Quod Homo sit Minor Mundus.

Robert Grosseteste and the Potentiality of the Material World: Microcosmism and Deification in the Development of a Didactic *Weltanschauung.*

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By

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Abstract

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Grossetestean scholarship routinely asserts the inventiveness of the Bishop of Lincoln (c.1170-1253), particularly in reference to the way he attempted to synthesise newly emergent peripatetic philosophy within a distinctly Augustinian theological framework. The result was a highly original, comprehensive epistemology influenced by Grosseteste's natural philosophic work on optics. The conclusions of this natural philosophy are utterly pervasive upon Grosseteste's noetic, and to fully appreciate the genius and comprehensiveness of his 'system' (if one can indeed call it as such), one must attempt to see the theological implications of combining his epistemology with his ontology; that is, how it fits with his novel cosmogony.

This thesis will seek to demonstrate that the theological implications of such a combination are vast. In explicating and combining under-explored constituent ideological parts of Grosseteste's *weltanschauung*, such as his assent to the Pseudo-Dionsyian notion of 'hierarchy', this thesis will demonstrate that Grosseteste proffers a contemporaneously uncommon, positive anthropology that rests upon humankind's ability to learn and the concomitant spiritual development such an educational journey entails. Crucially, this 'journey' is only possible because of the means by which we can 'travel' at all –creation's divinely orchestrated microcosmistic constitution – and because of our destination – our

reunification with God and our potential deification. Finally, in conclusion, this thesis will establish that these implications lead one to surmise that Grosseteste was panentheistic.

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be here. That is a fact; you probably don't remember the day you invited two undergraduates round to the chaplain's house to discuss philosophy, but I do, and I remember my head still spins thinking about it. From the innumerable tutorials in your office(s), to the suppers and the trips designed to impart some much-needed culture in me, I cannot thank you enough. So God bless you, Peter Green (and that's official).

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Mum and Dad; I dedicate the following to you.

Contents

Abbreviations for works and series consulted.	
AHDLMA	*Archives d'histoire doctrinale et litteraire du moyen Age*
CPA	*Commentararius Posteriorum Analyticum*, ed. Pietro Rossi. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1981.
CCCG	*Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca*.
CCCM	*Corpus Christianorum: Continuatio mediaevalis*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1966-
CUP	*Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis,* ed. Heinrich Denifle and Émile Chatelain. Paris, 1889.
DDGC	*Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils*, ed. H.J. Schroeder. St Louis, MO: B. Herder, 1937.
PG	*Patrologae curus completes: series graeca*, ed. J. P. Migne. Paris, 1857-66
PL	*Patroligae cursus completus: series latina*, ed. Migne. Paris, 1844-55.
RTAM	*Recherches de théologie ancienne et mediévalé*

Introduction

Robert Grosseteste (c.1170 - 1253) was a polymath. He was a theologian, administrator, teacher, translator, commentator, philosopher, poet, and perhaps, a scientist. Reaching the heights of being Bishop of Lincoln from 1235 until his death in 1253, he amassed a large library that was perhaps one of the largest of his time. His prodigious intellect and talent was matched only by his 'radical' orthodoxy, and this was widely recognised by his close companions. His zeal towards his faith and his duty of pastoral care saw the Bishop travel to every parish within the Diocese of Lincoln, then the largest in England stretching from the River Humber to the River Thames, and possibly as far as Paris to study, and Lyon to reprimand a Pope he thought was performing inadequately. He was a keen exponent of the decrees of Lateran IV and was notably a disciple of Augustine whose theological legacy still held a firm grip on Christian doctrine in the thirteenth century. Perhaps curiously, it is primarily within Grosseteste's 'conservatism' that we see a particularly inventive mind; one that experiments with contemporaneous and patristic theology and natural philosophy, as well as demonstrating a risqué penchant for dubious doctrine. Perhaps one of his greatest achievements was his masterful synthesis of the newly emergent Aristotelian *libri naturales* with his own 'radically' conservative theological views, re-energising this potentially troublesome doctrine and presenting it in a complex and orthodox guise.

As part of the growing discourse on Robert Grosseteste, this thesis seeks to accomplish three things. Firstly, by its conclusion, it will have explicated upon a small number of omissions in the scholarship. Presently, much of the discourse has dealt with many of the constituent elements that could collectively comprise something of a loose Grossetestean

weltanschaaung. For example, there are lengthy works (and still more forthcoming) on his early natural philosophic *opuscula*[1], his pastoral theology,[2] its culmination in a more comprehensive theological and philosophical vision,[3] and how this vision manifested itself pastorally throughout his bishopric.[4] Many of these works understood the need to clearly demonstrate how the constituent parts of such a loose *weltanshcaaung* amalgamate; and there is a clear developmental thread to be identified throughout the chronology of Grosseteste's *oeuvre*.[5] However, there are still a number of connections to be made throughout this historiography that deserve attention, and often, scholarship that is ideologically proximal to this thesis simply misses a crucial 'next step' in making these connections, inevitably for a plethora of reasons. The present work seeks to synthesise elements of this Grossetestean discourse to eventually proffer the viability of a subtle re-emphasis that highlights what have been, to present, under-appreciated yet crucial elements to one's ability to fully identify something as comprehensive as a Grossetestean

[1]Giles E. M. Gasper et al., *The Scientific Works of Robert Grosseteste. Volume 1, Knowing and Speaking: Robert Grosseteste's De artibus liberalibus "On the Liberal Arts" and De generatione sonorum "On the Generation of Sounds."* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019). This is the first volume in what will be a six volume series.

[2] Some of the most influential works on Grosseteste's pastoral theology, aside from those mentioned directly below include: Leonard Boyle, "Robert Grosseteste and the Pastoral Care," *Medieval Renaissance Studies* 8 (1979): 3-51; Joseph Goering and F. A. C. Mantello. "The Early Penitential Writings of Robert Grosseteste," *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale* 54 (1987): 52–112; and James R. Ginther, "Robert Grosseteste's Theory of Pastoral Care," in *A Companion to Pastoral Care in the Late Middle Ages (1200-1500)*, ed. Ronald J. Stansbury (Leiden: Brill, 2010): 95-122.

[3] James McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).

[4] The single largest work on Grosseteste's pastoral work is: Philippa M. Hoskin, *Robert Grosseteste and the 13th-Century Diocese of Lincoln. An English Bishop's Pastoral Vision* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

[5] There are various competing chronologies and arguments surrounding Grosseteste's works and life. For an illustrative snapshot of this historiography see: Daniel Callus, *Robert Grosseteste: Scholar and Bishop. Essays in Commemoration of the Seventh Centenary of His Death*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955); Richard Southern, *Robert Grosseteste: Growth of an English Mind in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); the particularly damning review of Southern's work: Bruce Eastwood, "Book Review: Robert Grosseteste: The Growth of a Medieval Mind in Europe," *Speculum* 63 (1988): 233-237; Southern's response to the review: Richard Southern, "Intellectual Development and Local Environment: The Case of Robert Grosseteste," in *Essays in Honor of Edward B. King*, ed. Robert G. Benson and Eric W. Naylor (Sewanee, Tennessee: University of the South, 1991): 1-22; and finally James McEvoy, "The Chronology of Robert Grosseteste's Writings on Nature and Natural Philosophy." *Speculum* 58, no. 3 (1983): 614–55. Some of the evidence that points to Grosseteste being in Paris originates from his name appearing in a cartulary here: Paris, Archives Nationales, MS LL584 as posited in: N.M. Schulman, "Husband, Father, Bishop? Grosseteste in Paris," *Speculum* 72, no. 2 (1997): 330-346; 331.

weltanschauung. In identifying and explicating this *weltanschauung,* as well as its many ideological bases, this thesis will have accomplished its second aim, the emphasising of Grosseteste's richly positive anthropology rooted in humanity's ability to learn. Finally, this thesis will show that for Grosseteste, humanity's ability to learn is itself precipitated by our, and the cosmos', divinely orchestrated composition, and thus, in its conclusion, this thesis will accomplish its third aim; the assertion that, when one takes into account the pervasiveness of the two titular theo-philosophical doctrines on Grosseteste's noetic, it is almost impossible to deny Grosseteste's proclivity towards panentheism.

This thesis will show that the naturalistic disposition Grosseteste exemplifies right across his earlier and later life is a defining feature of a man once described as the 'Father of Experimental Science'.[6] Despite such probable inaccuracy, a mature *Lincolniensis* posits a complex, optimistic, frustratingly unsystematic, theological anthropology that emphasised the epistemological importance of the material world's potential as a concatenation of divine symbols, building upon, and yet remaining distinct to, particular works of Augustine (354 - 430), Pseudo-Dionysius (*fl.* c.6th), and Eriugena (*fl.* c.845 - 870).[7] The epistemological importance of corporeity primarily originates in Grosseteste's cosmogonical thought; his metaphysic of light proffered the notion that God, in initiating creation, is the first form of everything. God, being supreme light (*lux*), combined with his first command *fiat lux,* means that He is, quite literally, corporeity and as such is, *in some way,* the material world itself.[8]

[6] Alistair C. Crombie, *Robert Grosseteste and the Origins of Experimental Science 1100-1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953).
[7] Henceforth, Pseudo-Dionysius will be referred to in-text as Dionysius.
[8] In his *Commentary on* [Dionysius'] *The Celestial Hierarchy* for instance he wrote: "God is by nature and truly, or presently and chiefly, that is firstly and by himself, the substance and essence of spiritual light and therefore nothing can shine with spiritual light without participating in the light that he is." Robert Grosseteste, *Commentarius in De celesti hierarchia,* XIII, in Rome, Bibliotecha Vaticana MS. Chigi A.V.129. trans. Servus Gieben, "Grosseteste and Universal Science." In Maura O'Carroll, ed., *Robert Grosseteste and the Beginnings of a British Theology Tradition (*Roma: Instituto Storico dei Cappuccini, 2003): 231. This work can also be found here: Robert Grosseteste, *Commentarius in De celesti hierarchia* (CCCM 268, ed. D.A. Lawell, 2015).

This conclusion is then introduced to Grosseteste's pastoral theology, which strongly emphasises education as a particularly powerful communal, salvific and indeed, deificatory tool. Education is the driving force of the laity's and religious' ability to perform their God-given vocation. This is to 'climb' the Pseudo-Dionysian ladder towards their apotheosis potentially reaching deification.[9] Grosseteste's subscription to the thought of Dionysius and Eriugena, his own novel concept of divine illumination, and even the educative extent to his pastoral theology have all, to varying degrees with multiple 'missed steps', been covered in the current Grossetestean scholarship. To give an example: throughout a chapter on Grosseteste's use of light, Cecilia Panti brilliantly makes the connection between Grosseteste's light metaphysic and his prolonged didactic use of 'light-metaphors'. However, her analysis does not quite go far enough; for Grosseteste the importance of symbolism is far more than merely metaphorical, and by restricting the scope of her study she omits the idea that God is, *in some way,* present in the actual metaphors Grosseteste employs. In fact, God's dynamic presence can be felt across the entirety of the epistemological process, which will be a topic elaborated upon most fruitfully in the penultimate chapter of this thesis.[10]

However, to date, nobody has sought to combine the nuanced symbolism Grosseteste develops with his light metaphysic alongside his natural philosophy, and the educational aspirations of his pastoral theology. Furthermore, this thesis will posit that the presentation of the entirety of this theo-philosophy as a unified whole is only made possible due to two

[9] Deification will be elaborated upon in much greater detail below, but for now it should be sufficient to say that deification is the transformation, participation or reunification with God to such a degree as is possible. The nuances of this concept are detailed below.

[10] See: Cecilia Panti, "Robert Grosseteste's Cosmology of light and Light Metaphors A Symbolic Model of Sacred Space?," in *Bishop Robert Grosseteste and Lincoln Cathedral: Tracing Relationships between Medieval Concepts of Order and Built Form* ed. Nicholas Temple John Shannon Hendrix and Christian Frost (England: Ashgate, 2014).

implicit, near omnipresent and pervasive doctrines tying them all together: microcosmism and deification.[11]

Sir Richard Southern came close to detailing an ideological golden thread throughout Grosseteste's works when he wrote that, 'The idea of hierarchy [a crucial Dionysian notion analysed later] gave Grosseteste's thinking its strong unitary drive: it stamped his science, his theology, and finally his practical administration with zeal for the subordination of the visible event to the invisible source of its being.'[12] Alas, whilst the notion of hierarchy is incredibly formative to Grosseteste's mature thought, it is most certainly a framework that is applied after his explication of microcosmism and deification.

In order to fully develop the central tenets of this Grossetestean study, this thesis will firstly focus upon the constitution of, and relationship between, the two important yet subliminal notions of microcosmism and deification. It is essential to define exactly what is meant by these terms before going on to use them in a sustained manner. Furthermore, without such exploration, key concepts and terminology would be without definition, and as such it would be impossible to elucidate how such a relationship manifests itself upon the thought of those who influenced Grosseteste. Thus, elaborating upon this defined base, chapter two will

[11] Another 'missed step' occurs in the only sustained scholarship on Grosseteste's microcosmism as found in: James McEvoy, *The Philosophy* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2011): 367-441. McEvoy knows the significance of such a notion: '…when the whole series of microcosmic *leitmotive* is assembled from the writings of St. Bonaventure, for example, it is undoubtedly something like a central key to the organicity of his system that is recovered, an architectonic element of unquestionable revelatory power for his thought, taken as a whole. Something similar holds true for Grosseteste.' Ibid., 370. Unfortunately, McEvoy, whilst elaborating upon microcosmism's influence across Grosseteste's *corpus,* fails to combine some of the constituent elements this thesis attempts to: he glosses over any idea that microcosmism could have educational implications, whilst making the connection between the Pseudo-Dionysian form of hierarchy and microcosmism more generally. The idea that humanity is, in some way, a summary of all creation, as microcosmism espouses, is present in numerous Grossetestean works such as: *De confessione, Exiit edictum, De cessatione leglium* and *Hexaëmeron*. Ibid., 387. 'Macrocosm' is the opposite to the 'microcosm'; put simply, a microcosm is a small thing that somehow encapsulates in its entirety something that is larger than it (the macrocosm).
[12] Southern, *Growth of an English Mind*, 244.

evaluate the manifestations of such an ideological relationship with specific reference to Grosseteste's thought. However, significant attention to how Grosseteste incorporates the ideas of these luminaries will be reserved for the penultimate chapter, allowing for greater fluidity throughout the thesis as a whole and enabling the formulation of a more sustained argument regarding Grosseteste's educative *weltanschauung* at the appropriate time. Chapter three will contemplate, in some depth, the school of Chartres' impact upon the thought of Grosseteste. This connection represents a startling lacuna in the field of Grossetestean studies. The similarities between the natural philosophy occurring at Chartres and Grosseteste's own should be reason enough to merit sustained scholarship on the tracing upon a more tangible connection. There is much speculative evidence that begs the question of the presence of a relationship and this evidence will be discussed. The penultimate chapter will provide sustained evidentiary support to the argument of this thesis as built by the previous three chapters and as sketched in the first few pages of this work before a conclusive chapter distils the previous four, by first offering a defence of this thesis' panentheistic position. However, before reaching this conclusion, it is important for the reader to appreciate the definitions of pantheism and panentheism and to keep the discussion of these themes in mind when considering this thesis' argumentation. Before further definitional analysis on the two undercurrents of Grosseteste's theo-philosophy ultimately leading towards his panentheism, a brief, yet necessary excursus should occur that will elucidate these terms' meaning.

There is a subtle difference between panentheism and pantheism. In chapter three, this thesis will describe the difference between the two terms thus; aside from the concrete medieval heterodoxy of the latter, panentheism advocates for the paradoxical distinction between an ultimately immanent God and His creation. For panentheists, God is His creation, and yet He somehow, mysteriously, remains beyond it. Indeed, possibly due to the fear of charges of

heresy, Grosseteste never openly admits his allegiance to either theological position, and would certainly have been foolish with any attempt to do so, and yet, when one considers the argumentation to follow, panentheism is certainly an accurate descriptor regarding the work of *Lincolniensis*. However, in some cases, so can pantheism. In *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology*, John Cobb defers his discussion of panentheism to the work of process theologian Charles Hartshorne:

> He [Hartshorne] juxtaposes this 'di-polar' theism with the 'mono-polar' theism of much of the tradition. Monopolar theism affirms that the perfection of God consists in the divine absoluteness, immutability, eternality and complete independence. Panentheism, or dipolar theism, affirms that true perfection involves absoluteness, immutability, eternality and independence but also perfect relatability, perfect mutability or responsiveness, perfect temporality and perfect dependence.[13]

In contrast, D. W. D. Shaw writes:

> [Pantheism] denotes the doctrine that everything is the mode or the appearance of one single reality, and accordingly nature and God are identical … Pantheism has been developed in a variety of ways, the two extremes being, on the one hand, that view which sees God as the total reality, the world being appearance and ultimately unreal (acosmic pantheism) and, on the other hand, *the view which sees God as part of the world, immanent within it (immanentist pantheism).*[14]

[13] John Cobb, "Panentheism," in *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology*, ed. Alan Richardson and John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1983): 423.
[14] D.W.D. Shaw, "Pantheism," in *A New Dictionary*, 423 (emphasis added).

Immanentist pantheism would certainly seem more apposite than panentheism concerning the argument expressed throughout this work, and one can safely rule out the allure of acosmic pantheism when one considers the potentiality of the material world. However, immanentist pantheism seems to run counter to the original statement posited by Shaw; that nature and God are *identical*. God cannot be a mere 'part' of something that He *is.*[15] Joyce Ann Konigsburg wrote that pantheism sees the relationship between God and His creation as equivalents, '[that they are] so co-dependant that God *is* the universe'.[16] Already, immanentist pantheism seems to be rather paradoxical *prima facie*. God being His creation is phraseology that will be used within this very thesis, yet it must be stressed that each time God is referred to as being His creation, for Grosseteste, this occurs *in some way,* and that this mysticism is a direct outcome of the rather mystical ontological and epistemological conclusions of his light metaphysics. Whilst the propositional statement, 'God is light, light 'makes up' the universe, thus God is the universe' certainly concurs with Grosseteste's scientific and theological position, God is not *only* light. He is more than light, and it is this 'more than' which entails panentheism rather than pantheism, and by extension immanentism, as will be discussed at length in chapter four.

This divine transcendence is another contentious issue: like almost all medieval theologians Grosseteste discusses divine characteristics, and the following descriptors as proffered by Cobb are not there. Grosseteste does not discuss 'perfect relatability' nor 'perfect responsiveness' and such like because he is not a process theologian. Thus, it seems neither definition neatly fits the theological vision of the Bishop of Lincoln.

[15] Rather, as panentheism asserts, creation is a part of God.
[16] Joyce Ann Konigsburg, "Panentheism: A Potential Bridge for Scientific and Religious Dialogue," in *Connecting Faith and Science: Philosophical and Theological Inquiries* ed. Matthew Nelson Hill and Wm. Curtis Holtzen (California: Claremont Press, 2017): 161-182; 161.

This brief excursus demonstrates three things. Firstly, there are no clear lines of distinction between pantheism and panentheism except those that are rather 'broad-brush', because there can be various overlaps between the two theories. It is far beyond the current work's scope to sufficiently explicate upon the varying notions and history of panentheism and pantheism and as such, broad speaking must suffice.[17] Secondly, both pantheism and panentheism can be deeply paradoxical in nature. Thirdly, whilst Grosseteste never openly expressed such positions, and whilst his work does not offer neat categorisation and systemisation, perhaps neither of these definitions quite fit Grosseteste's *oeuvre* nor indeed his *weltanschauung.* Immanentist pantheism may seem accurate, but God's transcendence in the mind of Grosseteste pushes one towards a more mystical, less explicit panentheism, but not definitively. However, Dionysius' apophaticism might aid in the defining of Grosseteste's thought in this regard.

Dionysius' work centred on the mysticism invoked by theological paradox, and both panentheism and pantheism can be inherently paradoxical. Grosseteste's close reading of *On the Divine Names* would undoubtedly have made him aware of this:[18] relating the potentiality of the material world, the need for humankind to fulfil such potentiality and panentheism, the mystic wrote:

[17] A particularly good example of such broad speaking can be found here: "Pantheism is the view that God is wholly within the universe and the universe is wholly within God, so that God and the universe are coextensive, but not identical. A related, but distinct view known as Panentheism, agrees with pantheism that the universe is within God, but denies that God is limited to the universe. For according to panentheism, the universe is finite and within God, but God is truly infinite and so cannot be totally within or otherwise limited to the finite universe." William Rowe, "Does Panentheism reduce to Pantheism? A Response to Craig," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 61 no.2 (2007): 65-67; 65. Rowe's definition of panentheism would not be as problematic were it used to regard Grosseteste.

[18] Grosseteste's commentaries on the *Corpus Areopagiticum* were so intimate, it is sometimes hard to tell them apart, see: James McEvoy, *The Philosophy*, 90. Later in the same work, McEvoy writes: "*The Divine Names* also had a strong influence on Grosseteste, and his interpretation of its doctrine remained close to the spirit of Dionysius … Grosseteste's reflections in his *Commentary on the Celestial Hierarchy* on symbolic knowledge of the divine and the spiritual m are in profound agreement with Dionysius." Ibid., 115-6.

> … we cannot know God in his nature, since this is unknowable and is beyond the reach of mind or of reason. But we know him from the arrangement of everything, because everything is, in a sense, *projected* out from him, and this order possesses certain images and semblances of his divine paradigms … *God is therefore known in all things and as distinct from all things*. He is known through knowledge and through unknowing. Of him there is conception, reason, understanding, touch, perception, opinion, imagination, name, and many other things … *He is all things in all things and he is known to no one from anything.*[19]

Dionsysius' apophaticism and symbolism shields him from charges of heresy on pantheistic grounds; God is still beyond His creation, despite being *in some way* within it. Considering Grosseteste's regard for the mystic's works, this certainly opens the door to considering whether or not Grosseteste's cosmological thoughts were vindicated by Dionysius, and thus incorporated into his theological and didactic *weltanschauung*.

