Ars Memorativa, *Ars Oblivionis*
in Middle English Religious Plays

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Abstract
This paper investigates the multi-layered violence of religious representation in the late medieval York biblical plays, with a focus on the *Supper at Emmaus*. I read *Emmaus* (Y40), a play which commemorates the Crucifixion and openly encourages strong anti-Judaism, alongside scenes in an early predecessor pageant, *The Crucifixion* (Y35), within their contemporary devotional and mnemonic practices, i.e. the confessional *Book of Margery Kempe* and Thomas Bradwardine's tract on *ars memorativa*. *Emmaus* in particular demonstrates how a fundamentally violent *ars memorativa*, the legacy of ancient rhetoric to the Middle Ages, also underpins the instruction of the laity in the basics of Christian faith, here with the aid of highly musical prosody and repetition, and thereby hones a biased, intolerant and violence-inured Christian collective memory. To study the York play's position relative to late medieval mnemonic practices, I frame my analysis within memory studies, enriched with the more specific insights offered by social-psychological, neurobiological and cognitivist studies of memory.

Keywords: Christianity, Middle English biblical plays, *Supper at Emmaus* (York), *The Crucifixion* (York), *ars memorativa*, social amnesia, memory studies, violence of representation

> I told him that the way to salvation was by Jesus Christ, God-Man, Who, as He was man, shed His blood for us on the cross, etc. "Oh sir," said he, "I think I heard of that man you spake of, once in a play at Kendall, called Corpus Christi play, where there was a man on a tree, and blood ran down," &c. And after that he professed that tho' he was a good churchman, that is, he constantly went to Common-Prayer at their chapel, yet he could not remember that he ever heard of salvation by Jesus Christ,

> but in that play. This very discourse made me the more vigorously go thro'
> the chappelry [of Cartmell, Yorkshire], and both publickly and from house
> to house catechise both old and young. (Shaw 139)

The above catechism occurred in 1644, the Protestant preacher records (Shaw 138-9), yet his 60-year-old parishioner's recollection of the bloody image seen in a Corpus Christi play at Kendal in Westmorland (now in Cumbria) as a child references an event half a century before.[1] Not the soteriological message of Catholicism but the image of the gory tortured body made an indelible impression on the very young Christian and would be *recalled on cue* by the 60-year-old Protestant parishioner,[2] otherwise barely capable of *recognition*[3] of how his redemption would come through.[4]

This paper investigates the existence, if any, of a diffraction pattern of violence[5] in the late medieval York biblical plays, with a focus on the Woolpackers and Woolbrokers' *Supper at Emmaus*. To verify my working hypothesis about Christianity's multi-layered violence of representation embedded in the religious message as disseminated through vernacular drama, I read *Emmaus* (Y40) in tandem with an early predecessor York pageant, *The Crucifixion* (Y35), and with their contemporary devotional and mnemonic practices. I submit that *Emmaus* demonstrates how a fundamentally violent *ars memorativa* – the legacy of ancient rhetoric to the Middle Ages – could also be deployed, if obliquely, outside its scholarly realm to instruct the laity in the fundamentals of Christian belief and thereby hone a biased, intolerant and violence-inured collective memory. The analysis is framed within memory studies as a cultural historical field (Confino 1388), but also resorts to social-psychological, neurobiological and cognitivist studies of individual memory to better understand, by recourse to twenty-first-century models, late medieval views on and practices concerning memory within the social.

Memory – whether individual or "collective memory" – as a form of representation of the past of the individual/the group is an ambiguity-ridden concept.[6] Psychologist Frederic Bartlett recognises with regard to collective memory that there exists "memory *in* the group, [but] not memory *of* the group" (qtd. in Wertsch 2008: 2.928): "Collective

memories may ultimately reside in individual nervous systems, but complex social processes provide the basis for our memories and their nature" (Roediger *et al.* 142; see Lambert *et al.* 197; Wertsch 2009: 119), which includes sharing "the same cultural tool kit": language, visual symbolism, mnemotechnics, instruments and ritual calendar (Wertsch 2008: 2.393; Wertsch 2009: 120). This is why Wertsch "prefer[s] to speak of collective *remembering* rather than collective memory" (2009: 119), thus focusing on process, with its "effort after meaning" (Bartlett, qtd. in Wertsch 2008: 2.928), and heeding "the active social and political processes involved" (2.928). Such cultural sharing crucially shapes the group (Wertsch 2009: 120-2) as part of its identity project (Wertsch 2008: 2.929-32).

