The energized colloquial language, free from the conventions of religious rhetoric, suggests both the author's individual voice and an independence of mind which in the long history of commentary on The Cloud has been celebrated by some, denied or deplored by others. This passage is distinctive in the author's writings in its open resort to Dionysius' authority, then accepted as apostolic, and in its implied alignment with divine authority in its closing adaptation of Christ's often repeated words. Elsewhere the author is true to his expressed dislike of academic display, in that he does not draw attention to his indebtedness in chapters 63–6 and 71–3 to Richard of Saint-Victor's Benjamin minor and Benjamin major, to Carthusian sources, or to borrowings from The Scale of Perfection by his contemporary Walter Hilton. In its defensive invocation of authority and direction to a limited readership, the passage is one of many internal revelations of the discursive fragility of The Cloud in ecclesiastical tradition and contemporary context.
Such fragility is further suggested by the text's development, which is characterized by repetitions and fluctuations in rhetoric that sometimes indicate interruptions to composition. The author's offer to amend or amplify on request (130.14–17) confirms that he did not seek to polish his longest treatise to the structural perfection achieved in his formal epistles, Discretion of Stirrings and An Epistle of Prayer, which are the literary equivalents of costly manuscript art. Instead the oral dialogues with his apprentice that seem to have inspired The Cloud and which permeate it as a textual strategy extend to an intertextual dialogue with Hilton. Thus although the text solidified to the form familiar to later generations at the point when manuscript transmission commenced, its details probably remained conditional in its author's conception. In the same empirical spirit he translated the Pseudo-Dionysius' Mystical Theology under the title of Deonise Hid Diuinite. The Latin sources from which the author fashioned his translation were selectively published, together with the Middle English text, in 1924 by Abbot Justin McCann and again in 1955 by Professor Phyllis Hodgson. McCann demonstrated that chapters 1–3 of Deonise Hid Diuinite, comprising approximately three-quarters of the text, are based on John Sarracenus' (John Sarrazin's) Nova translatio (c.1167), while chapters 4–5 follow Thomas Gallus' Extractio or Paraphrase (1238). Some conflation of these sources occurred, with the further complications that the Extractio is based on Sarracenus and that it mixes translation with exposition. The editors traced further borrowings to Gallus' Explanatio (c.1241), a commentary on Sarracenus' version of the Pseudo-Dionysius' canon, including the Mystical Theology.

The source texts chosen by the Cloud-author represented major stages in the process by which the philosophy of the Pseudo-Dionysius came to influence the spiritual beliefs and practices of the western Church. Sarracenus' free rendition found equivalent Latin terms for Greek vocabulary that John Scotus Eriugena had retained in what became known as the Vetus translatio, the first acceptable Latin translation of the canon, completed by 875. As a monk at Saint-Denis, Sarracenus helped to build a tradition of Parisian Pseudo-Dionysian scholarship in which Gallus, a canon regular at the abbey of Saint-Victor, was to occupy a 'prominent and distinct position'. Gallus' immersion in Pseudo-Dionysian thought over twenty years produced interpretations that blended scholarship with pastoral and contemplative concerns. His commentaries were widely read, and from the fourteenth century their manuscripts circulated in Carthusian circles both on the Continent and in England. They were therefore a natural source for the Cloud-author when he came to compose the only known Middle English version of the Mystical Theology.

Although Hodgson claims that Deonise Hid Diuinite 'follows its Latin sources closely, with only very minor additions, omissions and modifications', she lists these at length. She also notes the presence of 'more vivid imagery ... often reminiscent of the lively language of The Cloud'. By contrast, in 1983 Rosemary Ann Lees referred to the translation's 'comparative emancipation ... apparent both in the flexibility with which it supplements and culls matter
from its various sources as well as in the facility with which it seems in general to preserve the native idiom of English prose.'  
She claims more contentiously that 'intelligibility seems in all things to have governed [the author's] practice as a translator'.  
My argument is that the small changes introduced by the Cloud-author follow discernible trends, outlined below, and that even in this short text they accumulate sufficient mass substantially to remake the sources. I contend further that the author's procedures in Deonise Hid Diuinite were chosen so as actively to confirm his development of negative theology in The Cloud.

The prologue to Deonise Hid Diuinite maintains the mixed pastoral and defensive stance of the Cloud passage quoted above:

Dis wryting þat next foloweþ is þe Ingilsche of a book þat Seynte Denys wrote vnto Thimothe, þe whiche is clepid in Latyn tounge Mistica Theologia. Of þe whiche book, for þat þat it is mad minde in þe 70 chapter of a book wretin before (þe whiche is clepid þe Cloude of Vnknowyn) how þat Denis sentence wol cleerly afferme al þat is wretyn in þat same book: þerfore, in translacioun of it, I haue not onliche folowed þe nakid lettre of þe text, bot for to declare þe hardnes of it, I haue moche folowed þe sentence of þe Abbot of Seinte Victore, a noble & a worði expostour of þis same book. (2.5-12)

Two slippages suggest authorial anxiety. The first is that 'Denisé bookes' in The Cloud has become 'Denís sentence', a change that glosses over the adoption of the Mystical Theology as being fully representative of Dionysius' thought.  
The connective 'þerfore' camouflages a second slippage, since the declaration that the author resorted to Gallus to clarify a difficult text does not follow logically from the contention that the Mystical Theology will clearly affirm every word of The Cloud. The author's uncharacteristic praise of Gallus may aim to defend his choice of the Extractio over Robert Grosseteste's commentary, which was based on the Greek original. However the Cloud-author's assertion is more obviously aimed at defending his decision to combine his sources.