Despite the tentative link with the panentheism of a major influence upon Grosseteste, and indeed this thesis' argumentation to this point, this conclusion might be problematic for some. The most prominent counter one can envisage originates in a common caveat against panentheism according to more 'traditional' Christian theists. Panentheism is essentially a middle-ground between pantheism and traditional Christianity, one that seeks to overcome the problems between the two: chiefly, the destruction of the distinction between the creator and His creation. For panentheists, much like in Rowe's definition, God *is* the universe, and yet He is also much more. However, if God is in any way His creation, then that must have

[19] Pseudo-Dionysius, *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works* trans. Colm Luibheid and Paul Rorem (Paulist Press: New Jersey, 1987). Herein, all works of Pseudo-Dionysius will be specifically cited as the specific work with its respective pagination, however they can all be found in the Rorem's translation as found directly above. For this quotation, see: Pseudo-Dionysius, *On the Divine Names,* trans. Paul Rorem, 869d-872a.

major ramifications for the significance of the Incarnation, for how can the Word becoming flesh be an important event if God is already present? There also seems to be no ontological gap the argument from unity expressly seeks to rectify in Grosseteste's *On the Cessation of the Law*, a powerful indication of his centralisation of cosmic concerns.[20]

These issues need not detract from this work's conclusive ascription of panentheism to Grosseteste, despite his emphasis on the cosmic importance of the Incarnation, and indeed, his belief in its sheer inevitability. In short, the response to this criticism is simple: it is one of ratio. Despite God's immanence within humanity, the centre of creation, *officina omnium*, God is still transcendent; but not so for Christ, the new Adam. God does not transcend Christ in the same way He does everything else; Christ's hypostatic union would have been well-known to Grosseteste, much like the passages in John 14, whereby Jesus is talking about his kinship with the Father to Phillip and Thomas.[21] Here, Christ truly is the God-Man; fully God and fully human, in one body. Grosseteste might have said that He is made in equal measure from *lux* and *lumen*, fully spiritual yet fully corporeal.[22] As per the argument to follow, God's immanence within creation illuminates it, makes it engageable, intelligible even, and in Christ it perfects, is made deiform. As such, the historical Incarnation remains a truly significant event, whilst still performing its proper role in Grosseteste's argument from unity.[23]

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[20] See 155ff. of the present work for this discussion.

[21] John 14:5-11. "Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. *If you know me, you will know my Father also.* From now on you do know him and have seen him.' Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.' Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? *Whoever has seen me has seen the Father*" (emphasis added).

[22] Grosseteste does say something close however: "The human being is not the image of God as the only-begotten Son of God is, because the Son is an image in that he is what the Father is, the same in nature, the same in substance, but in another person. And thus the Son, as Augustine bears witness in his book of the *Retractations*, is not *to* the image of the Father, but *is* the image of the Father." Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron* VIII, IX, 2, trans. C.F.J. Martin (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1996). The significance of *lux* and *lumen* will be elaborated upon below.

[23]McEvoy concurs; speaking of Grosseteste's chain of ontological continuity, he writes: "The gap between the creation thus unified and God remains infinite, and can only be bridged by the Incarnation of the Word. Microcosmism serves his theology of the Incarnation beautifully." McEvoy, *The Philosophy*, 394.

Chapter One – Theo-Philosophical Foundations: Microcosmism and Deification

Despite the ideas surrounding the etiology of microcosmistic theories, it is not necessary, nor pertinent, for this chapter to delve into their pre-Platonic history. The theologians, philosophers, and scholars (as they were almost inevitably a combination of all three) developed their theologies and philosophies around Plato's legacy, his imaginative views on cosmology, politics and ethics. Plato's microcosmistic theories are a recurring theme throughout much of his corpus. He uses the theory to demonstrate the relationship between Man and the State in his *Republic*,[1] he links it to ethics regarding the World-Soul in the *Philebus*,[2] and, most pertinently, in his cosmology.[3] Whilst microcosmistic theories can be used to elucidate the relationships between various entities, it would not be wrong to suggest that, at its most fundamental level, it is a cosmological theory being transposed inter-disciplinarily.

1.1. What is Microcosmism?

Microcosmism, whilst an underlying feature of Plato's philosophy, is never central to it, and Plato does not seem to place much emphasis on discussion of it. Many commentators in fact stress that microcosmistic theory is much more explicit in Neo-Platonism. Examination of

[1] This is Plato's famous parallelism between his notion of a tripartite ideal state and the tripartite human soul. See: Plato, "Republic*,"* trans. G.M.A. Grube and Rev. C.D.C. Reeve, in *Plato: The Complete Works,* ed. John M. Cooper and D.S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company): 971-1224.

[2] Socrates divides creation into a four-fold categorisation: the finite, the infinite, a mixture of the first two, and the World-Soul. The 'good life' is also four-fold: a mixture of the finite and the infinite, wisdom and pleasure and 'a harmony which realizes the good in man and in the All.' George P. Conger, *Theories of Macrocosms and Microcosms* (Russell and Russell: New York, 1967): 8.

[3] Plato discusses his cosmology in various length throughout his works, mostly in the *Timaeus*. Good examples can be found between 30c and 44d as well as elsewhere. Other examples from other works can be seen in: the *Phaedrus* with the Charioteer (247b-248), Aristophanes' speech in *Symposium* (190b), where creation is described as in the *Statesmen* (269c, ff.) as well as comparisons between the heavens and the mind (897c) and enquiries into the Sun's movement (898e) in the *Laws*. For these works see: Plato, "*Phaedrus"* trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff, in *Plato: Works*, 506-557; Plato, "Symposium" trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff, in *Plato: Works*, 457-506; Plato, "Statesmen" trans. C.J. Rowe, in *Plato: Works,* 294-359; and finally Plato, "Laws" trans. Trevor J. Saunders, in *Plato: Works*, 1318-1617.

whether this is simply true or not is not within the scope of this chapter. However, it is important to note that this could be true, simply because later thinkers were mostly only able to source Neo-Platonic materials, as well as a portion of the *Timaeus,* and were therefore coloured by it. Three significant Neo-Platonists on the thought of Eastern and Western Christendom were Plotinus (c.204 - 270), Chalcidius (fourth century) and Proclus (412 - 485).[4]

Plotinus's *Enneads* makes full use of microcosmistic theory; the World-Soul for instance plays a large role.[5] Despite the subtle differences between the human soul and the world's, the parallel is a repeated fixture of the work. The relationship between humanity and the universe is played out in the description of the make-up of one's being. The universe is a living entity, the sum of the individual parts within it, living their own life, much like the animated powers within humans.[6] The human is simply the sum of their constituent parts, and humanity is an individual cog in the larger sum of the universe. Perrigo Conger states Plotinus' elaboration of the human and universe parallel:

> The world … has what might be called a kind of proprioceptive system- for, says Plotinus, just as we apprehend one part [of our bodies] by means of another, what hinders the All from seeing the planetary region by means of that

[4] It should be noted here that the influence of these thinkers and their contemporaries (of which there are many, such as Ammonious Saccas, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Simplicius, Plutarch, et al.) is not the focus of this chapter. Their influence can be seen to have permeated almost all medieval philosophy and theology and it is beyond the scope of this chapter to detail this satisfactorily. Instead, a general overview of some important and pertinent views is given here.

[5] The World-Soul or *anima mundi* refers to the Platonic concept. It is the third figure in Plato's ontological triad comprising The Demiurge, the *Nous* and the World-Soul itself; it is the vitality of the cosmos, the mechanism by which entities within the *nous* are brought into and maintained within existence. It is a concept that will be discussed in greater detail below.

[6] For this source see: Plotinus, *The Enneads* trans. Stephen Mackenna and John M. Dillon (London: Penguin, 1991): IV, iv.35, 429b.

> region which is fixed, and from seeing the earth and what is contained in it by means of the planetary region? [7]

Plotinus goes further. Both humanity's and the world's soul are divided into higher and lower parts.[8] Another parallelism is formed between the tripartite Platonic hierarchy (the One, the Intelligence (*Nous*) and the World-Soul) and the individual human's soul. The individual's soul is split into three: higher, lower, and intermediate. The analogies between the universe and mankind are significant and are certainly microcosmic. They allowed Plotinus to explicitly state (according to Conger) that: '… as the world-soul elaborates the cosmos, so "the reasons in the seeds fashion and form the living beings [or, animals], as, in a way, little worlds"'[9] and to say, 'that the soul "is many things, or rather all things"; and, he adds, "We are each an intelligible world."'[10] Conger then states that from this line originates the possibility of epistemological microcosmic theories. The epistemological implications of microcosmism are a fundamental aspect of this thesis' argument that microcosmism and deification, for Grosseteste, are inextricably linked by the acquisition of knowledge, including knowledge of nature.

Other Neo-Platonists take Plotinus' groundwork and develop it slightly further. As the Neo-Platonists of the medieval era only had access to commentaries on Plato's work and some of the *Timaeus*, figures such as Chalcidius emerged as a defining influence. His commentary on the *Timaeus* opened the door to microcosmism in Christendom because this idea is, fundamentally speaking, a cosmological concept, and the *Timaeus* is perhaps Plato's most

[7] Conger, *Theories of*, 21.
[8] John M. Rist, "Integration and the Undescended Soul in Plotinus." *The American Journal of Philology* 88, no. 4 (1967): 410–22; 410.
[9] Ibid., 22. Here Conger is quoting *The Enneads* translated by Friedrich Creuzer, IV, iii, 10, 379-380.
[10] Ibid. The passages Conger cites are from *The Enneads*. The first: III, iv, 3, 285a, 284g. The second: Ibid.

explicitly cosmological work. Chalcidius reiterates the doctrines that the four elements of the world are to be found in the composition of the human and the importance of the parallelism between the World's soul and mankind's. Proclus, on the other hand, utilising various triads pushed the dichotomy between higher and lower, heavenly and earthly. As Perrigo Conger writes: 'Proclus thought that in a theory of the world the nature of man ought to be discussed completely – for man is a microcosm , and all the things which the world contains are … contained partially in him…'[11] Humans are dualistic; individuals have a soul akin to the World's and a terrestrial body derived from its elements.[12] Microcosmism, as a cosmological concept, pushes the idea that humans and the universe are inextricably linked in some fashion. However, there are subtle differences in microcosmistic interpretation and explication of these differing interpretations can offer insight into how this multifaceted concept has been readily synthesised into Christian theological traditions.

1.2. The Various Types of Microcosmism

Because there are various forms of microcosmism that depend on a common notion that is invariably broad, the following forms of interpretation are not mutually exclusive. In point of fact, the type of microcosmism Grosseteste employs, having had various influences with differing emphases to draw upon, is multiform. It is symbolistic, elementaristic, cosmocentric and anthropocentric.

The relationship between humans and the rest of the created universe typified in elementaristic microcosmism is quite simple. It is that their constitutions are made of the same things – the four elements: earth, wind, fire and water – and that these are structured in

[11] Conger, *Theories of*, 24.
[12]Proclus, *Commentarius in Platonis Timaeum*, I, 11c; I, 62d.

the same way. Therefore, humans share in the natures of other beings, both higher and lower than themselves. It is a common trope of elementaristic microcosmism (and one that will be repeated throughout by various luminaries and this thesis) that humans share within themselves the natures of stones in that they exist, plants in that they grow, animals in that they sense and angels in that they understand. This formula, whilst not exclusively attributed to St. Gregory the Great's *29th Homily on the Gospel*, proves to be very influential for others discussing microcosmism.[13] It would not be wrong to suggest that almost all aspects of microcosmistic theories detailing the relationship between humanity and universe are elementaristic. It is this very relationship that lays the foundation for more detailed comparison between the two entities. It is the common feature of all microcosmistic doctrine discussed herein and it is the very conception that emphasises the uniqueness of humanity in creation as well as the theological concept that becomes connected to it, the *imago Dei*.[14]

The closest interpretation to elementaristic microcosmism is cosmocentric microcosmism. The chief difference for Rudolf Allers is the emphasis on the dynamic between the two entities. He offers this example:

> This shift of emphasis becomes clearly visible [in Philo the Jew's philosophy when he] goes farther [than the elementaristic form] … He also believes in a strict correspondence between the parts of the human body and certain things in the visible universe, chiefly indeed things terrestrial. Stone and wood are solid

[13] Whilst Gregory's *Homily* may not be the first to state the now familiar formula, it is his elucidation of it that is the most referred to throughout the medieval period. St. Gregory the Great, *Homily on the Gospel XXIX* (PL 76, 1570b-d); *Omnis enim creaturae aliquid habet homo. Habet nameque commune esse cum lapidibus, vivere cum arboribus, sentire cum animalibus, intelligere cum angelis.'* He continues: '*Si ergo commune habet aliquid cum omni creatura homo, juxta aliquid omnis creatura est homo.'* This text will often times be referred to throughout this thesis as the 'Gregorian formula'.
[14] Image of God.

> bodies and are to be compared to the bones of man, hairs and nails correspond to plants and so on.[15]

Theologically speaking cosmocentric microcosmism is a rather amenable philosophical construct within the Neo-Platonic framework; humankind, as a like for like reproduction of the universe was created *ad imaginem et similitudinem Dei*.[16] Due to the doctrine of emanation, there is a slowly diminishing link between the One (God) and the successive emanations of his creation. This allows for God to indwell – in whatever form – in everything without actually being in everything.[17] The problem for many Neo-Platonic theologians however was how to demonstrate this view in a palatable orthodox manner, something Grosseteste accomplishes with great success with his light metaphysics, in his earliest works, such as *De luce.*[18]

Grosseteste's work *Quod homo sit minor mundus* is a prime example of elementaristic, cosmocentric and symbolistic microcosmism.[19] In the short work he repeats the common theme of humans as constituted of the four elements and goes further, detailing the relationship between the functions of the human body and the universe. This elementaristic relationship, much like the example Allers points out, reinforces the correspondence between humans and the universe as well as their similar composition.[20]

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[15] Rudolf Allers, "MICROCOSMUS: From Anaximandros to Paracelsus," *Traditio* 2 (1944): 319-407; 348.
[16] 'In the image and likeness of God.'
[17] For an interesting discussion of a popular discourse on the differences between emanationism and creationism, see: Brandon Zimmerman. "Does Plotinus Present a Philosophical Account of Creation?" *The Review of Metaphysics* 67, no. 1 (2013): 55–105.
[18] There is some disagreement concerning the chronology of Grosseteste's natural works, but the academic consensus places *De luce* early in his life.
[19] A brief discussion and translation of this little-known work can be seen in McEvoy, *The Philosophy*, 371-373. Its title is *On Why Man is a Small World.*
[20] This little-known Grossetestean work will be deliberated upon in chapter four.

Cosmocentric microcosmism has its own implications and these can be anthropocentric in nature. The underlying premise of cosmocentric microcosmism is that humans and the universe are both animate, and therefore must conform to some similar principle or thing. The idea of an animate universe, of the universe itself taking on human-like qualities such as having a soul, is anthropocentric. The notion of the World-Soul is a very common occurrence in Platonic and Neo-Platonic philosophy and the nature of the relationship between man and the world he inhabits is an often-discussed philosophical point. Indeed, the very ability of humans to rationalise possibly stems from their soul's derivation from the World-Soul. The reasoning for this is two-fold. Firstly, the World-Soul is the all-pervading principle of generation in the cosmos. Through it all things are, and will, be made. It therefore stands that in having knowledge of all things created and to be created, the World-Soul is itself guided by a form of reason. Due to the parallelism between a human's soul and the World's, the human soul is capable of comprehending this very created nature. The second point stems from this; the relationship between the World-Soul and the universe and the relationship between the human soul and its body is the same. Both souls are the driving force behind the body's actions.[21]

Whilst there are disagreements surrounding the actual nature of the relationship between the human soul and the World's soul, humans nonetheless possess a spiritual soul. Because of this, they stand alone in the centre of creation, bound together as its summation, 'equidistant from the lowest and from the highest existential level … he [or humanity in general] actually "holds together" the totality of being'.[22] This view of humans as the centre of creation is a

[21] Allers, "Microcosmus," 358.
[22] Ibid., 361.

prominent feature throughout the entire Middle Ages, as will be seen. Augustine for instance in *De civitate Dei* states:

> [Humankind] is a kind of mean between angels and beasts …man, inferior to the angel and superior to the beast, and having in common with the one mortality, and with the other reason, is a rational and a mortal animal.[23]

Elementaristic microcosmism stresses the importance of the human as microcosm by detailing the compositional relationship between humans and the universe (and is therefore implicit in the other discussed microcosmistic interpretations), yet the same can be said of cosmocentric and anthropocentric interpretations. All three with their slightly different emphases all reinforce humans' position as the centre of creation, going as far as to suggest humans are the very entity that hold creation together. This thesis' argument suggests for Grosseteste and many before him, that due to humanity's uniquely shared nature they have a special role to fill that is ultimately identified and fulfilled in a theological manner.

Symbolistic microcosmism is perhaps the most attuned to theological development. The microcosm, symbolically representing the macrocosm, becomes a vehicle for gathering knowledge, and vice-versa. Should humans inquire into the inner-workings of the macrocosm they will find truth relating to the inner-workings of themselves. Should they look for truth within themselves, they will discover truth relating to the universe. Symbolistic microcosmism is the form of microcosmism that enables Grosseteste to include natural philosophy as an epistemological vehicle towards spiritual enlightenment. Behind the

[23] St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, IX, 13 (PL. 44, 267): '*medium quoaddam; sed inter pecora et angelos … medius homo … infra angelis sed supra pecoribus; homini cum percoribus mortalitatum, rationem vero cum angelis*.'

phenomenal macrocosmos are deeper truths to be unlocked by investigation. Any thing or event that happens points at a deeper meaning which in itself 'owes its place in the order of being and time, ultimately in its relation to eternity and God's creative plans.'[24] As Allers continues to explain:

> … on the background of a world conception which admits several levels of being … anything on a lower level may be representative of something pertaining to a higher level, which in turn refers to a still higher form of being. Ultimately, all the levels of being become, according to their nature, symbols of the last and highest reality, God. … by directly "reading the book of reality", by translating its "signs" into the reality they indicate, we attain knowledge of the wonders beyond.[25]

One is reminded at this stage of St. Paul's oft-quoted message in Romans 1:20: 'Ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature, namely, His eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made.' Knowledge of God and His message can be found interlaced within the fabric of nature because knowledge of this kind is knowledge of oneself, and, as the pinnacle of creation, styled *in imaginem et similitudinem Dei*, knowledge of thyself is knowledge of God. There are many instances of Grosseteste utilising this symbolism in his more pedagogical works. As this thesis will demonstrate, in the theology of Grosseteste there is a conflation between spiritual development and knowledge acquisition. Therefore, when Grosseteste in his *Dicta* is sermonising and describes an item as having spiritual significance in its appearance or function for instance, he is hinting at the

[24]Allers, "Microcosmus," 326-327.
[25] Ibid., 370

symbolistic microcosmism underlying his proposition. He is doing this in an attempt to demonstrate - to teach - that creation offers insights into theological truth.[26] Therefore, many of Grosseteste's sermons and theological reflections are deeply pedagogical in character, and as will be demonstrated, this is fundamental to his pastoral outlook.

As will be demonstrated, by amalgamating an Aristotelian methodology of knowledge acquisition with a thoroughly Neo-Platonic epistemology – validated both by microcosmistic theories encouraging the intelligibility of creation and our ability to comprehend it, reinforced theo-philosophically by his scientific account of light metaphysics – Grosseteste lays out humanity's path towards God. The key element of humanity's journey to spiritual enlightenment and their eventual salvation is the acquisition of knowledge, and this knowledge includes, indeed the entire epistemological journey begins with, natural, sensual, knowledge. As will be shown, this vein of Neo-Platonism runs right throughout both the Eastern and Western Christian traditions in the medieval period. The fundamental aspect of this thesis is that the link between microcosmism and deification lies in education. Education is very much the cornerstone of Grosseteste's pastoral theology. Indeed, Grosseteste's theology does not appear in a vacuum: the result of both microcosmism's and deification's theological development, of mankind's unique place in creation, through our creation by God, ennobles, and gives purpose. Crucially, this purpose is to return to God, and one of humanity's key routes to reaching that lofty goal is the interpretation of the potentiality of the material, sensible world.

1.3. Deification

[26] One such example can be found in *Dictum 54*, as elaborated upon in Chapter 5.

There is an underlying assumption at play in the above argument and that assumption lies with one's understanding of the term 'deification'. Studies into deification have historically been lacking although this is being remedied in current, modern historiography. However, most of these newer studies discuss deification in relation to a specific person or aspect of theology.[27] Deification has generally been regarded as an Eastern Christian conception having had its roots mainly buried in the Alexandrian milieu by academic discourse.[28] This is a view that is slowly shifting although, it would not be unfair to state that, in the absence of similar levels of historiography and scholarly evidence, it is still, centrally, perceived to be an Eastern idea. It would also not be unfair to suggest that deification in the Eastern Christian tradition plays a much larger role shaping Orthodox doctrine than it does in the Western tradition. The underlying premise at the heart of the argument above is that humans can attain a divine status by the acquisition of knowledge, thereby making the acquisition of knowledge itself a special methodology aiming to promote spiritual development. Until the end of the fourth century the process of deification could be described in two distinct ways each backed by Neo-Platonic, Christian thought. The first description was the 'transformation of humanity in principle as a consequence of the Incarnation'. The second, 'the ascent of the soul through the practice of virtue'.[29] In this way, deification is a concept that can be applied generally to humankind and to individual humans. Which then, does knowledge acquisition fall under? At the end of the fourth century, in Cyril of Alexandria (†444) and Maximus the Confessor

[27] These include but are not limited to Andrew Hofer, *Divinization: Becoming Icons of Christ Through the Liturgy* (Chicago and Mundelein: Hillenbrand Books, 2015); David Vincent Meconi and Carl Olson, *Called to be the Children of God: The Catholic Theology of Human Deification* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2016); David Vincent Meconi, *The One Christ: St. Augustine's Theology of Deification* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2013); Jordan Cooper, *Christification: A Lutheran Approach to Theosis* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2014); Daria Spezzano, *The Glory of God's Grace: Deification According to St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, DC: Sapientia Press, 2015); Jared Ortiz, *Deification in the Latin Patristic Tradition* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2019).
[28] See the introduction to: Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
[29] These quotes are from: Ibid., 14.

(†662) – albeit in differing ways – it seems as if these two descriptors become much more similar. This amalgamation of the two main descriptors of early deification is mediated by Eriugena in the ninth century who infuses into it even more Dionysian mysticism and frames this theology within an *exitus* and *reditus* framework.[30] This development will be discussed later.

