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IMAGINATIVE PARALLELS. RE-READING THE TROPES OF MARRIAGE AND VOLUNTARY ENCLOSURE IN DOROTHEA OF MONTAU'S *VITAE*

LILIANA SIKORSKA[1]

ABSTRACT

Medieval women, escaping the restrictions of marriage, frequently opted for an inner life dedicated to God. Rendered through the trope of the spiritual union to Christ, the mystical marriage underscored the medieval discrepancy between the mundane and the ideal. This divergence reverberates in Johann von Marienwerder's hagiographic narrative of the life of an anchoress, Dorothea of Montau.[2] Married at an early age to an abusive older man, Dorothea found solace in secretly dedicating herself to the divine while following the rules of the Church and living in utter submission to her husband. Dorothea suffered as a battered wife, but, once widowed, excelled as an immured recluse. Relinquishing physical freedom, Dorothea gained spiritual emancipation. In Canon Johann's *Vitae*, her earthly matrimony, even though a necessary ordeal for the future saint, is presented through the metaphors of imprisonment, and the anchoress's cell, however claustrophobic, through the imagery of her liberating spiritual union with the divine. Such a representation, which is in accord with Lakoff & Johnson's (2003: 5) straightforward definition of the essence of metaphor denoting "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another", will be the subject matter of the present paper. Warranting the imaginative parallels, what follows is an analysis of the earthly and unworldly matrimonies in Dorothea of Montau's life in the historical context of the late fourteenth-century Prussia.

Keywords: Hagiography; anchoress; medieval mysticism; marriage; *reclusorium*.

In their locus classicus, *Metaphors We Live By*, Lakoff & Johnson consider metaphor as the essential instrument of the mind, which allows us to use our

[1] Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland. E-mail: sliliana@amu.edu.pl.

[2] Stargardt used the Latinised version of the name. Since Marienwerder is the place name and Canon Johann was German, in what follows I am going to refer to Johannes von Marienwerder as Canon Johann.

physical and social experience so as to comprehend and describe reality. Through metaphors we conceptualise the values which are embedded in a given culture. "Because so many of the concepts that are important to us are either abstract or not clearly delineated in our experience (the emotions, ideas, time, etc. we need to get a grasp on them by means of other concepts that we understand in clearer terms (spatial orientations, objects, etc." (Lakoff & Johnson 2003: 115). The same holds true in medieval culture as symbolic language was used to render both complex theological ideas alongside everyday experiences, with the trope of marriage being one of the most frequently exploited themes in medieval literature, pervading, what Lakoff & Johnson (2003: 115) deem, conceptual systems. From aristocratic literary representations of the vicissitudes of love and marriage in Marie de France's *Lays*, to the criticism of Eros and love-related transgressions in the works of John Gower, Geoffrey Chaucer and their followers,[3] writers have used both figurative and non-figurative language to describe human relationships.

In the present-day critical discourse, the medieval institution is usually analysed from the historical perspective related to the position of women in medieval societies across centuries – concomitant with the ideas of dowry and marriage contracts as practiced by different social classes – as well as through theological dogmas linked with the debates on the marriage of Mary and Joseph.[4] Such images paved the way for the doctrinal conceptualisations of conjugal rights and duties in ecclesiastical discourses. The idea of marriage served also to illustrate the perfect union between the soul and Christ, explored and exalted in various mystical treatises, instigating the fashioning of a new image of pure love based on absolute devotion to the Lord. Since life in the world was considered

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3 I am well aware of Chaucer's reading of the ideal of marriage in *The Book of the Duchess* and *Troilus and Cryseide*, as well as his representation of love and lust in other marriage tales. A discussion of such is beyond the scope of the present paper, however. For more, see Derek Brewer, *A New Introduction to Chaucer* (1998); and Alcuin Blamires, *Chaucer, Ethic and Gender* (2008).

4 The debate concerning the lack of consummation of the marriage of Joseph and Mary preoccupied medieval theologians, especially because marriage was verified and validated through the physical union. Herlihy argues that it was this idea that ultimately ensured the idea of patrilineage (Herlihy 1985: 88). Hugh of St. Victor, in his *On the Virginity of the Virgin Mary*, shifted the emphasis from physical to spiritual love; making the union of Mary and Joseph legitimate (though predictably not consummated) through their mutual affection and devotion (qtd. in Leclerq 1982: 27). Outlining the theological context of the discussion on marriage in the twelfth century, Leclerq mentions freedom to choose as "a condition for marriage" and discusses the possibility of happy marriages without consummation (Leclerq 1982: 40–43, 43–48). Neither model was followed by Dorothea's family. The later medieval ideal of spiritual marriage was, undoubtedly, influenced by the early Christian saints' lives, such as the life of St. Cecilia presented by Chaucer in "The Second Nun's Tale" (*The Canterbury Tales*, 1989) as well as by the rise of female mysticism in the High Middle Ages.

inferior to the life of the mind, real-life marriages were deemed subordinate to the otherworldly tie between an individual and Christ; in itself, an indissoluble bond. Since the divine could only be lodged in a pure soul, the untainted vessel was often portrayed through the metaphors of an unconquerable castle or a fortress. Though chastity was seen as hierarchical, with virgins occupying the highest position, widowhood was blessed because of the woman's sexual abstinence (Carlson & Weisl 1999: 2). Accordingly, women were continually showcased through their sexually defined roles: be they virgins, wives or widows, throughout their lives, they could not escape their physicality. Conveyed as a necessary ordeal for the future saint,[5] Dorothea's marriage to Adalbert of Danzig is revealed as a prison for the body, while the actuality of the anchoress's cell is portrayed as the liberation of the soul.[6] The two forms of the real and metaphorical spaces were used by Dorothea's hagiographer to strengthen his claim of her sanctity, for Canon Johann described her marriage as an intentional enclosure and the *reclusorium* as a perfect union with Christ. Dorothea's penitential and penitentiary experiences of a violent union are, therefore, inverted in her imaginative matrimony to Christ when, as a widow, she becomes an anchoress finding fulfilment and deep spiritual love. This reversal perceived through the historical and social demands of wedlock will be the subject matter of the present paper. Her confessions along with Johann's doctrinal explorations demonstrate that both of them certainly had a way with words.

1. Virgins, Wives and Widows

Dorothea Schwartze (or Schwartz) of Montau[7] (in Polish, Mątowy Wielkie) was born c. 6 February 1347 as the seventh and youngest child of a landowning family. Her exemplary life's journey, whose crowning achievement was her

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5 In religious works such as the thirteenth-century *Holy Maidenhood*, the debate on marriage tips the scales towards virginity; even though arguments in favor of marriage are presented, they are offered so as to be easily refuted. The inimitable early thirteenth-century *Ancrene Wisse* – the first version of which is dated between 1130 and 1220, the later versions between 1230 and 1240 – advocated maintenance of daily routines, contemplation, and, above all, prayers, to maintain a healthy inner life (Wada 2003: 1).

6 Leclerq (1982: 1) describes inquiries into ecclesiastical guidelines concerning marriage that argue for "true marital love between partners" as one of the requirements of marriage. *Affectio conjugalis* was first defined so as to strengthen the idea that marriage was based on mutual love whose purpose was procreation (Leclerq 1982: 7). According to Leclerq (1982: 12–23), conjugal love as a doctrinal issue first appeared in the writings of the Church Fathers, such as St. Augustine and St. Jerome, and is bound together with pastoral concerns.

7 Dorothea's life and the written vita have been invariably read in the context of European mysticism. See Elliott (1999: 168–191) and Wallace (2011: 1–60). Wallace's work highlights the similarities between Dorothea's and Margery Kempe's lives, travels, and texts. Wallace does not analyse either the historical aspects of Dorothea's popularity or the reasons for her failed canonisation.

voluntary enclosure, stands for the true *vita contemplativa*, the life of the soul, preceded by *vita activa*, the life of a married woman. Following the death of her husband, Dorothea spent eleven months in a cell built especially for her as an attachment to the Cathedral of Marienwerder in Prussia, now Kwidzyn in Poland.[8] Through the efforts of her confessor, Canon Johann von Marienwerder (in Polish Jan z Kwidzyna, 1343–1417), Dorothea was venerated popularly, from the late fourteenth century onwards, as the patron saint of Prussia; her feast day was the day of her death, 25 June, celebrated since 1594.[9] Dorothea's life confirmed the order of importance accorded, in turn, to maidenhood, marriage, and widowhood; yet, by upturning the images of the bodily and spiritual bonds, Dorothea validated her mystical experiences above her earthly sojourn. By doing so, she claimed the position akin to that of virgins, elevating her widowhood through voluntary chastity. As Carlson & Weisl (1999: 3) hold "The widow's fortitude was measured by her will; having rejected the carnal world, she was able to live within it. By having rejected sexuality before experiencing it, the virgin was less able to defend herself against seduction". It was the female mystics, who, as former wives, commanded widowhood as the time for *vita contemplativa*, sanctioned by the church.

The European High Middle Ages were the heyday of female mysticism, the bourgeoning of which was coterminous with a period of increased misogyny. "The poisoned blossoms", as Rosalyn Voaden (1999: 19) discerns, flourishing "on a stock of classical thought which consistently defined women as inferior and subordinate to men in intellectual, physical and spiritual attributes", facilitated the representation of women as lesser beings. Medical and theological discourses stressed that women's bodies were deficient and frail, that women had limited intellectual capacities, and consequently, that their souls were naturally in need of male guidance and supervision. The husband was at the centre of the medieval

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8 Kwidzyn and not "Kwydzyn", as the town is quite consistently misspelled by Wallace (2011: 2). Ute Stargardt (1997: 2–3) also mistakenly uses "Kwydzyn". The name comes from the Latin Quedin/Insula Sanctae Mariae, German: Marienwerder.