As translator he in fact displays the same colloquial vigour and independence that he demonstrates in the invented passages so far discussed. McCann, Alastair Minnis, and John Clark have considered how closely the theology of The Cloud aligned with Gallus' affective teachings.  
However, Deonise Hid Diuinite is infused not only with Gallus' 'sentence', but also with the doctrine and stylistic features of The Cloud. The translation extends the sequence by which Sarracenus and Gallus in turn adapted Dionysius' Greek Neoplatonism to Latin Christian doctrine. Beyond this, the uniqueness of negative theology in the vernacular devotional context of England in the 1390s further explains why the author shaped his version of the Mystical Theology so as to support The Cloud.

Many of the changes that he made are founded on his belief, already explained in The Cloud, that rather than the intellect or imagination, love is the means by which the soul is united to God.  
In emphasizing love's pre-eminence he moderates Dionysius' philosophical abstractions by introducing affective, experiential, personal, and explanatory elements. These intrusions recapture The Cloud's presentation of contemplation as a vigorous human activity. The author's reservations about learning and learned men are used to soften further
the sources’ intellectual language. However an exception occurs at the end, where Dionysius demonstrates the moment of the intellect’s failing through an exaggerated textuality which stretches language beyond its limits. Here the Cloud-author extends the sources’ linguistic overreaching to the point where a silence eloquent with the divine mystery intervenes. In reapplying another technique perfected in *The Cloud*, the translation thus mimics the surrender in contemplation of the flow of thoughts to ‘affecyon abouen mynde’ (Deonise *Hid Divinite, 2.25f*).

The author begins to diverge from his sources’ scholarly status by translating ‘theologia’, found in the titles of all surviving Latin versions, not by ‘theologie’, which by then was an accepted English word, but by the older Latin borrowing ‘diuinite’. Since ‘diuinite’ can mean either ‘theology’ or ‘godhead’, the English version maintains an outward faithfulness to the original. However it imports the suggestion that this work, like *The Cloud*, is ‘A Book of Contemplacyon’, the words and structure of which will themselves assist the reader’s practical efforts to attain knowledge of a God ‘hidden’ to the intellect. A later mistranslation of Sarracenus’ ‘Theologiam’ as ‘Cristes diuinitee’ (4.13) meaning ‘divine nature’, and an added reference to ‘pis deuinite’ (6.32) meaning ‘contemplative method’, further support this interpretation. In the same way an address of the opening prayer to ‘Wysdome’, a concept favoured by Dionysius but often a portmanteau term for contemplation, replaces the conventionally theological ‘Trinitas’, which again is found in all known Latin versions. Whereas Sarracenus gives the ending as ‘Igitur ista mihi quidem sint oratione postulata’ (‘Therefore may these things asked for in my prayer indeed be mine’), implying an exemplary function, the Cloud-author personalizes the opening with added first- and second-person pronouns: ‘Ibesche bee (2.17). He thus invites the reader to take part in the prayer.

Deonise *Hid Divinite* personalizes the divine to approximately the level reached in *The Cloud*. Intruded personal pronouns continue to be applied to God, extending the effect achieved in the opening prayer (2.19; 5.23; 5.31; 7.18f.; 7.32–8.3). Additions of ‘hym’, ‘himself’ and an insertion to the effect that the true understanding should be held by faith (‘fastliche for to holde in si3t of byleue’) qualify the abstraction of Dionysius’ thought about the primal cause (4.3–10). Two references to Christ are also added (4.13). Where Sarracenus writes: ‘quomodo divina et bona natura singularis dicitur’, the translation retains Anglicized forms of the adjectives, but undermines their abstraction with an Anglo-Saxon noun and definitions: ‘how hat hige, deuine synghleer kynde, þe whiche is God, is one’ (7.14f.). By preferring Gallus’ *Extractio* over Sarracenus, the conclusion to chapter 3 replaces non-personal with personal constructions. However in a contrary procedure in chapter 5, based on Gallus, God is referred to as ‘he’ following Sarracenus, in preference to Gallus’ ‘ommium causa’ (9.26).

Furthermore, the first of a series of interpolated references to ‘affecyon’ as a supra-rational faculty for apprehending the divine expands Sarracenus’ conclusion to the prayer quoted above, so that it reads as follows: ‘And for alle
The expansion imposes on the source a proposition that the author had explored empirically in *The Cloud*, namely that a mind focused on God’s substance operates above the ordinary human level (120.2–8). By touching on the theme of longing also recurrent in *The Cloud*, it grounds in the reader’s desire the paradoxical abstractions of Dionysius’ address to a divinity opaque to intellectual seeking.

While the interpolations involving ‘affeccioun’ are confined to the long first chapter of the *Cloud*-author’s translation, which is mostly based on Sarracenus, they have the effect of extending Gallus’ doctrinal influence in the form in which it already appears in the affective focus of *The Cloud*. However, only one of the interpolations (5.15) draws on Gallus’ writings as a direct source, and even here his equivalent word is ‘dilecctio’. The author therefore appears to be acting independently in giving prominence to ‘affeccioun’. In *The Cloud* his chosen term for the faculty by which God may be ‘getyn & holden’ is ‘loue’ (26.4f.), meaning the soul’s will and power to love (18.15–20). However by the time of writing ‘affeccioun’ was thoroughly acclimatized in English devotional texts including *The Cloud* and the author’s preference in *Deonise Hid Diuinite* for ‘affeccioun’ is thus a relatively minor concession to Sarracenus’ abstract Latin vocabulary and the status of the *Nova translatio* as theology. Moreover the interpolated references to ‘affeccioun’ are a technique of emotional enrichment appropriate to the *Cloud*-author’s practical contemplative purpose and to his recognition in *The Cloud* that the ‘sweetnes of loue’ (46.18) is also a feeling: ‘he felyng of his is eendles blisse’ (19.13). In *Deonise Hid Diuinite* a later pair of examples expands the description, ‘munde ... cuncta auferens et a cunctis absolutus’, with an acknowledgement of human complexity: ‘makyng hiself clene fro al wordly, fleschly, & kyndely likyng in his affeccioun’ (3.14f.). This prepares for the contemplative reader’s again being ‘drawen up abouen mynde in affeccioun’ (3.16f.) to the divine darkness.

