred abroad and drawyn wol streyte vpon þe tree tyl þe senuys and þe veynys crakkydyn, & how hese hondys weryn naylid to þe cros and stremedyn on blode for to dystroyze þe synne þat Adam and Eue dedyn wyt here hondys quanne þey tokyn þe appyl azens Godys forbode. (I, 83, ll. 5–14)

In this passage, Pauper repeatedly admonishes Dives to ‘take heid’ or ‘see’ — suggesting first of all attention and visual focus, only secondarily identification.²⁵ And although the text does invite its audience to identify with Christ’s death here, that identification is of a complex kind: Christ’s wounds parallel, by way of contrast, the sinful human body; that human body, in its turn, both commits sin and displays sin. In discussing the crown of thorns, for example, Pauper explains that the crown of thorns wounded Christ’s head ‘for to dystroyze þe heye synne of pryde þat shewyt hym most in mannys hed and womannys’ (I, 83, ll. 7–8). Rather than simply imagining Christ’s pain, in other words, the viewer must immediately understand the theological purpose of that pain. Even when Pauper is not inviting his audience to view Christ’s body as a corrective to their own sin, he consistently invites them to read the moral and spiritual symbolism of the body: Christ’s wounds and outstretched arms demonstrate his openness to the believer, while his nailed feet demonstrate his willingness to stay with the sinner.

None of this is new to *Dives and Pauper*, of course. The author is drawing on a tradition of meditation at least as old as Bonaventure, in which Christ’s body becomes, in the words of Holly Johnson, ‘a meditative map’ for believers.²⁶ But in doing so in connection with image- veneration, the author of *Dives and Pauper* chooses elements of the preaching tradition which best fit the ‘image-as-book’ paradigm. Pauper clearly does present emotion as important, but the emotions that he imagines that images stir are pity, repentance, and worship — not sympathetic suffering. And these emotions are produced by reading the body of Christ symbolically, part by part. The mimetic quality of the image quickly disappears behind its symbolic quality, its ability to convey concepts. Instead of imagining oneself as an onlooker to the historical crucifixion, as a participant in his suffering, or as a mourning mother or disciple, the viewer is prompted to read

²⁵ The admonition to behold or see was common in late medieval devotional works. For examples, see Baker, ‘The Privy of the Passion’, p. 88; Gayk, *Image, Text, and Religious Reform*, p. 100; and Bryan, *Looking Inward*, p. 109.

²⁶ Johnson, ‘Hard Bed of the Cross’, pp. 137–38.

Christ's crucified body as a catalogue of sin and salvation: only after reading and decoding his body can the viewer move on to remembrance, pity, and worship.

This method of 'reading' the crucifix aligns with late medieval understandings of other sorts of images. According to Stephen Perkinson, a similar method of interpretation informed how medieval viewers interpreted secular images, particularly images of kings and queens. Perkinson shows that for much of the Middle Ages, portrait-painters used a highly conventional set of gestures, clothes, and heraldic insignias to portray their subjects. The highly conventional nature of these elements allowed even someone who had never met the king or queen personally to understand who was being represented if he or she had learned to read the 'language' of gestures. The visuals of painting were not meant to reproduce and mimic the visual appearance of the subject, but to encode his or her inner reality.²⁷ Although Pauper does not highlight Christ's role as king in this section, he treats the crucifix as an image parallel to a royal portrait and, in interpreting the crucifix as he does, he is demonstrating to Dives how to properly read the image. In chapters 6–9 he applies it to images of other religious figures including saints, the Virgin, and angels, explaining the spiritual significance of details ranging from their gestures to their haloes to the emblems in their hands. That he understands this approach to the cross as, at base, a form of reading is reiterated by Pauper's final cautions in chapter 2: 'On þis maner, I preye the, rede þin book and falle down to grounde and thanke þin God þat wolde doon so mechil for the, and wurshepe hym abouyn alle thyngge, nought þe ymage, nought þe stok, stoon ne tree, but hym þat deyid on þe tree for þin synne and for þin sake' (I, 85, ll. 49–53). In the end, the image — like a word on a page — is useful not for its resemblance to what it represents, but for its ability to point to that greater thing.