8 Wallace (2011) uses Dorothea's life as a foil to Margery's. Apart from the lack of insight into the ethnic make-up of the region, as well as into wars between the Order of the Teutonic Knights (hereafter the Teutonic Order) and Poland, Wallace's study foregrounds Dorothea's significance during the Middle Ages and her continuous appeal afterwards.

9 The formal process of canonisation, however, was broken off in 1404 and not resumed until 1955. She was finally beatified by Pope Paul VI in 1976, based on the long-standing veneration (*cultus confirmed*). Because of the wars with the Teutonic Order and the ensuing Protestant Reformation, Dorothea's remains were removed from the cathedral in Marienwerder in the sixteenth century (Kujawska-Komender 1957: 115), whereas the tombstone of Johann of Marienwerder was only uncovered in the late twentieth century during the renovation of the cathedral. All my Polish sources on the life of Dorothea come from the Gniezno Cathedral Archives, and I am very grateful to the director of the Archives, pr. Marian Aleksandrowicz, PhD, for helping me with my research on Dorothea's biography and the canonisation process.

household. The superiority of the male came from the Bible, which deems Adam as the first created human. Theological doctrines were buttressed by medical ones in an unlikely amalgamation of the classical and medieval views espoused by encyclopedia writers such as Bartholomeus Anglicus (c. 1203–1272).[10] In his *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, Anglicus (1893: 47) divulges: "A man is called *vir* in Latin, and hath that name of might and strength. For in might and strength an man passeth a woman. A man is the head of a woman, as the apostle saith. And therefore a man is bound to rule his wife, as the head hath charge and rule of the body". Anglicus repeats the well-known precepts found not in the New Testament, where Christ avows the spiritual equality of all human beings, but in the Old Testament and followed by the Church Fathers. It is worth noting that etymologically, "virtue" was constructed as coming from "vir" (man). Tapping into the convictions of medieval theologians "the properties of virtue were thus the properties of masculinity, women had the potential to achieve virtue only through a 'rejecting of her original abject nature'" (Carlson & Weisl 1999: 3).

There was no doubt that men were viewed as an authority over women; the Bible, buttressed by the early ecclesiastical tradition, reiterated the position of man as lord *ad nauseam*. Medieval girls were brought up to be less independent than boys, since wives were not to be decision-makers but had to cede power over their lives to their husbands (McSheffrey 1995: 18). In reality, the positions of women within medieval households were shaped as much by the economic situation of a family within a given community as by patriarchal ideologies.[11] Nonetheless, the established social hierarchies, in which heir-producing wives were given the highest value and widows and spinsters were accepted but treated as lesser beings, solidified links between the biological (reproduction) and the social (motherhood) functions of women.[12] The rise of female mysticism,

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10 Galenic theories (Claudius Galenus, c. 130–200) were linked with etymological ones by Isidore of Seville (560–636). It was commonly accepted that men (*vir*) came from *vis*, meaning force, and that women were unfinished males whose sex organs were in an embryonic state (Bullough 1994: 31–45). For more, see Brundage (1990).

11 Kaplan surmises that a woman's position within the family was based on her dowry, which in turn was connected with the relationship between the economy and the state. She advocates a more detailed research into the significance of the dowry as instrumental in establishing the relationships between husbands and wives, and between parents and children (Kaplan 1985: 8–9).

12 In an introduction to one of the earliest works on women writers, Wilson argues that virginal life was placed at the pinnacle of excellence in the hierarchy of values; through the ideal of chastity, it was possible for a woman to "rise above her native position" (Wilson 1984: x). Yet, because virginity for many burgher and peasant women, like Dorothea, was an impossible ideal, they had as lay women with "loose tongues" (any literary activity could be equaled with that) to fight against possible degradation and were compared with "loose women". There were many different female movements during the Middle Ages, in addition to those of nuns and lay women, such as the continental Beguines, whose work shifted the position of women writers

however, enabled women to fulfil their roles as wives and mothers, and in widowhood find satisfaction and recognition beyond their immediate family and community. Playing pivotal roles in their lives, the metaphors of marriage and motherhood permeated the writings of lay women fostering their literary endeavours and securing their recognition in ecclesiastical circles.[13]

Still, female creativity nurtured by spiritual experiences dislocated the God-given inferiority of women, and for this reason the Catholic Church regarded female mysticism, especially when involving wives and mothers, with suspicion. Even though Christ's love cleansed the mystic's heart, she always had to be vigilant in her interpretation of God's grace. According to the Church Fathers, as the weaker sex, women were more susceptible to devilish whispers. Nonetheless, because the movement, lasting more than four hundred years, proved to be too powerful to nip in the bud, the Church strove for control rather than dismissal. Consequently, women's confessions were regarded as in a constant need of male authority and ecclesiastical approval. What is more, women were supposed to be unaware of the intricacies of doctrinal arguments and thus were perceived to be in a constant danger of unknowingly falling into the clutches of heresy. Their revelations had to be bridled and verified by learned male theologians. Literate women cited the Church authorities, and illiterate ones had their lives recorded and, for that matter, framed within the orthodox Christian thought by their confessors cum hagiographers. Surprisingly, the ecclesiastics commonly reinforced their argumentation with writings not only by male scholars but also by renowned holy women. Despite all the classical and theological pronouncements from Aristotle to Gratian asserting the physical and moral inferiority of women, women refused to be subjugated to men. Standing in mute opposition to the patriarchal clerical culture, they managed to authorise their "showings", to use Julian of Norwich's expression, and assert their significance.[14] Nonetheless, "it was difficult for medieval women to follow the paths which led to intellectual visions" (Voaden 1999: 35). Traditionally illiterate, save for highly knowledgeable women such as Julian of Norwich (1342–c.1416), lay women

and women readers. Wilson was one of the first researchers to map the scene of medieval writings, including secular and religious, orthodox as well as heretical writers, pinpointing ways in which women asserted their positions within the body of medieval ecclesiastical output. I am grateful to my husband, Professor Jacek Fisiak, then a visiting professor at the University of Zürich, who first drew my attention to Wilson's book.

13 For the relationship between femininity and motherhood in Julian of Norwich's *Showings*, see Sikorska (2002: 281–291).

14 Such a paradoxical situation concerning the concurrent rejection and acceptance of women's religious practices had a long tradition, exposed by Blamires in his *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended*, an anthology of medieval texts on women. Blamires exposed patristic writings concerning the defamation of women; he noticed, however, that the Middle Ages likewise produced quite a considerable bulk of works defending women (Blamires (1992) and (1998)).

such as Margery Kempe (1373–1438) had to carefully listen to their scribes and confessors, to fend off accusations of heresy.[15] In a world dominated by religious authorities, even if God spoke directly to them, it was only through the mediation of the priests and scribes that their accounts could gain a wider recognition.[16] Typically, the confessors were the first to acknowledge the significance of a woman's visions and attest to their authenticity. It comes as no surprise that, living within an anti-female tradition, women mystics, and especially anchoresses, had to incontestably accept the doctrinal expertise of the clergy, both before and after they entered the *reclusorium.* Apart from the evident role of authenticating a mystic's visions, confessors also provided guidance and religious sustenance and for immured recluses became their singular link with the outside world, strengthening their resolve and supporting their inner life.[17] As an uneducated woman, a wife, and then a widow, Dorothea[18] was referred to Johann von Marienwerder, whom Valerie Lagorio (1984: 173) calls her "spiritual director",[19] to make sure that what she heard was God's voice and not the devil's.

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15 Elliott (1999: 185–191) gives an outline of the process of canonisation of Dorothea of Montau including certain mishaps related to heresy.

16 Medieval society was customarily divided into three estates (from Latin *ad status*): those who prayed (the clergy), those who fought (the nobility), and those who ploughed the land (peasantry). Huizinga (1996: 62) claims that "the division of society into estates permeates all the fibres of theological and political reflections. This concept was by no means limited to the well-known three: clergy, nobility and third estate. … [E]state is 'state' and 'ordo,' it contains the notion of an entity willed by God". He also explains that "[t]he medieval image of society was static, not dynamic" (Huizinga 1996: 63), and such a static image is, of course, preserved in the concept of the body politic. In a more contemporary work, Constable gives a comprehensive account of the idea of the orders of society and its development throughout the Middle Ages (Constable 1998: 360). The orders were established by birth, and although moving between them was possible, it was extremely unlikely.

17 Many female mystics were given the gift of tears, which was considered to be an atonement for their sins. Margery Kempe cries excessively in churches; on Calvary, for example, she felt "sche myt not kepe hir-self fro krying" (Kempe 1993: 68). As Atkinson claims, Margery's resemblance to Dorothea was not limited to the circumstances of their lives as middle-class married women with many children. Even more noteworthy is their shared habit of tears and the emphasis in their lives and writings on tears as evidence of sanctity (Atkinson 1985: 179–181). The description of Dorothea's crying in Canon Johann von Marienwerder's *Vita* is presented in a more scholarly fashion (see Stachnik 1978: 25), than what we find in *The Book of Margery Kempe*, but the content of the descriptions is similar. Nonetheless, crying confirms intense religiosity and spirituality. Petroff (1986: 38–44) examines abnormal and uncontrollable behaviour as tests necessary to authorise women's visions.