1.4. The Intricacies of Deification

The concept of deification can be categorised into various typologies and it is important to note that the very language used to discuss the concept have been scrutinised by modern scholars.[31] Norman Russell's *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* is one of a few seminal works that detail the mechanisms of the concept. His typology of deification in the Patristic Era is technically three-fold but becomes, in practice, four-fold. The classes are nominal, analogical, and metaphorical. The metaphorical classification includes two further sub-categorisations: the ethical and the realistic. Russell defines them thus:

[30] *Exitus* refers to how all things come from God, and *reditus* refers to how all things will return.

[31] This study, like many studies referring to deification, interchange the use of a variety of words all being used to describe the same notion. Christensen and Wittung in their introduction to *Partakers of the Divine Nature* state the following: 'Theosis/deification is the preferred theological term for what the New Testament describes as "becoming god." There are other related terms used in scholarly discourse … including: transfiguration, perfection, sanctification, glorification, Christification, sophianisation, ingoding, and Divine-humanity.' Michael J. Christensen and Jeffery A. Wittung ed., *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions* (Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008): 15.
This large vocabulary can be confusing as Daniel A. Keating shows in his comparative article entitled, Typologies of Deification; '… T.F. Torrance, [in] Theology in Reconstruction (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), p.243 … dismisses 'divinization' and 'deification', but appeals for a retrieval of the Eastern patristic notion of theosis – without realizing that what he warmly embraces as theosis is just what the tradition has called 'divinization' and 'deification.'' Daniel A. Keating, "Typologies of Deification*,"* in *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 17, no. 3 (2015): 268. Interestingly, the lexical choices of the Patristic authors who discussed deification in Greek was as multitudinous as it is today. Norman Russell discusses the differing usage of Christian and Pagan thinkers in the appendix to his *The Doctrine of Deification* in which he sought to 'examine all the Greek terms for deification used in inscriptions, papyri, and literary texts.' Norman Russell, *Deification*, 333. After this impressive historical survey is finished, Russell comes to the very significant conclusion that Christian writers were successful in evolving their own distinctive terminology for deification.' Ibid., 334. Appendix two containing the survey can be found here: 333-344.

> The nominal interprets the biblical application of the word 'gods' to human beings simply as a title of honour. The analogical 'stretches' the nominal: Moses was a god to Pharaoh as a wise man is a god to a fool … [the metaphorical] is characteristic of two distinct approaches, the ethical and the realistic. The ethical approach takes deification to be the attainment of likeness to God through ascetic and philosophical endeavour, believers reproducing some of the divine attributes in their own lives by imitation. Behind this … lies the model of *homoiosis*, or attaining likeness to God. The realistic approach assumes that human beings are in some sense transformed by deification. Behind the latter use lies the model of *methexis*, or participation, in God.[32]

He goes on to state that whilst all of these categorisations of deification are all well-developed by the fourth century, the predominant are the metaphorical, and as already discussed, *homoiosis* and *methexis* become impressively synthesised in the works of Maximus the Confessor.

Other typologies offer slightly different interpretations whilst some other very important works in this area borrow Russell's framework for their own study.[33] Another typology can be seen from Gösta Hallonsten. For Hallonsten, there is a worrying trend of applying the phrase 'doctrine of deification' to many notable figures' theologies whereby this may be overestimating their theology's themes of deification and subsequently diluting the true

[32] Russell, *Deification,* 1-2
[33] Paul M. Collins, *Partaking in the Divine Nature: Deification and Communion* (New York and London: T. & T. Clark, 2010): 50.

doctrines of deification in the works of the Eastern tradition.[34] Hallonsten explains his concern in the form of a three-fold typology:

> First, there is the theme of theosis, which most often is connected with similar scriptural themes like adoption and filiation. While the theme of theosis is surely to be found in most Christian writers throughout the ages, this should not, however, mislead us into speaking as frequently about a doctrine of theosis. For the sake of clarity, I would like to underscore here that the theme of theosis includes the theme of "happy exchange", the *admirabile commercium*.[35]

One is inclined to agree with Hallonsten's comment here if not the method. Whilst it would be erroneous to suggest that doctrines of deification are present in every author who merely utilises themes of deification in their theologies, it is difficult to agree with the way in which Hallonsten describes the differences between themes and doctrines. Daniel Keating correctly identifies one of the problems in Hallonsten's reasoning as the importance of the exchange formula, especially in the Eastern Orthodox tradition.[36] Keating is right to claim that the exchange formula, amongst other ideas, perhaps offers more than just a theme of deification

[34] '… a distinction should be made between the theme and doctrine of theosis and, and that the label "doctrine of theosis" should preferentially be reserved for the integral doctrine of deification as presented by the Eastern tradition.' Gösta Hallonsten, "Theosis in Recent Research: a Renewal of Interest and a Need for Clarity,"' in *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, 287

[35] Ibid., 287. The *admirable commercium* is a Christological concept that defines the exchange between Heaven and Earth in the creation of Christ. This term is also known in discourse pertaining to deification as the 'exchange formula'. It is commonly used to define Irenaeus's quote, 'God became man so that man might become God.' *On the Incarnation*, 54. Hallonsten in a footnote elaborates on this by stating his belief that the concepts '*Salus carnis* [the salvation of the flesh]/ *admirabile commercium*/theosis make up a common basis for the development of soteriology in East and West. A real doctrine of theosis, however, is to be found only in the East.' Halllonston, "*Theosis,"* 292.

[36] Here Keating paraphrases Kenneth Paul Wesche; 'the exchange formula is the summation of the character and aim of Eastern Orthodox spirituality. It is one of the marks right at the core of Eastern doctrine.' Keating, "*Typologies*," 274. Wesche's passage can be found here: Kenneth Paul Wesche, "Eastern Orthodox Spirituality: Union with God in Theosis," *Theology Today* 56 (1999): 29

considering that they, and the exchange formula particularly, can 'function as the primary means to express the content and goal of Christian salvation'.[37]

The two fundamental theo-philosophical concepts that underpin Grosseteste's overall theological narrative are that humans are a microcosm of the universe and that they can be deified. His conception of deification is seemingly a mixture of Eriugena, the mediator of Maximus the Confessor, himself influenced by much of the Greek patristic tradition, and Augustine, as well as Dionysius. For Grosseteste, as demonstrated in *On the Cessation of the Laws*, the Incarnation performs a dual role. By finally perfecting and harmonising the universe God allows humans to reach salvation. Therefore, the exchange formula, the *admirabile commercium*, is of paramount importance to Grosseteste. The question remains however whether this is enough to describe Grosseteste's theology as including a definitive doctrine of deification, or whether or not he merely incorporates deificatory themes. Hallonsten's typology continues:

> Second, theosis is connected to a certain anthropology, often based on the distinction between image and likeness and always teleologically oriented in a dynamic way toward the prototype. This prototype, the real Image of God, is Christ. Thus the importance of the Incarnation as the central point in the economy of salvation. This anthropology, further, is based on or implies a view of the relation between creation and its Creator that is characterized by formal causality and implies the continual presence and action of grace or the energies of God from the beginning to the end.[38]

[37] Keating, "Typologies," 274
[38] Hallonsten, "Theosis," 287.

Here Hallonsten has managed to describe quite remarkably one of the aims of this thesis. Here is a rather overt connection to microcosmism; '[theosis] …is always teleologically oriented in a dynamic way towards the prototype' refers to mankind's eventual return to God within the Platonic framework of *reditus* and *exitus* but also the theological framework of salvation and deification. Humanity's unique creation instils individual people with the powers to reconnect with their creator. The importance of the Incarnation has already been discussed above. '…implies the continual presence and action of grace or the energies of God from the beginning to the end' is, and will be shown to be, the method by which Grosseteste manages to side-step potential pantheism; his light metaphysics. The connection with both Grosseteste arguably developing a doctrine of deification and this thesis' argument, related to the symbiotic relationship between deification and microcosmism can be even more finely attested in Hallonsten's own words:

> The comprehensiveness of the theosis doctrine [in Irenaeus] … comprises: a certain view of creation, especially of human beings; a soteriology, including the meaning of the Incarnation; a view of Christian life as sanctification connected to the Church and sacraments; and the final union with God. The whole structure of this comprehensive doctrine is determined by a teleology that implies human beings from the very beginning are endowed with an affinity and likeness that potentially draws them to God.[39]

[39] Hallonsten, 'Theosis," 285. Importantly, McGuckin summarises the 'chief lineaments' to Irenaeus' theory of deification, 'its dynamic as a soteriological term, its rootedness in the concept of creation's purposes, its close relation to the ideas of corruption and immortality; its essential closeness to the concept of transactive substitution in the doctrine of the Incarnation of the Logos.' J. A. McGuckin, "The Strategic Adaptation of Deification," in *Partakers,* 96.

The similarities between a part of what Hallonsten describes as a doctrine of deification that is absolutely central to the Eastern Christian tradition and the anthropological implications of microcosmism are striking here. Three of the four microcosmistic interpretations to be found in Grosseteste's works all emphasise the link between the created and the creator, especially considering humans are made in the image and likeness of God. As has been discussed earlier, this gives humankind a unique vocation, and that vocation is to return to God, and, when placed with the broader Christian framework, this return to God equates to deification and salvation. To repeat Hallonsten, it is through their creation that humans are 'endowed with an affinity and likeness that potentially draws them to God'.

Hallonsten's final demarcation is not particularly distinct from his second. However, it is important to reinforce the comprehensiveness of the deification concept because it will further highlight the comprehensiveness of Grosseteste's light metaphysics and how that manifests itself epistemologically.

> Third, theosis is a comprehensive doctrine that encompasses the whole of the economy of salvation. The whole plan of God and its accomplishments from the creation through the Incarnation, salvation, sanctification and the eschaton are included in this comprehensive vision.[40]

Whilst Hallonsten's typology seemingly reinforces the idea that Grosseteste offers a genuine doctrine of deification *a la* the Greek patristic tradition, Keating's reservations towards Hallonsten's doctrine/theme argument offers a viable and perhaps more accurate lexical choice. Keating points out slight flaws in Hallonsten's reasoning that, whilst not diminishing

[40] Hallonsten, "Theosis," 288.

the impressive correlation between Hallonsten's typology and a significant part of this thesis' argument's foundation, does attack his insistence on the doctrine/theme dichotomy. Firstly, Keating decries the idea that a doctrine of deification can be partly defined by a terminological distinction between 'image' and 'likeness'.[41] He also denies the distinction between God's essence and energies.[42]

Secondly, as Keating continues, many of the Greek fathers do not offer a systematic account of deification, indeed, it is not until Dionysius in the sixth century that the term is even defined.[43] Whilst Hallonsten's typology may suggest that Grosseteste's views on deification maybe defined as a doctrine – and in Hallonsten's view is therefore Greek in character – Keating's reflections on the typology are persuasive. Therefore, taking into account Keating's refutations of the way in which Hallonsten tries to promote his theme/doctrine argument this thesis will refer to Grosseteste as not having a doctrine of deification (or any of the derivations of the word), so much as having a theology of deification. The idea that any of the Greek fathers had a *systematic doctrine* of deification is perhaps an overestimation. However, it would be less arguable, one should think, to deny that Athanasius, Irenaeus, and Augustine even, did not have a theology of deification. Simply put, a *doctrine* of deification connotes

[41] He points to Cyril of Alexandria. Cyril expressly rejects any such distinction and argues for their equivalence as Burghardt translates: 'If they say that "according to image" and "according to likeness" are two different things, let them show the difference! For our mind is that "according to image" means nothing else than "according to likeness", and conversely "according to likeness" means nothing but "according to image."" Walter Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man according to Cyril of Alexandria* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1957): 7). For elucidation on Cyril, see: Norman Russell, *Fellow Workers with God: Orthodox Thinking on Theosis* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2009): 77–80. For the origin of Burghardt's translation, see: Cyril of Alexandria, "De dogmatum solutione," in Cyril of Alexandria, *Select Letters*, ed. and trans. Lionel Wickham (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983); 180-213.

[42] Keating admits that whilst the distinction 'gives shape' to the Eastern concept of deification, and can be seen in 'germinal form' in the Cappadocians, it is not a prominent part of most of the Greek Father's works and therefore, cannot be seen to be a defining characteristic in the doctrines of deification of Greek Christian origins. Keating, "Typologies," 277.

[43] Even then, the definition is very broad: Norman Russell translates the following: 'ἡ δέ θέωσίς ἐστιν ἡ πρὸς θεὸν ὡς ἐφικτὸν ἀφομοίωσις τε καὶ ἕνωσις' as 'theosis is the attaining of likeness to God and union with him so far as possible' Norman Russell, *Deification*, 248. The original can be found in Dionysius' *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, I. 3. For this work, see: Jacques Paul Migne, *Patrologae Cursus Completes: Series Graeca*, 3-4 (Paris, 1857-66).

the idea of a systematic, well-defined and finely tuned definition of deification, whereas a *theology* of deification offers more flexibility. This does not necessarily affect the legitimacy of all of Hallonsten's views on deification however, and, as the above similarities are observed, many of them could, and will, be used to describe a genuine Grossetestean *theology* of deification.

The above discussion on deification and microcosmism demonstrate their relatedness to each other as well as their centrality to Grosseteste's thinking within a Neo-Platonic, Christian framework. The two concepts combine to create a theological anthropology, one that, whilst remaining true to the utter nobility and eminence of the Trinity and ultimately God, places a great emphasis on the role of individuals in their, and all of creation's, salvation. This narrative is expounded by Grosseteste throughout all of his corpus and his idea of humanity's journey to salvation is mirrored in the Bishop's own life and career. Prior to Grosseteste however, the Christian understanding of humanity's role in their own salvation and their ability to become deified reaches a significant height with John Scotus Eriugena. All of nature was to be re-joined with its Creator through the grace of God and by individual agency. It is the development of the importance and centrality of humanity's agency in creation's journey to salvation that is the subliminal undercurrent of 'humanism' as described by Southern.[44] This development is rooted in one's ability to both comprehend the material cosmos, its invisible secrets, and ultimately become deiform. The utilisation of humanity's sensual abilities is absolutely paramount to this process. The next chapter will now go on to

[44] This thesis will use Richard Southern's description of 'humanism', which for him is the culmination of three specific elements: '… a strong sense of the dignity of human nature [and our ability to perfect our nobility] … a recognition of the dignity of nature itself …[these first two being inextricably linked] … [and] Finally [that] the whole universe appears intelligible and accessible to human reason [;] nature is seen as an orderly system – and man in understanding the laws of nature – understands himself as the main part, the key-stone, of nature.' Richard Southern, *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970): 31-32. This thesis does not support the idea that 'humanism' even in Southern's guise was fully fledged during the Patristic Era, but there is strong evidence to suggest that it was slowly forming through this period and beyond, as will be demonstrated.

discuss iterations of the conceptual combination between microcosmism and deification throughout the early and late Patristic eras, demonstrating its development through the medieval period whilst explicating upon key terminology needed to fully appreciate and discuss Grosseteste's own work in chapter four.

Chapter Two: The Historical Manifestations of the Theo-philosophical Foundations and the Emergence of the Potentiality of Materiality

2.1. Introduction

This chapter will detail the pertinent intellectual history of the two important theo-philosophical foundations of Robert Grosseteste's thought; humans as a microcosm of the universe, and the theological notion of deification. It will do this by analysing the work of a selection of proponents of this thematic thread who, directly and indirectly, had an influence on the Bishop of Lincoln's theology. This chapter has four ultimately inextricable aims. Firstly, to suggest that Grosseteste is a radical thinker in that he primarily gets his inspiration from the Patristic and early medieval periods, and that much of his theological anthropology is largely indebted to Greek theology mediated by Dionysius and Eriugena. The preceding chapter prompts the following question: suppose humans have a special role to play, how do they fulfil it? The bridge between humanity's innate abilities endowed by their unique creation and the conclusion of their utilisation of them, is the method by which they fulfil their potential. This chapter will seek to show that humanity's method for fulfilling their potential lies in their acquisition of knowledge. The third aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that, for Grosseteste, one of the chief sources of this knowledge that individuals should attain is natural, sensual, material knowledge. The growing levels of intelligibility, and thus importance, materiality enjoys throughout the development of the microcosm doctrine is paramount to this. As shown, this chapter has a variety of goals, the conclusions of which, this thesis' argument lies. It is therefore this chapter's overall aim to depict and analyse the currents of thought Grosseteste eventually assimilates into his grand theological narrative and positive anthropology, an argument to then be supported in chapter four. This chapter's importance then will be demonstrated after the successful integration into Grosseteste's work, to be conducted in chapter four. For Grosseteste, and many other Christians before him, by

unlocking the knowledge of the universe, we unlock knowledge of ourselves, and God. This slow undercurrent of 'humanism', as so described by Southern above blossomed in the twelfth century and was seized on in the following century by *Lincolniensis*.

The majority of the leading proponents of the two titular concepts hail from the Patristic period and this is very much in keeping with a specific viewpoint of this thesis: Grosseteste is a radical thinker in that he largely returns to the roots of theological discourse. It is well-established that the Bishop of Lincoln is quite un-Scholastic in that he invariably shuns overt theological argumentation with his contemporaries and it is patent from his *corpus* that he is seemingly well-satisfied with merely proportioning his wisdom to friends, students and episcopal colleagues. To Grosseteste, his is a wisdom that is deeply Patristic, and in the case of Dionysius, seemingly sub-Apostolic. It holds the utmost weight. One of Grosseteste's supreme accomplishments is that he manages to erect a complete and progressive theological anthropology based on the combination of two theo-philosophical foundations, microcosmism and deification, whilst at the same time managing to synthesise these concepts into his unique cosmogony and light metaphysics.

That being said, the current of thought Grosseteste capitalises on also has a resurgence in the 'Twelfth-Century Renaissance' in the guise of Chartrian humanism, a product of an all-together different methodology resulting from similar primary source material. This Chartrian connection with Grosseteste will also be developed at length despite the difficulties of maintaining such a position, in chapter four. It is perhaps because of these difficulties a lacuna is present in the Grossetestean historiography. The difficulties surrounding the argument that Grosseteste had any connection with the School of Chartres are simple. There is little that connects the two together either physically, or in writing directly. However, those

that are sceptical of this position need to allow for the possibility that Grosseteste assumes some level of Chartrian thinking in his noetic for a host of reasons, as chapter three will detail. There is an abundance of circumstantial evidence that needs to be formally addressed, much in the same way Grosseteste's 'ambiguous' connection with Eriugena has been. This chapter will demonstrate that *Lincolniensis*' influences are exceptionally diverse. Whilst much of his material originated in the Patristic era, he also thoroughly engages with the corpus of Dionysius, and even later than this, if one is allowed to make such a connection, the works of John Scotus Eriugena. Whilst the intellectual legacies of these periods and individuals seem *prima facie* distinct, they are in fact, in many ways, very similar.[1] This similarity is centred around the development of the two titular theo-philosophical foundations.

The two foundations themselves, as previously alluded to, are inextricably entwined. Furthermore, they cannot be easily defined. Microcosmism as a concept has been often neglected in academic discourse, playing a merely partial part complementing other theories in a variety of disciplinary investigations. There are very few monographs on the theory itself or its history. That being said, due to its continued utilisation across millennia identification of the various types of the concept are available. Robert Grosseteste, much like others, amalgamates various forms of microcosmism in order to fit his narrative. The same cannot be said for that of deification. Deification is a much more complex and theological concept with differing methods of attainment, and even different theories regarding what the attainment of it incurs for those deified. The different types of both will be explored first in this chapter to facilitate proper further analysis and discussion of how the varying forms of both have been at the same time developed, and used, by the Fathers of the Church and medieval scholars.

[1] *Prima facie* in the 'on the face of it', or superficial sense of the phrase.

2.2. Dionysius

Dionysius' work has an immense influence on a number of key thinkers.[2] Eriugena's theology becomes infused with Dionysius' supremely apophatic mysticism and Maximus the Confessor's theological anthropology, which will go on to posit the five-fold division of everything,[3] situates humanity as a microcosm of the universe and ultimately as the pivot of creation because of it. Dionsyius and Maximus are attractive to the Eriugena and colour his noetic with a very Eastern notion of deification. This section of the chapter is fundamental to this thesis. Through Eriugena's translations of these authors' work, as well as manuscripts of the original Greek (such as that of the *Corpus Areopagiticum*) he is introduced to, Grosseteste is overtly made aware of the concept of humanity as a microcosm, his eventual deification and how the two concepts are intimately entwined. He also picks up on the symbolic nature of creation and the importance of acquiring knowledge, in all of its paradoxical, apophatic character. Grosseteste fully ingratiates himself with Eastern patristic theology in his later years, utilising his considerable resources into the identification, translation and dissemination of Greek texts, bringing Greek scholars to England, and learning Greek himself.[4] With regard to his work on the Dionysian *corpus* especially, Grosseteste finds vindication, and as such, more fully completes his theo-philosophical and deeply epistemological narrative. Much like the Greek patristic fathers, Grosseteste is very progressive regarding humanity's role in its and the cosmos', salvation. Through humanity's unique constitution the individual person is able to apprehend the world around them,

[2] Throughout this thesis Dionysius will be referred to in a variety of ways, for example as 'the Areopagite' as will his work: it is widely known by two names: the *corpus Areopagiticum* and the *corpus Dionysiacum*. Not much is known of this author at all except that he is definitively not the actual St. Dennis and that he flourished sometime between the fifth and sixth centuries.
[3] Maximus Confessor, "Ambigua Ad Iohannem," in *Maximi Confessoris Ambigua ad Iohannem*, ed. Edouard Jeauneau (Turnhout: Leuven University Press): 1304d-1305b.
[4] James McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, 113-6.

comprehend its symbolic structure and implications, and strive ever closer to knowledge of its, and their, creator, reaching beatitude and ultimately deification. The parellels between Grosseteste's work and Dionysius' are patent, as will be discussed. The work of Candice Taylor Quinn has proved immensely helpful: Quinn's work, *Robert Grosseteste and the Corpus Dionysciacum: Accessing Spiritual Realities through the Word* perfectly encapsulates a significant part of Grosseteste's theology, and a close reading of that work will follow shortly. That being said, this thesis' argument goes beyond Quinn's conclusions: within the referred to work the author only details so far the relationship between the *Corpus Areopagiticum* and Grosseteste, and does not fully consider the implications of the bishop's engagement with the Dionysian *oeuvre* with regards to his prior scholarly output, or other sources Grosseteste may have drawn from.[5] This thesis attempts, in part, to correct this.