To explore meaningfully the likely effects of vernacular religious theatre (as shared cultural tool) on medieval Christian collective remembering, we should consider its contested position. Northern English "biblical drama may have arisen as a solution – religious, political and otherwise – to clerical attempts to suppress and control play and game" (Clopper 169; 109-37), i.e. secular, often bawdy, forms of entertainment, yet it also indicates "a contestation for space within the religious arena" (204). At stake in the lay-clerical ratio of involvement in drama production was *access* to positions of authority ordinarily occupied by the clergy; lay producers averred that they only exercised their Christian right to exhort fellow Christians to belief and penance (Clopper 204-6).[7]

If traditionally exhortation fell to clergymen, in the fourteenth century it took a new twist: teaching laypeople devotion to the human Christ also through devotional vernacular texts. Furthermore, preachers now instructed the laity how to interpret the iconological programme underlying church painting and especially to focus on Christ's tortured body: "Notice that the shedding of [Christ's] blood is a very strong remedy because it leads the sinner to the sorrow of contrition, the shame of confession, and to the labour of [making] satisfaction" (qtd. in Ross 55). What such regular devotional instructions would have persuaded individuals about cannot be ascertained. However, we know from the confessional *Book of Margery Kempe* (late 1430s) that the East-Anglian lay mystic was compassionately melting with tears (*Book* 1.46.2609-10)

on seeing any depiction of the Passion/Crucifixion either (originally) in church or (subsequently) in her mind's eye as powered by mnemonic devotional practices (Ciobanu, *SBLME* 292-4). Such embodied compassion, manifested as the fire of love kindled in her heart (*Book* 1.46.2610) and given vent in exceptionally loud crying, sobbing and weeping (1.46.2611-13), Margery also experienced during the Good Friday rite of the Sepulchre (1.57.3302-15), where her eye of faith gained the upper hand once the actual image had activated the mnemonic one. Picturing the Passion and Crucifixion "in the syght of hir sowle" (1.57.3309) "as verily as thei sche had seyn hys precyows body betyn, scorgyd, and crucifyed wyth hir bodily eye" (1.57.3309-10), Margery felt the mental image "wowndyng hir wyth pité and compassyon" (1.57.3311). It is a classic case of *compunctio cordis* – devout piety literally embodied as the piercing of one's heart in pious *imitatio Christi* – as encouraged in late medieval devotional preaching and tracts alike (Ciobanu, *SBLME* 291-9).

Yet at the same time as Christians learnt to let their eyes linger over images of violence against Christ's body, a concurrent motif emerged within the same devotional practices: the incrimination of Jews as fully responsible for the Passion/Crucifixion. One of her contemplative exercises made Margery Kempe vividly witness, *in her mind's eye*, the Crucifixion as a violent and cruel Jewish attack which flayed and tore Jesus to pieces (*Book* 1.80.4545-62). Margery's may be a rather extra-ordinary case, highly controversial for the contemporaries, but it suggests the import of the mnemonic dimension of pious engagement with devotional images and practices, and its likely extra-religious ramifications, especially the anti-Jewish sentiment.

Such sentiment was particularly forcefully taught to Christians on Good Friday, whose special liturgy incriminated the Jews for the Crucifixion.[8] The Good Friday observances, a religious ritual through which Catholicism re-constructed its history as living memory (hence a memorial practice) and grounded it in a violent foundational event,[9] illustrates the working of *hegemonic Christian memory* (or *collective memory* as constructed and disseminated *from above*). In the later Middle Ages, the Good Friday liturgy concurred with *theologia cordis* to convey

the latter's pious accent to the laity within the ritual frame afforded by the liturgical calendar. What the hegemonic *theologia cordis*, with its trope of *compunctio cordis* and its ways of fashioning the devotional gaze, aimed to achieve was the pious (re)fashioning and understanding of religious practices. To what extent it was successful, Margery's excessive devotionalism verging on transgression, the old Protestant's remembrance of religious theatre watched as a child, though not of weekly clerical teaching about redemption, i.e. Christian *memory* as *experienced below*, and various clerical fears articulated in the Middle English *A Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge* (*c*. 1380-1425) or in Jean Gerson's *Tractatus pro devotis simplicibus* (early fifteenth century), can only begin to suggest (Ciobanu, *SBLME* 323-40).

Given the relative unfamiliarity of the York *Supper at Emmaus*, I will first outline its plot and stanzaic structure. Subsequently I will highlight certain aspects pertinent to the discussion of memory in late medieval western Christianity.

Harking back to the Lukan episode of the road to Emmaus (Lk 24.13-35),[10] the York script organises its early dialogue between the two disciples – captioned I and II Perigrinus in the manuscript character-headings – as one-eight-line-stanza speeches linked to each other through concatenation.[11] This is the pattern (stanzas 3-8) used, prior to the pilgrims' encounter with the risen Christ, to *deliberately recollect* the details of the Passion and Crucifixion. Stanzas 9-10, each shared between Christ and the two disciples, introduce Christ as a stranger unfamiliar with the Jerusalem events and thereby a renewed interest in the Passion. Stanzas 11-16 follow the early pattern, although stanzas 14-16 dispense with the concatenation: this corresponds to the shift in subject matter to the vetero-testamentary Resurrection prophecy and the gospel account of women's vision of angels and the disciples' (re)discovery of the empty tomb, to conclude in the pilgrims' doubtful "þat wight [*fellow*] was away" (Y40/128). Christ rebukes his disciples for unfaith (ss. 17-18) and is invited to share their abode at Emmaus (ss. 19-20). The remaining stanzas (20-30) halve their line number, which creates a somewhat racy exchange between the pilgrims. Stanzas 22 (where they realise their interlocutor has vanished) and 23 (where the II Perigrinus affirms that the stranger is

Christ (Y40/166)), shared between the disciples, reinstate the concatenation pattern, which will be pursued to the end in one-four-line-stanza speeches. With stanza 25, the II Perigrinus's repetition (Y40/167-8) of his fellow's affirmation of Christ's risen condition introduces the third and final rehearsal of gory Passion details, alongside the repeated incrimination of the Jews.