18 It is difficult to place Dorothea within a specific social order, because she came from a peasant family (low class) and through marriage entered what might today be termed as the middle class. Still, in the Middle Ages, the burghers who earned their living through the work of their hands were closer to the lower than the upper class.

19 Johann von Marienwerder was not the only ecclesiastical male authority in Dorothea's life. Yet another important clergyman was Father Nicolaus von Hohenstein (in Polish, Mikołaj z Pszczółek), one of the brothers of the Teutonic Order (Stachnik 1978: 20–21) who, from 1380

Through Canon Johann, she found a way to express the inexpressible. Since Dorothea was narrating her life when she was already an older woman, there was the need to jog her memory, an unremittingly vital point found in all of the so-called penitentiaries, or confession manuals.[20] For the confession to be valid, it was supposed to be most detailed, sparing no painful or transgressive minutiae. In the *Ancrene Wisse* one finds a whole chapter devoted to the procedure, which needs to be "made nakedly, not petrified with rhetoric, nor flavored with suavity" (Savage & Watson 1991: 164). Dorothea practiced obedience and patience towards men in her early life, notably her brother and her husband, and once she arrived in Marienwerder she entrusted her body and soul to her confessor. In addition to all the encouragement she needed, she received mild chastisement so that she would not overstrain her body during her fasts and vigils. Theirs was a perfect union of the pious woman and the clergyman unravelling the teaching of Christ in her visions and interpreting the "showings" of the Divine Husband, guiding and controlling her intimate thoughts. Throughout the process of both confessing and recording, the confessor and hagiographer analysed Dorothea's past as much as he acknowledged and validated her present.

The significance of the relationship between Dorothea and Canon Johann is even more intriguing if one takes into consideration the historical factors influencing the first attempts at her canonisation. Montau, where Dorothea had been born, Danzig, where she had lived with her husband,[21] and Marienwerder, where she spent her last years, were all situated in Prussia, the locus of the Order of the Teutonic Knights. The Order of Brothers of the German House of Saint Mary (in Latin, *Ordo domus Sanctae Mariae Theutonicorum Hierosolyminanorum*),[22] commonly known as the Teutonic Order, had been expelled from Transylvania and invited to Poland in 1226 by Konrad I, Duke of Masovia, a duchy located in northeastern Poland.[23] Konrad I asked the Order to

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on, agreed to her weekly communion (Kujawska-Komender 1957: 106). He was the first one to corroborate her revelations and was witness to her ecstasies. Furthermore, before her encounter with Canon Johann, Father Nicolaus was Dorothea's source of theological knowledge. When Dorothea was interrogated by the Order on account of her visions, Nicolaus understood that she needed to be referred to a more experienced specialist.

20 In *Instructions for Parish Priests*, John Mirk showed how a priest should try to extract a full confession from a parishioner. If the penitent is a woman, he is to try and jog her memory by saying that he had also sinned (ll. 792–804). For diverse approaches to memory in medieval culture, see Carruthers (1999).

21 The newlyweds moved to Gdańsk, a large multicultural city on the Baltic, and lived in a sizable house at Langgasse 64 (now Długa Street).

22 Because of the name of the Order, a number of cities and towns in Prussia were given Mary's name. Marienwerder (Kwidzyn) and Marienburg (Malbork) are good examples.

23 Wallace (2011) draws attention to the Marian worship in Prussia and Poland. He forgets, however, that the Teutonic Order was not well regarded outside their own territory, its reputation having been tarnished by wars and subsequent trials. The use of the image of Mary, the mother

defend his borders and subdue the pagan Baltic Prussians.[24] Unsuspectingly, he allocated Culmerland (Polish Chełmno) to serve as a base for their campaigns. The Order, however, instead of fighting in the name of the Polish ruler, began their own invasions and settlements in the subdued lands. Although generally accurate in his reading of the history of the Teutonic Order in Poland, Edgar Johnson (1975: 545–585), unjustifiably influenced by twentieth-century views of the conflict, erroneously suggests that the disagreement was national and ethnic: the movement of the German Christians against the pagan Slavs. Poland has been a Christian country since 966, and Lithuania had accepted Christianity with the baptism of Jogailo, who became Władysław Jagiełło, king of Poland, in 1386.[25] During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the legal moves in the form of appeals to the Pope coupled with military actions geared towards the relegation and limiting of the power of the Teutonic Order or, at least, making them dependents of Poland, were in full swing. The ruling favoured the Polish cause, directing the Order to give up Pomerania and Culmerland. By then, however, the Order was too powerful to abide by the papal order.[26]

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of God, was intended to soften the image of the Order, which needed good PR. By the end of the fourteenth century, the Order desperately needed a female saint, and Marienwerder saw and seized the opportunity to have Dorothea canonised. Dorothea was buried in the cathedral in Marienwerder, we do not know what happened to her remains after the Reformation (Kujawska-Komender 1957: 115). Johann von Marienwerder's tomb is still there. On their way back from their pilgrimage to Rome and Aachen, Dorothea and her husband went to a famous hermitage in Finsterwalden, a renowned Marian sanctuary, now in Switzerland.

24 Interestingly, Stargardt shows how Paul Nieborowski's 1933 study *Die Selige Dorothea von Preussen* was used to enlist her help in the cause of Nazism. Nieborowski, who was a Catholic priest, wanted to protect Germany from the Bolsheviks and desired to see it as a country of "one God, one nation, one faith", which is strikingly similar to Hitler's battle cry: "ein Raich, ein Volk, ein Fürher" (Stargardt 1997: 25). For more, see Zajączkowski (1946); and Harry W. Hazard (1975). For the documents looking at both sides of the conflict, see Housley (1996). The latter contains an extract from Wigand of Marburg describing the Teutonic *Reisen* against Lithuania (Housley 1996: 54–59) and the tract *Opinio Hostiensis*, a polemical onslaught against the Teutonic Order presented to the Council of Constance on 6 July 1415 by Paul Vladimiri, a Polish ambassador at the Council (Housley 1996: 108–112).

25 The Christianisation of the pagan Prussians and later of Lithuanians was a pretext for the Teutonic Order to invade and subjugate Polish territories, such as, for example, Cuiavia in central Poland, with the town of Inovladislavia (Inowrocław, in German Hohensaltza). In 1321, the town was the site of the court proceedings between the Papal Legate and Poland, during which Poland raised a number of accusations against the Order. Notwithstanding the decrees, by the mid-fourteenth century the Order had established itself as a separate state governed by the Grand Master, carving out a large portion of western Poland.

26 The early fifteenth century witnessed the onset of renewed conflict that culminated in the war of 1409–1411. The war was most probably the reason why the canonisation papers were lost. What is more, the lost battle of Tannenberg (Polish Grunwald) fought on 15 July 1410, together with the spectacular victory of the combined Polish and Lithuanian armies, assured the steady decline of the Teutonic Order's power in what was always felt were Polish territories. What was to be a brilliant Teutonic victory marked the beginning of the Order's downfall. A number of wars

As has been noted above, the Teutonic Order settled in lands populated by a rather hostile native population, despite the mass campaign to transplant German-speaking residents from Franconia (contemporary Germany) and the low countries (contemporary Netherlands) that had begun already at the end of the thirteenth century so as to assure a more favourable ethnic makeup. Dorothea's as well as her husband's families were very good examples of such migrations. What is more, at the beginning of the turbulent fifteenth century, Johann von Marienwerder saw Dorothea's canonisation as the way to soften the image of the masculine Prussia, ruled with an iron hand by the Order. Dorothea as an anchoress was already an important asset to the Order, but Dorothea, the canonised saint of Prussia, would have been invaluable. Canon Johann died in 1417 and thus never formally completed the process, but his dream was realized through the popular recognition of Dorothea's cult and her ensuing canonisation. In his efforts, Canon Johann not only polished the crudely described events but also moulded Dorothea's life journey into hagiography. His was the translation of Dorothea's incommunicable experiences into Church Latin, the transformation of the vernacular life into the clerical discourse. Her narrative recounted her inner and outer life; his offered an interpretation and analysis of both, thereby endorsing her visions in line with orthodox Catholic dogmas.

2. The Enclosure of Marriage

In the late fifteenth-century morality play *Wisdom*, the Devil tempts the saintly virginal Anima to *vita mixta*, a life of prayer combined with, as the Devil phrases it, a life of "communication" or interaction with other people. The Devil argues that it was not contemplation but conversations with sinners, labour, and prayer that constituted the true way of Christ.[27] Medieval theologians habitually juxtaposed the highest spiritual ideal, *vita contemplativa*, with *vita activa*, the life

followed, on account of the Order's reluctance to give up some of its territories. One lasted from 1431 to 1435, and Margery Kempe, who stayed in Danzig in 1433–1434, was caught in the middle of it. She never discussed the ongoing war, but because of the antagonism between the English and some Hanseatic League towns, to which Danzig belonged, Margery feared for her safety and was ordered by the Lord to leave the town. She then embarked on a strenuous land crossing back home (Kempe 1994: 275–277). After a four-year period of armistice following the war of 1519–1521, the wars between the Order and the Polish Crown continued until 1525. In 1524, the Teutonic State accepted Lutheranism and became the secular state of Prussia. On 10 April 1525, Albrecht von Hohenzollern (1490–1568), the last Grand Master of the Order, performed the symbolic Prussian Homage or the Prussian Tribute to Zygmunt I the Old, during which he was formally invested as Albrecht, duke of the Polish fief of Ducal Prussia. For the history of Prussia, see Carsten (1954). One tragic consequence of the subjugation of Prussians was the loss of their language in the seventeenth century (Bartlett 1994: 177).