Two final insertions of ‘affeccioun’ (4.25, 5.15) likewise relate to contemplative practice rather than to theory.

The drift to an experiential orientation in *Deonise Hid Diuinite* is confirmed by the opening to chapter 1. Here, in an expansion unparalleled in Sarracenus or Gallus, the author fictionalizes Timothy’s and the reader’s state at the commencement of contemplative practice: ‘what tyme þat þou purposist þee by þe steryng of grace to þe actueel excersise of þi blynde beholdynges’ (2.31f.). *The Cloud*’s focus on the novice’s preliminary progress in chapters 1 and 2 is comparable. A parallel resort to narrative occurs in an introduction added in *Deonise Hid Diuinite* to Sarracenus’ account of Moses on Sinai: ‘Ensaumple of þis se by þe story how ...’ (4.27). An interpolated reminder of context likewise recalls the development of this narrative, based on *Benjamin major*, in the climax to *The Cloud*: ‘In þis tyme it was þat Moyses in syngulertee of affeccioun was departheid from þees beforeseyde chosen preestes’ (5.15f.). Moses’ separation is not referred to in the sources, but recalls contrasts in *The Cloud* among Moses, Bezaleel, and Aaron as priest. Chapter 1 of the translation concludes by again invoking a dimension of the contemplative’s affective experience that goes
beyond Sarracenus, whose difficult Latin the author partly mistranslates in a way that rules out pantheistic implications: 'for to fele in experience þe presence of hym þat is abouen alle þinges, not haung felyng ne pinkyng of no beyng þing' (5.19-21).33

Again, when the author describes the ascent to transcendence as occurring 'somtyme sodeyn þen oper' (8.19), he recaptures The Cloud's interest in the duration of contemplation.34 Among other experiential additions reminiscent of The Cloud is his exhortation that as well as 'stronge' (Sarracenus 'forti'), contrition should be 'sleiȝ' and 'listi' (3.1). 'Sleiȝ' and its cognate 'sleiȝt' (referring to the strategic working of grace) are interpolated again later, also in relation to contemplation (6.27, 6.26). First recorded in English in The Cloud, 'listi' and 'listely' designate enthusiasm for spiritual practice.35 Together 'sleiȝ' and 'listi' denote an eagerness tempered by wisdom, and in The Cloud they encompass the notion of contemplation as play. This nexus recurs over several chapters36 and includes an explanation of the significance for contemplation of the proverb, 'wirche more wip a list þen wip any liuer strenge' (87.6f.).37 Deonise Hid Divinite therefore qualifies the Latin text's recommendation of strength with the sagacious easeful approach evoked by the language of The Cloud.

Further psychological and theological modifications recapture features of The Cloud. The author's reiterated distinction in the earlier work between 'bodily wittes' and 'goostly wittes' is used to extend Sarracenus' generalized allusions to physical perception. The translation adds a definition of 'bodily wittes': 'as heryng, seyng, smelling, taastyng, & touching' (3.2), and specifies separate areas of operation for the bodily and spiritual senses: 'alle þoo þinges, þe whiche mov be knownen wip any of þi fyue bodily wittes without-forþe; and alle þoo þinges þe whiche mov be knownen by þi goostly wittes wiþinne-forþ' (3.3-6). An added dismissal of those 'wonyng þat not only in here goostly wittes of natureel philosophy, bot lowe downe byneþe in here bodily wittes, þe whiche þei hauen bot in comoun with only beestes' (3.27-30) recalls the satiric cameos in The Cloud of misguided contemplatives who mistake bodily feelings for spiritual working (chapters 51-3). Finally, Deonise Hid Divinite modifies Sarracenus' representation of Dionysius' theology with intruded references to grace,38 a doctrine which, in accordance with Augustinian tradition, including Gallus, pervades The Cloud.

In yet another significant parallel to The Cloud, where the author creates recognizable identities for himself and his disciple, Deonise Hid Divinite strengthens the sense of a speaker and a hearer for its message. Authorial first-person pronouns are introduced in such phrases as 'I besecbe þee' (2.17); 'as I may' (2. 26); and 'I haue affermyngliche set' (7.29). Where Sarracenus reads 'quid dicat quidem aliquis?', the translation personalizes to: 'what schul we sey þan ...?' (3.27). Gallus' 'removetur ab eo' in the Extractio similarly becomes 'we schuld do awey from hym' (8.33). As reader's representative, the apostle Timothy is actualized in the opening by intruded second-person pronouns39 and by translating Sarracenus' adverb 'ignote' as 'in a maner þat is þou woste neuer how' (3.11). This parallels such phrases in The Cloud as 'þou wost not how' (16.14) and 'þou wost neuer what' (17.1), and alludes to the earlier work's many
evocations of the desired contemplative state of unknowing. Again, *The Cloud* constructs the author and disciple as fellow contemplatives: ‘sïpèn we ben boþe clepid of God to worche in þis werk’ (129.10f.). *Deonise Hid Diuinite* recreates this relationship in two interpolations: ‘as it is possible to me for te speke & to þee to wnderstonde, loke þat þou rise wip me in þis grace’ (3.9; Sarracenus: ‘sicut est possibile, ignote consurge’); and ‘us alle þat ben practisers of þis deuinite’ (6.32; no Latin parallel).