As Pauper elaborates on his argument, he continues to emphasize the distinction between an image and what it represents. He follows his exposition of how to read the cross with a more general analysis of the cross as a symbol of Christ and his suffering. Pauper asserts that Christ was a 'verey croos' (I, 88, l. 7) during the crucifixion because his human body formed a cross, cites a series of previous authorities and hymns as evidence of this usage, and concludes that the word *cross*, used in these contexts, refers not just to a physical object or a shape, but also to Christ and all his earthly sufferings and death. Throughout chapter 4, Pauper affirms that worshippers render worship to Christ, not to the physical object representing him, for 'þe lyknesse of a thyng owyzt nought been in as mechil reuerence ne in wurshepe as þe thing in þeself' (I, 88, ll. 22–24). Pauper then argues that the cross is a metonym for Christ in exactly the same way that

²⁷ See Perkinson, *The Likeness of the King*, pp. 85ff.

a heraldic badge becomes a metonym for the lord or knight who bears it. His argument here parallels the theory of images put forth by the anonymous author of the early fifteenth-century 'Sixteen Points on which Bishops Accuse Lollards', which, defending Lollard theology, allows images to be honoured 'as signes or tokones' and makes a direct connection to the way that 'clerkis don [vsen] her bokis'.²⁸ Pauper condemns — or rather, dismisses as a fool — any priest who addresses his worship to the image rather than to the Christ it signifies. It is sheer common sense, he suggests, not to mistake the sign for its referent.

Conclusion

I have argued that *Dives and Pauper*, a treatise written explicitly for lay people, downplays affective approaches to images in favour of more explicit intellectual reflections. James Simpson quotes a later segment of chapter 2 in order to support his claim that *Dives and Pauper* 'gives cogent voice to what are effectively Lollard positions' and that 'The only way Pauper can *defend* images is via their devotional, affective impact'.²⁹ Simpson's larger argument about the vexed nature of images in the fifteenth century is compelling, but I think he misses something crucial about the treatment of the cross in *Dives and Pauper*. Pauper asks Dives, and by extension those readers who identify with him, to understand the visual richness of a crucifix as a set of symbols rather than as a picture: to read and interpret images, not to imaginatively enter into them. It is true that Pauper's reading of the cross involves the emotions. Yet he thinks that looking at the crucifix is reading, not just seeing, and that it should result in a different sequence of emotions than those produced by the tradition of affective piety. Pauper steadfastly avoids language that would suggest participation in or entry into the represented scenes. In Pauper's telling, Christ gestures from the crucifix to signal the theological meaning of his own body, not to invite his worshippers to imagine themselves 'þere bodily present',³⁰ much less to feel Christ's pains themselves. What they should feel, looking at the image, is repentance.

²⁸ *Sixteen Points on which the Bishops Accuse Lollards*, in *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, ed. by Hudson, p. 23. William Thorpe also compares images, particularly crucifixes and images of saints, to the 'armes or [...] priuy sygnētis' used by kings and lords to seal their letters, which are then honoured by servants (*The Testimony of William Thorpe*, ed. by Hudson, pp. 57, ll. 1085–94).

²⁹ Simpson, 'Orthodoxy's Image Trouble', pp. 103, 105.