Of course the medieval spectators were unaware of *Emmaus*'s stanzaic structure. They watched a performance – with all its semiotic specificity, as well as likely differences from year to year – of what is now available to us merely in script form.[12] Nevertheless, and irrespective of the performance particulars, they could hear certain *repetitions*, both thematic (manifested lexically) and prosodically inflected ones, and grow aware of *changing rhythms*.

Here is the pilgrims' early *recall* of the Passion/Crucifixion, illustrative of stanzaic concatenation:

> I PERIGRINUS
> ... With scourges smertly goyng þei smote hym.
> II PERIGRINUS
> Þei smotte hym full smertely þat þe bloode oute braste,
> Þat all his hyde in hurth was hastely hidde.
> A croune of thorne on his heede full thraly þei thraste,
> Itt is grete dole for to deme þe dedis þei hym dide.
> With byndyng vnbaynly and betyng,
> Þane on his bakke bare he þame by
> A crosse vnto Caluery;
> Þat swettyng was swemyed for swetyng.
> I PERIGRINUS
> For all þe swette þat he swete with swyngis þei hym swang... (Y40/32-41)

The alliterative verse,[13] the framing morphology (concatenation), and cross- and arch-rhyme contribute significantly to the *musical beat of the script*.[14] Could verse musicality[15] have mitigated the representation of physical violence against Jesus so as to alleviate the distress caused to medieval Christian audiences?[16] Yet such psychological strain was actively cultivated in devotional practices centred on Christ's humanity, as Margery Kempe's pious exercises illustrate. Furthermore, the music-violence intertwining had permeated representations of the Passion or martyrdom since early times, with the Crucifixion represented as re-

morphing Christ's body into God's *cithara* (Holsinger 33-46, 53-60, 194-216). York's spectators were thus inured to spectacles of religious violence (Bestul 145-64; Ciobanu, *SBLME* 308-11).

The echo-effect of concatenation shoots throughout the York *Emmaus*: in the dialogue between the two pilgrims in the absence of Christ (e.g. Y40/40-1, 64-5, 72-73, 104-5, 120-1; 162-3), where it has a validating force, as well as only once within respectively Jesus's speech (136-7) and one disciple's speech to Jesus (144-5), with a suasive thrust. Metatheatrically, speech concatenation recalls the very rolling of the pageant wagons along the York route, as is also hinted in the play's closing speech (190-2), in one of the several York instances of theatricality.

For all their pleasant musical sound, with its soothing capacity, such structures of repetition in *Emmaus* (like early in *The Death of Christ*) are *mala musica*: they provide a musical *mise en abyme* for the Passion-Resurrection drama's violence of representation. Broadly, what at a literal or pictorial level appears to be a scene representing violence may turn out to be a rhetorical argument which dissimulates its violence of representing the us/them dualism, especially through its allotment of the subject position and therewith speech entitlement (Armstrong and Tennenhouse 3-9; de Lauretis 240; Ciobanu, *SBLME* 39-55, 75-81, 115-207). On the face of it, *Emmaus* dabbles exclusively in the representation of violence against Jesus in the Passion/Crucifixion, whose minute description two disciples repeat nauseatingly in their dialogue before Christ's appearance (ss. 3-8), to Christ (ss. 11-14), and again to each other (ss. 24-26). Nevertheless, *Emmaus* braids its description of the Passion/Crucifixion suffering – dangerously aestheticised: "For so comely a corse canne I none knowe" (Y40/60) – with a flat accusation of Jews. The Jews' name is mentioned explicitly, as opposed to anaphoric noun phrases (63, 65), by the II Perigrinus both before (19) and after (172) their Christic encounter. Nevertheless, the incriminated Jews *never speak* here, unlike in the early pageants, which should give us pause. At the grammatical level, the active voice[17] spuriously represents Jews as criminal *agent*, when they are actually the *object* of the discourse of *slander* (see *infra*). Conversely, the passive voice represents Jesus as victimised, contrary to the gospel and

dogmatic emphasis on divine kenosis and self-sacrifice for love of humankind; yet such usage is subtly consistent with the Anselmian view of the Atonement as transitive, with the Son atoning so as to propitiate the Father. At the ideological level, *Emmaus*'s exclusive focus on what the Jews did to Christ de-emphasises what their descendants had been done to by Christian polities ever since (Ciobanu, *SBLME* 175-207), which therefore *pre-empts* any "negative commemoration" in Christian history, i.e. "the memory of what 'we' [Christians] did to others rather than what others did to us" (Uhl 82; see Ross *et al*. 2.912-15). Could this be an instance of an *ars oblivionis* (Brockmeier 30; Ricoeur 412), or *social amnesia*, which Christianity has cultivated, i.e. a systematic attempt to memorialise only what is convenient for the group's self-image (see Pennebaker and Gonzales; Confino 1393-6)?