27 "Wisdom" in *The Macro Plays. The Castle of Perseverance, Wisdom, Mankind* (ll. 425–428).

in the world that included marriage and had three major advantages: *fides*, *proles*, and *sacramentum* – in other words fidelity,[28] offspring, and permanent union (Herlihy 1985: 11). Although inferior to *vita contemplativa*, *vita activa* within the sacrament of marriage was the only option for secular women whose families, like Dorothea's, were opposed to their entering a convent. Despite her observable inclinations (Stargardt 1997: 37–46)[29] and the fact that she was born into a family of land-owning farmers of Dutch or German origin,[30] in 1363 at the age of sixteen, Dorothea was married to a prosperous swordsmith, Adalbert[31] or Albrecht[32] from Danzig (in Polish Gdańsk), then in his forties.[33] Nunneries required a substantial dowry, which her brother, head of the family after their father's death, quite obviously did not want to procure. It can be surmised that he did not see the convent as a viable option for a woman of Dorothea's position. The brother's decisions, buttressed by Pauline writings,[34] were not to be questioned by any woman. In compliance with the wishes of her family and the ethos of her social class, Dorothea accepted the unavoidable option.

Since the validity of marriage in Christian Europe was concomitant with its physical consummation,[35] this life-altering situation entailed a different approach

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28 Kelly shows two ideals of love: Jerome and Ovid. In the case of the first one, fidelity is to the abstract ideal of chastity; the second lauds fidelity towards one's beloved (Kelly 2004: 109).

29 Margery Kempe ordered her life to be written down, and in doing so she seems to have more agency than Dorothea of Montau whose life is subsumed in her confession. Hence, for the purpose of references, I am using Kempe's name and the name of the editors of Dorothea's vita.

30 Her mother Agatha, a native of Montau (Mątowy) (Stachnik 1978: 195), might have been of Polish origin (Kujawska-Komender 1957: 101). I am very grateful to my friend Professor Gabriele Knappe for helping me find the Stachnik papers and other materials concerning Dorothea of Montau in the library of Bamberg University. My then future husband, Professor Jacek Fisiak, was also instrumental in finding materials concerning medieval women mystics at the University of Zurich.

31 Stachnik (1978: 97–98).

32 Polish sources, notably Kujawska-Komender, use the name "Adalbert", a popular name that is also the German version of the patron saint of Poland, St. Adalbert (956–997), who died in Prussia. Liedtke (2011: 311) uses the German name "Albrecht". David Wallace (2011: 17) goes with the name Albert.

33 The age difference is not particularly striking, as medieval courtly literature shows a number of such unions, the most notable example being King Mark of Cornwall from the romance of Tristan and Iseult.

34 For more on the sources of the religious ideals on marriage, see Herlihy (1985: 132–135).

35 Analysing the shift from brideprice to dowry, Hughes observes that in the early Middle Ages, "rape could be turned into marriage by the payment of *morgengabe*", and that fact led to understanding marriage through the sexual act. "Marriage was based neither on the consent of the parties, as it had been in Rome, nor on the conveyal of rights through purchase, as it had been earlier among the Germans" (Hughes 1985: 28). Interestingly, discussing love and marriage at the time of Chaucer, Henry Angsar Kelly (2004: 173–176) shows the development of private contracts leading to public weddings. According to Gies & Gies (1987: 291–292), marriage "remained an economic enterprise, the dowry growing larger and more important than ever. Marriage negotiations among wealthy families of both country and city were deliberate and ceremonious, and more often

to devotion, as Dorothea would no longer be a virgin, pure for her divine spouse.[36] Concurrent with the rise of female mysticism, ecclesiastical sources differentiated between virginity as a bodily state and the virginity of the will, a chosen identity, a permanent devotion to God (Salih 2001: 21–26). David Herlihy (1985: 22) notices that "[a] life of virginity was considered especially appropriate for women. Christian writings on the subject could be read as a feminist critique of marriage". His is a rather simplified view. Theological discussions of "virginity" indeed influenced the lay perception of gender roles and the female position within a family, yet this happened without ever raising a critique of such roles and positions. It is true that family was seen as a bar to *vita contemplativa* and that many women, including Angela of Foligno (1248–1309), Bridget of Sweden (1303–1373), and Elizabeth of Hungary (1207–1231) – the latter used by Canon Johann (Stargardt 1997: 57) to exemplify a holy woman capable of withstanding the state of matrimony and retaining inner purity – were wives first, only to become nuns and recluses later. Because of the atmosphere of mistrust, medieval female mystics struggled to legitimise their "second" virginity as worthy of their marriage to Christ, to overcome the biblical polarisation of female figures into maidens and harlots, but also to counter the negative pictures of marriage linked solely with sexuality. Not only female mystics but also literary characters – for example Patient Griselda, Dame Alice, and other heroines of Chaucer's marriage tales populating *Canterbury Tales* – underscore the medieval preoccupation with the institution itself. The family, after all, was central as a basic political and economic unit of medieval society. Therefore, when in the thirteenth century marriage was instituted as a religious sacrament,[37] it was virtually impossible to dissolve it, although it was possible to obtain a divorce *a mensa et thoro*, i.e., release from table and bed; in short, a separation. Divorce *a vinculo*, meaning liberation "from the bond", corresponded to an annulment (McSheffrey 1995: 6).[38] Typically, once a woman was married, she had to bear her "cross", with both physical and psychological pain as yet another consequence of the curse of Eve (Liedtke 2011: 311).

involved religious ritual". The notion that marital love requires absolute fidelity was frequently reiterated by writers and philosophers in secular and religious literature alike.

36 True virginity, in the eyes of the Church Fathers, was the virginity of those who devoted their lives to God; hence, for example, in the early fourteenth-century romance of *The King of Tars*, the Christian princess, though married to the Sultan, is referred to as "the Christian maiden" throughout the text, so as to accentuate her almost saintly status.

37 Stone (1990: 30) suggests that the Catholic Church took control over marriage law "to assert at least in the principle of monogamous indissoluble marriage, to define and prohibit incest, to punish fornication and adultery, and to get bastards legally excluded from property inheritance".

38 Although divorces did not really exist in the Middle Ages, annulment could be granted, usually on the basis of consanguinity. The Church instituted laws against incest and bigamy if there was a prior contract. Consanguinity was the basis for the dissolution of the marriage of Eleanor of Aquitaine and Louis VII.

Dorothea's traumatic marriage, as has been noted before, was an important aspect of her hagiography, which tapped into Canon Johann's assertions of her sainthood. Hence, he felt obliged to record that "[t]he maid of God lived united with her husband in holy matrimony for twenty six and a half years and kept her marriage vows in such chastity that she never demanded her conjugal rights from her husband" (Stargardt 1997: 60). It is through submission, and what can be termed as the "martyrdom by marriage", that Dorothea was able to atone for her "fallen" state, lauding her widowhood. Hope and redemption were at hand, as "[n]ot only virgins and those who live chastely enter into the kingdom of heaven but also married people who with true faith and good works earn God's grace" (Stargardt 1997: 57). If the early Christian saints repudiated marriage, were martyred, and died gloriously defending their faith, medieval women accepted marriage as the institution that sanctified various forms of violence. They devoted their energy to bearing and rearing their children and sacrificed themselves to the tribulations of conjugality. Facing frustration and pain, Dorothea, like countless other women, resigned herself to Christ "omnem humanam consolationem" (Stachnik 1978: 321).

Despite the praise of marriage as one of the sacraments, happy unions, especially when disparate natures were involved, were rather rare at the time. Dynastic and pecuniary reasons overshadowed the natural inclinations of Dorothea, who, in a way, found herself imprisoned within the confines of her marriage. Dorothea's relationship with Adalbert exudes a sense of wretchedness, of unbreakable ties equivalent to incarceration, or even the sense of being besieged. Such a perception of the institution of marriage was not uncommon in the medieval imagination, but it has to be analysed in the wider cultural context. Today, when anyone professes "my home is my castle", they think about the space of home pertaining to protection and privacy, rather than about captivity and misery. Medieval women enclosed in the supposedly safe space of the house, like Chaucer's Emily in "The Knight's Tale", were, quite frequently, prisoners of their families. Emily is restricted by the walls of the garden in which she walks, standing for the literal exposition of the requirements of her class, and is trapped in the discourses of courtly love. Similarly, Dorothea is ensnared by the demands of lower-class morals, her powerlessness sanctioned by the Catholic Church. For both of them, it is not love, but the freedom of choice that is the supreme ideal, and neither of them is granted their request.[39] Dorothea, however, finds comfort

[39] Love, presented as a storming and conquering of the object of adoration, features in secular texts, for example in the iconic *The Romance of the Rose* by Guillaume de Lorris, where the typical medieval image of a walled garden stands for the inaccessible garden of paradise as well as for the "besieged" beloved. The first 4,058 lines were written by Guillame de Lorris, c. 1230; Jean de Meun wrote an additional 17,724 lines, c. 1275. The text was partly translated into English by Geoffrey Chaucer.

in her faith and at the end of her life, by opting for the voluntary enclosure, forgoes all her earthly bonds. Her decision is the result of the life-long yearning to become a nun, the enclosure being the sublimation of such longings.