*The Cloud* survives in the twenty-first century as a guide to contemplation because of the subtlety and practicality of its teaching. The vernacular assertiveness that distinguishes it as text in its Middle English setting erupts in *Deonise Hid Diuinite* in the form of oppositions: ‘It is noþing þus: bot þus most it be’ (4.1; no Latin equivalent); ‘not to alle, bot to hem only’ (4.2of.; Sarracenus: ‘his qui’). It also takes the form of emphases: ‘þe whiche in himself is abouen alle, þe boþe doyng awey and affermyng of hem alle’ (4.10f.: Sarracenus: ‘quae est super omnem ablationem et positionem’). Similarly, the author augments the *Extractio* by adding energetic repetitions of ‘al’ to the list of bodily things to be taken away in the effort to conceptualize the divine nature (9.15—20). This strategy enlarges his vivid demonstration in *The Cloud* that ‘no3 where bodely is euerywhere goosdy’, a proposidon to be experienced as true by those who renounce the intervendon of the senses in spiritual working (121.15—21). A related interpolation articulates his prejudice against those who create figures of God and spiritual things ‘in here fantastik ymagynatyue wittes’ (3.35). The author’s vigour of utterance somedmes takes the form of removing qualifications. He translates as superladves a series of Latin comparadves designating spiritual things close to God (8.10, 17, 18, 23, 24, 27), and excises modest implicadons of doubt: ‘betokenijs’ translates Sarracenus’ ‘hoc autem puto significare’ (5.6) arid his ‘sicut arbitror’ is omitted (6.32).

Commentators have noted *The Cloud’s* use of vivid physical imagery. However *The Cloud* also seeks to negate the physical associative properdes of the metaphors that it applies to God and contemplation by upholding their figurative status: ‘& wene not, for I clepe it a derknes or a cloude, þat it be any cloude congelid of þe humours þat fleen in þe ayre, ne 3it any derknes soche as is in þin house on niȝtes, when þi candel is oute’ (23.13—15). This same tension persists in *Deonise Hid Diuinite* in interpolated figures and analogies that alternate with efforts to limit or thwart the imaginadon. Among the interpolated images is a simile, ‘as þe lady haf þir maydens’ (5.8), that was domesdcated in the *Cloud* group by the translated allegory of Jacob’s wives and their handmaids in *Benjamin minor*. In *Deonise Hid Diuinite* it further elucidates the subordinadon of the intellect in contemplation. Supplementary kinaesthedc metaphors of drawing up, fastening, and folding likewise recall the exposition of contemplation as an energetic human work in *The Cloud*, where each of these actions conveys an aspect of practice or experience.

The most substantial remaking of sources in *Deonise Hid Diuinite* is the author’s treatment of Dionysius’ brief sculpting analogy. This is translated by Sarracenus and slightly expanded in Gallus. The *Cloud*-author’s alternating
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augmentation and undercutting of figures relating to contemplation adapts the analogy to the teaching and vocabulary of The Cloud, while again theorizing a distrust of the intellect as a faculty for approaching uncreated being.

As elsewhere, the English text initially inflates the likeness with experiential details. The 'facientes' and 'artifices' in Sarracenus and Gallus are replaced by a situation and a character: 'Here is a man hauyng a sounde stok of ye grettest quantitee wiþboutyn hym, liing before hym, and hauyng wiþinne hym entent ...' (5.33f.). The inner–outer balance thus established persists through a psychodrama, invented by the author, of uncovering the divine image at the centre of the block. Details of the artist’s preliminary imaginative grasp of the image are added. The analogy describes how he finds the centre by 'mesuryng of riȝt lynyng' (6.2), and the 'craft' and 'instrumentes' that he uses to carve away the obscuring wood (6.7). The changes again encompass The Cloud's view of contemplation as a 'werk', while the adapted analogy's fusing of the artist's imagination with the physical world recaptures yet another emphasis of The Cloud, where this fusing is seen as a cause of erroneous working (94.22–4). Therefore it is not surprising that the author proceeds to undermine the imaginative analogy at the point of application: 'Riȝt so we must haue us in þis hiȝe deuyne werk, as it is possible to be comyn to in vnderstondyng by soche a boistous ensaumple of so contrary a kynde' (6.9–11).

After thus rejecting the bodily 'ensaumple' suggested by his sources, the author provides an alternative spiritualized analogy. This begins with a lucid evocation, unparalleled in Sarracenus or Gallus, of the divine 'kynde' hidden at the centre of the block. In re-creating this central Dionysian conception, the Anglo-Saxon words retain paradox as an and-intellectual device, while avoiding the abstract Latinity typical of the sources:

> of it be in itself & to itself euermore free – wiþinne alle creatures, not inclusid; wiþbouten alle creatures, not schit outh; abouen alle creatures, not borne up; bineþe alle creatures, not put doun; behynde alle creatures, not put bak; before alle creatures, not dreuen forþe – (6.13–17)

However these terms too are revealed to be inadequate, since the divine image cannot be grasped by an embodied understanding (6.18f.), in which it is overlaid and obstructed,

> wiþ vnnoumerable sensible bodies & vnderstondable substances, wiþ many a merueilous fantastik ymage, coniellid as it were in a kumbros dlog abouten hym, as þe ymage of þe ensaumple wretyn before is hid in þe þik, greet, sounde stok. (6.20–4)

This culminating redefining of the block as the complex faculties of body and mind affirms yet again the deceptiveness of the imagination and the bodily figures that it creates.

Earlier Deonise Hid Divinite had dismissed those who seek to reach the first cause 'bi making of figures of þe last and þe leest worbi þinges of þeþ beyng visible þinges, as stockes or stones ...' (3.32f.). This dismissal foreshadows the translator's rejection of his sources' analogy as a deceptive product of the
bodily imagination. The dismissal's concluding phrase, equivalent to 'scilicet lapidibus et metallis' in the *Extractio*, is conventionally applied in Middle English to the worship of false gods. These additional negative resonances persist in the analogy's construction and reconstruction (5.33, 6.2), which emphasize the physicality of the 'be ðyk, greet, sounde stok'. For example, the remade analogy replaces Sarracenus' image, 'circumvelatum' ('veiled about'; Gallus: 'latentum sub misticis velis'), with 'wallid aboute' (7.6). Furthermore, the analogy's final disparagement of the 'stok' as 'a kumberous clog' of thoughts and images aligns it with the congealed 'lump' in *The Cloud* of all sins together, 'none opær þing þan þi-self' (73.17f.).