Dionysius' theological impact was far-reaching, surprisingly more so in the West than in the East, and its paradoxical mysticism produced many important contributions to religious thought in the thirteenth century.[6] Interestingly, Jaroslav Pelikan states, ' … when they [the Neo-Platonic metaphysics of Dionysius, Augustine and Boethius] came together, as for example in Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas, the result was a spirituality in which intellectuality and fervor were fused'.[7] Grosseteste routinely defers to Augustine; the Augustinian influence on Grosseteste simply cannot be overstated, and this, paired with commentaries on the Dionysian *corpus*, definitely contributed to a more intellectual, and yet, fundamentally orthodox theological narrative.

[5] It should be said here that the aim of the referred to work may not have had the required scope with which to fully appreciate and develop its conclusions and is no way intended as criticism.
[6] Jaroslav Pelikan states that this is a widely accepted viewpoint. This is because, for them, there was no prior Eastern influence, no Origen or Gregory of Nyssa for example, as there were in the East. These works embodied Dionysius' *oeuvre*. Jaroslav Pelikan, "The Odyssey of Dionysian Spirituality," in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works* trans. Colm Luibheid and Paul Rorem (Paulist Press: New Jersey, 1987): 24
[7] Ibid.

Dionysius offers a complex and not entirely coherent theology. Major themes within his work are paradoxical: the scholar discusses God's utter transcendence and His utter immanence, Dionysius' cataphatic and apophatic approaches to Godly discourse, and knowing and unknowing in a kenotic fashion.[8] These themes permeate through a theology that also significantly incorporates themes such as anagogy and the deification of the rational. These themes are all explicated through the exposition of dynamic triadic hierarchies that are essentially the spiritual ladder with which the rational are supposed to climb towards God.[9] The Dionysian influence on Grosseteste is numerous. One scholar, Nicholas Temple, describes it as primarily two-fold:

> There were, it seems, two entwined facets of Dionysius' work that exerted most influence on Grosseteste's thinking. The first, closely related to the Bishop's translations of the *Celestial Hierarchy* and Ecclesiastical *Hierarchy*, concerns Grosseteste's conviction about the need for a clearer hierarchical structure in the Church that can mirror the celestial hierarchy … The second influence that we can trace in Grosseteste's work is drawn, among other sources, from the Bishop's study of Dionysius' *Mystical Theology* … Grosseteste's investigations are underpinned by a belief in the transcendent nature of light (its self-multiplication and diffusion).[10]

[8] 'Kenotic' refers to the 'emptying' of oneself to become more receptive to the Divine.
[9] 'Hierarchy' is a term supposedly coined by the Syrian and one that takes on a much different meaning than it does in common parlance today. The originator's definition is given below.
[10] Nicholas Temple, "The Bishop's Eye: Robert Grosseteste and the Architecture of Light," in *Architectural Theory Review* 9, no. 1 (2004): 1-18; 5.

Temple correctly identifies two important contributions the Pseudonymous Father has on Grosseteste, but omits others, and does not fully explicate the implications of the first. Starting with Temple's second example, Grosseteste's entire metaphysics is based around the natural philosophic works he is said to have begun in the earlier stages of his life. Perhaps the best insight into this light metaphysics is his *De luce*, and it is here that the Bishop of Lincoln posits one of his most controversial statements, and it is one that is central to his entire theo-philosophical enterprise. In the short treatise, Grosseteste's states that light is the first form of corporeity, and this is a hugely important proposition for reasons that will be discussed most readily in chapter five. The *corpus Areopagiticum* Grosseteste engaged with in the final stages of his life reinforced much of the natural philosophy he had formed in the earlier stages. Taylor Quinn agrees:

> In the Dionysian expressions of hierarchy Grosseteste encountered a cosmology with parallels and correspondences to his own … How well this [Dionysius' theology – specifically in this case, his expressions of hierarchy] allies with Grosseteste's light metaphysic, in which light is a privileged form of matter which gave corporeity and form to creation is evident… [11]

This may be a fortuitous occurrence, but one is inclined to consider the possibility Grosseteste was exposed to the *corpus Dionysiacum* at quite an early stage of his life.[12]

[11] Candice Taylor Quinn, "Robert Grosseteste and the Corpus Dionysiacum: Accessing Spiritual Realities through the Word," in *Editing Grosseteste*, ed. Joseph W. Goering and Evelyn A. Mackie. (University of Toronto Press, 2003): 93.

[12] Indeed, this thesis is not the first to surmise this: of the three Greek manuscripts Grosseteste and his cadre of assistants worked from in the later stages of his life, two have been identified as being in France. The main MS is MS Canonici Gr. 97, currently situated in the Bodleian Library. This MS is wonderfully intact, and more. It is written in 'meticulous' Greek by a Latin scholar, and comprises the entirety of Dionysius' corpus, including his letters. Complementary works are also included, such as: 'the prologue of Maximus the Confessor and the epigrams and chapter-headings to each work; the Eusebian extracts from Polycrates, Clement of Alexandria and Philo; a vocabulary-index of Dionysius; the Encomium of Michael Syncellus; Methodius's account of St. Dionysius's martyrdom, and the Scholia of Maximus the Confessor and John of Scythopolis to the four chief

Moving on to a Dionysian influence omitted by Temple, Dionysius puts forward a highly positive theology, one that ultimately leads to something akin to Gregory of Nyssa's *epektasis*.[13] Much like the Cappadocians, Dionysius posits an ascentive theology: Janet P. Williams writes, 'Dionysius' favourite term for the spiritual life is "anagogy", literally "being led upward" … Dionysius envisages a continual process of discovery in which God leads the soul into ever-deeper relation with himself.'[14]

An ascentive theology necessarily requires an apotheosis and this comes by way of deification. For Dionysius, deification is defined thus:

> … divinization consists of being as much as possible like and in union with God … [divinisation is the] common goal of every hierarchy [and it] consists of the continuous love of God and of things divine, a love which is sacredly worked out in an inspired and unique way, and, before this, the complete and unswerving avoidance of everything contrary to it. It consists of a knowledge of beings as they really are. It consists of an inspired participation in the one-like perfection and in the one itself, as far as possible. It consists of a feast upon the sacred vision which nourishes the intellect and which divinizes everything rising up to it.[15]

works.' James McEvoy, *The Philosophy*. (Oxford University Press: New York, 2011): 74. If this is true, it may well explain the close links between Grosseteste's works and the mystic's.

[13] *Epektasis* refers to the perpetual state of joyful evolution. For more, see: Liviu Petcu, "The Doctrine of Epektasis. One of the Major Contributions of Saint Gregory of Nyssa to the History of Thinking," in *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia*, 73 (2017): 771-782.

[14] Janet P. Williams, "Pseudo-Dionysius and Maximus the Confessor," in *The First Christian Theologians: An Introduction to Theology in the Early Church*, edited by G. R. Evans. Malden: Blackwell, 2004): 188.

[15] Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 376a-376b. This thesis will always take English translations of the Dionysian corpus from *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works* trans. Colm Luibheid and Paul Rorem (New Jersey: Paulist Press: 1987).

Specifics related to actual deification are not given sustained elucidation, as seems to be commonplace, but for the Areopagite, much like Gregory of Nyssa, there is a clear conflation between *epektasis* and deification. Dionysius seems to have a secure doctrine of deification in that the concept is inextricably tied to his overall scheme of procession and return, as well as the fundamental concept of hierarchy.[16] Whilst the ascentivist nature of his theology decidedly influenced Grosseteste, Dionysius' concept of deification did not. Grosseteste's and the Areopagite's deificatory accounts are markedly distinct. It is in beholding the beatific vision that humans ascend to their truest degree of divinity and wisdom, but for Dionysius, due to God's sheer ineffability and utter transcendence, even the beatific vision is mediated. It is yet another of God's theophanies emanating from the divine essence.[17] Grosseteste's defence of the beatific vision in his *Commentary on the Celestial Hierarchy* is one of the best known of his eight excursus. In it, Grosseteste defers to the Latin tradition against the perceived authority of Dionysius. In fact, across his engagement with the *corpus Areopagiticum*, Grosseteste subtly repeats this defence:

> …without explicitly referring to it at every turn, he [Dionysius] none the less repeated with quiet insistence in commenting the *Celestial Hierarchy,* the *Divine Names,* and the *Mystical Theology*, that the soul will see God '*sicuti est,*

[16] Defined in his own terms, '… a hierarchy is a sacred order, a state of understanding and an activity approximating as closely as possible to the divine … hierarchy causes its members to be images of God in all respects, to be clear and spotless mirrors (a clear reference to the Wisdom of Solomon 7:26) reflecting the glow of primordial light and indeed of God himself'. Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy* 164d-165a.

[17] 'Someone might claim that God has appeared himself and without intermediaries to some of the saints. But in fact, it should be realized that scripture has clearly shown that "no one ever has seen" or ever will see the being of God in all its hiddenness. Of course, God has appeared to certain pious men in ways which were in keeping with his divinity. He has come in certain sacred visions fashioned to suit the beholders. This kind of vision, that is to say, where the formless God is represented in forms, is rightly described by theological discourse as a theophany. The recipients of such visions are lifted up to the divine.' Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy* 180c.

> *sine medio'* in the next life, and that the mystical experience is at its summit '*ipsa non velata visio, sine symbol et parabola*'.[18]

It is in the attainment of divinisation that the characteristic paradoxes of the supposed Syrian come to the fore and within Dionysius' mechanism of divinisation, lies the other key influence Temple identified on the Bishop of Lincoln. Before discussion takes place regarding how one within the mechanism reaches deification, one must describe the mechanism by which this attainment can take place.

Dionysius' theology rests on his hierarchical structure. Firstly, it encourages mobility; its very traversal is predicated on the combined utilisation of key Dionysian themes, cataphatic, apophatic and kenotic approaches to theology; hierarchies by their very nature also have a summit, and that summit is divine likeness/union with God or deification. Finally, hierarchies exist to create order. God's hierarchical aim is salvific and the hierarchy is created so that we may climb it towards Him. Through its creation it enables us to be purified and deified. In fact, taking this to its logical conclusion Quinn writes:

> The goal and purpose of this arrangement [the creation of hierarchy and our abilities to ascend it] is salvific, the assimilation and union of souls with the divine likeness, that is deification. In turn, the deified creature becomes so godlike that divine activity can then flow through him and he becomes a worker, or co-worker, with God.[19]

[18] McEvoy, *The Philosophy*, 93. The first quote in English: ' As it is, without medium'; the second: 'the vision is not veiled, nor a symbol or figure.'
[19] Quinn, "Grosseteste and the Corpus Dionysiacum," 93.

This is quite an extreme proposition, and Quinn does not refer to any text at this juncture to reinforce her claim. However, if she were to, she could refer to Dionysius' *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy,* where he wrote:

> Approaching therefore the holy activity of the sacred office we come closer to those beings who are superior to us. We imitate as much as we can their abiding, unwavering, and sacred constancy, and we thereby come to look up to the blessed and ultimately divine ray of Jesus himself. Then, having sacredly beheld whatever can be seen, enlightened by the knowledge of what we have seen, we shall then be able to be consecrated and consecrators of this mysterious understanding. Formed by light, initiates of God's works, we shall be perfected and bring about perfection.[20]

When discussing his definition of hierarchy in the *Celestial Hierarchy*, Dionysius repeats the above, referring to 1 Corinthians 3:9:[21]

> Indeed, for every member of the hierarchy, perfection consists in this, that it is uplifted to imitate God as far as possible and, more wonderful still, that it becomes what scripture calls a "fellow workman for God" and a reflection of the workings of God. Therefore when the hierarchic order lays it on some to be purified and on others to do the purifying, on some to receive illumination and on others to cause illumination, on some to be perfected and on others to bring

[20] Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 372b-c.
[21] 'For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building.'

about perfection, each will actually imitate God in the way suitable to whatever role it has.[22]

Grosseteste aligns himself with this point of view. This thesis argues that Grosseteste's theology is pastoral, and this pastoral emphasis is directly related to his positive anthropology reflected in his humanist outlook. Grosseteste believes that humanity's innate abilities allow them to gain knowledge of the phenomenal world, the crucial first step towards spiritual enlightenment and deification.[23] His acknowledgement of the important function a person's senses takes can be seen in his *Perambulavit* where he writes:

> '… the five senses of the body that the Lord has given me for good, so that I might know and be able to behave rightly in the midst of this wicked and perverse place turn me into evil and sin…[24]

Despite the sword of Damacles-like nature of the senses, the knowledge that results from the utilisation of them *can* allow the individual person to be a better Christian, to spiritually ascend and be able to more accurately imitate the divine characteristics. The alignment to Grosseteste's emphasis on the *cura animarum* is patently clear.[25] Grosseteste categorically asserts that the most Christian thing a person can do is relieve another person of their

[22] Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy* 165b-165c.
[23] Dionysius may be subtly hinting at these abilities when he writes, 'By grace and a God-given power, it does things which belong naturally and supernaturally to God, things performed by him transcendently and revealed in the hierarchy for the permitted imitation of God-loving minds.' Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy* 168a-165b. This 'God-given power' is endowed at creation – an act previously described as being microcosmistic by this thesis.
[24]Robert Grosseteste, "Perambulavit Iudas," in Joseph Goering and F. A. C. Mantello ,"The 'Perambulavit Iudas' (Speculum Confessionis). Attributed to Robert Grosseteste," *Revue bénédictine* 96, no. 1-2 (1986): 125-68. pp.125-168; p.149. '*… corporis v sensus quos Dominus dedit mihi ad bonum, ut scirem et possem recte conuersari in medio huius praue et peruerse nacionis, conuerti michi in malum et in peccatum…*[24] The English translation is my own.
[25] This term refers to 'the cure of souls' a much-used term taken to denote pastoral care for the laity.

ignorance.[26] Through this one, pithy maxim, Grosseteste shows his assent to the idea that through a greater knowledge of the universe humans are more able to help their fellows and ascend the divine hierarchy - as set out by Dionysius - by sharing their wisdom and finally attain deification. Those that are further along this 'hierarchy', pull up those that are below, and in turn are pulled up by those who are even closer to God. While Grosseteste's entire life was not pre-meditated, it should come as no surprise that this is something Grosseteste would assent to as the resemblance to his own life is striking. Grosseteste's life can be broken into four distinct phases: his formative years, spent growing up and working in Hereford (amassing knowledge), his scholarly years where he may or may not have gone to Paris (amassing more explicitly academic knowledge), his early ecclesial career as deacon (when he may have first started to write theological works) and finally his bishopric, where he eventually had the opportunity and in his own mind the obligation, to widely disseminate the knowledge he had gained. As can be seen, there is a clear parallelism between the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge as a Christian act and Grosseteste's own life. This also goes some way to explaining his voracious appetite to explicate the works of Dionysius; they affirmed both his own theological noetic and his life. Grosseteste's own educational achievements aptly demonstrate his insistence on the absolute necessity of basic educational provision; a crucial insight into his overall *weltanschaaung* as explicated below.

Dionysius' hierarchical reality is the mechanism that allows for humans to be perfected, but it requires a significant degree of individual agency; it is not a totally passive occurrence. One

[26] 'The first and principle compassion then is the desire to relieve the fool of his folly, so that through wisdom the sight of his mind might be lit up to true faith and understanding, and his disposition to ignorance corrected.' Grosseteste, *Robert Grosseteste: The Complete Dicta* vol. 1, *Dictum 2* trans. Gordon Jackson, (Lincoln: Asgill, 2003)|: 10. This *dictum* is especially illuminating: throughout Grosseteste defines wisdom as the 'sum of all spiritual good' and folly as 'complete spiritual deficiency', highlighting humanity's need to acquire knowledge. All subsequent references to Grosseteste's *Dicta* will refer to Gordon Jackson's translations, unless otherwise stated.

ascends through the hierarchy by *operatio*, or as Quinn describes it, knowledge and activities. Dionysius' theology puts a heavy emphasis on symbology, and there is a direct link between what the mystical scholar describes as liquids, such as dew, water, milk, wine and honey with biblical symbols of God that rely on sense perception. [27] This is a type of:

> … nourishment … that is the abundant outflowing which reaches out eagerly to all beings and which is a guide through all that is varied, multiple, and divided and which generously leads those to it feeds to a simple, stable knowledge of God.[28]

This is opposed to 'solid food', a common scriptural term which essentially means advanced theological knowledge:[29]

> I believe that by solid food is depicted a perfection and sameness of an intellect and stable order, by virtue of which and during the exercise of a knowledge which is stable, powerful, unique, and indivisible, the divine things are shared with the intelligent workings of sense perception.[30]

For Dionysius, 'solid food' and 'liquid nourishment' are themselves symbols for the types of intelligible symbolism one is to find in Scripture. What is meant by intelligible here is that, for Dionysius, scriptural symbolism is to be contemplated, but it is to be contemplated in

[27] "This is why the divine and conceptual scriptures are compared to dew, to water, to milk, to wine and to honey." Pseudo-Dionysius, *Letter 9*, 1112a-1112b. Interestingly, one of Dionysius' non-extant (and possibly even fictitious) works is entitled *Symbolic Theology*, and it is something the mystic refers to throughout his works.
[28] Ibid.
[29] For examples of this see; Hebrews 5:12-14 and 1 Corinthians 3:2.
[30] Pseudo-Dionysius, *Letter 9*, 1112a.

light of one's lived, perceptive experience.[31] The often contrived and extraordinary scriptural passages are at once written in such a way so as to both shield the sacred reality behind the symbol from the *hoi polloi*, and because of what the supposed Syrian describes as 'theological tradition.'[32] One aspect of this tradition, which is essentially the symbolic writing of scripture, is that it by 'means of a mystery that cannot be taught … puts souls firmly in the presence of God'.[33] He continues:

> This is why the sacred initiators of our tradition, together with those of the tradition of the Law, resorted freely to symbolism appropriate to God, regarding the sacraments of the most holy mysteries. Indeed, we see the blessed angels using riddles to introduce the divine mysteries. Jesus himself speaks of God by means of parables and passes on to us the mystery of his divine activity by using the symbolism of a table.[34]

The amalgamation of humanity's perceptive and intelligible powers being utilised in the interpretation of a scriptural symbol can be seen in an illustrative example:

> Taking holy delight according to this same sacred explication, one says of God, the cause of all good, that he is "inebriated", and this is to convey that superabundance of delights unfathomable to the mind. Better still, it is to convey the quite total and indescribable limitlessness of God's well-being. In

[31] One of these symbols, God being inebriated, is explicated below.
[32] Pseudo-Dionysius, *Letter 9*, 1105d. *Hoi polloi* is a specific term used in the translation of Dionysius' corpus. The secrecy of divine knowledge to the uninitiated is a common theme in the mystic's writings. "… it is most fitting to the mysterious passages of scripture that the sacred and hidden truth about celestial intelligences be concealed through the inexpressible and the sacred and be inaccessible to the *hoi polloi*. Not everyone is sacred, and, as scripture says, knowledge is not for everyone." Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy*, 140a.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid. 1105d-1108a.

> our terminology, inebriation has the pejorative meaning of an immoderate fullness, being out of one's mind and wits. It has a better meaning when applied to God, and this inebriation must be understood as nothing other than the measureless superabundance of good things which are in him as Cause. As for being out of one's mind and wits, which follows drunkenness, in God's case it must be taken to mean that incomprehensible superabundance of God by virtue of which his capacity to understand transcends any understanding or any state of being understood.[35]

For Dionysius then, the symbolistic nature of scripture is derived from human experience. It both shields the mysteries of the faith through contrived language whilst simultaneously allowing those holy, initiated peoples to be 'capable of seeing the beauty hidden within these images to find that they are truly mysterious, appropriate to God, and filled with a great theological light'.[36] The utilisation of familiar language in creating scriptural symbols goes even further in supremely paradoxical fashion. In *The Celestial Hierarchy*, the mystic discusses dissimilar similarities. In effect, this is an apophatic method of discussing God, a step below the ultimate negation of one's understanding. Essentially, Dionysius advocates the utilisation of low frequency lexical choices regarding God and His character as opposed to cataphatic depictions of His majesty or His supremacy amongst other descriptors. This is especially true of physical depictions of Heaven, or God. This is because positive descriptors (such as omnibenevolent, or omnipotent) of God are likely, for many, to seem more 'accurate' than 'dissimilar' descriptors when applied to God. Due to the Areopagite's extreme apophaticism this will not do because of his absolute insistence on humanity's

[35] Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy*, 1112c.
[36] Ibid., 1105c.

inability to comprehend God and his divinity. However, that is not to say that every affirmation of God is equally inappropriate, and neither is every negation, in fact, it is important for people to qualify their perceptions of these concepts and images by degree of their congruity.[37] However, for one to return to God and ascend to deification, it takes more than merely being able to describe God affirmatively. It is much easier for one to state that "God is perfect", than it is to suggest that "God is a leopard", although scripture, whilst not verbatim, affirms both of these statements.[38] Dionysius stresses that through the usage of dissimilar descriptors, incongruous symbolism and the contemplation of them, people are pushed towards the divine truth behind perceptible reality.[39] This conclusion is important to keep in mind; Grosseteste's own subscription to and heavy use of the natural world as a concatenation of divine symbols is congruent to Dionysius' idea of dissimilar similitudes. As will be demonstrated, Grosseteste goes as far as to suggest that one should seek to see God in and through something as insignificant as a speck of dust as a means to both spiritually and epistemologically develop.[40]

This idea is central to his ascentivist theology. The Areopagite treads familiar ground when referring to St. Paul: 'As Paul said and as true reason has said, the ordered arrangement of the

[37] 'Is it not closer to reality to say that God is life and goodness rather than that he is air or stone? Is it not more accurate to deny that drunkenness and rage can be attributed to him than we can apply to him the terms of speech and thought?' Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Mystical Theology*, 1033c-1033d.
[38] For God as a leopard, see Hosea 13:7. For God as perfection, see Matthew 5:48.
[39] "Furthermore, I doubt that anyone would refuse to acknowledge that incongruities are more suitable for lifting our minds up into the domain of the spiritual than similarities are. High-flown shapes could well mislead someone into thinking that the heavenly beings are golden or gleaming men, glamorous, wearing lustrous clothing, giving off flames which cause no harm, or that they have other similar beauties with which the word of God has fashioned the heavenly minds. It was to avoid this kind of misunderstanding among those incapable of rising above visible beauty that the pious theologians so wisely and upliftingly stooped to incongruous dissimilarities, for by doing this they took account of our inherent tendency toward the material and our willingness to be basely satisfied by base images. At the same time they enabled that part of our soul which longs for the things above actually to rise up … And remember too that there is nothing which lacks its own share of beauty, for as scripture rightly says, 'Everything is good.'" Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy* 141a-141c.
[40] See chapter 5.

whole visible realm makes known the invisible things of God.'[41] This is an example of symbolistic microcosmism. Humans are the summation of all creation and created in the image of God. Contemplation of sensible, perceptible phenomena leads to a greater understanding of God, therefore, this contemplation pushes humans along in their ascent towards divinisation. Dionysius actually asserts that humans cannot ascend to the level of sheer conceptual contemplation without first contemplating perceptible phenomena, and these are views that are taken and explicated by Grosseteste throughout the entirety of his works.[42]

As explicated, the physical symbols that man is able to contemplate and interpret at the beginning of his ascent are not limited to scripture. There are two other avenues to deification. There are the symbols related to the organisation of the Church and its mysteries, as well as the symbolic character of the natural world. Dionysius' *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* is devoted to the symbolism inherent in the hierarchy of the Church, and this is something Grosseteste makes eager use of.[43] For Grosseteste, the earthly church: its offices, its sacraments and 'those who seek the light' is a theophany of Dionysius' ecclesiastic hierarchy, and its primary function, as with any Dionysian hierarchy, is union with God; deification.