³⁰ Sargent, *Love's Mirror*, p. 190, ll. 15–16. Michelle Karnes has examined the complexities of imaginative meditation on the Passion before 1400. Karnes shows that in philosophical contexts, imagination linked sense perception and reason, and as a result, imaginative meditation

Pauper's emphasis is not unique. Shannon Gayk has shown that a similar phenomenon is at work in John Lydgate's devotional poetry on the crucifixion and the pieta. Although medieval artists and writers depicted these scenes in ways that invited worshippers to identify with the Virgin or Christ himself, Lydgate consistently draws attention to the theological meaning of the scenes in a variety of ways, so that readers must concentrate more on remembering and understanding than they do on suffering sympathetically.³¹ Gayk suggests that Lydgate resists 'purely affective' modes of seeing images and produces instead a reformist alternative to two sets of extremes. What Gayk says of Lydgate's poem 'On the Image of Pity' might apply equally well to *Dives and Pauper*: 'The reader [of this text] is not called to identify with or suffer alongside Mary but rather to see Christ and the Virgin's agony as a direct result of "thyn offence".'³² Reading the cross in this way makes the image a prompt to guilt rather than to pity. Where Lydgate relies on poetry to reform his readers' approach to images, however, Pauper provides explicit interpretation of the image himself and then provides tools that will allow *Dives* to decode other images independently. Deployed in the context of a vernacular treatise aimed at Lollard sympathizers, Pauper's method suggests a mission to bring Lollards back into the fold by acknowledging the validity of their critiques and presenting a form of orthodoxy that is compatible with them.

My argument has several implications. First, it shows that *Dives and Pauper* should not be taken as an exemplar of orthodoxy. The author of *Dives and*

on the Passion was a way to encounter Christ's divine nature as well as his human nature. Nicholas Love's sources encouraged imaginative entry into the Passion as a way of ascending into a direct knowledge of God. In contrast, Love alters his sources by confining the objects of imagination to earthly, physical things like the humanity of Christ and by adding language that highlights a certain distance from the scenes being described. (Karnes, *Imagination, Meditation, and Cognition in the Middle Ages*, pp. 218–25.) Read in conjunction with my argument here, Karnes' argument might suggest that Love and the author of *Dives and Pauper* are both simply emphasizing the difference between representation and reality. However, I think something more complex is happening, and it has to do with the cognitive process of reading as opposed to the cognitive process of recognizing a picture. While it is outside the scope of this study to examine how medieval scholastics would have understood the role of imagination in the process of reading, it seems to me that the image-as-book metaphor allows the author of *Dives and Pauper* to avoid some of the potential cognitive problems of affective-pietistic devotion by reframing the sensory elements of an image into symbolic elements, moving quickly beyond the visual to the theological concepts that are the objects of the mind's understanding. Love, less confident that his audience can be trusted to make this move to the divine, retains the sensory details but brackets them with reminders that they are all imaginary.

³¹ Gayk, *Image, Text, and Religious Reform*, pp. 96–109.

³² Gayk, *Image, Text, and Religious Reform*, p. 97.

Pauper, like other Oxford scholars of the period, is concerned with carving out a position that affirms traditional uses of images while responding positively to the critiques of his opponents. His arguments indicate that he sees a number of possible stances to take on the hot issues of his time. This outlook, moreover, is not restricted to the subject of images: he displays a similar outlook in his later sermons compiled in Longleat MS 4, for instance supporting vernacular translation of the Bible and criticizing the Constitutions which prohibited it. In the words of Anne Hudson and H. L. Spencer, the sermons ‘speak against the Constitutions but are not Wycliffite.’³³ The author of *Dives and Pauper* actively avoids some forms of post-Arundel orthodoxy (entering imaginatively into the Passion) while drawing heavily on others (the sermon tradition; a focus on sin and penitence; the image-as-book metaphor). As a result, his treatment of images does not fit neatly into an ‘orthodox’/‘Lollard’ binary. Indeed, it is likely that he did not see himself as bound by such a binary.³⁴ He clearly is not interested in defining his audience — whether the fictive interlocutor Dives, the probable imagined audience of his patron, or the audience that actually read the work in the hundred-plus years after it began to circulate — as heretics. Instead he seeks to engage the substance of their concerns about idolatry, and to present a theory of images that addresses those concerns.