*Deonise Hid Diiunite* further adjusts the reconstructed analogy to contemplative practice by a first-person application of *The Cloud*'s teaching and an infusion of its terms: 'For we moten be in þis werk as it were men makyn an ymage of his nakýd, vnmaad, & vnbigonne kynde ...' (6.12f.), and 'þe whiche kumberous clogge ... we moten algarres craftely pare awey by sleȝt of grace in þis deuine werk' (6.24-6). Ineffability and practicality remain paramount to the end: 'in a maner þat is vnknowen how vnto alle, bot only to þoo þat it proueþ; and 3it euermore to þoo same, bot onliche in tyme of þe proef' (6.29-31). These assertions parallel the final chapters of *The Cloud*, which stress the incommunicability of fulfilled contemplation, 'þis nouȝt when it is nouȝt where wrouȝt' (122.18f.), and caution against the mistake of judging others' experience by one's own (chapter 72).

Outside the analogy, other modifications in *Deonise Hid Diiunite* focus on the limits of the intellect's attainment in contemplation. They thus recapitulate a message delivered empirically and theoretically in *The Cloud*. For example, an interpolated clause defines 'summitatem divinarum ascensionum' as 'þe teermes & þe boundes of mans vnderstondyng, be it neuer so holpen wijȝ grace' (5.1f.). Again, the translation re-emphasizes God's transcendence 'of alle vnderstandyng þinges ... & alle vnderstondyng' (8.25f.) with a vigorous added *complexior*: 'And 3it he in hymself is abouen bojse alle spekyng and alle vnderstondyng' (8.34f.). Like *The Cloud*, *Deonise Hid Diiunite* supports the view that God is beyond 'alle spekyng' by attending to the threshold where the intellect, and with it language as the mediator of concepts, fails. Sarracenus describes the state beyond this threshold as 'non sermonum brevitatem, sed irrationalitatem perfectam et imprudentiam'. The author strengthens this by translating: 'not onliche ... þe schortyng of wordes, bot as it were a madness & a parfite vnresonabilitee of alle þat we seyn' (8.14-16).

As a further technique to convey the failing of language and thinking, *Deonise Hid Diiunite* extends the Pseudo-Dionysius' use of paradox. In the first instance, 'blynde beholdynysgs' is imported from *The Cloud* (32.7) to translate Sarracenus' non-paradoxical 'mysticas visiones'. Elsewhere 'mysticus' is translated as 'derke' (2.19) and 'hid' (title and 5.18). The enigma inherent in 'blynde beholdynysgs' encourages and perhaps produces the renunciation of conceptual thinking that is basic to the *Cloud*-author's contemplative method. Secondly, Sarracenus' 'nullus indoctorum' is rendered paradoxically as 'none of þeis vnwise men 3it wonyng in
here wittys' (3.19f.), thereby reinforcing the author's conviction of the inferiority of intellectual working to contemplative love. Finally, where Sarracenus presents the insights gained in contemplation paradoxically: 'et per non videre et per ignorare, videre et cognoscere', the translation heightens the contrast by applying The Cloud's central negation: 'et, bi nou3t seeyng & vnknowyng, for to see & for to knowe' (5.27f). This change is repeated when the goal of contemplation is condensed as 'knowe pat vnknowyng' (7.5; Sarracenus, 'cognoscamus illam ignorantiam'). This phrase draws on the quotation from On the Divine Names in The Cloud with which this essay began. In Deonise Hid Divinite as in The Cloud, the author uses 'vnknowyng', which connotes activity, for the highest contemplative experience; he rejects the Latinate equivalent word 'ignoraunce', which in The Cloud retains its derogatory passive associations.

The state of 'vnknowing' is captured in Gallus' Extractio in a conclusion that overstrains language in an apparent effort to cross from text into transcendence. The ensuing silence resonates not only with the failing of concepts but also with the possibility of a supra-rational understanding:

> ipsum neque ponimus neque auferimus; quoniam et super omnem positionem est perfecta et unica omnium causa, et super omnem ablationem est excessus ipsius ab omnibus absoluti et super omnia eminentis.\(^*\)

The English version goes even further in challenging the limits of linguistic possibility. It demonstrates the failing of the intellectual powers through multiple reiterations, and piles up superlatives and antitheses in its ascent to an even more eloquent silence:

> hym we mowe nei3er set ne do awey, ne on any vnderstandable maner afferme him, ne denie him. For (e parfite & (e singuleer cause of al most nedelynges be wipoutyn comparison of (e moost heijt abouen alle, bo3pe settyng & doyng awey. And his not-vnderstandable ouerpassyng is vn-vnderstandabely abouen alle affermyng and deniinge.\(^{10.17-25;}\) italics indicate interpolations)

The Cloud applies a parallel technique in a passage which recommends attaching 'a litil worde of o silable' to the divinely inspired 'steryng of loue' which is the essence of 'pe werk' (28.16–29.6). The discussion is unified on repetitions of 'worde', which is first linked with warrior metaphors (28.17–20) but later mimes the practice of mental repetition being taught. As the overtures of a distracting thought that offers 'of his grete clergie' to expound the 'worde' are progressively rejected (29.1–4), both textual 'worde' and 'worde' as contemplative vehicle merge into a stillness filled with potentiality.