Medieval literature brings to light the significance of architecture, in its cultural and religious context, and offers a plethora of metaphorical readings of enclosed spaces, which repeatedly allude to the interplay of liberty and imprisonment.[40] Drawing attention to the fact that the medieval "castellum" meant both "village" and "castle", Hebron (1997: 143) points to the allegorical parallels between the castle and the female interior in relation to popular Marian imagery.[41] In medieval literature and culture, the Virgin was usually portrayed as a deity guarding a castle; additionally, the castle is her virginal womb, which houses the unborn Christ. Such images allude to the rather erotic representation of overwhelmed virginity, a favourite concept of the romances, love lyrics, and allegories of the time. "We see a further siege imagery employed for religious instruction towards ideas of spiritual consummation, from which much of the rhetoric of love yearning in the siege of love is derived" (Hebron 1997: 143). The feudal social system created the castle as the centre of power; the castle and the house remained as a potent symbol of marriage. The castle was perceived as an emblem of power and prosperity, with its towers and gardens as symbols of surveillance and imprisonment, where fathers and husbands "protected" the women from outside influence and possible corruption. Analogously, the house was a place of withdrawal for the burghers and lower-class women. While the family was the main unit for individuals, the castle and its adjacent territories were the basis of the entire social order: the husband ruled over the wife, and the lord ruled over his subjects. Although frequently playing important social roles and sometimes holding quite considerable influence, for example Eleanor of Aquitaine, women were barred from the public life, so as to remain chaste and thus ensure the legitimacy of their children. More often than not, medieval women were literally walled in their castles and homes and were victims of ill-treatment.

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40 Curiously, in the Old English poem "Juliana", attributed to Cynewulf, the heroine, while she is in prison, follows God's orders to capture the devil masquerading as an angel. The devil is sent to tempt her, but, instead, she forces him to describe his methods of charming and tempting Christians, which are conspicuously similar to what we find in later morality plays. The prison scenes reverse the idea of capture, demonstrating that even in a confined space, a staunch believer can find spiritual liberty.

41 Poland's most famous Marian Shrine is in Częstochowa. According to popular tradition, the icon was painted by Luke the Evangelist on a tabletop built by Jesus himself, and the icon was discovered by St. Helen. In 803 a Greek princess who married a Ruthenian nobleman gifted the icon to him and her subjects. It was then brought to Poland by a Polish army escaping from the Tartars in 1382. Jagiello founded a monastery to enshrine the icon, and since then, both the mountain called Jasna Góra on which the monastery was built as well as the icon itself, ineptly renovated by medieval artists, have played a symbolic role in the Polish imagination. The icon is reputed to have worked a number of miracles and the monastery remains the most popular pilgrimage site, especially for the Feast of the Assumption on August 15th.

Such was the fate of Dorothea of Montau, whose husband "… was a choleric man, by natural inclinations and because of his arthritis" (Stargardt 1997: 66). Adalbert was a typical well-to-do town dweller with alcohol and rage-control problems, who would never tolerate the slightest objection to his whims on the part of his wife. Striving to perform her wifely duties, Dorothea tried to be attentive to his needs. Even when she was pregnant, had just given birth, or was nursing an infant, "she fetched and carried, she climbed stairs and bent over, and whatever was appropriate for her to do she did in good spirits and with complete trust in God" (Stargardt 1997: 61); her efforts, however, were not sufficient for Adalbert. The fact that Dorothea had children, nevertheless, becomes one more advantage on her journey to sanctity, as they were her blessing and the fulfilment of marriage (Stargardt 1997: 59). Lawrence Stone argues that, given the high mortality rate for children, in order accomplish the responsibilities of marriage as much as to assure heirs to the property, couples were urged to produce numerous offspring. Given the practice of fostering children out of the home, family bonds were relatively loose (Stone 1990: 48).[42] Hence, for Dorothea, the loss of the family was one more step towards her *reclusorium*. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the dissolution of the family due to bereavement contributed to the rise of female spirituality, and that, in turn, impacted the ensuing upsurge of mystical writings. Analogously to the rest of Europe, medieval northern Poland was not spared the outbursts of the plague, "mors nigra". The Black Death, which decimated the population of the continent in the years between 1347 and 1352 and again in 1388,[43] also caused the death of eight out of nine of Dorothea's children (Atkinson 1985: 179).[44] They died between the two waves of the plague, in 1374 and then in 1382. Only her youngest daughter, Gertrude, born in 1381, survived. She was later a Benedictine nun in Culm (Polish Chełmno).[45] Unexpectedly, the loss of their family in 1382 helped Dorothea convince Adalbert to sell their house, leave their youngest child in the care of friends, and go on a pilgrimage to Aachen and Rome. Cultivation of the penitential spirit, rather than curiosity, led them to suffer the inconveniences of the road. Both wanted to atone

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42 Stone's study concerns a slightly later period, but many of the issues raised in his work are pertinent to the present paper. Gies & Gies (1987: 12), however, challenge Stone's views that there was little or no affection between the spouses and that, consequently, strong love bonds within the family, especially in relation to children, were non-existent in the pre-industrial era.

43 One of these outbreaks might have killed Julian of Norwich's family. There are hypotheses that she might have entered the anchorage to battle depression (Leech & Ward 1995: 11–29).

44 Herlihy argues against the claim that medieval parents frequently ignored their children. Yet the examples of Margery and Dorothea's attitude would suggest otherwise (Herlihy 1985: 125).

45 Kujawska-Komender (1957: 105) argues that the eldest daughter, Agatha, also survived the Black Death because she was no longer living in the family home as she was most probably already married (in 1381). She was still alive in 1400, but when the canonisation process began in 1404, she was already dead. Agatha's daughter became a Cistercian nun.

for their sins and, in a way, to salvage their marriage. For Dorothea, the pilgrimage was a suitable moment to secure dispensation from the conjugal debt, and, like Margery, she managed to obtain Adalbert's agreement to the vow of chastity (Atkinson 1985: 179).

Her ten-year-long vow of chastity was unprecedented, as compared, for example, to the two years of sexual abstinence of St. Bridget and her husband Ulf (Elliott 1999: 171). In an exhaustive study on the issue of spiritual marriage, Elliott provides a number of examples of when, although recognized by the community, the vows of chastity within marriage provoked accusations of unchastity, because women were habitually thought of as temptresses (Elliott 1993: 147). Like Bridget, who was also married against her will, Dorothea practiced penitential ethos, but unlike Bridget, her husband proved to be a more difficult case, perhaps because of Dorothea's self-inflicted asceticism and her unwillingness to enjoy her role of wife in either the spiritual or physical sense. As Canon Johann avowed: "Physically she became the mother of children, but she remained a virgin in spirit to do justice to her carnal bridegroom and at the same time not to withhold from her heavenly bridegroom the service that was his by right" (Stargardt 1997: 60). Her repugnance towards sex was yet another sign of her extraordinary piety; nonetheless for Adalbert a saintly wife, prone to mystical raptures and forgetting about her household chores, was more of a problem than an asset. Having been frequently transfixed in prayer, she not only neglected her household duties but also withdrew herself from the marriage bed. Naturally, Adalbert became enraged and kept her for three days "fettered and in chains, a prisoner in his house" (Stargardt 1997: 66). Not much is known about Adalbert's motives for agreeing to withhold his conjugal rights. One may surmise, however, that he had already fulfilled his Christian duty of begetting children, was growing old, and decided that it was now the time to repent his earlier transgressions. The vow of chastity coupled with the conversion of a sinner, Adalbert, ensured two important demands of the canonisation process. The pilgrimage, likewise, solidified her resolve to follow the *vita contemplative* in her later life. Apart from its apparent religious meaning, the pilgrimage for Dorothea was a liberating incidence, discharging her from "the mundane structure" through "the ritualized enactment of correspondences between religious paradigms and shared human experiences", as Victor & Edith Turner (1978: 34) hold.

Canon Johann repeatedly presents her marriage as oppressive, even though Dorothea was not entirely blameless for her misdemeanours, for, similarly to Margery Kempe, she preferred prayer to housework.[46] Once, engrossed in

[46] A very unfavourable depiction of Dorothea and perhaps a slightly more sympathetic picture of the swordmaker Adalbert is found in Günter Grass's *The Flounder* (1978). His novel, however,

religious meditation, she prepared an uncleaned fish, and Adalbert "beat her so severely on the mouth that her upper lip was cut badly by the teeth. Her mouth swelled shut hideously, which disfigured her greatly" (Stargardt 1997: 101). Dorothea endured this trial patiently, accepting the chastisement in the name of the Lord. Applauding her behaviour, Canon Johann seemed to forget what John Mirk so aptly outlined in his early fifteenth-century *Instructions for Parish Priests*, viz., that a woman's penance must be such that her husband may not know.[47] Contrary to Mirk's precepts, whenever she could, Dorothea gave herself to austere self-castigation, for example by prodding her wounds to intensify the pain. She kept numerous vigils and punished her body with lack of food and proper clothing (Stargardt 1997: 51–52), as if the anguish of an ill-chosen and cruel husband was an insufficient atonement for her sins. Bound by the oaths of fidelity and subservience, Dorothea was to bear her husband's maltreatment even if it was undeserved. She seemed to have internalised the idea of pain as a necessary element of a woman's life. Throughout her married life, Dorothea was repeatedly harmed by her drunkard husband, yet instead of fighting back or attempting to obtain legal separation, brutality being one of the grounds – the other two were adultery and "spiritual fornication" which, according to Dyan Elliott (2003: 47), signified heresy or apostasy – she accepted her fate with martyr-like calm and humbly tried to perform her tasks to Adalbert's satisfaction. In the canonisation process, her disregard of domestic responsibilities was duly noted by Canon Johann. Though Adalbert's violence provided the grounds for her martyrdom, and her fasting, vigils, and excessive work, were signs of her inner strength, her hard life might have contributed to her various illnesses.