As Quinn asserts:

[41] Pseudo-Dionysius, *Letter 9*, 1108b.
[42] "Now there are two reasons for creating types for the typeless, for giving shape to what is actually without shape. First, we lack the ability to be directly raised up to conceptual contemplations." Pseudo-Dionysius, *Letter 9*: 140a.
[43] Quinn writes: 'within *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* … Grosseteste finds an articulation of the macrocosmic design to which he is expressly committed, and which provides the explanatory context for the parallel microcosmic realities of the Church Militant, namely, the orders of clerics, the sacramental mysteries, and the sacred rights and obligations of the laity.' Quinn, "Grosseteste and the Corpus Dionysiacum," 93.

> The salvific light [God[44]], then, descends through the ordered rites, or sacraments, and through the clergy who perform them to those below them on the hierarchy. Dependence on orders of the hierarchy is dependence upon God, and the good soul relies absolutely on the hierarchical community that is both being saved and mediating salvation. As the hierarchic light is revealed in words and rites, and apprehended by purified and knowing souls, salvation is effected.[45]

She goes on to state that these types of symbols that are to be apprehended are 'items and acts which give form … to something that is without form' and that, once again, the material world is the starting point towards our ascent to the spiritual.[46] The apprehension of the symbols' spiritual significance points one towards the conclusion that, despite moral virtue being fundamentally imperative towards one's ascent to God, the journey is at least as much epistemological as it is ethical.[47] Quinn is not wrong when she forcefully claims that

> Grosseteste's unified vision, informed by the unified system of Dionysius, is one in which theology and devotion, true knowledge and right action, are fused and synthesised. Good pastors purged vices, performed the sacraments, and spoke the Word of God to all who would hear.[48]

[44] In this quote I believes Quinn is referring to the 'salvific light' with particular reference to Grosseteste's concept of light: it is the unique qualities of this Grossetestean conception of light that is important for Quinn. As mentioned previously, the parallel between Grosseteste's light metaphysics and the Dionysian hierarchical structure of reality is all-important.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Quinn writes, 'Those receiving the light apprehend the divine manifestation and are united to their source by means of the light which infuses the entire soul of the believer.' Ibid., 94.
[48] Ibid.

Implicit within the entirety Grosseteste's *Dicta* is the Bishop's focus on pastoral care. As previously mentioned, there is a clear similarity between Dionysius' central theme of ascent and salvation with Grosseteste's insistence on matters of pastoral concern. The pastoral and ecclesial realm is perhaps *the* place that Grosseteste's theo-philosophy comes to fruition:

> … the sacraments serve many functions, foremost among them being to serve as a divinely established meeting place of divine work, or ritual and pastoral care, a meeting which facilitated and endorsed all of Grosseteste's theological concern, and, simultaneously, increased devotion and the drawing of human hearts and souls to God. The sacramental and human hierarchy was at once the material embodiment of God's descending love for man … and the vehicle of the soul's return to its source.[49]

Thus far, the Dionysian concept of symbology has been found within scripture and in the mysteries of the Church and the ecclesiastic hierarchy they constitute. The final avenue towards God is related to both. Both types of symbol rely on human experience; scripture so that one can correctly identify, interpret and understand the symbols that appear sub-textually (such as God being inebriated); and within the perceptible and material symbols of the sacraments that hold within them a light that can be conceptually followed toward divinity. The last realm of symbology is what Quinn identifies as the 'book of nature'.

She writes:

[49] Quinn, "Grosseteste and the Corpus Dionysiacum, 94.

> [for Grosseteste] … the book of nature, whether manifest in the form of the bread of the Eucharistic Host, or the generation of species, or the action of light in a rainbow, was a source of revelation for those who would peer into it looking for the very mind of God. Dionysian thought-forms allotted to each entity its rightful place in God's plan, including the material realm through which spiritual things may be known.[50]

There are many stages to Grosseteste's life, and it is widely accepted that his early academic years revolved around a fascination of, and experimentation with, the natural world.[51] His early scientific endeavours coloured much of his theological vision, and his light metaphysics seamlessly underpins his epistemology which is itself the lynchpin to his theologically ascentivist worldview. Quinn, once again recognising the importance of Grosseteste's academically formative years, reinforces the view that the *Corpus Areopagiticum* – which Grosseteste was probably introduced to whilst at Paris – played a vital role in the formation of a theology that was both very pastoral and positive regarding the human condition, and also deeply patristic and yet contemporarily modern.[52]

Quinn believes that by the time of his bishopric ecclesial concerns shift Grosseteste's focus away from the natural world and its symbology, to the acquisition of knowledge regarding more ecclesiological, and episcopal concerns. Whilst Grosseteste's responsibilities certainly changed, as did the direction of his scholarship, Quinn omits the fact that the subsummation

[50] Quinn, "Grosseteste and the Corpus Dionysiacum," 86.
[51] 'Experiment' may be the wrong word: within Grossetestean scholarship there is a significant discourse regarding whether or not one can consider him a scientist proper. Does his version of '*experimentum*' comply with more modern and rigorous notions of methodological naturalism? For Alistair Crombie's seminal work, *Origins,* the answer is a resounding yes, although this position, whilst a good starting point with which to view the Bishop of Lincoln, is becoming increasingly harder to maintain. Grossetestean scholarship is much indebted to the explication of Grosseteste's scientific works conducted, in large part, by the Ordered Universe Project.
[52] Quinn, "Grosseteste and the Corpus Dionysiacum," 86

of this lower form of knowledge to theological, philosophical contemplation and the dissemination of that knowledge to others is all a part of the plan for Grosseteste. As shown, many commentators make much of the idea that knowledge of the material world (be it nature, scripture, or the sacramental 'symbols') is absolutely crucial to material beings in their quest to acquire knowledge of the immaterial. Not only is this natural, material, sensible knowledge the first step for the individual knower, it is also the easiest knowledge to disseminate. The inherently symbolic structure of creation lends itself to pedagogical efforts: if humans can see the Sun, and if they can see the way its light can be altered dependant on the medium it shines through, then humans can also be quite easily taught theological truths.[53] This is a rather simple example of the method by which those who are closer to God (those that are 'higher' and already perceive the divine symbolism at play in such an example) can pull up those that are 'below' them (those that cannot perceive the material things as symbols). Again, as mentioned above, Grosseteste explicitly states that the most Christian thing a person can do is to relieve another of their ignorance; teaching another person the symbolic structure of sensible reality is a vital step in their ascent towards divinity and it also naturally leads on to further study of more conceptual matters, thereby edging the knower and the learner (due to the continued production of virtuous acts such as teaching another) further along toward God. This omission fits aptly into Quinn's work's initial aims:

> … Grosseteste's commitment to Dionysian metaphysics reveals and supplements his own patristically driven Christological theology, in a threefold manner: the tendency to incorporate as equally relevant particular forms of gnosis as a means to salvation, and to hold it as important as moral rectitude; to

[53] Grosseteste's *De colore* is the investigation into the way in which light shines through distinct media. This work and its implications to Grosseteste's emergent theology will be made clear in chapter 5.

> embrace divine immanence as existentially real and correspondingly significant as divine transcendence; and to affirm his unified view of the cosmos as emanating from the one, hierarchically arranged, dynamically mediated, infused with light with the sole purpose of return to the One.[54]

Grosseteste's own grand theological narrative, largely indebted and attuned to Dionysius', is given a thoroughly firm foundation in the Bishop's light metaphysics. The theo-philosophical foundations of Grosseteste's theology, the relationship between microcosmism and deification, light being the first form of corporeity as found in *De luce*, the idea that material creation symbolically hints towards an immaterial, spiritual realm of understanding *a la* Dionysius, as well as the consequences of an emanationist creation narrative, are all key factors in the creation of Grosseteste's positive anthropology.[55] This is the agreeance between Grosseteste and Dionysius; an utterly immanent God that is at least partly knowable via study of the natural world that is intrinsically apprehendable by humankind due to man's innate, God-given abilities, and enables the ascent towards their own divinity and re-union with God.

Quinn's aims are a constituent part of this thesis' overall aim, to simply suggest that Grosseteste holds an unusually positive anthropology that is theologically driven and made possible through philosophic means. His views are uniquely based upon his contemporary scientific investigations and upon patristic scholarship and is thoroughly Greek and Neo-Platonic in flavour. This is perfectly demonstrated in his theological proximity to Dionysius and his own insistence on symbolic epistemology. As Quinn quite rightly asserts,

[54] Quinn, "Grosseteste and the Corpus Dionysiacum," 80.
[55] Emanationist in the sense that that creation that flows forth from its creator is, in some way, a manifestation of that creator.

> … we must … grasp how completely and fundamentally the substance of the Dionysian synthesis resonated with and therefore served to inform and supplement Robert Grosseteste's deepest religious concerns and convictions.[56]

Above all else, as Quinn observes in the conclusion to her study, 'Within the words of … [Dionysius] Grosseteste found the final mystery revealed, that all is one, and the One is all.'[57]

2.3. Maximus the Confessor

Maximus the Confessor was one of the first to comment and elaborate on Dionysius' works.[58] His theological anthropology is heavily indebted to the pseudonymous scholar and of Neo-Platonic thought in general.[59] There is a subtle difference between the two however: whilst Dionysius' hierarchical structure heavily favours the conceptual and intelligible and often relegates the utilisation of an individual's sensual powers to a 'first step', in Maximus, humanity's relationship with the cosmos becomes much more central. In Maximus, material creation seems to take on a much greater significance than it had before, much like humanity's own abilities to enact their salvation. It is more than a coincidence that the two coincide. Maximus's theology is simultaneously Christocentric and yet cosmic in scope. Maximus explicitly incorporates the microcosm/macrocosm paradigm into a theological context, and even more importantly, within a distinctly anthropologically focussed theology. The combination of humanity's innate, God-given abilities, and the newly-appointed importance of the cosmos to their spiritual enlightenment and subsequently creation's

[56] Quinn, "Grosseteste and the Corpus Dionysiacum," 86.
[57] Ibid., 95.
[58] For a very good introduction to the life and work of Maximus, see the entirety of 'part one' of: Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015): 3-124.
[59] The influence of the Cappadocians Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory Nazianzen for example is well-established in Maximian discourse.

salvation powerfully come together in Maximus, and in so doing, he seemingly plants the seeds of Eriugena's *On the Division of Nature*.

With regards to Grosseteste, it is hard to demonstrate the direct impact Maximus had. Grosseteste certainly translated Maximus' prologue to Dionysius' *Celestial Hierarchy* and the relevant scholia on the *Corpus Areopagiticum* from the tenth-century manuscript discussed earlier, but Maximian authorship was also attributed to scholia written by John of Scythopolis, unknown to Grosseteste.[60] What can be demonstrated is the development of Dionysian thought in Maximus' theological anthropology, and how that Maximian development of mystical deificatory theology is itself assimilated into Eriugenian thought; of which one can demonstrate a more direct influence on the subject of this thesis. Therefore, the inclusion of some deliberation as to the anthropological and microcosmistic content of Maximus' theology is important for highlighting its influence over Eriugena's *Periphyseon* and consequently whatever source Grosseteste used to locate it.

For Maximus, humans are both a microcosm of the universe (the macrocosm) as well as all of creation's mediatory agent to God. This dual role, exemplified in the Incarnation, is the basis for Maximus' anthropological theology much like Grosseteste's centuries later. Maximus states:

> [the] mystery of Christ is the great and hidden mystery … the blessed end for the sake of which everything came to be … in which all things made by God are recapitulated in Him [His incarnation] …manifested in the innermost depth of the Father's love, and showed in Himself the end for the sake of which created

[60] See: McEvoy, *The Philosophy,* 468-469.

> things clearly had their beginning … the mystery of the embodiment of the Word is not only the key to all the riddles and types in Scripture, but also contains the knowledge of created things, both visible and intelligible.[61]

Andrew Louth, a notable Maximian scholar, quotes Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae in his work *Man and Cosmos in Maximus the Confessor*, who succinctly and precisely conveys both Maximus' doctrine of the microcosm/macrocosm paradigm but also the absolute pre-eminence of the human and their vocation as the centre of, and mediator for, creation. He writes:

> The destiny of the cosmos is found in man … This is shown not only by the fact that the cosmos is the object of human consciousness and knowledge (not the reverse) but also by the fact that the entire cosmos serves human existence in a practical way.[62]

The entire cosmos serves human existence, but for Maximus, mankind also serves the cosmos. Through the individual as the microcosm, the universe as macrocosm is given meaning, and this is again due to humanity's special etiology. Created in the image of God, as the pinnacle of all creation, humans are the 'priest of the cosmos'.[63] This is perhaps the

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[61] Maximus the Confessor, "Questions to Thalassius" 60, P.G. 90: 621ac. This translation is presumably the product of Elizabeth Theokritoff and can be found here: Elizabeth Theokritoff, "The Vision of Maximus the Confessor: That Creation May All Be One," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Religion and Ecology* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2017): 222. Here Theokritoff is quoting Maximus the Confessor, *Centuries on Theology* 1.66., PG 90: 1108ab. Here, it is clear to see the similarities between the three avenues towards Dionysian deification as set out in this thesis in the earlier section.

[62] Dumitru Stăniloae, *The Experience of God* (Brookline, Massachusetts: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1994): 4-5.

[63] This is a familiar phrase in Maximian scholarship and various iterations of it denote a similar meaning such as 'priest of nature', or 'priest of creation'. Andrew Louth for example utilises both in Andrew Louth, "Man and the Cosmos in St. Maximus the Confessor," in *Toward an Ecology of Transfiguration: Orthodox Christian Perspectives on Environment, Nature, and Creation,* ed. John Chryssavgis and Bruce V. Foltz. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013): 59-71. The phrases are commonly used to denote the idea that man is the

first time the material world becomes more than a mere 'stepping stone' towards contemplation of the conceptual and purely intelligible. In the West the dichotomy between the material and the immaterial would continue for a long time, but in the East, creation was beginning to take on a greater importance.

Maximus envisions humans as constituting all of creation, of having a special role in its return to its creator, and ultimately achieving deification. Differently to others however is the status of corporeal reality, which for Maximus is literally divine revelation (in that God is actively expressing Himself), which thereby enables humans to fulfil their vocation through the use of their sensual powers.

To understand Maximus' revelatory model and its deificatory end, one must demonstrate three interconnected doctrines. Firstly, one must understand humanity's especial role in the grand narrative of procession and return as just set out above. This is due to every individual's creation as the *imago Dei*, their relationship with the cosmos as explicated in the microcosm/macrocosm paradigm, and the concomitant abilities humans possess as a result of these aforementioned reasons (as demonstrated in the classic Gregorian formula) with an especial focus on their rational powers.

Secondly, one must understand the importance for Maximus of apophatic and cataphatic approaches to the divine, or rather, their symbiotic relationship. Maximus writes:

interpreter of the cosmos; it is up to him to interpret creation's symbolism, espouse the cosmos' unity, and ultimately redeem it in the eyes of God and bring about creation's return to its creator.

> God is one, without beginning, incomprehensible, possessing in his totality the full power of being, fully excluding the notion of time and quality in that he is inaccessible to all and not discernible by any being on the basis of any natural representation. God is in himself (insofar as it is possible for us to know) neither beginning, nor middle, nor end, nor absolutely anything that is thought of as coming after him by nature; for he is unlimited, unmoved, and infinite in that he is infinitely beyond every essence, power, and act.[64]

This is an unsurprising and standard example of apophaticism, but as Adam Cooper points out, Maximus takes great pains to ensure the reciprocal nature of apophatic and cataphatic approaches to the divine. He does this by utilising affirmative scriptural references. Maximus uses Romans 11:36 as an example; he states, 'he is beginning as creator, middle as provider, and end as final boundary, for as it says, 'from him, and through him, and to him are all things.'[65]

For Cooper, this demonstrates that for Maximus the *via negativa* has a doxological goal; he writes, 'One can speak of God as beginning, middle, and end- not in that he suffers … them in himself, but in that he effects … them in the things that have being'.[66] What is fundamentally important here is the idea that one can speak of God affirmatively, and yet, God can still remain utterly ineffable. This paradox is the classic call to faith; when one fully understands the sheer transcendence, immanence, and ineffability of God through natural means one must, as a gift of divine grace, have faith, and faith for Maximus brings about an entirely new way of perception. In simpler terms, one must go through the epistemological

[64] Maximus the Confessor, *Chapters on Theology* 1.1-2.
[65] Ibid., 1.10.
[66] Adam Cooper, "Maximus Confessor on the Structural Dynamics of Revelation," in *Vigiliae Christianae* 55, no.2 (2001*):* 165.

process of interpreting corporeality's symbolic character to its summit; the realisation that one cannot know or understand God. The denial of our abilities' usefulness regarding knowledge of God is the culmination of our utilisation of our abilities in the pursuit of such knowledge. Maximus describes this process thus:

> It is said that all beings are objects of knowledge because they bear the demonstrable principles of their knowledge. God, however, is called the unknown, and among all knowable things he is believed only 'to be'. That is why no knowable object can compare in any way to him. The knowledge of beings includes naturally, in view of demonstration, knowledge of their own principles which naturally circumscribe them in a definition. But God, through the principles in beings, is believed only 'to be'. He gives to the godly a proper confession and faith which are clearer than every demonstration. For faith is a true knowledge which bears the undemonstrated principles, since it is the concrete actuality … of realities that are beyond mind and reason.[67]

Adam Cooper believes that for Maximus, both the approaches to the divine are 'two sides of the same coin'; negation of God's character in light of His inscrutability can actually lead to His praise.[68] Paradoxically, God's hiddenness enables him to be known.

Explicating the dynamics of apophatic and cataphatic theology further, the implications of their symbiotic relationship can be seen in the form of Maximian revelation. This is the third

[67] Maximus the Confessor, *Chapters on Theology* 1.8-9. This could be a reference to Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is the assurance of thing hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." For an English translation of this work, see: Maximus the Confessor, *Two Hundred Chapters on Theology* trans. Luis Joshua Salés (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2022).
[68] Cooper, "Confessor on the Structural Dynamics," 167.

doctrine to be demonstrated: for Maximus, within his dualistic framework encompassing apophaticism and cataphaticism, lies the two-fold form of corporeal divine revelation; the very source humans must engage with. Revelation then derives either from the natural world or scripture. This is a consequence of the movement of the divine *logos* from its inherent unity, to the corporeal multiplicity that is creation. Once again, something indwells in all of creation thus turning creation into a concatenation of possible symbols designed to enable humanity's utilisation of their powers, and effect their transformation from fallen human, to divine. For Maximus, this is the *logoi*. The use of the word *logoi* and its root, *logos* is not straightforward. Andrew Louth explains it in this way:

> There is a lot that could be said about the history of the word *logos* in Greek thought, but I shall simply dwell on its use in Greek Christian thought. The universe was created by God, through his *Logos*, which is identical with the second person of the Trinity, the Son of the Father. To say that the universe is created by the *Logos* entails that the universe has a meaning, both as a whole and in each of its parts. That "meaning" is *logos*: everything that exists has its own *logos*, and that *logos* is derived from God the *Logos*. As St. Maximus is fond of saying: "the one *Logos* is the many *logoi*," and also "the many *logoi* are the One *Logos*." To have meaning, *logos*, is to participate in the *Logos* of God. Behind this lurks the Platonic idea that everything that exists exists by participating in its form, or idea, which is characterized by its definition; the Greek for definition (in this sense) is, again, *logos*.[69]

[69] Louth, "Man and the Cosmos," 62.

As Louth observes, for Maximus, the Word of God indwells within all things; it is creation's cause, the thing that gives creation meaning, and it is the thing that will inevitably, through the mediation of mankind, enable its own recapitulation in God. This mediation of mankind can occur because, unlike Plato's conception of created reality as a distorted imitation of eternal reality, Maximus believes that through God's creation, and the dynamism involved in the doctrine of the *logoi* (Λόγοι) in all things, God's creation is ultimately good, and its beauty and meaning resonates through the *logoi*. Maximus uses the term *logos tês physeôs (*Λόγος της φύσεως) to describe meaning given to creation through the *logoi*. However, this goes further; not only are the *logoi* created but also, paradoxically, they are uncreated, because, as Dionysius is quoted as saying by Maximus, they are "divine predeterminations and wills."[70] The *logoi* within creation are 'inviolable … [and] they may be obscured by the Fall, but they cannot be distorted',[71] they must be seen as expressing God's will and intention for each created being and for the cosmos as a whole.'[72] This is an important development to consider when contemplating humans as created in the image of God; if the *logoi* are communicated to creation by God the *Logos (*Λόγος) and humans are created in this image, then for Maximus, humans are *logikos (*Λογικος); 'usually translated as "rational" … [therefore] one could say that human beings, as *logikos,* are capable of discerning meaning, maybe even conferring meaning'.[73] This is Maximus' rationale for humanity's vocation as 'priest of the cosmos'; one must engage with the corporeal and discern the *logoi* beneath. This process Maximus defines as *physike theoria (*Φυσική θεωρια), or natural contemplation.[74] It is easy to see the parallels between the conceptual framework of

[70] Maximus *Ambigua ad Iohannem* 7 (PG 91.1085a), the quotation is from Dionysius' *On the Divine Names*, 5.8.
[71] Louth, "Man and the Cosmos," 63.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid., 64. Interestingly, following this quotation, Louth comments on the possibility of man being able to confer meaning, stating, "is that the implication of Adam naming the animals?"
[74] Ibid.