The Cloud-author's remaking of the Mystical Theology is therefore not minor but significant. Insofar as his choices as translator buttress and recapitulate his own spiritual and writing practices previously developed in The Cloud, his remaking is also innovative and daring. His many departures from his Latin sources follow the trends discussed above. Expanded references to the limitations of the intellect and language and recollections of his resistance in The Cloud to the pretensions of learning signal a reduced tolerance in Deonise Hid Divinite for scholarly abstractions. The Cloud's exposure of the deceptiveness
of the imagination as an aspect of bodily existence and therefore a hindrance to contemplation takes the form in the translation of an initial undermining, followed by a radical reconceptualizing, of Sarracenus' and Gallus' sculpting analogy. This same expansion contains the author's exegesis of an indwelling divine nature open to exploration 'in his deuine werk' (6.26). The translation's doctrinal adjustments include interjected references to grace and a personalizing of the divine in a way that differentiates it from a philosophical postulate. Yet other changes reintroduce the author's characteristic robustness of tone and contribute to a sense of his own reality and that of his reader.

It remains to consider how Deonis Hid Diuinite fits within the flourishing traditions of medieval translation theory and practice. In tracing the theory from its classical origins, Rita Copeland reveals how the paradox inherent in translation as 'a sign of both continuity and rupture' coalesced with a series of rethinkings to produce a range of options. Cicero's De optimo genere oratorum authorized a view of translation as contending against the source text that it sought to displace and replace, as the translator laboured to expand the literary capacity of his own language. In De doctrina christiana Augustine transmitted a related view of translation as a function of the rhetorical act of inventio, a discovery or 'coming upon' of multilayered meanings in Scripture that it was the exegete's task to reconfigure as text and language. A contrary stream of opinion sanctioned by St Jerome's prescription for Bible translation as a faithful replication of the word of God diluted this understanding.

Deonis Hid Diuinite falls nearer to the creative end of the spectrum of approaches. The author's stated purpose in translating, quoted above, is to 'aferme' his teaching by resorting to Dionysius as a respected 'doctour'. His intention to follow 'pe nakid letter of pe text' suggests that his purpose is not to displace his Latin sources, but his rewriting of the sculpting analogy militates against this. Moreover, a cultural transference, comparable with that aimed at in Cicero's translations from Greek, has taken place, in the vigorous English tone of Deonis Hid Diuinite, and the 'translation' of the text to a practical contemplative, probably Carthusian, context. The author's experiments with the liminal space between vernacular language and the silence of contemplation, as well as the neologisms discussed by Hodgson and Lees, are original features that 'discover' the potential of English and help to establish its credentials. Hodgson rightly describes the author as 'an inventor who enriched the language by his attempts to express philosophical and theological conceptions'.

In this respect the contemporary text with which Deonis Hid Diuinite has most in common is Chaucer's translation of Boethius' Consolatio. Like the author, Chaucer regarded his work as a 'translacion', and Copeland and Tim Machan have analysed the Boece for the insights it provides into late fourteenth-century understanding of the term. Three points of comparison with Deonis Hid Diuinite are evident. First, the author selected his sources from a Pseudo-Dionysian textual tradition in a way that parallels Chaucer's selection of mixed Latin and French sources from an admittedly richer Boethian tradition. Secondly, like the Boece, Deonis Hid Diuinite conflates the two main components
of medieval translation identified by Copeland: *interpretabio*, or exegesis as an act that goes beyond mere replication; and *exercitabio*, or an instructive exercise that enables a 'discovery ... of one's own language'. Nevertheless, and this is the third point, both *Deonis Hid Divinitie* and the *Boece* adapt a challenging but revered philosophy for an audience more concerned with *sentence* than aesthetic effect. In applying techniques for engaging such an audience, the Cloud-author's stance as a translator is comparable with Chaucer's, for whom 'the Consolation was a living text which invited reader involvement'.

The merging of roles of expositor and translator traced by Copeland underpins the author's approval of Gallus as 'a noble & a worjji expositor, and it is likely that he saw his use of the *Extractio* as an extension of Gallus' work. The distinction between Gallus and Eriugena, who was, and who regarded himself as, a *fidus interpres*, is a feature of Pseudo-Dionysian tradition that the Cloud-author probably knew. As an expositor he complied with current expectations regarding translation. However, in adapting his version of the *Mystical Theology* to the approach and tenets of *The Cloud*, he moved beyond exposition and resumed his pre-existing stance as *auctor*, yet another category that the period imperfectly distinguished from translator.

The breadth of the author's self-positioning in relation to *Deonis Hid Divinitie* evokes the innovatory nature of that work and *The Cloud* as the only vernacular texts at the time of writing to offer Pseudo-Dionysian philosophy to an English audience. The defensive strategies of *The Cloud*, and the author's intention that each work should affirm the other, suggest that they met with resistance from some readers or from the Church. Like contemplative texts in other historical periods, they seem to have occupied the unstable creative margins of the religious culture that produced them.

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NOTES


2 'Qui habet aures audiendi, audiat' (Matthew x.15; xiii.9; xiii.43; Mark iv.9; iv.23; vii.16; Luke viii.8; xiv.31).


4 For borrowings from Hilton, see John P. H. Clark, *The Cloud of Unknowing: An


6 Clark argues that The Cloud responds to arguments in book I of The Scale (The Cloud of Unknowing: An Introduction, I, 86-8), and that it initiated a series of exchanges in treatises by both authors that continued until Hilton completed the second book of The Scale shortly before his death on 24 March 1396.


10 The present argument is based on a comparison of Hodgson’s text with the following sources: Sarracenus’ *Nova translatio* and Gallus’ *Extractio* in Dionsiaca: *Recueil donnant l’ensemble des traductions latines des ouvrages attribués au Denys l’Aréopage*, ed. Dom Philippe Chevallier, 2 vols (Paris, 1937), I, 561-602 and 709-12; and the quotations from Gallus’ *Explanatio* in British Library, Royal MS 8 G.iv printed by Hodgson. Clark points out that Gallus may not be the author of the *Expositiones seu glossae* (*PL*, CXXII, cols 267-84), diversely attributed to Eriugena, Adam Marsh, and Peter of Spain, and he finds Hodgson’s view that this work was a supplementary source for *Deonise Hid Diviniite* ‘less persuasive’ (*The Cloud: An Introduction*, I, 61f.). My observation is that none of the parallels adduced by Hodgson in her editions establishes her case for direct borrowing from the *Gloss*.