Emmaus's violence of representation has even more complex ramifications than already indicated. The repetitions *remediate*[18] a gospel-inflected account of Christ's suffering as desirable and validating *vita*, as echoes across this text (e.g. Y40/33::170-1, 42::168, 53::107, 54::104-5) and echoes of the York *Crucifixion* in this text (e.g. Y40/94-5::Y35/223-6) also suggest. *The Crucifixion* makes the musical instrument by pulling the ropes and straining Jesus's body; *Emmaus* refashions the crucified body as the score of atonement theology (Y40/169). *The Crucifixion* counterpoises Jesus's body in pieces (Y35/98-226) with the executioners' bodies in pieces (188-94); *Emmaus* replicates it in the pilgrims' avowals of experiencing heart-rending grief at the sight of the protracted and manifold torture, then (Y40/51, 108), and memory thereof, now (46-7). Violence-infliction therefore becomes the elective instrument of working/achieving redemption.

On the other hand, framing the space-time of remembering as the journey to Emmaus presents the opportunity/"tome" (Y40/18) for talking and debate/"jangle" (19), yet also for mnemonic reinforcement of Jewish guilt. The Middle English verb *janglen* described all kinds of talking, from discussing, debating, disputing, to complaining, to chattering (*MED*, s.v. "janglen"). Retrospectively, the two pilgrims' is not idle talk or gossip, but *slanderous conversation*, one informed by and partaking in the central and late medieval anti-Jewish discourse (Ciobanu, *SBLME* 175-

207), vindicated here as true in the protracted description of the torture performed by Jews (Y40/172). Act as they may as "reputational entrepreneurs,"[19] the disciples achieve a double goal with only one stone: they make Jesus's battered, now dead, body the token of divine love and forgiveness, whilst also fostering negative attitudes towards Jews. The *legitimacy* of anti-Jewish sentiment as *Emmaus* scripts derives from its being framed within the eye-witness account, with its *claims to authenticity and authority* (cf. Basu 144) through indisputable *proximity* to the reality of the events described. No one ever takes it amiss that the *Emmaus* pilgrims – Jesus's gospel disciples – could *not* have witnessed all the Passion stages, but rather imagined the events unfolding "in the subjunctive voice" (Zelizer 162-5, 180), the voice of the hypothetical, by *inferring* the violence from the gory marks on the body, and adding rhetorically an emotional touch.

Furthermore, the scripted commemoration within what seemingly constitutes *communicative memory*, i.e. the actively transmitted memories between three living generations (J. Assmann 126-7), liable to various changes (Ross *et al.* 2.921-2), blurs awareness that the events belong to Christian *cultural memory* as rehearsed and consolidated for over a millennium. Unbeknownst to medieval audiences, yet fully in keeping with the Christian teachings about the eternal present of the Crucifixion, *Emmaus* re-morphs Christianity's cultural memory – analogous to the individual's *semantic memory*, i.e. stored conceptual and factual knowledge about the world[20] – as precisely the communicative memory powered by individual *episodic memories* – i.e. explicit recollection of one's past experiences[21] – which frames the writing of the canonical gospels. What for each gospel writer may or may not have constituted *flashbulb memories*, i.e. "extraordinarily detailed, long-lasting, and unusually accurate 'snapshots' of the specific context in which an unexpected, emotion-laden event occurred" (Lambert *et al.* 194),[22] for the Christians of the 1400s were merely instances of *cryptomnesia*,[23] of pseudo-memories implanted in one's head through (repeated) recounting during the individual's induction into *Christianitas*[24] and participation in its collective remembering, itself a process with a high capacity to create

and maintain a sense of group identity and unity (Wertsch 2009: 122-4; Lambert *et al.* 194-5; Zerubavel 286; Olick and Robbins 124).

To recapitulate: The York *Emmaus* centres on the ekphrasis (as typically depicted in religious iconography and thence in devotional discourse) of Jesus's body mangled during the Passion/Crucifixion, and aestheticised in commemoration (Y40/60), yet in the absence of any stage props cuing visualisation, whilst *de-emphasising* the *soteriological* burden of Jesus's death. I could trace the effects only tentatively.