Maximus' theological approach defined by negation and affirmation, and the dynamics of his revelatory structure; it is through God's hiddenness – as the *logoi* - that one may find affirmation. For Maximus, much like for Dionysius, revelation is essentially interactive. Crucially, the parallels with Grosseteste's light metaphysic are astonishing. To *precis* a forthcoming discussion on this very topic: Grosseteste separates light into two forms, *lux* (spiritual light) and *lumen* (corporeal light). Because God is light and the first form of corporeity He is in essence His creation. This is the dynamic relationship that sustains the symbolic potential of the material world that humankind is supposed to interpret - *physike theoria* – but for Grosseteste, rather than seek the *logoi* within creation, one is to reveal the *lux*, the spiritual light that one can see as God. This *physike theoria* is the process by which deification will be attained.[75]

The interaction takes place between three distinct but nevertheless inter-related entities; God, as the *Logos* in creating the cosmos and residing in it as *logoi* thus giving it meaning; corporeal creation, as the 'stuff of revelation'; and humans, the mediators between creation and God and the enactors of cosmic salvation.[76] The corporeal 'stuff' of revelation that humans are to engage with and interpret divine truth from through the *logoi* is two-fold; nature and scripture (or the natural and historical laws) and for Maximus, both hold equal

[75] Discussing humanity's potential Grosseteste wrote, "… the godhead sees all things, hears all things, looks into all things. You too really have this power through your eyes and ears, a power that gives life to and examines the things you know that can be in your understanding". Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron* VIII, VII, 3. He is building upon the idea that God is everything and is that which we can understand; "Our mind is his imagine in this, that it is capable of grasping him and can have a share in him … 'Nothing is so much like the highest wisdom as is the rational mind, which by memory, understanding and will is set on that ineffable Trinity." Ibid., VIII, VII, 4; 232. All of the subsequent references to the *Hexaëmeron* will refer to this edition, unless otherwise stated.
[76] "That which the *Logos* penetrates in order to unify with himself necessarily becomes an agent of the revelatory process. Creation constitutes the 'stuff' of revelation". Cooper, "Confessor on the Structural Dynamics," 171.

weight.[77] The human engagement with this revelatory structure is the process of deification; in words reminiscent of Dionysius, Maximus writes:

> The soul would never be able to reach out and attain to the knowledge of God, unless God himself, having drawn near to it, touched it by condescension and lead it up to himself; for the human mind has no such power to ascend, to apprehend any divine illumination as it were, unless God himself draw it up-as [far as] the human mind is able to be drawn up - and [himself] illumine it with divine brightness.[78]

Maximus' revelatory structure reveals the anthropological emphasis on his theology. Throughout, the centrality of human agency is emphasised; it is through humanity's powers, God-given, that individuals are to discern the symbolic meaning of the cosmos, a meaning that is an expression of the divine Himself. Thus far however, this discussion, whilst noting the Christological aspects of Maximus' theology has not properly explicated it, and an understanding of this Christology is imperative to understanding Maximus' theology's focus on both humanity's engagement with the corporeal and its symbolic nature, as well its deificatory consequences.[79]

Maximian theology, whilst deeply cosmological, is also heavily attuned to his contemporary Christological concerns; the monothelite controversy in particular: 'Consequently, nearly all

[77] "… the two laws - both the natural law and the written law - are of equal honour and teach the same things; neither is greater or less than the other." Maximus the Confessor, *Ambiguum* 10 (PG 91.1128d). Also see Paul M. Blowers, *Exegesis and Spiritual Pedagogy in Maximus the Confessor: An Investigation of the* Quaestiones ad Thalassium (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991): 102; '[Maximus] 'envisions creation and scripture as objective economies of divine revelation that stand in a perfect analogous relation to the Logos-Revealer'.
[78] Maximus the Confessor, *Chapters on Theology* 1.31.
[79] Here, I am taking 'Christology' in its common definition to be thoughts concerning Christ and His nature.

of Maximus's writings and their cosmological centricity are significantly oriented by Christological concerns.'[80] A key aspect of Christological doctrine Maximus emphasises is incarnational theology. The Confessor sees incarnation as the pre-requisite for humanity's ability to wield his innate powers and, as a doctrine, is inextricably linked with Maximus' concept of the *logoi*. Significantly, this incarnational theology has two parts: whilst the Incarnation as a historical event resulted in the virginal birth of the God-Man and acts as a pre-requisite and exemplar in the life of true ascetism, the doctrine of the *logoi* is in and of itself incarnational. This is because the *logoi* are the predeterminations of God; they are his thoughts and his plans for the universe, the universe's principle of harmony and the *raison d'être* and destiny of each individual being. Through the *logoi*, the *Logos* is "incarnated" in creation.[81] This mode of incarnation allows mankind's spiritual ascent: 'By engaging in the *theōria* of the *logoi* of beings, then, we become partakers of the creative life of God himself – a life that assimilates us to him in what early Christians term deification.'[82] If one were to subscribe to the idea that Grosseteste is panentheistic through his light metaphysics – in that God indwells within all of His creation *in some way*, then this sounds very resonant of Maximus; Maximus believes that by contemplating the *logoi* of things, essentially God in things, one will achieve deification, and this is precisely what Grosseteste is advocating for in his own novel way. This notion is only compounded when one considers Grosseteste's cosmic, and crucially Christological argument from unity in his *On the Cessation of the Laws.* This truly unique argument posits the absolute predestination of Christ. All of these points will be tied together and deliberated upon in chapter five.

[80] Blowers, *Exegesis and Spiritual Pedagogy in Maximus the Confessor*, 80. The Monothelite controversy focussed upon the controversial and heretical position advocating for Christ's singular will. See: Cyril Hovorun, *Will, Action and Freedom : Christological Controversies in the Seventh Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).
[81] Julia Konstantinovsky, "Evagrius Ponticus and Maximus the Confessor: The Building of the Self in Praxis and Contemplation," in *Evagrius and His Legacy*, ed. Joel Kalvesmaki and Robin Darling Young (University of Notre Dame Press, 2016): 145.
[82] Ibid.

The historical Incarnation is hugely significant for Maximus in that it restores mankind's ability to be the 'priest of the cosmos'. This is because, whilst the above discussion is quite right in describing the epistemological and deificatory consequences of Maximus' incarnational ontology on humanity, humans are fallen. Thus, it is the combination of *physike theoria* and living within the sacramental life of the Church plus struggling ascetically that humans can truly be deified. The three modes of incarnation then, all revolve, in large part around the *Logos*, which in turn is analogous to Christ. These being the words (*logoi*) spoken by the Incarnate Christ, the *logoi* bound within creation, and the *logoi* of scripture. In Maximus' words:

> The *Logos* of God is called flesh not only inasmuch as He became incarnate, but in another sense as well. . . . When he draws near to men who cannot with the naked intellect come into contact with intelligible realities in the naked state, He selects things which are familiar to them, combining together various stories, symbols, parables and dark sayings; and in this way he becomes flesh. Thus at our first encounter our intellect comes into contact not with the naked *Logos* but with the incarnate *Logos*, that is, with various sayings and stories. . . . For the *Logos* becomes flesh in each of the recorded sayings.[83]

This tripartite account of incarnation is commonly referred to as Maximus' doctrine of the three incarnations.[84] All of these incarnations of the *Logos* are symbolic in character, and the divine symbolism of corporeality is, with regards to this thesis, Maximus' greatest legacy to Eriugenian thought. Despite this however, one should not dismiss the possibility that Grosseteste was deeply moved by the important role 'sayings and stories' or the incarnate *Logos* had: Grosseteste's deep relationship with the Friars Minor, and his particular use of

[83] Maximus the Confessor, *Chapters on Theology* II. 60 (PG 90.1149CD). This translation is Adam Cooper's.
[84] Louth, "Man and the Cosmos," 65.

their preaching skills, despite the ire of his diocesan colleagues is perhaps a testament to his convictions regarding the power of the spoken word. Combined with his commentary on Genesis regarding the specific semantics of God's creation of humanity, this thought potentially had a long-lasting impact on Grosseteste.[85] The dynamic relationship between creation and God, mediated through God's image (the individual person) is the primary subject of Eriugena's *Periphyseon,* written in 867. Eriugena seeks to demonstrate the cosmic centrality of mankind in the grand narrative of God's descent into multiplicity and, through humanity, His return to unity. Through the combination of natural contemplation, *physike theoria,* of the divine *logoi* within all of creation, and living a virtuous life through sacramental immersion and ascetic struggle humans will be deified. As Maximus writes in his *Ambigua*:

> For [the Fathers] say that God and man are paradigms one of another: God is humanised to man through love for humankind to the extent that man, enabled through love, deifies himself to God; and man is caught up noetically by God to what is unknown to the extent that he manifests God, who is invisible by nature, through the virtues.[86]

2.4. Eriugena[87]

One may be forgiven in thinking that the theological centrality of mankind may have found its apotheosis in the theological anthropology of Maximus Confessor. Eriugena's

[85] This will be elaborated upon in chapter four.
[86] Maximus Confessor, *Ambigua ad Iohannem* 10 (PG 91.1113). This translation is Adam Cooper's.
[87] For a very accessible work on background information regarding Eriugena, see part one of: Deirdre Carabine, *John Scottus Eriugena (Great Medieval Thinkers)* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press). Throughout academic discourse, Eriugena is known by many names: 'the Irishman', John or Jean the Scot, John Scottus *et al.*. This thesis will continue this tradition.

development of the dignity of human nature and the very fundamental, cosmological role it has to play takes Maximus' work and amplifies it. In so doing, Eriugena's importance to this thesis cannot be overstated and yet, an explicit link to the works of Robert Grosseteste is not fully agreed upon. However, one can, perhaps more than tentatively suggest both direct and indirect lines of influence upon *Lincolniensis,* as thoroughly demonstrated by James McEvoy in the only work bar this thesis that attempts to seriously posit a relationship between the two.[88] Due to the dearth of discourse on this topic, an intimate reading of McEvoy's chapter will occur. This section of the chapter will outline key elements of Eriugena's Neo-Platonic theology that strongly resonate with the works of Grosseteste and then, using McEvoy's study of the two as well as some critical elaboration upon it, this section of the thesis will seek to posit the ever-tempting link between them. Before this takes place however, it is important to stress that even if the link between Eriugena and Grosseteste is not convincing enough, this is no large way hampers this thesis' aims. This is because John the Scot and Grosseteste have very similar source material; indeed, this is one of the few reasons why any influence is hard to distinguish, and the majority of the key elements that Grosseteste may or may not take from Eriugena to form what this thesis deems to be deeply Greek and humanistic, originates from Eriugena's Greek material. Simply put, even if Eriugena was not the primary medium Grosseteste received this Greek noetic, the Bishop may still have picked up much of the same thought from the sources Eriugena himself utilised, or sources that used Eriugena. However, if this is the case, one may deem Eriugena's inclusion into this thesis as superfluous. This is not the case. There is certainly a case to be made that distinctly Eriugenian ideals may have impressed themselves upon Grosseteste's thought, and these

[88] James McEvoy, "Ioannes Scotus Eriugena and Robert Grosseteste: An Ambiguous Influence," In *Eriugena redivivus: Zur Wirkungsgeschichte seines Denkens im Mittelalter und im Übergang zur Neuzeit*, ed. Werner Beierwaltes (Heidelberg: Winter Universitatverlag, 1987): 192-223.

ideals whether directly from the Irishman or not, are formative to Grosseteste's overall theological schema.

His ontological theology, perhaps taking Platonism even further ('All material things point to a truer, spiritual reality…'), is centred around two paradigms: being and non-being, and the distinction between the creator and His creation.[89] His masterpiece, the *Periphyseon* or *De Divisione Naturae* is, in essence, a *Hexaëmeron*; a commentary on the first books of Genesis. In it, John Scotus manages to successfully synthesise various medieval foci: he creates an ontologically based theology centred around a cosmogony that develops an optimistic anthropology (itself based on an epistemology that relies upon God's method of creation as self-manifestation) building on the work of various Greek fathers. The *Periphyseon*, through whatever transmission it underwent, and his commentaries on Dionysius, almost undeniably influenced Grosseteste.[90] Theologically and anthropologically, Grosseteste's own insistence on God as the form of all things, an epistemology that heavily relies upon an engagement with an individual's *mundus sensibilis*, the idea of humans as a microcosm and therefore central to creation, and of deification are all possible Eriugenian influences.[91] Eriugena's ideas, as indicated earlier are a development of ideas originating from the Early Church

[89] Van Nieuwenhove, *An Introduction*, 60.

[90] Richard Dales is under the impression that Grosseteste receives his Eriugena directly through the *Periphyseon* and makes no suggestion of another medium. McEvoy suggests that Grosseteste's Eriugenian influence is through Honorius Augustodunesis' C*lavis Physicae*. The *Clavis* is a reduction of Eriugena's *magnum opus* – Honorius of Autun (as he is also called) seems to have been a populariser of theology and a manuscript (Paris MS Bibl. Nat. lat. 6734) even includes diagrams explaining some of its key themes (reproduced and available in Marie-Therese d'Alverny, "Le Cosmos symboliqué du XII siècle" *AHDLMA* 20 (1953): 46-47. McEvoy, "Eriugena redivivus," 216). For McEvoy's brief discussion of this point, see: James McEvoy, "Book Review: De Cessatione Legalium by Robert Grosseteste," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 38, no 2 (1987): 551-553; 552-3.

[91] As expressed in his letter to Adam Rufus now entitled *Unica forma omnium*. This letter is a response to Adam's question on the validity of the proposition, "God is the first form and the form of all things." This letter can be accessed here: F.A.C. Mantello, and Joseph Goering, *The letters of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010) 35-41. Post page 41, one will begin reading the second letter *De intelligentiis* – the two letters have over time become amalgamated. Henceforth, all references to the letters of Grosseteste will refer to this work unless otherwise stated and will be cited simply as '*Letters'.* These ideas and how they specifically interrelate with the Bishop of Lincoln will be explored in the second, third and fifth chapters in more detail. *Mundus sensibilis* refers simply to the 'world of sense.'

period. He is a conduit, however controversial, of Eastern ideas, and was amongst the first to attempt to reconcile the emergent doctrinal differences between the Greeks and the West. Much of his noetic is built upon Dionsysius', who also utilised much Patristic material. This creates a problem for identifying Grosseteste's source material; how does one know where one possible source ends and another begins?

These Dionysian works had a profound effect on many luminaries of the following years. *Lincolniensis* thoroughly engaged with Dionysius' *oeuvre* eventually translating it with the help of Eriugena's own attempts at translation into Latin, amongst others.[92] However, there remains one simple, yet powerful obstacle to the conflation of Grosseteste's and Eriugena's thought; nowhere in the Bishop's literature is Eriugena mentioned. Not any of his personal works, nor his *Tabula* (or *Topical Concordance*).

Prima facie, this is a serious concern for one looking to demonstrate an Eriugenian influence on Grosseteste. The most obvious, and also most persuasive solution is given in McEvoy's study of their 'ambiguous' relationship. McEvoy identifies a number of problems Grosseteste could have had with referencing Eriugena. Firstly, Eriugena had been condemned in Paris twice before Grosseteste's sustained work on him occurred, once in 1210 (the *Periphyseon*) and in 1225 (Eriugena himself). The condemnations occurred as the result of theological issues that had been the source of some polemic for centuries. Eriugena's ontological and theophanic theology was dangerously close to pantheism, and some of his more radical views included his views on gender (and the eschatological abolishment of gender) and his ideas on

[92] The other translations were written by Hilduin and Sarracenus. Grosseteste acquired three manuscripts which still survive (one unknown, the others being Paris B.N. gr. 933 and B.N. gr. 437. (McEvoy, "Eriugena Redivivus," 196). The Dionysian works are available in an uncritical edition here: Philippe Chevallier, *Dionysiaca. Recueil donnant l'ensemble des traductions latines des ouvrages attribues a Denys de l'Areopage* (Paris-Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1937).

pre-destination, a source of his initial infamy. His reputation was soured by the explication of these ideas and was further compounded by misattributions of his authorship to other heretical works. For instance, the work *De corpore et sanguine Domini* was criticised for its anti-realist eucharistic ideas by Lanfranc when attacking its support by Berengar of Tours (999 - 1088); the authorship of the in-question piece was deemed to be Eriugena and this misattribution stuck possibly until the early years of the twelfth century.[93] However, McEvoy is absolutely right to stress that it is not simply the reputational decline for his unorthodox views and the misattributions that are the key problems, it is the 'encroachment of the suspicion upon his authentic works, of which there is an abundance of evidence.'[94]

Another problem with identifying the link between the two great minds is their common source material. The Augustinian influence over both men is patently clear but, with regard to the Greek theologies not really seen in the Latinate West, Grosseteste seems heavily engaged. Key to this thesis is the emergent ideas surrounding the microcosm/ macrocosm doctrine (a predominately Eastern notion) and McEvoy has helpfully elucidated the comparative influences over the Bishop of Lincoln and the Irishman regarding it:

> Grosseteste and Eriugena even had certain sources in common as regards the microcosm doctrine, notably the *De hominis opificio* of St. Gregory of Nyssa (which Grosseteste, however, read in the translation of Dionysius Exiguus, not in that of Scotus, and from which he quoted in *Hexaëmeron)*. Grosseteste

[93] McEvoy, "Eriugena redivivus," 222. For brief context, *De corpore et sanguine Domini* is a work by Ratramnus of Corbie, amongst a small discourse on the same topic, that precipitated the 'Eucharastic controversy' of the eleventh century when it was ordered to be destroyed at the Council of Vercelli in 1050. For more information, see: Paul F. Bradshaw, Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies: Their Evolution and Interpretation. Collegeville,* (Minn., Liturgical Press, 2012); Charles M. Radding, Francis Newton, and Alberic of Monte Cassino. *Theology, Rhetoric, and Politics in the Eucharistic Controversy, 1078-1079: Alberic of Monte Cassino against Berengar of Tours* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).
[94] Ibid.: See n.75 in the work cited.

> supplemented these, in particular, from St. John Damascene, who interlaced the doctrine of Gregory of Nyssa, Nemesius and Maximus Confessor [the first and last of which Dionysius had translated works from and whose works had left an indelible mark[95]].[96]

It is becoming increasingly difficult to argue that Grosseteste does not utilise and develop in his own 'scientific' way Eriugena's (and his ideological forefathers') thought and that this happened accidentally. The evidence that Grosseteste is deeply sympathetic to various parts of Greek theology is clear to see when scrutinised in light of Eriugena's corpus and the circumstantial evidence surrounding its referential omission in Grosseteste's work. McEvoy puts it bluntly:

> … it becomes ever more difficult to account for the similarities between Scotus and Grosseteste in terms of simple accident, or of the use of those Greek sources which they had, in part, in common.[97]

Grosseteste's promotion of these uncommon tenets is of immense value to the argument of this thesis; he places primary importance on the value of a person's education and stresses its concomitant spiritual development within the wider narrative of creation fulfilling its potential, reunification with God and deification. It is important ideologically, but also practically, as it demonstrates Grosseteste's holistic approach to source material, and willingness to engage with and promote potentially problematic doctrine in his own unique

[95] Steel and Hadley, "John Scotus Eriugena," in *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jorge J.E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003); Eriugena translated Gregory of Nyssa's *De imagine* and two works from Maximus the Confessor, the first to commentate on the pseudonymous author.
[96] McEvoy, "Eriugena redivivus," 220.
[97] Ibid., 220-221.

style. This thesis seeks to demonstrate how Grosseteste's work encapsulates and synthesises the progressive humanism, natural philosophy, and theology of the Middle Ages and how it is exemplified through his pastoral, and fundamentally, educational *weltanschauung*. Therefore, in answer to McEvoy's implicit question, 'can we now tentatively work on the informed assumption that Grosseteste has been influenced by Eriugena?' this thesis answers in the affirmative.[98]

The effects of the Greeks in general on Grosseteste's thought are wide-ranging and fundamental to his overall theological vision, and yet they are small in number in relation to their impact. From Eriugena, Grosseteste may well be picking up a distillation of many important Greek themes, and the most important of them have been demonstrated herein. To put it briefly, the subtle yet large impact that microcosmism has had across the entirety of his theology and his ideas surrounding deification. Microcosmism's influence on much Christian doctrine has already been demonstrated; it entirely revolves around the way in which humans are created by God. By being created in His image and likeness, humans, as demonstrated by Genesis, culminate nature; within humans, all things can be found. This is most assuredly displayed in the Gregorian formula much touted in this thesis – indeed, Eriugena imitates it in his *Periphyseon* as will be shown below.[99] This is not all; following Eriugena, Alan of Lille (†1202) and Grosseteste both believed that, due to the Neo-Platonic principle of ontological continuity, the most fitting form for the Incarnation to occur was within the body of a human due to our microcosmistic constitution. The result is that the Incarnation allows the salvation of mankind (or the entirety of nature as Eriugena will be shown to argue). It allows every person to participate in the goodness of God through the Eucharist, it offers humanity a

[98] Sustained deliberation and elaboration of McEvoy's article on the relationship between Eriugena and Grosseteste will occur below.
[99] The first elaboration of this 'formula' can be found on page 23.

physical and imitable figure in the humanity of Jesus Christ, and, to Eriugena, due to the cosmically unique constitution the form the Incarnation took (the human), it initiated universal intelligibility. This is because through the Incarnation, God made the cosmos as perfect as it could possibly be, making it imminently more intelligible to mankind. This consequence is not coincidental; in fact, the intelligibility of the cosmos is the primary source humans are to engage with to enact their own, and creation's, salvation. Through the Incarnation, through the perfection of the universe, humans can contemplate God through *physike theoria*. The material world, in Eriugena, reaches new levels of potentiality. To be explicit, through mankind's universally unique possession of both sensible and rational powers endowed by God, individuals are to fruitfully engage with this sea of material symbols of the divine.[100] These are the effects of microcosmism, and, in Eriugena, they are demonstrated remarkably forcefully in his *Homily on the Prologue of St. John* and *Periphyseon*. To summarise, microcosmism is a deeply influential doctrine that inextricably weaves together cosmogonical, incarnational and deificatory theology and there is nowhere better to see this than in the works of Eriugena and Robert Grosseteste because of their remarkable similitude.