Besides, Adalbert's abuse can be symptomatic of a larger problem, that of the late medieval crisis of lower-class, urban male identity, caused and accelerated by the female mystical movement.[48] The rise of the European cities and the burghers coincided with the decline of feudalism and aristocratic masculine models.[49] Middle-

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is a postmodern version of hi/story displaying different levels of unreliability of the narrator, as well as the writer's distrust towards the objectivity of historiography and his dislike of hagiographic accounts based on belief.

47 Mirk, *Instructions*, ll. 1537–1540.

48 Determined by the ideologies of monastic life, chastity became the highest ideal for both men and women. A woman can overcome her fallen state only by upholding virtue. In Wilson's opinion, this "often resulted in the degradation of women, particularly secular women, because in the ideology of a male-ruled world at whose pinnacle of excellence chastity was placed, woman then became a dangerous temptress representing lust and carnality" (Wilson 1984: xi).

49 For more on the question of medieval masculinities, see D. M. Hadley (1999) and Cohen & Wheeler (2000). Although there are studies concerning medieval masculinity, they usually juxtapose the aristocratic secular and religious models, discussing the chivalric ethos in the first case and effeminacy in the second. The romances also frequently parody the behaviour of burghers who do not quite understand the ways of aristocracy (see the romance of *Octavian*).

class social status was not tested on the battlefield, yet violence seems to have been synonymous with power. In the fourteenth-century manual of good behaviour, *Livre du Chevalier de la Tour*, written by the Knight of the Tower for his daughters, one finds an example of a transgression against one's "husbond and lord".[50] Characteristically, the chevalier talks not about violence within an aristocratic marriage but about a "wyf of a burgeys" who dared to answer her husband so noisily and disgracefully that "he bicam angry and felle to see hym self so rewlyd to fore the peple that he had thereof shame ... And smote her with his foote on the vysage so that he brake her nose by which she was euer after al disfigured" (Caxton 1971: 35). Whereas a contemporary reader may be baffled by this story, for the medieval audience the scene asserted the social order. "Man and Lord" was never ever to be crossed, especially in public. Yet the interpretation of the position of a husband in a middle-class household needs to be defined while taking into consideration the historical and social variability of the patterns of behaviour.[51]

Dorothea's prison-house of marriage, therefore, was seized upon as an opportunity to be the testing ground for the future saint. In Canon Johann's opinion: "… married life was helpful to the blessed Dorothea insofar as she became all the more humble through the heavy load of conjugal burdens, and God was praised even more highly in the fruit her married life brought forth as she, for his praise and honor, became more skilled in all matters ordained proper in God's service" (Stargardt 1997: 57). Inescapable marriage becomes one of the tropes of late medieval female hagiography.[52] Described as "the ordeal" by later ecclesiastical sources (Liedtke 2011: 311–312), Dorothea's suffering is in line with the early Roman saints' lives, in which the abusive dominance of spouses becomes one of the prerequisites for sainthood. It is hardly surprising that the canonisation papers provide numerous instances of Adalbert's brutality (Stachnik 1978: 24–25, 97–98, 106–108), transforming Dorothea's marriage into a kind of purgatory, and that they strengthen the portrayal of their relationship as entrapment. In every version of her *vita*, Dorothea is depicted as the willing prisoner cum victim, whereas her husband is depicted as the necessary evil, whose death, at the time, seems to have removed the one and only obstacle on the way to voluntary enclosure for Dorothea.

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50 *The Book*, was written by the fourth Geoffrey de la Tour-Landry between 1371 and 1372, translated and published by Caxton in 1485 (Offord 1971: xxxv–xxxix).

51 Christianity indeed provided lay people with inflexible hierarchies, which accorded certain patterns of behaviour to both sexes, but aristocratic masculinities were also constructed in the context of power struggles. This type of masculinity is easily discerned in later periods. See, for example, Phillips (2006). Even though the development of masculine ideals within earlier warrior culture, and then through later medieval chivalry also in connection with non-heteronormative behaviour, are undoubtedly fascinating, tackling these issues would require a separate paper.

52 Newman (1995: 115) claims that "[t]he abused wife is a figure of hagiography, while the abused husband is the figure of misogynist satire". She draws attention to the comic topos of marriage as purgatory in later medieval literature (Newman 1995: 115–117).

3. Voluntary Enclosure as Mystical Marriage

As has been noted, Dorothea's hagiographer had to reconstruct her life as worthy and immaculate from the beginning until the end. There is no doubt that Dorothea, from a very young age, was drawn to the religious rather than the secular life. Her religious awakening occurred at the age of seven when she was scalded by hot water (Elliott 1999: 171); this is when she was first comforted by God and felt "a tremendous pull that seemed to draw her upwards, body and soul" (Stargardt 1997: 44). Being still a small child, Dorothea nevertheless lost all interest in earthly affairs and frequently contemplated "the starry sky at night as her future home where she hoped to dwell forever with God and his saints" (Stargardt 1997: 45). From 1378 onwards, when she was already married, she experienced ever more frequent ecstasies, such as a twenty-four-hour "fainting-like state" (Stargardt 1997: 51). Her austere religiosity and raptures, as I have mentioned earlier, disrupted her family life and were barely tolerated by her husband. Canon Johann reports that she found "little if any satisfaction" in worldly joys because "her desire for the heavenly treasures that attracted her made her abstinent, and human festivities were bitter to her" (Stargardt 1997: 43). As it transpires, her flawed housekeeping was regarded as a triumph of humility, faith, and endurance, and her extreme penitential practices were intensified by her husband's maltreatment. In spite of the marital vows, service to God was always a priority in the mind of medieval Christians, as the well-being of the soul took precedence over the comfort of the body. Throughout her married life, Dorothea was not drawn to the world but was enticed by God to withdraw from it.

As a wife, whose body belonged to her husband, Dorothea practiced the life of the soul, pledging her mind to God, in her confessional narrative, subscribing to the new *imago Dei*, of Christ, the lover. For both men and women, mysticism channelled the forbidden human involvement with the divine, but it is within the female mystical tradition that the love of Christ became understood in terms of passion, emotional closeness, and sublime eroticism; the desire for him, *nomen omen*, incorporated. While the troubadour tradition found fertile ground in aristocratic literature,[53] the middle classes, raised on exempla, hagiography and sermons, might have found the adulterous elements too transgressive. To this effect, religious literature accommodated only platonic motifs, suitable to render Christ's love for humanity. Fuelled by the idea of courtly love, otherworldly bliss was rendered through the language of spiritualised desire, while the idealised

[53] From the well-known work by C. S. Lewis entitled *The Allegory of Love* (1936) and Denis de Rougemont's *Love in the Western World* (1940), the notion of courtly love preoccupied researchers. I am far from entering the debate over whether it was real and practiced at medieval courts or was an entirely literary idea. What is important for the mystical tradition, however, is that the Eros can be presented as Agape, both aiding in the construction of female subjectivity in mystical discourse.

marital affection was imparted by Bernard of Clairvaux's reading of the *Song of Songs* (Kelly 2004: 307). Medieval interpretations of the *Song* radically reshaped both the religious and secular literature concerning marriage. Mystical marriage, originally referring to the portrayals of *Sponsus* and *Sponsa*, Christ and the Church, provided the model for the new conjugality, reiterated in various mystical works. No wonder the exemplary *Ancrene Wisse* uses the pattern of wooing and lists four types of love – that between man and woman, a woman and her child, good friends, and body and soul – but the love "that Jesus Christ has for his dear beloved transcends these four, surpasses them all" (Savage & Watson 1991: 192). Here, Christ becomes a courtly lover who pursues a soul. For an anchoress: "This love is the rule that rules the heart" (Savage & Watson 1991: 198). In an uncomplicated way, love is the rule, and the rule is considered to be love.

Characteristically, the mystic's love for Christ was once again based on absolute obedience and, surprisingly, restraint. Dorothea must have been mindful of the perils of uncontrolled passions, for she was instructed by Christ himself to forgo undue emotionalism and savour the power of contemplation: "You must not exert yourself so severely with running about and not cry so much when you are in prayer. Instead, listen to my voice in quiet and silence and taste the wholesome fruit of the contemplative life" (Stargardt 1997: 83). Even though women mystics were prone to raptures, ultimately it was the quiet retirement and calm inner life that were to be the highpoint of the anchoress's life. Christ taught Dorothea many "prayers sweeter than honey, many spiritual songs, and many sound teachings that agree so perfectly with the holy scriptures that no expert of holy writ could punish her" (Stargardt 1997: 83). Finding succour in the arms of the Lord was only legitimate insofar as it agreed with the Church's teachings concerning women's visions.