At individual level, the spectators were likely overwhelmed by the script's powerful visuality concerning exclusively the representation of violence against Jesus's body, as well as by verse musicality. Memory research focusing on oral tradition (Rubin 277) suggests that lines higher in visual imagery can be recalled better than the others; lines important to understanding the meaning are recalled less than lines which carry the meaning by being causally connected to other lines, as in *Emmaus* through musical repetition. Alliterative stress rhythm in oral rendition also improves *line* recollection, whilst a relative failure in *depth of processing* because of extremely powerful shallow rhyme processing is offset by the latter's recollective force (Rubin 278-80). In terms of memory encoding, at a minimum, information should be stored and processed in the semiautonomous sensory systems (with a spatial system integrating them), with the contribution of *language* to code non-linguistic inputs, *narrative* to structure coherently the story, and *emotions*[25] (Rubin 282-3). In *Emmaus*, the highly visual narrative-descriptive dialogue, prosodic-lexical musicality and emotional charge conspire to create a haunting visual music-text whose performance may have cued memory encoding and/or consolidation.

At the level of collective remembering, the purpose which *Emmaus*'s commemorative description served, in this yearly practice framed at York by the Corpus Christi feast (Beadle n. 6, 28-9),[26] was hardly innocent. *Emmaus* mentions explicitly the Jews as tormentors twice (Y40/19; 172), followed by descriptions of Jesus's body bleeding copiously. Commemorating the tortured body records, not simply the "unmaking of the body,"[27] but its re-making in metaphorical-institutional terms and whose very grounding has been, ever since Tertullian's

description of the institution of Christian faith through its martyrs' sacrifice, the *flow of blood*.

Granted *Emmaus*'s anti-Jewish violence of representation, should it concern us today apart from noting its consistence with the late medieval western anti-Jewish sentiment and practices (see Nirenberg)? I find the York script worth examining for its intertwining of individual memorisation and collective remembering within *Christianitas*.

Psychological and neurocognitive memory studies have endorsed our sense – and also practices past and present – that individual learning (viz. memory encoding) and memory retrieval benefit from coding information both verbally and visually, i.e. creating a visual image of a verbal item (Foster 117); that imagery value (i.e. the ease with which words prime a mental picture) and concreteness are strongly related to recall (Cornoldi *et al*. 2.109; Worthen and Hunt 2.146); that using bizarre images to peg words works better than using common ones, and more generally that bizarreness and distinctive features in a mnemonic set of bizarre *and* common images which both elaborate and organise schematically the to-be-remembered information, improve both its encoding and retrieval (Foster 117; Cornoldi *et al*. 2.107; Worthen and Hunt 2.146-52); or that rhythm and rhyme provide structures which aid recall (Foster 128; Rubin 275-8; Worthen and Hunt 2.147). Furthermore, behavioural experiments supplemented by fMRI tests indicate the *self-reference effect*, i.e. "enhanced memory for information encoded in relation to oneself" (Schacter *et al*. 93; 93-5), as well as the import of emotion for memory in its encoding stage (95-6; Rubin 283). Yet, both self-reference and emotions are prone to distortion over time, although negative emotion may boost memory accuracy, especially compared to emotionally uncharged memories (Schacter *et al*. 97-9, 100-2).

To revert to *Emmaus*: Its repetition-steeped rhythms – prosodically and lexically encoded musicality and the internal/external citation structure – boost memory encoding and retrieval, as do the admittedly fluidly polarised emotions: negative emotion triggered by anti-Christic violence, yet *ideally* to be re-orientated as positive eschatologically; and constant negative anti-Jewish emotion. Repeated ekphrasis emphasises the horror of the scourges, ropes and nails that have re-formed Christ's body,

as well as the blood thus shed, yet such over-exaggerated *imago pietatis* is consistent qualitatively, beyond religion, with the striking image to be pictured in one's mind during the encoding stage of semantic memories, according to the medieval *ars memorativa*.

Thomas Bradwardine's *De memoria artificiali adquirenda* (*c.* 1333-35) illustrates how violence could serve in the exercise of learning the art of memory, typically framed within an ocularcentric practice.[28] One method of serial recall which the tract demonstrates uses *loci* to encode *memoria rerum* ("memory for things," viz. subject matter)[29] and depicts the *imagines agentes* (mnemonic images of the actors) of average size, but "wondrous and intense, because such things are impressed in memory more deeply and are better retained" (qtd. in Carruthers 208). Rendered distinct through extreme appearance, as the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium* advised (Whitehead 29, 42-3), the *imagines agentes*, Bradwardine urges, should be linked together in a succession of organised scenes, where engagement in vigorous physical action, e.g. holding, dragging, biting, striking or dancing, indicates the actors' relationships (Carruthers 205-8) through a calculatedly dramatic *mise-en-scène*. Deliberately violent, *ars memorativa* is, however, made to conceal its violence of representation by glossing over violence as mnemonic topic, even origin, and instrument (cf. Cornoldi *et al.* 2.107), especially through the scene's embedding within a seemingly neutral setting for the memories. Bradwardine demonstrates the *memoria rerum* by recourse to the Zodiac (qtd. in Carruthers 209-10); such ekphrastic epitome of sexual and kyriarchal violence he *naturalises* as cosmic order which *men* (*sic*) should learn to appropriate and manipulate for their intellectual profit (Ciobanu, *SBLME* 239-40).