Eriugena's works are arguably, above all else, an attempt to detail the fundamental movements of the totality of being and non-being, starting from its emanation (creation) from God, and this totality's eventual return to Him. The overarching theme of *exitus* and *reditus* is perhaps the most important element of his writing, and this must always be kept in mind. The second most important element to his writing is his explication of the driving force behind

[100] In fact, Eriugena goes further and suggests that the corporeal is not merely a symbol of God, but a multitude of theophanies. For an in-depth appreciation of Eriugena and his use of theophany, see: Hilary A. Mooney, *Theophany: The Appearing of God According to the Writings of Johannes Scotus Eriugena* (Tubingen:Mohr Siebech, 2009)

those movements, and, whilst in the beginning of this cycle that was God, the onus on reunification very quickly turns to mankind.

Eriugena begins his *magnus opus*, the *Periphyseon*, by defining nature. The following hyper-inclusive definition of nature however makes any attempt at comprehension futile, unless his definition of 'nature' is to be divided up. Eriugena's division of nature makes use of Maximus Confessor's work; he divides nature into a five-fold schema that, in practice, should be seen as two-fold, with the second division containing further sub-divisions. The first division is between 'being' and 'non-being'. The second division distinguishes between four further sub-divisions into various forms or species. These well-known differentiations are succinctly summarised by Willemien Otten; in order they are:

> The first form (*natura creans et non creata* – nature that is creating and uncreated) refers to God as cause. The second (*natura creans et creata* – "nature that is creating and created") refers to the primordial causes or divine ideas. The third form (*natura non creans et creata* – "nature that is not creating and created") indicates spatio-temporal creation and the fourth (*natura non creans et non creata* – "nature that is not creating and is not created") indicates God as end.[101]

Importantly, this division of nature is not just an explanation of the sum total of everything; by describing the divisions in this way, as an order of species, Eriugena is demonstrating that *natura* is not simply a 'cosmological whole, but also a line of development … [keeping the

[101] Willemien Otten, "The Dialectic of the Return in Eriugena's "*Periphyseon*'," *The Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 84 (1991): 399-421; 400.

overarching schema of procession and return in mind] The first three forms represent God's unfolding in creation, while the fourth concludes the movement of nature's return.'[102] Eriugena's *magnum opus* then should be seen as an attempt to demonstrate the process by which multiplicity (creation) returns to unity (God). Specially pertinent to this thesis however, is how Eriugena situates humans as the driving force behind this return.

Eriugena's anthropology is startlingly positive and, within his immediate milieu, unique. It is his positivity that emboldens the likes of the Chartrians and Grosseteste in their own efforts to capitalise on the potential agency of mankind. This Greek inheritance is primarily a result of microcosmistic thought. However, it would be wrong to posit that Eriugena's anthropology was solely conditioned by microcosmism. In fact, the Irishman's thoughts on the matter are ultimately entwined within his cosmic soteriology. To demonstrate how Eriugena pushes the notion that humans are the 'agent of continuity', and the driver of the universal return to God, one must discuss the soul of the human, the power they possess as *imago Dei*, their microcosmistic creation and their cosmic Christology.

Eriugena, in discussing the inner composition of humanity, describes the human interior and exterior senses as being in the middle of the body's vital motion and its intellect and reason. This middle ground is the residence of Christ within the soul.[103] On this subject Otten writes, '[by this] … Eriugena seems to imply that Christ's sinless perfection lies within natural human reach.'[104] For context, in book four of the *Periphyseon*, Eriugena offers an allegorical interpretation of Genesis' paradise and equates the Tree of Life in the middle of Eden to the

[102] Otten, "*The Dialectic of the Return*," 400.
[103] Ibid., 410.
[104] Ibid.

presence of Christ within the soul.[105] This means that within each and every human their resides an element of perfection, and yet, this perfection remains dormant through the consequences of the Fall. Christ and the Tree of Life reside within the inner senses, however, due to the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil being situated in the external senses,[106] Adam's engagement with it explains humanity's lived, corrupted experience. Due to sin being actualised by the engagement with the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil the inner 'inclination toward perfection remains hidden [and] it is the innate corruptibility that becomes actualised in Adam's created nature.'[107] To Eriugena, this dialectic of corruption and perfection is entirely normal. Despite this corruption, due to some creative license, Eriugena at the beginning of Book V, in which he begins to explain the universal return from multiplicity to unity, offers optimism. Re-interpreting God's punishment at the conclusion of Genesis, he writes:

> … concerning the words [of God], "Now therefore, may he not perchance put forth his hand" and so on as far as "live for ever," there might be some doubt…For I do not regard as careful readers those who think that in this passage the particle ne has a negative rather than an interrogative meaning, expressing as it were a doubt…[108]

Much later he comes to the conclusion that, '… no attentive reader could doubt that however

[105] Here Eriugena, citing St. Ambrose, most explicitly writes, "Paradise is nothing than the man himself". Eriugena, *Periphyseon* IV trans. Inglis P. Sheldon-Williams (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks 1987): 815c. All references to Eriugena's *Periphyseon* will refer to this edition unless otherwise stated.
[106] Eriugena writes, '"Therefore it is in this place of falsehood and vain phantasies, namely in the corporeal sense,. . . that the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and of Evil is established." Eriugena, *Periphyseon* IV, 826b trans. Inglis P. Sheldon-Williams.
[107] Otten, "The Dialectic of the Return," 410.
[108] Eriugena's quote on Genesis 3:22 is as follows: '"Now, therefore, may he not perchance put forth his hand and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat of it, and live forever?"' Eriugena, *Periphyseon* V, 859d.

the words are taken they contain the promise of the Return of human nature to its pristine state.'[109] Thus, humanity has an innate desire to strive toward perfection. This, in and of itself, is not a new idea, but it is the way Eriugena comes to it that is; his focus here is on humans, not God. Through developing his notion of the human soul and with some exegetical creative licence Eriugena has fashioned humans into an entity striving towards their return, their perfection.

Eriugena thus posits the idea that humans did not forego their nature as *imago Dei* because of the Fall because this nature is necessarily incorruptible.[110] Eriugena routinely asserts the power of humans, merely highlighting the Fall as an event that essentially tarnished one's abilities but by no means eradicated them. Strikingly he writes,

> N. There was then in human nature the potency of possessing the fullest knowledge of itself had it not sinned.
>
> A. Nothing is more likely. For most mighty and most wretched was that fall in which our nature lost the knowledge and the wisdom which had been planted in her, and lapsed into a profound ignorance of herself and her creator.
>
> N. So the fullest knowledge both of herself and her Creator was implanted in her as part of her nature before the Fall…
>
> A. Such is my opinion. For how would she be an image if in some respect she differed from that of which she is the image?...
>
> For if human nature had not sinned but had adhered unchangeably to Him Who

[109] Eriugena, *Periphyseon* V, 861a.
[110] "Whence it follows that the sending or driving forth of man is nothing else but the loss of that natural felicity for the possession of which he was created. For it was not his nature that was lost (that, being made in the image and likeness of God, is necessarily incorruptible), but the felicity which would have been his if he had been obedient to God instead of treating Him with contempt." Eriugena, *Periphyseon* V, 863a-b.

had created her, she would certainly have been omnipotent.[111]

Eriugena's interlocutor's reply to this statement ties together man's inclination toward his own perfection, his return journey to it (to paradise, to God), and the acquisition of knowledge:

> If then the perfect knowledge both of herself and her Creator was present in human nature before the Fall, it would not be remarkable if in reason we found that she then possessed the fullest knowledge of natures similar to her own, like the celestial essences, and those inferior to herself such as his world with its causes, which are subject to the intellect, and that this science still abides in her, generally in potency only, but in the highest men in act.[112]

The above encapsulates the essence of Eriugena's, and Grosseteste's noetic; humans, through the Fall, have been intellectually diminished, but the potential towards perfection still resides within them. Not only this, humanity should actively strive toward it, and that such a return to a state of perfection is still imminently possible. This state of perfection, of course, being the ineffable union with God; *theosis*, or deification.

To further demonstrate Eriugena's boldness, the Irishman attempts to add more power to humanity; the capacity towards resurrection. When discussing whether or not the resurrection of the body is a consequence of either divine grace or nature, Eriugena forcefully states that the answer lies within their combination, after briefly describing his initial thoughts being

[111] Eriugena, *Periphyseon* IV, 777c-778c..
[112] Ibid.

solely reliant upon divine grace. It is Epiphanius' *Homily on Faith* and Gregory's *On the Image* that transforms his opinion.[113] Quoting Epiphanius, Eriugena displays the restorative force of the natural world:

> The very creation itself affords them [the Greek philosophers who do not subscribe to resurrection] of it, providing daily instances of the resurrection. The day wanes, and we undergo a kind of death: but when night is past day returns again and breathes new life into us, revealing the symbol of the resurrection. The harvest is gathered in, and this year's sheaves are cut, a clear figure of our passing hence: but the seed thereof is sown in the earth, and is fruitful; for the seeds that are planted … shall rise again.[114]

Eriugena, extrapolating from these natural examples of resurrection a general restorative principle residing in nature, amalgamates it into his microcosmism and hints at his belief in universal salvation. He writes:

> If then there is a natural power which effects these restorations in nature and renews the parts of the human body and brings irrational animals to life again [Epiphanius describes the life-cycle of the dung-beetle as a further example of natural resurrection] … we should not be surprised to find that there is a vital and an innate virtue which never abandons the human body and is capable of restoring the body itself to life and to the fullness of its human nature … for since all sensibles and all intelligibles are established in the plenitude of human

[113] Epiphanius of Salamis (c.310- 403) was Bishop of Salamis in Cyprus and is considered to be a strong defender of early orthodoxy. His *magnum opus* is probably his compendium of early heresies; his *Panarion* (in Latin *Adversus Haereses).* The Gregory here refers to Gregory the Great.
[114] Epiphanius in Eriugena, *Periphyseon* V, 899c-899d.

> nature, is it so unreasonable of us to suggest that the whole earth, with all its parts, shall by a kind of general resurrection rise again when the time shall come for the restoration of that nature (i.e. human nature) in which all of it is contained?[115]

Whilst this prior discussion may account for both mankind's innate drive towards its creator and humanity's agency, it does not seemingly proffer much regarding the cause of the cosmos' return to its creator. However, as hinted by the directly above, universal nature and human nature become, in Eriugena, inextricably linked, and this can most clearly be identified by the recurrent microcosmism and Christological doctrine on display.
After lengthily expounding on the division of God into all of creation in Book II, Eriugena powerfully asserts humanity's esteem. He writes:

> For man (as we have said and shall < very often > say again) was created with a nature so high a status that there is no creature, whether visible or intelligible, that cannot be found in him. For he is composed of the two universal parts of created nature by way of a wonderful union. For he is the conjunction of the sensible and the intelligible, that is, the extremities of all creation. For in nature there is nothing lower than body and nothing more exalted than intellect … So not even now in our feeble condition have we wholly abandoned God nor have been abandoned by Him, for still between our mind and Him no nature intervenes. For the leprosy of the soul or of the body does not deprive us of the

[115] Eriugena, *Periphyseon* V, 900c-d ..

mental vision by which we have an understanding of Him…[116]

Unsurprisingly, this view can also be found elsewhere in Eriugena's *oeuvre*. In his beautiful and short *Homily on the Prologue to the Gospel of St. John*, Eriugena writes of three distinct worlds:

> The first of these worlds in order is filled uniquely with the invisible and spiritual substances of the angelic hierarchies. Whoever enters it possesses full participation in the true Light.
>
> The second is directly counter to the first, for it is constituted wholly of visible and bodily natures. And yet, however low a position in the universe this world might possess, the Word was nevertheless in it, and it was made by the Word. Thus it is the first stage for those wishing to ascend to the cognition of the truth by sensible means, for the species of visible things draws the soul towards the cognition of things invisible.[117]
>
> The third world is that which, like a mediating principle, unites in itself the upper, spiritual world and the lower, bodily world, making of these two one. By this world, humanity alone is meant, in whom all creatures are joined as one. For the human being consists of a body and a soul. Binding together the body of this world and the soul of the other world, the human being … creates a single cosmos … That is why "man" is called "all" for all creatures are in humanity as

[116] Eriugena, *Periphyseon* II, 531a-c.
[117] It is this kind of scriptural referencing that lays at the heart of the future Chartrian's defence for their 'scientific' enquiry. This is usually attributed to Romans 1:20.

if melted down in a crucible.[118]

Perhaps the most quoted of Eriugena's explicit references to microcosmism however appears when he develops the oft-referenced Gregorian formula:

> … this is why man is not inappropriately called the workshop of all creatures [*officina omnium*] since in him the universal creature is contained. (For) he has intellect like an angel, reason like a man, sense like an (irrational) animal, life like a plant, and subsists in body and soul: [there is no creature that he is without]. [For] outside these you (will) find no creature.[119]

This microcosmism is not explicitly different from any of the microcosm themes that have come before it and yet, Eriugena certainly places a greater emphasis than ever before on it. Defending the idea that humans are the culmination of creation, Eriugena highlights how everything created before humans in the Genesis narrative is actually in mankind, hence humanity's creation being the final creative act in the *Hexaëmeron*.

> A. … why is man not introduced at the very beginning of … creation, instead of at the conclusion of all, when that operation has already been six times repeated? For not only the angelic essence, but also the essence of sensible things, seems to precede in dignity [than the] creation of man.
>
> N. It is in this very fact that the exaltation of human nature over all existent

[118] Eriugena, *The voice of the Eagle: The Heart of Celtic Christianity: John Scotus Eriugena's Homily on the Prologue to the Gospel of St. John,* trans. Christopher Bamford (Great Barrington: Massachusetts: Lindisfarne Books, 2000): 105-105. It is important to note here the importance Eriugena places upon the contemplation of the sensible world as an avenue towards divine truth.
[119] Eriugena, *Periphyseon* III, 733a-b.

> things is most clearly shown; for by this it is made abundantly clear that in all those event … before the creation of man, he himself was already created, in fact, all things were created in him.[120]

Importantly, a lot of the emphasis of microcosmism to date has centred around the idea that within humans lies all of creation, and, following the Gregorian formula, this is taken to mean that within humans resides reason like angels, vitality like in plants and so on and so forth. Eriugena goes even further and attempts to detail how individuals can even be shown to be comprised of the Sun, the moon and the stars,[121] and, following the same logic, how the Trinity, being introduced within the *Hexaëmeron*, can also be comprised within him.[122]

Following Maximus Confessor, perhaps the greatest example of the symbiotic nature between microcosmism and Christology, Eriugena also professes the cosmological scope of the Incarnation. It is primarily because of the pre-eminent status of humanity, because of the unique nature individual humans possess, that they are God's chosen vessel. Through the Incarnation, not only is mankind saved, but so is the entirety of nature; 'He [God] took upon Himself the human nature in which the whole world subsists: for there is nothing in the world which is not comprehended in human nature.'[123] He continues,

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[120] Eriugena, *Periphyseon* V, 782a..
[121] He does this by positing a three-fold model of the senses. These essentially differ in brightness: the Sun is the first mode which, "…without danger of error announces to the mind the species of the sensibles … with the greatest ease and without labour the mind is able to form unclouded judgements…" Eriugena, *Periphyseon* V, 783c-d. Whereas the moon and the stars (in that order) offer slightly less assurance. A good summary of these three modes of sensation are offered here: Ibid., 784c-d. In defence of this position Eriugena quotes Augustine, '"the soul of the worm is better than the body of the Sun that illuminates the whole world"' Ibid.
[122] "…it should be first noted that in the creation of all things which from the beginning of creation are described in the foregoing Five intellectual Days, the unity and ineffable Trinity of the divine superessential nature, or, as St. Dionysius the Areopagite calls it, the "Fecundity of the Highest Good", is not openly expressed – although in the text "In the beginning God created Heaven and Earth" it is not unreasonable to see a reference to the Persons of the Father and the Son: the Father in the word "God", the Word in the word "Beginning" … later the Holy Spirit is introduced in the text "And the Spirit of God brooded over the waters." Eriugena, *Periphyseon* IV, 786a-786b.
[123] Ibid., V, 911a.

> Therefore in the Only-Begotten Word of God, Incarnate and made man, the whole world is restored even now according to its species, but at the end of the world will return universally and in its genus. For what he wrought specially in Himself He will perfect generally in all: and not only in all men but in every sensible creature.[124]

The injection of microcosmism into incarnational theology transforms the Incarnation into a truly cosmic event with truly cosmological importance, and this is something that is taken up by Alan of Lille, and later, Grosseteste, as will be demonstrated. Alan and Grosseteste utilise this combination to forward the Neo-Platonic notion of ontological continuity; through Christ's Incarnation of a human (specifically), God perfects His creation, renders it intelligible, and therefore proffers the book of nature as a legitimate avenue towards divine truth and concomitant spiritual development.[125] This realisation, alongside the recurrent scriptural and Patristic source material affirming that contemplation of the visible leads to knowledge of the invisible, initiated many of the later natural philosopher's enterprise, particularly those at the School of Chartres. This is Eriugena's influence; his work pursued his grand scheme of demonstrating the sheer power of humanity by detailing the majesty of the instruments by which one is to engage with intelligible creation. On these instruments, Eriugena writes:

> See what power there is in the sense of the eyes which can gaze into the infinity of the light-filled space and can mould within itself the divers and innumerable

[124] Eriugena, *Periphyseon* V, 912b f..
[125] Here it should be noted that Alan of Lille does not explicitly suggest this. Instead of Christ, Alan offers a perfect human in the guise of Antirufinus, a re-appraisal of the classical perfectly evil man as seen in Claudian's *In Rufinum.* The theology of Antirufinus is detailed below.

> species of bodies, colours, shapes, and all other things of which the phantasies enter the memory by means of this sense: And what will you say of the power of hearing, which can absorb and discriminate between so many voices … And anyone who in this way considers the other senses will contemplate for himself these marvellous and indescribable virtues.[126]

Humans, then, are uniquely created as a microcosm. By this creation humans are Eriugena's workshop of all things, Maximus' priests of the cosmos, and to both, the driver of cosmic reunification. Mankind is given all of the instruments they will need in the pursuit of this endeavour (an innate desire toward perfection, rationality and sensible powers), then they are chosen to be the vessel of the Incarnation, God's act of perfecting the cosmos, which consequently renders the universe comprehensible to humanity. This marriage of acts enables humanity to contemplate the corporeal world, the books of scripture and nature, develop spiritually, and ready their proximal return to God. If this is the case, it would seem that the acquisition of knowledge is absolutely fundamental to this entire journey. Eriugena writes:

> … as St. Augustine says, the first man in his primal condition, before he had sinned, was neither wise nor unwise … he was in a balanced midway position between wisdom and unwisdom, desired to become wise if he should observe the ordinance of God. For the Scripture does not say; "let us make man Our image and likeness," but "Let us make him in Our image and likeness," which clearly means: Let us make man to this end, that, if he keeps My commandment, he may become Our image and likeness. Therefore he was not created wise, but

[126] Eriugena, *Periphyseon* IV, 785c.

capable of wisdom if he should desire it.[127]

Eriugena is constantly demonstrating that humans are endowed with all the tools they need to reunite with God. They have an innate desire to reach perfection; they are made in the image of God; they encapsulate the entirety of creation; they have five senses with which to engage with their surroundings and the ability to rationalise the material they gain from the senses. This is not by any means an easy process, they are, since the Fall, plagued by bodily corruption, but the ability to become wise is instilled within. Humans can, therefore, with the grace of God, enact their reunion with their creator and revel in the bliss of their beatitude and deiform self.[128] To further this argument, one only need look toward the nature of that which humans are to intellectually engage with and ultimately achieve the deification given by Eriugena in Book V of his *Periphyseon*.

As noted in the beginning of this section regarding Eriugena, the *Periphyseon* details the unfolding and return of God's creation. The process of creation for the Irishman is one of continuous manifestation. Creation, to Eriugena's God, is simply a theophany. The consequences of such a notion are not to be understated. One has already seen within Dionysius and Maximus the ever-growing potentiality of the material, corporeal world. But now, in Eriugena, God is truly immanent within His creation therefore reinforcing the material world's importance symbolically. Steel and Hadley deftly summarise this position:

[127] Eriugena, *Periphyseon* V, 1013b-c.
[128] "… our human nature is always in motion … in its search for the Supreme Good Which was also the source of its motion, and towards Which it hastens as to its proper end. For every rational creature, of whom it is proposed to suppose that all subsist in human nature … is always seeking its God, from Whom it has its being and for the contemplation of Whom it was created. For rational nature never seeks the evil, though it is often deceived and led astray into the way of error approving the false for the true…since this irrational motion, which is the cause and accomplishment of all evil and wickedness, is circumscribed and brought to a complete end by the abundance of goodness, human nature will eventually, by exercise of its reason and in accordance with the natural virtues which inhere in it, moved by its search for its proper cause, ascend and return in to Paradise…" Eriugena, *Periphyseon* V, 919a-b.

> … for Eriugena, corporeal things have no proper subsistence on their own, and exist only as compounds derived from intelligible principles, their true substance being an eternal idea in the mind of the Creator. He [Eriugena] directly states that "there is no visible or corporeal thing which is not the symbol of something incorporeal and intelligible."[129]

They continue:

> Eriugena asserts in no uncertain terms that to be is to be theophany … The ontological activity of divinity in its creative relation to the world demands that to exist as a creature means to exist as a manifestation: "everything that is understood and sensed is nothing else but the apparition of what is not apparent, the manifestation of the hidden … the comprehension of the incomprehensible … the materialization of the of the spiritual, the visibility of the invisible" (III, 633A).[130]

The sensible cosmos is one of the two primary avenues towards knowledge of the divine. The other being holy scripture. Throughout this chapter the potentiality of materiality to act as this path has slowly developed. Presently, in Eriugena, materiality is a manifestation of God, and those with the correct level of understanding will realise this. The following evidence for this assertion is long, but is crucial to understanding why future scholars seize upon this approach to the sensible world:

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[129] Carlos Steel and D. W. Hadley, "John Scotus Eriugena," in *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jorge J.E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003): 401.
[130] Ibid., 401-2.