12 Lees, Negative Language, II, 182.

13 Deonise Hid Diviniite, ed. Hodgson, p. xlii.

14 Ibid., p. xliii.

15 Lees, Negative Language, II, 198.

16 Ibid., II, 209.

17 The Cloud also draws on *On the Divine Names*, as the above quotation and other references confirm. See Clark, The Cloud of Unknowing: An Introduction, I, 53.


19 ‘Sarracenus ... undertakes to align the Dionysian corpus – insofar as his role as translator permits – with the traditional Christianity of the Western Church for which his text was compiled’ (Lees, Negative Language, II, 179).

20 Minnis refers to Gallus as having ‘medievalized’ the *Mystical Theology* (*The sources of The Cloud*, p. 63); similarly Lees: ‘It was principally at the hands of Thomas Gallus ... that Sarracenus’s latinization of the Dionysian corpus and his project to establish beyond question its total accord with orthodox Christian theology was finally brought to full
effect' (Negative Language, II, 181); 'Thomas Gallus was largely instrumental in ensuring the assimilation of Dionysian theology into the mainstream of Christian tradition in the West' (II, 193).

21 See Minnis, 'The sources of The Cloud', pp. 64f.


24 'Book of Contemplacyon' occurs in the title to The Cloud in Cambridge University Library, MS II.6.39 and MS Kk.6.26; London, British Library, Harley MS 919; and Dublin, Trinity College, MS 122. The texts in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 576 and MS Douce 262; London, British Library, Royal MS 17 C.26; and Parkminster, MS D 176 refer in their titles to 'diuyne clowde'. The repetition 'diuyne'/diuinite' may reflect the author's view of The Cloud and Deonise Hid Diuinite as companion texts.

25 The change to 'Wysdome' aligns Deonise Hid Diuinite with the Middle English translation of Benjamin minor, described in its opening sentence as 'a book ... of pe studie of wisdom' (Deonise Hid Diuinite, ed. Hodgson (1955), 12.4). This work traces the purification of the faculties in contemplation through a biblical allegory of Jacob, his wives, and their maidservants. Probably not the work of the Cloud-author, A Treatise of the Study of Wisdom accompanies his authentic works in four manuscripts.

26 For example, when Sarracenus writes: 'Quoniam hoc quod est super omnem positionem ponentes ...', Deonise Hid Diuinite inserts a clause from Gallus: 'For whan we wolen merk Codhy settyng ...', followed by a modification of Sarracenus: 'pe whiche in hymself is abouen alle settyng ...' (8.24f).

27 The translator personalizes or simplifies others of Sarracenus' and Gallus' formulations: 'ad divina Dei' becomes 'vnto God' (7.30), 'Deus' becomes 'he' (10.9), and 'in Verbo' becomes 'in hym' (10.12).

28 e.g. chapter 1 develops the metaphor of 'a lyame of longing' (Cloud 14.4). After exploring the error of a bodily directing of the mind upward in the time of prayer (112.1-3), chapter 60 refers to: '[jeire loue & [jeire desire, [je which is goosdy [jeire liif (112.15-18).

29 'Per unitionem dilectionis' (Extractio) is translated 'syngulerette of affeccioun' (Deonise Hid Diuinite 5.15).

30 The Cloud combines the terms in the phrase, 'an affectuous stering of loue to God' (33.2f.), and defines virtue as 'an ordeinde & a mesurid affeccion, pleinly directe vnto God for him-self' (39.17). 'Affeccion', meaning the feeling faculty, is again linked with love in the phrase, 'Pan schalt [ou fele [ine affeccion enflaumid wip [e fiire of his loue' (62.17f.).

31 Lees, Negative Language, II, 205.

32 The translator is faithful to the biblical account in adding references to the cleansing of the people (Deonise Hid Diuinite 4.28f.; Exodus xix.10, 14f.). However neither Dionysius' statement that Moses received the commandments accompanied by chosen priests (Sarracenus: 'cum electis sacerdotis'), nor the impression given in the English that he was alone, is biblically exact, since God commands Aaron to accompany him (Exodus xix.24).

33 Sarracenus: 'et impalpabili omnino et invisibili fit, omnis existens ejus qui est super omnia, et nullius, neque suipsius, neque alterius.' This translates as: 'and he is made [or enwrapped in; adheres to] wholly of him [add: who is] intangible and invisible, his whole being [add: consisting of the One, or belonging to the One] who is above all, and of none else, neither of himself, nor of another.'
e.g. ‘For if it be trewlich conceived, it is not a sodeyn steryng, & as it were vnauised, speedily springing unto God as sparcle fro e cole. & it is merueylous to noumbre þe sterynges þat may be in one oure wrou3t in a soule þat is disposid to pis werk’ (Cloud 22.6–10). Earlier the author compares the duration of the ‘werk’ of contemplation to an ‘athomus’, as defined by ‘trewe philosophres in the sciens of astronomye’ (17.14–20).


The Cloud’s recommendation of contemplation as play, established in chapter 32 in descriptions of spiritual ‘sle3ts’ (‘devices’) that are compared with childlike play (67.10–13), recurs in chapter 46 (87.19–88.4), following a passage that associates ‘list’ (enthusiasm) with true spiritual working and a courtesy in contemplation that is the opposite of bodily straining: ‘leerne þee to loue listely wijj a softe & demure conteanaunce, as wel in body as in soule’ (Cloud 87.16f.). Chapter 47, described in its heading as offering a ‘sle3’ (meaning ‘subtle’) teaching, develops the insight that the contemplative’s playful hiding from God of desire for him casts that desire ‘into depnes of spirite, fer fro any rude medelyng of any bodelines’ (89.16f).