Was indeed Bradwardine's – and generally, *ars memorativa*'s – sound mnemonic counselling regarding information encoding, storage in and retrieval from *semantic memory* or rather violent fancy in respectable travesty? The 1644 catechetic incident's testimony to the *memoria* of Passion plays (Shaw 138-9) offers us a cautionary tale about the power of the Christian representation of violence. Shaw's presumably largely counterfeited report suggests that what was lodged in the people's minds and hearts with each Corpus Christi play performance may have

concerned less the soteriological message than the spectacularly disfigured body. The "man on a tree, and blood ran down" (Shaw 139) is precisely the *imago agentis* impressed onto the memory of commoners who, though unschooled in *ars memorativa*, were nevertheless systematically exposed to verbal/visual representations of violence against Christ's body and thus likely to have had their individual religious memories – the soteriological narrative within their semantic memory – framed by a violence-inflected collective Christian remembering.

That this may have been so is also suggested by recent theorisation of visual rhetoric (Foss; Hill; Blair), which, whilst pointing to the emotional power of devotional images, also cautions against their decontextualisation. Both texts and images can be used "to prompt an immediate visceral response," "to develop cognitive (though largely unconscious) connections over a sustained period of time," and "to prompt conscious analytical thought" (Hill 37). However, Hill's (28-32) comparison between verbal and visual arguments regarding their rhetorical appeal suggests the stronger epistemic force of representational images due to the *presence* they seemingly enshrine. Nevertheless, the persuasive power of vivid images has been proved to be short-lived: such images do not effectively convince someone to change their belief(s) in the long run *unless* the images are included in a long-term *persuasive strategy*. In the latter case, the series of messages will work together to build up over time a schematic connection between a particular figure and a set of positive (or negative) values, which will foster the desired audience response towards the figure (Hill 36). All this appears to endorse my previous remarks about the ramifications of religious and theatrical representations intertwining anti-Christic violence and anti-Jewish sentiment. However, as Mills (106-12, 141-4, 170-1), Crachiolo, Sponsler (148-52) and Lipton (1202) suggest in their analyses of hagiographic texts and iconography, even the systematic association of vivid martyrdom images and their devotional explication within a long-term persuasive Catholic strategy like that of late-medieval Christocentric devotionalism would not guarantee a univocally pious interpretation, but could also provide for sadistic identification with the torturer or indicate a manifestation of pious pornography.

The Lukan Emmaus story provides an excellent opportunity in York to braid together discursive strands that are paramount to the religious and political agenda of the dramatic collection. *Emmaus* interweaves the motifs of bodily torture, apostolic disbelief and Jewish treachery in a *musical script* which structurally and thematically echoes the Passion sequence and centres its subject matter on violence.

As pious commemoration of Christ's sacrifice yet also anti-Jewish hate speech, *Emmaus* is quite likely to stick to the Christian spectators' memory on two grounds. On the one hand, psychological experiments suggest that memorisation and recall are "directly determined by the intensity of affect as perceived by the subjects,"[30] especially high in cases of emotional involvement, and that, in this connection, "more unpleasant than pleasant adjectives will be recalled when attributed to a rival or competitor," as opposed to the case of adjectives attributed to one's own group (Dutta and Kanungo 64, 84-7, 104-6), which in York endorses a more general anti-Jewish sentiment. On the other hand, the script's repeated ekphrasis blends the horror of the torture resulting in body *sparagmos* with the musicality of the verses describing such scenes. Or, the pleasant *sound* of the text embedding the unpleasant *ekphrastic* details of Jesus's martyrdom, frames the very hate speech concerning the arch-enemy, Jews past and present, thus compounding the damaging effect of scripted anti-Jewish sentiments (cf. Reisberg and Hertel 24) and endorsing like sentiments as "scripted" and "performed" yearly in the Good Friday liturgy. Nor is the unpleasantness of the gory details of Jesus's martyrdom immaterial, since their uncanniness is consistent with the practice of *ars memorativa*, whilst having as its vehicle the very musicality of the verse.

York's music to the ear thus conceals the violence of representation in the mind. Taking my cue from Jody Enders, I submit that *Emmaus*'s fixation on the gory details of the Passion/Crucifixion dramatises the rhetorical making of *Christian memory as individual remembrance* through the description of a process of body unmaking as dismemberment intended for future re(-)membering as the Law of (God) the Father, viz. the law undergirding the constitution of members (or membership) in the Body of Christ, with the correlative exclusion of those deemed unworthy. The York Passion/Crucifixion scripts, including *Emmaus*, intimate that

such an ecumenical edifice is built upon the blood of martyrs, not as Tertullian intended his phrase in *Apologeticus* 50.13, but by crucifying the body and extolling pain as the ultimate token of legitimate power, or rather, in a twist to Foucault, *legitimate belief as power/knowledge* of access (i.e. metaphorical belonging) to the right body. Dramatic representation of violence against one body collapses into violence of representing all the bodies involved, from Jesus's battered and crucified body through the momentous glorification of (innocent) suffering as Atonement, to the collective body of the *other* through an indictment of the Jewish body.