The second implication of my argument is more far-reaching. If scholars ought not to point to *Dives and Pauper* as the textbook case of orthodoxy on the question of image-worship, then we ought instead to pay closer attention to the ways in which it problematizes our category of ‘orthodox’ altogether. Viewed alone, *Dives and Pauper* might be an outlier in the landscape of late medieval devotion, a text to be categorized as somehow ‘between’ orthodoxy and Wyclifism.³⁵ Viewed alongside John Lydgate’s devotional poetry, however, the writer

³³ Hudson and Spencer, ‘Old Author, New Work’, pp. 229 and 228–32; Watson, ‘Censorship and Cultural Change’, pp. 854–57. The authorial attitude I am describing here has been described in a variety of ways, from ‘liberal’ to ‘reformist’ to the various locutions I mentioned at the start of this essay (Slater, ‘*Dives and Pauper*’). To call him ‘reformist’, as several scholars do, seems more satisfactory to me, but ultimately reinscribes the binary as a continuum with a third, slightly more complex term occupying the middle between the two extremes. See, for instance, Jones, ‘Lollards and Images’, p. 28.

³⁴ The late medieval manuscript tradition attests that in many cases, identifiably Lollard texts were copied alongside generally reformist works and traditional texts that probably all would have seen as useful and correct. See Raschko, ‘Common Ground for Contrasting Ideologies’.

³⁵ Thus, for example, Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and Ian R. Johnson, introducing the excerpts of *Dives and Pauper* (in Wogan-Browne and others, eds, *The Idea of the Vernacular*, p. 252) characterize the text’s view of images as ‘orthodox in outline, if not always in detail’ and ‘not

of *Dives and Pauper* suddenly seems less like an aberration and more like an alternative way of interacting with the traditions of the past claimed as orthodox by different writers of the time. With this in mind, I want to suggest that there were a number of possible 'orthodox' positions available to take up. While many different theologians might tolerate or approve given religious practices, there was a wide variety in how they made sense of those practices and how ready they were to cede intellectual ownership of those practices to laypeople.

In short, Arundel's Constitutions reflect one sort of decision about what counted as heresy and what didn't, and *Dives and Pauper* reflects another. The circulation history of *Dives and Pauper* itself supports this contention: at the same time that the abbot of St Albans was ordering a copy of the manuscript, a chaplain in Bury St Edmunds was being accused of heresy because he owned a copy of the same text.³⁶ This suggests that fifteenth-century readers themselves were working with competing ideas of orthodoxy long after the Constitutions had theoretically settled the question. Furthermore, we should understand the categories assumed by the Constitutions (heresy, orthodoxy) as historically contingent and generated at least partly in retrospect rather than as stable, descriptive historical categories. We might conceptualize orthodoxy, not as a two-dimensional spectrum with diametrically opposed poles, but as a matrix of ideas, concerns, practices, and relationships, much as Patrick Hornbeck and other scholars have suggested we conceptualize Lollardy.³⁷

orthodox [...] [but] acceptable', while Aston, 'Lollards and the Cross', pp. 106–07 describes the author's views as 'on the iffy side of orthodoxy' and Stanbury, 'The Vivacity of Images', p. 145 says that the text is 'somewhere between orthodox and Wycliffite, or at least allows a Wycliffite critique of images rather free play within an "orthodox" defence of images'.

³⁶ Discussed at length in several places, including Hudson and Spencer, 'Old Author, New Work', p. 228; Walsham, 'Inventing the Lollard Past', p. 636, and Hudson, "'Who Is My Neighbour?'" pp. 84–90.

³⁷ Hornbeck, *What Is a Lollard?*, pp. 1–24, 196–204; see also, as representative samples of the complexity of this matrix, the essays in Somerset, Havens, Pitard, eds, *Lollards and Their Influence*; Bose and Hornbeck, eds, *Wycliffite Controversies*; and Ghosh and Gillespie, eds, *After Arundel*.

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