Repeated in An Epistle of Prayer, the proverb is again linked with the word-stem ‘sle3’: ‘... it is my counsel þat pou seke sle3ts, for “Betir is list þan leipr strengbe”’ (Deonise Hid Diuinite, ed. Hodgson (1955), 8.1–2). The same combination occurs as an addition to the Latin source in A Treatise of the Study of Wisdom: ‘For betir is a sley man þan a strong man, 3e, and betyr is list þen lijer strengbe. And a sley man spekip of victories’ (Deonise Hid Diuinite, 41.3–1). The repetitions suggest that the author’s circle explored the proverb’s relevance to contemplation.

A reference to grace is introduced from Gallus into an early passage based on Sarracenus (2.32). Unsourced references to grace are added at 3.10 and 5.6f.


For example, an account of the spiritual depth to be achieved by a repeated one-syllable prayer (which however must not become a substitute for the prayer of the Church) ends with the assertion: ‘& raper it peersip þe eres of Almy3ty God þan dop any longe sauter vmmynfuldly mumlyd in þe teep’ (75.4).

The Cloud develops the theme both briefly in similar words, e.g. ‘a proude, coryous & an ymaginatif witte’ (22.18f.); ‘corious & ymaginatyue wittyss’ (94. 23f.), and at length: ‘Pees men willen sumtyme wijj þe correousite of here ymaginacion peerce þe planetes, & make an hole in þe firmament to loke in þerate. Pees men wil make a God as hem lyst, & clofien hym ful richely in clofes, & set hym in a trone, fer more curiously þan euer was he depeynted in þis erje’ (105. 9–14). The contemplatives portrayed as deceived by bodily feelings and by ‘pride & coriouste of witte’ (99.20f.) are said to ‘trauayle þeire ymaginacion so vndiscreetly, þat at þe laste þei turne here brayne in here hedes’ (96.22–4).


In the opening prayer a metaphor, ‘drawe us up’, replaces Sarracenus’ ‘dirige nos’.

Later the author translates Sarracenus: ‘Istos autem dico qui in exsistendbus istos autem dico qui in exsistendbus sunt formati’, meaning ‘conformed’, ‘adjusted’, as ‘alle þoo þat þen fastnyd in knowing & louyng of þees þinges þat ben knowable and han bigynnyng’ (3.2of.). Finally, an interpolated metaphor sums up the effort of removing concepts: ‘we foulden alle togeders & done hem awaye’ (7.4f.; Sarracenus: ‘omnia auferimus’).

e.g. ‘lat God drawe þi loue up to þat cloude’ (34.2of.); ‘fastnidy bi it a lyame of longing’ (14.3f.); ‘haue þis entent lappid & foulden in o worde’ (28.10).
"e.g. 'Mechil more dyshonour doo we to God ... 3if we wurshypyn stockys or stonys or onye ymagys' (Dives and Pauper 1.90). The MED gives further examples.

In The Cloud the 'lump' undergoes a series of transformations that are theologically more venturesome than those of the 'stok'. The author first invites the contemplative aspirant to consider, not individual sins, but sin as a lump, identified with the self (Cloud 78.17f). For as long as he lives, he will 'fele in som partye pis foule stynkyng lump of synne, as it were onydl & congelid with pe substaunce of pi beyng' (79.13–15). If he persists in contemplation he will experience the lump as a barrier of sin/self separating him from God (82.13–17); and later as the deepest apprehension of selfhood, which must be forsaken (84.14). The most original aspect of the author's thought on the lump of sin is nevertheless his identification of it, in terminology that he was to repeat in Deonise Hid Diuinite, with 'pis combrros cloude of vnknowyng' (63.22). The contemplative sometimes experiences the cloud (122.18f), as 'synne a lumpe, he wote neuer what, none obe r ping pan hym-self', i.e. as the remaining root and pain of original sin (123.16f).

Not even persistence in contemplative grace can entirely rub away the cloud/lump in this life (123.11f). At other times however the contemplative experiences it as 'paradis or heuen' (123.19f), and even as God (123.21). The Cloud's references to being encumbered by the burden of sin (38.1, 78.24) and by a studied outward demeanour (99.1) further foreshadow the encumbering block in Deonise Hid Diuinite. Both sequences may build on Hilton, who writes of being encumbered with oneself in bodily feeling (The Scale of Perfection, book I, ch. 88).

Compare The Cloud: 'pe nakid being of God him-self only' (32.7f); 'a nakid wetyng & a felyng of pin owne beyng' (83.3).

Compare The Cloud: 'Somtyme we profite in Dis grace by oure owne goosdy slei3t, holpyn wij) grace' (128.17f).

The phrase 'biynde beholdyngs' in Deonise Hid Diuinite forms a bridge between The Cloud and The Book of Privy Counselling, the author's last known composition, where it takes various syntactical shapes (139.12, 142.9–12, 143.22, 144.1–3).

"... alle actyues pleynen hem of contemplatyues, as Martha did on Mary; of pe whiche pleynying ignorance is pe cause' (Cloud 5.19f); 'myn ignoraunte defautes ... obe r mens ignoraunte wordes & dedes' (51.5f).

The Nova translatio is similar: 'ipsam neque ponimus neque auferimus; quoniam et super omnem positionem est perfecta et unitiva omnium causa, et super omnem ablationem est excessus ab omnibus simpliciter absolu ti et super tota.'


Rita Copeland, 'The fortunes of Non verbum pro verbo: or, why Jerome is not a


56 Copeland, ‘The fortunes of *Non verbum pro verbo*’, p. 21.


58 Deonise Hid Diuinite, introduction, p. xxxiii.


61 Copeland, ‘Rhetoric and vernacular translation’, p. 44.


63 Ibid., p. 195.

64 Copeland, ‘The fortunes of *Non verbum pro verbo*’, pp. 30f.