Notes:

[1] If Gardiner's (87) sources are correct, the Corpus Christi plays continued in Kendal until the beginning of James I's reign, although already in 1586 the town council placed restrictions on the production.

[2] For the possibility of an emotional overriding of the religious message see Ciobanu (*The Spectacle of the Body in Late Medieval England* 327-8; henceforth *SBLME*); for that of inaccuracy due to original misrepresentation and/or the lapse of time, see Megill (47). See Pennebaker and Gonzales (173-4) and Wertsch (2008: 2.930-2) for overviews of the psychological literature on the age (between 13 and 25) when long-lasting memories – with formative effects – are generated of the most striking events in one's personal history or one's community, which will later in life be remembered vividly in the so-called *reminiscence bump*.

[3] See Foster (50-2) on the distinction, in memory psychology, between *recognition* and *recall*, as well as between *cued recall* and *free recall*.

[4] With a proviso regarding the polemic unreliability of the narrating minister, the parishioner's *cued recall* ostensibly belongs with "strongly context-dependent memories [which] can be quite insular, i.e. inaccessible when context cues are not provided" (Smith 113), especially considering the difference between Catholic and Protestant priming contexts; see Smith (111-14) on memories' context dependency.

[5] See Buell on *diffraction* as a method to study the rippling effects of a certain construct.

[6] See Halbwachs, J. Assmann (128-33), A. Assmann (52-6), Olick and Robbins, Wertsch (2008: 2.928-9) and Roediger *et al.* on the social framing of collective memory; Wertsch (2008: 2.929-37) on collective memory in the social construction of groups and collective memory as semiotic distribution; Wertsch (2009) and Boyer (11-13) for a critique of the assumption of collective memory as "memory *of* the group"; and Ross *et al.* on social memory processes, especially the effects of present knowledge, goals and motivation on individual recall, and how memory changes during transmission affect people's beliefs and attitudes.

[7] The ecclesiastical establishment in England could find partial solutions to pre-empt this lay challenge, especially in the wake of the Wycliffite movement (which culminated with the full English translation of the Bible by the end of the fourteenth century and also spawned Lollardy), as the 1409 Arundel Constitutions' drastic censorship and local control of the dissemination of religious texts demonstrate (Ciobanu, *SBLME* 294-5; Lawton, "Englishing" 459). One of the first devotional translation projects encouraged in this context was Nicholas Love's *Mirrour of the Blessyd Life of Jesu Christ* (1410), known to have shaped Margery Kempe's devotionalism (Beckwith 79), which shows how laypeople were primed to hone and express, through embodied practices, their devotion to the suffering humanity of Christ.

[8] In the Catholic Good Friday liturgy, the *Improperia* (Reproaches) antiphon sung by the choir during the Adoration of the Cross was *traditionally* couched as Christ's reproaches to the Jews (Morrisroe): ungrateful to God despite being the chosen people and having been delivered from the Egyptian bondage and conducted into the Promised Land, the Jews inflicted on the divine Son an ignominious Passion and Crucifixion. The words *perfidis Judaeis* ("perfidious" as "faithless" rather than "treacherous") within the intercessory prayers – *Oremus et pro perfidis Judæis* ("Let us pray also for the faithless Jews") – were finally removed from the Roman Catholic Good Friday service only by Vatican II in 1965 (<www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/index.htm>).

[9] See, at two poles of the Christian formation, the "inaugural" bloody event of martyrdom, as commemorated by Tertullian's *Apologia* 50.13 (197 CE) – *semen est sanguis Christianorum* ("the martyrs' blood is the seed of Christianity") – and the blood libel, a twelfth-century Christian fiction about the ritual torture and exsanguination allegedly performed by medieval Jews on Christian children, which inflamed medieval Christians (Ciobanu, *SBLME* 196-201).

[10] Banned by the 1409 Arundel Constitutions, Wycliff's Bible had widely circulated in England, although for the people the authoritative text remained the Latin Vulgate (Twycross 345). On Englishing the Bible, see Lawton.

[11] Such line iteration from one stanza to another was frequent in northern poetry (Toulmin Smith lii).

[12] See Ciobanu, *The Body Spectacular in Middle English Theatre* (*BSMET* 52-78) on medieval theatre production and performance, and the extant manuscripts.

[13] See Ruud (20-2), Cady, Shillock, Lawton ("Alliterative Poetry") and Hanna on alliterative verse, essential in Germanic prosody, and Shillock (9) and Hanna (504) on the role of alliterative pattern for memory encoding.

[14] The York Play stanzas can be classified into alliterative and metrical, both having end-rhyme; in the former case, e.g. in *Emmaus*, the metre is determined by accent, not by the syllable or feet number (Toulmin Smith lii).

[15] Bodily pain – productive of *musica humana* – was fashioned into a redemptive technique by the religious, patterned on *imitatio Christi* (Holsinger 17, 37-53, 193-7, 214, 286). Such allegoresis vindicated violence against the other and also self-violence as *salvific technologies of the Christian self* (Ciobanu, *SBLME* 319).