Be it as it may, hagiography feeds on miracles, and one such outstanding miracle was the famous "exchange of heart" that took place in Gdańsk, on the holy day of Candlemas, on 2 February 1385, when Dorothea was aged thirty-nine. The said *estractione cordis* (Stachnik 1978: 210–211, 271), described not in mystical but in quite literal terms, was a turning point in Dorothea's religious life, as it gave her the strength to continue her penitential journey, culminating in the decision to forgo the world entirely:

> ... Our Lord Jesus, her mighty lover, came, pulled out her old heart, and pushed into its place a new, hot one. The blessed Dorothea felt very well that her old heart was being extracted and that in place of that heart an extremely hot piece of flesh was shoved into her. In receiving this piece of flesh or new heart she experienced such rapture and joy that she could never truly relate it to anyone ... With this renewal of her heart the Lord bestowed on her a love which encompasses other kinds of love and good things ... .
>
> (Stargardt 1997: 77–78)

The new heart was Dorothea's mystical rebirth, substantiating her union with Christ, perpetrating the image of wholeness and harmony. To corroborate his story, Canon Johann referred to the lives of *Saints Cosmas and Damian* and quotes the crucial authority, St. Augustine, who urged the faithful to be aware that God's miracles are not always intelligible to human reason (Stargardt 1997: 79). Likewise, he observed, God promised Dorothea that her soul will remember His teaching, but that she herself would not be able to comprehend the divine message rationally (Stargardt 1997: 192). The impossibility of grasping the magnitude of the divine message with the limited human brain serves as one of the ways to de-anthropomorphise the humanised Christ of the mystical treatises. Thus, Canon Johann's rendering of his charge's visions both endorses the closeness she feels with God and serves as a reminder of the distance between the human and the divine.

As has been already stated, for Dorothea, like for Canon Johann, the marvel of the new heart was a sign of the Lord's favour, of the extraordinary bond with Christ and a momentous step towards the contemplative life. Accepting God's calling meant, firstly, completing her duties as a wife and mother, only to begin a slow abandonment of the cares of her worldly existence. After the death of her husband, Dorothea enjoyed a peaceful life of a "chaste widow", whose only wish was to serve God more completely. In "order to hear the Lord clearly and in peace" (Stargardt 1997: 147), she desired to renounce the world. If virginity was represented as a sealed and unsullied body, especially through associations with the womb of the Virgin Mary, the married woman's physique could be reclaimed for the Church only after she was free from the bonds, or rather chains, of marriage. Dorothea's pilgrimage led to places of worship and miracles, but her most important journey was the one within herself. On 18 October 1389, the feast day of St. Luke the Evangelist, Dorothea travelled to Marienwerder; this was to be her final passage (Stargardt 1997: 124). There, with the help of Canon Johann, who offered doctrinal explanations, and, free from family obligations, she was able to devote the rest of her life to God. Although her "death-in-life"[54] seemed a rather drastic step, Dorothea had been nursing the longing to live apart from the world for quite some time. Such a decision, however, was not hers alone. The Marienwerder authorities had to test her resolve to ascertain that her calling was genuine. They needed to:

> discern more clearly the will of our Lord concerning her enclosure, to test and observe her determination and suitability for life in a cell and, with God's help, find appropriate means for securing permission from their spiritual father, the lord

[54] I have borrowed the expression from Gunter Blaicher's collection of articles and in particular from a contribution by Professor Inge Milfull's study entitled "Lebendig-Totsein in der mittelenglischen Devotionsliteratur: Leben und Sterben im Werk der Julian of Norwich", sent to me by the author herself. The article was translated from German by my grandfather Stefan Strzelczyk (1913–2003) in 1999.

> bishop, and his chapter to build such a cell at the church of Marienwerder, for at that time hermitages within churches or attached to them were uncommon in Prussia and not seen there.
>
> (Stargardt 1997: 147)

Discussing the requirements for lay people who wanted to enter the cell, Canon Johann highlighted the fact that, although purity and a clean state of mind are rather obvious prerequisites, the main condition should be the wish to devote oneself entirely to God. As a widow and a woman past childbearing age, Dorothea was a legitimate candidate for the enclosure, for her wish was no longer disruptive to the structure of the family. Still, to safeguard and validate such a momentous move, she was obliged to fulfil the requirements of the Church. A recluse cannot enter the cell on the advice of others; she has to be of sound mind and make the decision herself. More than once, Canon Johann emphasized the "languishing love" for the Lord,[55] which incapacitates such persons and renders them unable to perform daily tasks. Their love of God is so overwhelming that they cannot live in the world amongst other people (Stargardt 1997: 150). Blessed with the said feeling, Dorothea willingly submitted herself to the enquiry of the Church experts, who found her tenacity admirable. To fortify her, the Lord himself gave her the rule according to which she was to possess nothing but spiritual wealth. For the rest of her days, she had to depend on other people to feed and clothe her, but she could rely on her confessor to alleviate her doubts and anxieties. One of the privileges of the enclosed life was the possibility of receiving communion once daily. "And not only had Dorothea withdrawn from her friends, she also had removed her love, desire, and spirit from the entire world and all perishable things to surrender her entire being to the Lord and cleave only to him" (Stargardt 1997: 153). The idealisation of her emotions is unmistakable; even before she entered the cell, Dorothea's soul had already been enveloped in Christ's love, celebrated in her intensely private knowledge, as he was spiritually reborn in her (Stargardt 1997: 152). The image of all-consuming affection recurs in different contexts, for example:

> [w]hen he had set her afire with his love and she had performed and suffered so many spiritual exercises, disciplines, and self-castigations to become receptive to God, the Lord sent her his Holy Spirit invisibly with his hot, burning love so that she was illuminated and could understand what she was to do and could perform the heavy labors of virtue more joyfully.
>
> (Stargardt 1997: 182)

In his support of Dorothea's calling, Canon Johann uses the authority of Christ, who himself, as was understood, wanted to remove Dorothea from the world.

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[55] In the last part of the *vita*, Canon Johann cited Dorothea's thirty-seven degrees and names of divine love (Stargardt 1997: 229–239).

Dorothea of Montau entered her cell on 2 May, 1393. Since an anchoress was dead to the world, the Church offered the funeral mass, during which many people were moved by her dedication (Stargardt 1997: 152). She herself felt like a joyful bride. For her, the step into the cell was also a step towards the mystical marriage. "As she came to the Lord by stepping into the cell and was locked and walled in, the Lord granted her such abundant comfort in himself that she was too overwhelmed with happiness to imagine wanting anything else" (Stargardt 1997: 153). There she found the peace that she had striven to achieve since the fateful scalding when she was seven years old, when God himself comforted her with the promise that once she is with him, there could be no fear or anxiety. Enshrined in the images of conjugality and eternal bliss, the ceremony in which an anchoress was immured was a great and rare advantage for the religious community. It was believed that her sacrifice would bring a blessing for the entire region (Stargardt 1997: 156). Yet her mother, Agatha, who was still alive at the time of Dorothea's enclosure, wept for her daughter's terrible destiny, and so God instructed Dorothea not only to pray for her mother but also to tell her that even though she had given her a mortal bridegroom, the Lord "has given me a far nobler name, for among his special friends I am called the bride of the eternal bridegroom" (Stargardt 1997: 154–155).

In the contemporary theory of spatiality, space is read within philosophical and psychoanalytic frameworks. Leaving aside the Foucauldian idea that space can be synonymous with power, Henri Lefebvre (2005: 85) draws attention to the distinction between abstract and social areas. In this sense, the "production" of space is tantamount to specific ideologies: "here we see a polyvalence of social space, its 'reality' at once formal and material". Both the church and the anchoress's cell are socially charged; generating explicit meanings, in a way, their respective areas reverse the perception of power. While it is certainly true that an anchoress's cell is a peripheral addition to a church, through her sacrifice it becomes central in the community's devotions, thereby invalidating the perception of the high walls and vaulted ceilings of a Gothic cathedral as equal to the power of the Church as an institution. It is the smallness and darkness of the *reclusorium* that radiates authority.

In contrast to Lefebvre, Gaston Bachelard's seminal study on the poetics of space raises the question of the expressive foundations of the human response to space, especially that of a dwelling. Examining closed spaces, Bachelard (1994: 59) observes that the image of a house "is created through co-operation between real and unreal … if a house is a living value, it must integrate an element of unreality". By analogy, the anchoress's cell is a real, albeit limited, area in which a person leads a seemingly unconstrained life with and through the love of God. Transposing the notions of independence and confinement through Christ, Dorothea's spirit is freed from the bounds of physicality as he promises her: "…

I will bring you such comforts that you will have no desire to leave your cell. On the contrary, you will delight in staying here" (Stargardt 1997: 151). The place, her cell, introduces a new spatial order into her life as it transforms a grave-like area into a universe of her own and as the enclosure becomes a world in itself, affirming the inversion of the outside and the inside. The anchoress's isolation, her ultimate withdrawal within herself, is the utmost expression of her love of God, by upending claustrophobia, it exudes claustrophilia.[56] The cell is akin to the psychoanalytical womb, a place of purity and safety. In early as well as later medieval texts, the image of the soul, the Virgin's womb, the fortress, and the walled city, were connected; all of them were enclosed spaces, frequently besieged and in constant need of defence.[57]

The picture of the besieged castle so aptly executed in the late medieval morality play *The Castle of Perseverance* points to a number of metaphorical interpretations of the castle, among them the already-described marriage. A sealed area that is "assailed and defended" (Hebron 1997: 2) is concurrent with the idea of the soul being a shield against the forces of evil. The idea of the siege, thus, shaped the culture of the Middle Ages, with real as well as literary sieges as part and parcel of religious as well as secular writings. Such sieges "are used as models for the trials of the soul or the state of mind of the courtly lover" (Hebron 1997: 3). The manuscript of *The Castle of Perseverance* (c. 1400–1425)[58] included a visual depiction of a tower or a castle, with the characters besieging it: South (Caro, the Body),[59] East (Deus, God), West (Mundus, the World), North (Belyal. the devil), and North-East (Covetousness). The centrally placed edifice is the castle of the soul, in which Humanum Genus takes refuge as he is

56 For more on the erotics of enclosure, see Howie (2007).

57 "Numerous other passages in patristic writings demonstrate the vitality of the image of the siege in treatments of sin. The idea also appears in vernacular religious writings and poetry. By the time of the composition of *Beowulf*, perhaps in the early eighth century or later, it is commonplace" (Hebron 1997: 141).