[16] Psychological research suggests that at both individual and social level, coping with the stress generated by any major event, but especially traumatic ones, entails that the individual/society *communicates* about the event so as to understand, organise or resolve its effects; verbal rehearsal also consolidates the memory of the event (Pennebaker and Gonzales 174, 182, 186). Such findings concerning *communicative*, rather than cultural, *memory*, i.e. memories being actively transmitted between three living generations, become relevant to my discussion of the theatre's commemoration of the Passion/Crucifixion if we recall the Christian teaching about the continual relevance in the present of the historical one-off event, as also encapsulated in the Good Friday and Sunday liturgies.

[17] I am drawing on Scott's discussion of how the referential comprehensiveness of the concept of *public memory* (Scott 149) is articulated in language through the voice system: on the one hand active or passive voice and on the other "middle voice constructions ... for addressing appearing events when we want to consider the way appearing occurs" (148). The *middle voice* language of eventuation cannot, however, supplant the active/passive voice binary in a discourse of slander such as *Emmaus*'s, which frames its characters as either (guilty) agents or (innocent) victims, yet thereby deprives the grammatical agents of actual agency.

[18] See Bolter and Grusin (esp. 5-15) for *remediation* as the representation of a topic framed in another medium from its early occurrence(s), with an unavoidable alteration and accrual of meaning(s) and challenge to, couched as improvement of, the former.

[19] The *reputational entrepreneur* is the social and cultural agent "who transforms the bodily image [of the martyr] into one powerful enough to break through the established social order" (DeSoucey *et al*. 100), by fashioning the martyr's *reputation* through the "utilization, fetishization, and representation" of the body (101). The genuine reputational entrepreneurs in York are the Church Fathers, theologians and preacher-priests who disseminated the martyr's image.

[20] *Semantic memory* is the component of long-term memory responsible for the acquisition, representation and processing of conceptual information, i.e. general knowledge *not* associated with specific episodes (Szpunar and McDermott 492; Balota and Coane).

[21] *Episodic memory* refers to the recollection of unique, specific situations and their circumstances as either encountered in the past or not even actually experienced (Boyer 4-5), with a strong *phenomenological* quality, perceived as subjective awareness in re-experiencing the past (Szpunar and McDermott 492-5). Episodic memory can be communicated and exchanged between individuals *only* by "changing the quality of the experience through external representation" (A. Assmann 51).

[22] Recent research has shown that flashbulb memories "can sometimes be extraordinarily accurate and detailed, provided that the event has direct, personal relevance to the perceiver" (Lambert *et al*. 194; see also Reisberg and Hertel 34-5). Consequential flashbulb events are remembered more accurately than less consequential ones (Reisberg and Hertel 35) also because of close attention and

rehearsal – the case of both early Christians and vicariously of the late medieval ones.

[23] *Cryptomnesia* names "recollections in which 'you remember *what* someone told you but you forget *that* you were told'" (John Kotre, qtd. in Vivian 200; Kotre's emphasis).

[24] I use *Christianitas* at its most comprehensive in the later Middle Ages, viz. as belief, ecclesiastical jurisdiction and territory alike.

[25] See Reisberg and Hertel's (9-17) review of laboratory studies where *visually induced emotion* – as opposed to *thematically induced emotion*, by far more typical of everyday life – confirms the existence of *memory patterns*.

[26] The Eucharistic commemoration was subliminally associated in the late medieval West with the virtually omnipresent threat to the Host by Jews, as memorialised in the Host desecration legend and in the East-Anglian *Play of the Conversyon of Ser Jonathas the Jewe...* (Ciobanu, *SBLME* 200-1, *BSMET* 187-91).

[27] Elaine Scarry views torture as dual in its outcome, both an unmaking and a making of the world. For the torture victim, pain infliction *unmakes the world* by severing them from the external world (29-59), whilst transforming both world and victimised body into torture-inflicting weapons (40-53). The body under torture thereby *dys-appears*, becomes painfully absent (Leder 83-92). With an implicit nod to Foucault's contention about the dual outcome of power (Foucault 23-30), Scarry (169-72) also identifies a creative capacity of pain, the *making of the world*, through either artifice or imagining.

[28] Admittedly, the medieval *ars memorativa* was the exclusive preserve of a small male Latin-literate elite, subject to pedagogic violence early in their learning career (Enders 129-45; Holsinger 267-82; Mills 153). As a practical instructive method, *ars memorativa* also informed *mappaemundi* – indeed, not all of them available to the non-literate public either – and static or moving images (e.g. religious iconography, Corpus Christi *tableaux vivants* and plays), designed to deeply impress people in all walks of life.

[29] The method's usefulness has been validated to this day. Besides, studies of visual long-term memory suggest that "the learning of scene structure and object location facilitates visual search for an object" (Hollingworth and Luck 7).

[30] See also Eich *et al.* (esp. 243-4) on memory in and about affect.

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