58 In a prior work, the early thirteenth-century text of Robert Grosseteste entitled *Chateau d'Amour*, according to Sajavaara dated between 1200–1230 (Sajavaara 1967: 43). The allegory of the Castle of Love is concerned with Christ's birth and the contrast of vices and virtues. Finding himself at the gate of the castle, the author asks for admission because he is attacked by three foes: the Devil, the World, and the Flesh. The Devil attacks with Pride, Wrath, and Sloth; the World assaults with Envy and Covetousness; and the Flesh harasses the castle with Lechery and Gluttony. As the castle withstands the attack, the siege is evocative not only of mystical unions with Christ but also of confrontations with evil. *Chateau d'Amour*, like many other religious works, combines spiritual and erotic love. For Hebron (1997: 139), "[t]his articulation of an abstract idea by reference to common experience helps to explain the frequent occurrence of the image in spiritual and allegorical works: poets and preachers could refer to historical sieges to draw their audience from real life into the imagined or figurative worlds of romance and theology".

59 Medieval climactic theories very frequently declared that the southern regions of the Earth produced more lascivious human beings.

surrounded by the devil and evil angels. These stage directions clearly reproduce medieval symbolic geographies, but, what is more important, the text strengthens the idea of the enclosed space as both protective and being constantly exposed to various enemies.

The fortress of the soul and other allegorical castles are tested in the never-ending *psychomachia*, the ceaseless battle between good and evil. This is why Dorothea is reminded that the Lord would not enter any dwelling not carefully prepared for him. Here, once again, the image is that of the clean vessel, the immaculate castle of the soul. Logically, the language employed by the anonymous author of *Ancrene Wisse* points to the constant juxtaposition of open and closed spaces. Framing *Ancrene Wisse* in the context of the late medieval religious reform, Nicholas Watson argues that the work persistently underlines the dangers of straying from the Catholic orthodoxy. The anchoresses had to abide by the Church's teachings not only because of their inferior position as women and their assumed fallibility, but because of "their lack of institutional status" (Watson 2003: 201); hence, yet another contrast, that of the righteous path and doctrinal error. Physical enclosure entailed obvious psychological peril, a vulnerability equated with metaphorical openness to temptation. Canon Johann, despite his endorsement of the exchange of the public and private spheres in the anchoress's life, was much more precise in his renditions of Dorothea's qualms, making her acutely aware of the lingering longings. The human body and mind, after all, are frail and imperfect, and that is why she was taught to follow rigorous exercises so as to keep her soul unharmed.[60] One of the ways to avoid sin was to look at the holy body of Our Lord kept in a reliquary facing her cell. Punishing her body, she spent the winter in her cell without the benefit of a fire, but when she was shivering, Christ set her heart ablaze (Stargardt 1997: 163).

As most of the guidelines that she received from Christ were devoted to religious exercises, inner feelings, confession, and penance, Dorothea strove each and every day to be worthy of her celestial husband. One of her venerable aspirations was "to attain the serene virtue of a purified soul" (Stargardt 1997: 167). She disciplined her soul, "kept it spotless through great exertion and trained diligently for spiritual life. She wanted to make her soul worthy of the praise of

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60 In *Ancrene Wisse*, a whole chapter is devoted to the so-called outer rule pertaining to food, drink, gifts, clothing, and occupation. An anchoress may forgo a meal, but she should not starve herself. Canon Johann never mentioned *Ancrene Wisse*. But the instructions received from God himself specify that Dorothea should not disregard the needs of the flesh completely but that eating sparsely so as not to be sluggish was advisable (Stargardt 1997: 160). Her meals were to be accompanied by prayer (Stargardt 1997: 161). She is told to pray for many things (Stargardt 1997: 165); likewise, *Ancrene Wisse* specifies the external details of her life and devotions (Savage & Watson 1991: 53–65). In accordance to her rule, Dorothea ate moderately once a day, only experiencing unsurpassed joy within her soul (Stargardt 1997: 162).

the Lord. She experienced frequent illumination through the love of the Lord" (Stargardt 1997: 179–181). The prayers and penance, as well as her ecstasies, deepened her understanding of the enclosure. In the words of the Lord: "My bride, I have made you rich, as I enriched my elected after my ascension to heaven by sending them my Holy Spirit" (Stargardt 1997: 181). Her holy discipline dedicated to ensure her psychological well-being and to safeguard her soul is presented in terms of love within her mystical marriage, releasing her spirit, whilst her bridegroom is whispering delectable words into her ear. This scene exudes not a religious but an erotic ecstasy, even though she sees herself among the brides of Christ, "… crowned like a bride of a king, sumptuously adorned, highly honored and paid homage to" (Stargardt 1997: 191), an image associated with the Profession of Vows for the nuns. Fusing the ceremony of consecration with that of the royal marriage, Dorothea envisions her heavenly exaltation downplaying, and perhaps even nullyfying the abuse she suffered from the hands of her earthly husband. In her cell she is already emancipated, powerful awaiting esteem in the otherworldly domain. Espoused by her heavenly bridegroom, Dorothea feels enriched, repeatedly adorned with the divine grace, and endowed with spiritual offerings; what is most important, however, she is free to give herself to prayer and meditation.

One of the benefactions of her contemplation is an inward trip to the wine cellar, during which she becomes enraptured as if she was inwardly drunk. The visions involving visitations from saints is a recurrent motif in many mystical treatises serving to corroborate the mystic's revelations. What is uncommon, however, is the mentioning of particular holy men and women, hence the focus is on her perception of the scene, rather than the hagiographer's rendering of it. Transported to heaven, she is escorted by two chamberlains, a privilege restricted to aristocratic women, which once again plays into her unconscious fantasy of social advancement. Dorothea finds herself in a heavenly castle, and there she observes many saints:

> inebriated by the liquor of divine sweetness. She asked to stay and speak to them, but her request was denied. Instead, she was led away by the bridegroom's aforementioned chamberlains and released from her ecstasy. When she came to, she found herself spiritually intoxicated and so full of divine sweetness that she realized how truly well fed and plied with drink she was, which however she would not have divulged had the Lord not ordered her to do so.
>
> (Stargardt 1997: 189)

Disciplining her body through self-denial and continual penance, Dorothea had relinquished earthly pleasures so as to gain otherworldly perfection; in the last

months of her life, she existed sustained by the Eucharist.[61] Like other saints, she predicted her own demise was another indication of her holiness (Stargardt 1997: 198). Canon Johann concluded that she died because of her heartbreaking love of Christ, her mortal body being inflamed with divine love, and her mind unable to process her ecstasies rationally. Her death, however, was not an occasion for mourning, as it was, after all, the threshold leading to eternal bliss. In a world dominated by the inner life, the need for self-restraint is easily discernible as part and parcel of confinement, but that confinement was, in the end, Dorothea's deliverance.

Medieval culture implied a marriage "deal" imbued with the doctrinal significance of hierarchy and obedience. Instituted in theological writings, the secular model of man's submission to God and, in turn, female submission to man, was both upheld and inverted by mystics who chose devotion to Christ above all earthly authorities. The opposition of the real and the ideal in medieval secular reality underscored the epoch's duality, further accentuated by the existence of *amour courtois.* Courtly love suggested as an alternative standard, readily emulated by the female mystics, was based not on the physical consummation of the union but on a spiritual, platonic love. In the religious sphere, for both men and women, such love was concurrent with dedicating oneself to God. Following the overwhelming need to fulfil the wishes of the divine, as a child and young woman, Dorothea of Montau had dreamt of becoming a nun. Being a lower-class woman with no dowry, she had to concede to her family's demands to marry Adalbert. Unable to maintain virginity, or attain the perpetual chastity of the Virgin Mary, she could only be redeemed through her disdain towards physicality and the resultant abuse by her husband, which strengthened her resolve to spend her final years "dead to the world". Her continual commitment to Christ and the search for the space in which to pray and meditate freely, comprised the characteristics which the ecclesiastical authorities deemed necessary prerequisites for *reclusorium*. Her experiences as a wife and mother, although marred by Adalbert's maltreatment, became the dominant part of her martyrdom fitting the requirements of hagiography, brought into light by Canon Johann's tireless efforts to have her canonised. Adalbert's violence, however, has to be seen not only in the context of historical evaluations of marital relations but also linked with the changing norms of burgher class masculinity foregrounded by the imminent decline of aristocratic courtly ideals in the world of war, pestilence and famine. Dorothea lived according to the Church's precepts, imprisoned in abject humility, always subduing her own will to the will of the men who ruled and directed her life. Despite her social limitations, she managed

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61 Part III of Dorothea's *Septililium* is devoted to the sacrament of Eucharist. See Hipler (1883: 408–448).

to undermine the condescending attitude of the Church towards women, inverting the image of "the weaker vessel". Within the confines of marriage, she withstood cruelty, asserting her choice of the contemplative life. Within the bounds of her cell, she felt secure in her spiritual marriage to Christ. By imprisoning her body, she freed her mind. Her inward journey marks the victory of Agape over Eros, the triumph of self-denial and sacrifice accomplished in the name of domestic concord, and the undeniable joy found in the union with Christ. Re-reading the roles of the real husband and the divine spouse reformulates the all-too-obvious vilification of the former, at the same time upturning imaginative parallels between the constraints of marriage and voluntary enclosure.

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