> For just as air illuminated by the Sun appears to be nothing else but light, not because it loses its own nature, but because the light prevails in it so that it is believed itself to be light, so human nature when it is united with God is said to be God through and through, not because it ceases to be (its own) nature but because it receives a share in Divinity so that only God appears to be in it. Also when there is no light present the air is dark, while the light of the Sun as it subsists by itself is comprehended by no bodily sense. But when the sunlight mingles with the air, then it begins to appear: so that in itself it is incomprehensible to the senses, but when mixed with air it can be comprehended by the senses. And from this you are to understand that the Divine Essence is incomprehensible in itself, but when it is joined to an intellectual creature it becomes after a wonderous fashion manifest: For the ineffable excellence of the former surpasses every nature which participates in it, so that in all things nothing but itself is presented to those who have the understanding…[131]

Thus is the importance of understanding that which you are contemplating. The only way to attain the ability to understand that which you are contemplating is the continued contemplation of that thing: *Uses promptos facit*; practice makes you perfect. To reinforce the connection between the process of one's ability to attain wisdom – as the understanding of

[131] Eriugena, *Periphyseon* I, 450a. Unsurprisingly, James McEvoy highlights the transmission of this idea in the works of Alan of Lille; 'Eriugena's specification of the mysterious nature of the theophaniai, less perhaps in his own formulation of it than in its diffusion by Alain of Lille, was to be found at the very centre of the condemnation brought in by the Faculty of Theology of Paris in 1241, against the proposition, '*Divina essentia in se nec ab homine nec ab angelo videbitur*''. McEvoy, "Eriugena Redivivus", 205. McEvoy points to Alan of Lille's *Distinctiones Dictionum Theologicarum*, PL 210, 685-1012; 791C for Alan of Lille's development of the idea.

things – and one's process of spiritual development towards deification, Eriugena writes, 'For the others whom he Deifies He sets beneath himself in a mere participation in the Deity, each according to the height attained by his contemplative power.' [132]

Further evidence can be gleaned from Eriugena's discussion of deification in its natural place towards the end of the *Periphyseon*. Here his discussion is situated within a commentary on the Parable of the Ten Virgins. Eriugena splits the ten virgins into two groups of five, those who are prudent and those who are foolish. Those who are foolish are those who delight in their natural and temporal goods and these represent the proportion of humanity that will not, in the end, ascend into Eriugena's general union with God. However:

> …we may reasonably suppose that the other part of the human race which is represented by the five prudent virgins, is to be raised up beyond all natural goods to that height to which man would through Grace have ascended had he not sinned … to participation in the highest wisdom and all the virtues, and through that participation attain to deification and the contemplation of the truth…

Deification is the admittance to the Bridegroom's feast:

> To this feast none is admitted unless he is shining with the light of wisdom and aflame with the fires of Divine Love: and of these two qualities, wisdom and love, the nourishment is action and contemplation: therefore none I allowed to ascend to this feast who is deficient in action and contemplation … for it is not

[132] Eriugena, *Periphyseon* V, 911d.

> nature that raises the human mind thither, but Grace, which thus rewards obedience to the commandments of God, and the most perfect knowledge of God, in so far as that is granted to us in this life, through what He has created and what He has written in His Scriptures.[133]

Eriugena develops this even further:

> It is these deifications … that are signified by the spiritual marriage feast … not all shall enjoy these supernatural goods but only those who, in the words of Gregory the Theologian, "are permitted to transcend matter and flesh, as though they passed beyond the clouds and veils, and through reason and contemplation to come into the presence of God, and be received into the most pure light…[134]

Throughout Eriugena's discussion of deification through his commentary on the parable, terms such as wisdom and knowledge are used almost interchangeably. Indeed, the materials the prudent virgins possess that the foolish do not and which are the keys to their admittance into the feast and therefore their deification are good works and knowledge; 'The prudent virgins furnish their lamps, that is, their rational impulses, with the tallow of good works and the brightness of pure knowledge.'[135]

Deification is the end of the human process of return. As has been discussed, Eriugena's

[133] Eriugena, *Periphyseon* V, 911d.
[134] Ibid., 1051b. Eriugena goes on to elaborate that deification or 'theosis' is not much discussed in the Latin world although it is intimated by St. Ambrose. The Irishman puts this down to the Latin father's belief that this was an idea kept amongst themselves only to be discussed privately because, the idea is '..too profound for those who cannot rise above carnal speculations, and would therefore be to them incomprehensible and incredible … weak eyes cannot bear the brilliance of the light.' Ibid. One would presume that here Eriugena is deferring to Dionysius.
[135] Ibid., 1017a. Grosseteste also discusses the parable of the ten virgins in his *Dictum 135*. Here he also espouses the love of wisdom and its perfecting character. See: Robert Grosseteste, *Dictum 135*, 25.

microcosmism is absolutely implicit at every stage of the *Periphyseon*; it is a fundamental aspect of an individual person's constitution as *imago Dei*, and therefore the form of the Incarnation. The consequences of this are cosmic; the book of nature is thus opened. Humans are now able to use their innate powers to study this book which, through this *physike theoria*, will better enable them to understand the world, themselves, and their faith. This will eventually lead, in accordance with the level of the individual's contemplative power and their spiritual development, to their proximal return to their creator and eventual deification.

Thus far this thesis has elaborated on many of the key tenets to Eriugena's noetic; from the importance of microcosmism in the creation of humanity (as the workshop of all things) and the world in God's initial unfolding into multiplicity, through humanity's engagement within that multiplicity by way of utilising the powers endowed within their creation, to the eventual return of the multiplicity into either a general or special (deificatory) union with God, coinciding with the merit one had attained through their sensible and intellectual engagements. Again, thus far, this thesis has routinely attempted to assert that this general process is one that has slowly been explicated throughout the development of Eastern Christian doctrine. This thesis has also attempted to assert that Grosseteste appropriated this process, and that it reinforced his overall vision and emphasis on pastoral care. To summarise, Eriugena's works: his *Homily on the Prologue to the Gospel of St. John*, his *Periphyseon* as well as his translations of the *corpus Areopagiticum*, perfectly demonstrate this very Eastern process, as has been built by the Greek fathers, as well as Augustine. This thesis will go on to demonstrate Grosseteste's pastoral vision coincides with a lot of this noetic. If then, a tentative link from Eriugena to Grosseteste can be made, this would only strengthen the argument that indeed Grosseteste's theological vision was influenced by Greek thought (perhaps more than current academic consensus allows) - a Greek thought

encapsulated by Eriugena – and will also strengthen the notion that microcosmism and deification are two of the most fundamental theo-philosophical notions to Grosseteste's pastoral theology.

James McEvoy teases out a tentative Eriugenian influence on Grosseteste, and he is, to this author's knowledge, the only Grossetestean scholar to ever seriously suggest this leap explicitly, although relatively similar musings have been made by Richard C. Dales.[136] Of course, the link is hard to draw simply because Grosseteste does not refer to Eriugena in any of his writings, and, in some cases, Grosseteste seems to be at odds with some of Eriugena's theological positions. This should come as no surprise: all scholars of Grosseteste know that his library was large and the breadth of his knowledge nothing short of magisterial. As previously mentioned, Grosseteste went to great lengths to secure rare works, a perfect example being *The Testiments of the Twelve Patriarchs* he had brought over from Greece to be studied and translated.[137] There are also times when Grosseteste, whilst being supremely deferential to sources he believed to be of a loftier station than he (such as Dionysius) at the same time flatly refuses to accept all of their doctrine. An example from Dionysius is particularly illustrative of this point; Dionysius' notion of a final medium between humans and God in the *visio Dei* is categorically denied by Grosseteste.[138] Therefore, any thought that some Eriugenian ideas that are not immediately pre-disposed to Grosseteste's thereby eliminates him as a possible influence should be discounted. Indeed, Grosseteste, as can be seen with his engagement with the works of Aristotle, had a penchant for dubious doctrine

[136] For this see: Richard C. Dales, "A Medieval view of Human Dignity," in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 38 (1977): 557-572.
[137] McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste,* 113-6. McEvoy goes as far to state that Grosseteste's real European fame originates from his skill as a translator of Greek and that his translations of *The Testaments,* the *Nichomachian Ethics* and the *Letters of St. Ignatius* outweigh his original works in terms of extant copies.
[138] For a discussion of Grosseteste's development of Dionsyius' *occultam Dei* see McEvoy, *The Philosophy,* 246-256.

that he could not always fully and immediately synthesise with his own thought.

McEvoy, in his treatment on the ambiguous relationship between Grosseteste and Eriugena, comes to the tentative conclusion that it is difficult to account for their noetic similitude without positing a relationship of some sort in myriad ways. Firstly, he interrogates the combined source material between Eriugena and Grosseteste, then compares the translatory methods of both regarding their treatment of the *corpus Areopagiticum*. He demonstrates the paradoxical novelty and similarity of both author's light metaphysics, the eminence Grosseteste gives to Eriugena's *Homily* (although the authorship was unknown to him) and the sheer importance of the ideas he derives from it. From here he develops the importance of Eriugena's incarnational theology on Grosseteste's (although this may be indirect) in terms of Grosseteste's belief in the absolute predestination of Christ. McEvoy then details how some important Eriugenian noetic could have come indirectly through the writings of Hugh of St. Victor and, perhaps more possibly, Honorius Augustodunesis. Finally, he ponders on how much Grosseteste would have known about Eriugena and insinuates that the damage done to Eriugena's reputation by his own works and those wrongly attributed to him – well known contemporarily – would have made him impossible to refer to publicly. McEvoy writes:

> All in all, there is, I consider, sufficient circumstantial evidence to justify the view that Grosseteste very likely shared the widely-held view that Scotus had been rightly condemned for heresy … Scotus, then, could on no account be regarded as a theological authority, nor quoted, nor referred to, even in his humbler role of translator and exegete of the Pseudo-Dionysius. He could, however, be quietly studied and imitated.[139]

[139] McEvoy, "Eriugena redivivus," 222-3.

McEvoy's interrogation of the similar source material Grosseteste and Eriugena enjoyed begins with the simple assertion that, towards the end of Grosseteste's life, he supplemented the supreme authority of Augustine with that of Dionysius and of course, these two sources were also the two main sources of inspiration for Eriugena. McEvoy's admiration for both is obvious. He writes that the confluence between their originality and their contextually unique ability to translate from the Greek raises them to the level of the much earlier Boethius.[140] He writes that both

> … endeavoured to breach the mutual isolation in which Greek and Latin theologies had developed, by learning the Greek language and assembling a library of Greek patristic works, and through translation … [and] neither bothered with any strict distinction between philosophy and theology, in the style of Medieval Aristotelianism; each attempted to employ and to interrelate freely all sources which he found to be of use in the quest for Christian wisdom.[141]

Their extensive use of similar source material confounds efforts to connect their thought. McEvoy's first attempt to demonstrate this is in relation to one of Grosseteste's letter to Adam Rufus, now split into two parts. The part in question is the first, *De unica forma omnium*. In this letter written between 1225 - 1228, Rufus asks for an answer to the proposition that 'God is the first form and the form of all things.' Grosseteste, quite quickly, agrees to the formula, qualifying it further: "And since he is form, he is of necessity the first

[140] McEvoy, "Eriugena redivivus,"192-3.
[141] Ibid.

form, because before him there was nothing: he is the first and the last'.[142] However, problematically, Grosseteste's apparent source is Augustine: 'Now, if you ask what makes me think that God is form and the form of all things, my answer is the great authority of the great Augustine.'[143] Whilst acknowledging that Augustine had referred to God as *forma* before, McEvoy stresses that the term *forma omnium* is never used by Augustine in the works Grosseteste refers his student to, but is a term typical of Eriugena. McEvoy goes on to quite rightly explain that this hypothesis is strengthened by the supposed timing of the letter: in 1225 Eriugena was formally condemned by Pope Honorius III for pantheism. It is quite probable that Adam Rufus was just coming to hear about the papal condemnation and sought the advice of his most learned acquaintance on the now deemed heretical position. Whilst this does not, with any certitude demonstrate an Eriuginian influence, it does aptly demonstrate the difficultly inherent with such an endeavour. Therefore, as McEvoy stresses himself, only when a distinctly Eriugenian 'resonance' is found in Grosseteste's works, can one then begin to contemplate their similitude. [144]

The first direct relationship McEvoy draws between the Irishman and Grosseteste is in the latter's possession of the former's translations of Dionysius. Grosseteste re-translated much of the *Corpus Areopagitcum* in the years c.1239 - 1243.[145] Grosseteste had collated three distinct translations of the *corpus*; Eriugena's, Hilduin's and Sarracenus' as well as three Greek manuscripts – one of which is unknown, the other two being Paris B.N. gr. 933 and B.N. gr. 437.[146] McEvoy tells how, with the thorough collation efforts preceding his

[142] Ibid., 194: '*cum sit forma, necessario est forma prima, quia ante ipsum nihil. Ipse est enim primus et novissimus.*' Mantello and Goering, *Letters,* 36.
[143] McEvoy, "Eriugena redivivus," 194: *'Si autem quaeras, quid me moveat ad sentiendum Deum esse formam et formam omnium, respondeo: maga magni Augustini auctoritas*.' Mantello and Goering, *Letters,* 36.
[144] As McEvoy appositely puts it: 'the question of a direct influence must be approached with care, because both scholars laboured more than once at the same quarry face.' McEvoy, "Eriugena redivivus," 195.
[145] Daniel Callus, "The Date of Grosseteste's Translations and Commentaries on Pseudo-Dionysius and the Nichomachean Ethics," in *RTAM* 14, (1947): 186-210.
[146] McEvoy, "Eriugena redivivus," 196.

translatory endeavour Grosseteste was, from time to time, able to 'identify where and why a particular translator had erred…'[147] McEvoy continues to speculate as to the influence these translations may have had on Grosseteste:

> I cannot imagine that the enormous expenditure of resources, to which the Dionysian project witnesses at every turn, would have stopped short of the consultation of those Latin sources which might help to throw light on the true meaning of [the works of Pseudo-Dionysius].[148]

Relatedly, McEvoy gives a convincing argument to the idea that it is a distinctly Eriugenian translatory methodology that Grosseteste employs. Sure enough, McEvoy demonstrates the similar modes of translation and exposition between the two them. The four similarities he identifies are as follows. Both divided the Greek work into small pericopes before then attempting to give a literal glossation on them. In said gloss, the Dionysian text is repeated in order to perform their exposition, and, much like Scotus, in this endeavour Grosseteste, 'uses the particles, '*vel*', '*id est*', and '*aliter*', to introduce Latin words partially corresponding to the sense of the unfamiliar Greek vocabulary…'.[149] Finally, both of the scholars offer philological, grammatical, etymological and doctrinal comments in order to justify the given translation. The given pericope was always the departure point for these points of exegesis.[150] For both, their translation and their commentaries are one and the same process and product. Considering the above, it is hard to contemplate the idea that Grosseteste has not at least subtlety adopted some of the methods of this distinguished translator, the first of course to

[147] McEvoy, "Eriugena redivivus," 197-8. McEvoy goes on to demonstrate two examples of where Grosseteste has detected errors originating from Eriugena's translation; 197-198.
[148] Ibid., 200.
[149] Ibid., 202.
[150] Ibid., 202-3.

translate Dionysius in the first instance.

McEvoy continues by asserting what he perceives to be the influence of Eriugena in the promulgation of various ideas relating to the *visio Dei* and Dionysius' theophany. Grosseteste, as noted earlier, rejects the Greek notion of theophany in the *visio Dei* and remains steadfast to his Latin intellectual inheritance. However, Grosseteste manages, in a six-part process, to '… disarm Dionysius and even partially win him over…'[151] It is Grosseteste's seemingly unique (at least contemporarily) ability and skill to engage with the Dionysian noetic which brings McEvoy to the conclusion that he must have both had Hugh of St. Victor's translation and commentary on the *Celestial Hierarchy* (where Dionysius discusses this specific topic) and also Eriugena's.

Another similarity between the two thinkers can be identified within Grosseteste's light metaphysics. Light is absolutely central to his predisposition towards the 'the book nature'. This doctrinal similarity is all the more important to any effort to demonstrate Eriugenian influence because of its relative obscurity. McEvoy goes as far as to suggest that, in some ways, it is the 'most significant borrowing from *vox acquilae*'.[152]

Eriugena's position on the matter is easily identifiable. McEvoy points his audience to the Irishman's commentary on Dionysius' *Celestial Hierarchy*: 'every creature, visible and invisible, is light, created by the Father of Light in and through his wisdom, that light co-essential with himself'. Grosseteste's own views on the importance of light mirror those of

[151] McEvoy, *The Philosophy*, 255.
[152] McEvoy, "Eriugena redivivus," 211. *Vox acquilae* (*The Voice of the Eagle*) being another of Eriugena's works. Henceforth it will be referred to as Eriugena's *Homily on the Prologue of St. John*, or shorter derivations. Grosseteste placed a great deal of emphasis on this work because he believed it to be written by St. John Chrysostom.

Eriugena here. This doctrinal similitude is not coincidental. As above, it is clear that Grosseteste held Eriugena's *Homily on the Prologue of St. John* in high regard, as its placement in his *Topical Concordance* demonstrates, and it is here that one can more securely display the influence of Eriugena on Grosseteste as opposed to the possibly more indirect influence the *Periphyseon* may have had.

There is a considerable emphasis placed on the role of light in Eriugena's *Homily*. It is repeatedly emphasised when he arrives towards the mid-point of the work. Before deliberating upon the role of light however, he slowly constructs his argument. Beginning in chapter IX, What was Made in Him, Eriugena posits the idea that everything in the cosmos possesses life.[153] From here, he goes on to demonstrate the link between the living cosmos and God:

> And if you want to know how, or by what reason, all things that are made through the Word thus subsist vitally, causally, and in the same manner in him, consider examples from created nature. Learn to know the maker from those things that are made in him and by him. "For the invisible thing of him", as the Apostle says, "are clearly understood by the intelligence, being understood from the things that are made."[154]

To McEvoy, Eriugena is stating that we can

> … only return in thought to the *Verbum*, which is life and in which all created

[153] 'Let our meaning therefore be clear. All things that are made in him, in him are life and are one.' Eriugena, *Voice of the Eagle* trans. Christopher Bamford (Great Barrington, Massachusetts: Lindisfarne Books, 2000): 84.
[154] Ibid., 86.

> things stand, before and outside of time, as in their sole cause. We can accomplish this thought only by moving from *paradigmata*, known to us in the natures of creatures, towards the knowledge of their maker: *disce factorem*.[155]

It is from here that Eriugena offers us examples in chapter X, All Things. The first and most important Eriugena proffers is the Sun:

> See how the cause of all things which this spherical, sensible world contains subsist simultaneously and similarly in that Sun which alone is called the great luminary of the world. Thence the forms of all bodies proceed; thence the beauty of and diversity of colours; and whatever else may be known of sensible nature.[156]

Here Grosseteste potentially found an authority – seemingly St. John Chrysostom - that was sympathetic or even confirmed his own views on light; specifically, his idea 'that not only the colours and the other natural phenomena of nature, but even the very *forma* of each and every body is made out of light'. Indeed, as McEvoy goes on to stress, '…all living things depend upon its light.'[157] Here then, light is life. This is an important passage for Grosseteste; in his *Hexaëmeron* he quotes the passage regarding the Sun completely[158] and elsewhere refers to it

[155] McEvoy, "Eriugena redivivus," 220-1 This is one of the notions that his most ideologically proximal to Grosseteste.
[156] Eriugena, *The voice of the Eagle*, 86-7.
[157] McEvoy, "Eriugena redivivus," 212.
[158] Robert Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron* V, XXI, 3. The second example is in the potential multiplicity of the seed; ' consider the infinite, multiple power of the seed – how many grasses, fruits, and animals are contained … how there surges forth from each a beautiful, innumerable multiplicity of forms' . The third and fourth are related in as much as they discuss potentiality;
Contemplate with your inner eye how in a master the many laws of an art or science are one; how they live in the spirit that disposes of them. Contemplate how an infinite number of lines may subsist in a single point…' McEvoy seemingly cites this passage erroneously in his chapter, pointing his readers to book V, chapter XII, 3 in the *Hexaëmeron* instead.

deferentially.[159]

Eriugena goes further. In chapter XI of his *Homily* he conflates light with life Christologically and thus concomitantly, anthropologically. He elucidates a quotation by 'the theologian'[160], who writes, 'And the life was the light of human beings.' Without questioning this fairly medieval routine assertion of Christ as light and departing from 'the theologian's' quote, Eriugena seeks to discern what is meant by the qualification 'of human beings.' He first poses the question:

> Why does the theologian add "the light of human beings", as if the light that is the light of angels, the light of the created universe, the light indeed of all visible and invisible existence, should be peculiarly the light of humanity.[161]

The response is thus:

> Is not the Word that gives life to all things perhaps said especially and peculiarly to be the light of humanity because in human beings he declared himself … to all creatures able to participate in divine knowledge? … The light of humanity, therefore, [due to the Incarnation occurring in a human body] is our Lord Christ Jesus, who in his human nature showed himself to all rational and intellectual creatures, revealing the hidden mysteries of his divinity…[162]

[159] Here McEvoy points his readers to Grosseteste's *Commentary on Ecclesiasticus* 43 and also Grosseteste's *Commentary on Psalms I-C* as found in Ms. Bologna, Bibl. Com. dell'archiginnasio A. 983, fol.158vb.
[160] This reference is unknown.
[161] Eriugena, *Voice of the Eagle*, 89.
[162] Ibid.

Therefore, Eriugena manages to offer two accounts of the synchronicity of both life and light. Put rather simply, life, as a participation in the Word, is within everything, and as Christ is the Word, he is also light, thus light is also in everything.[163] This, alongside the conflation with the Sun, continues to perpetuate the supreme importance of light in the construction and maintenance of creation.

The bold Eriugenian idea that all that exists is in some mysterious way alive in that it shares its life in the Word, appears twice in Grosseteste's works. Firstly, it appears in chapter one of his commentary on Dionysius' *De divinis nominibus* when discussing the universal causality of God.[164] However, as McEvoy demonstrates, this is also an idea that Grosseteste encounters in Augustine and it is to the Bishop of Hippo that he defers when answering Adam Rufus in *De unica forma omnium*. Despite this, McEvoy draws attention back to the Eriugenian association of this idea by pointing towards the similarities between Grosseteste's position on the creation of creatures and chapter X of Eriugena's *Homily*. In the Bishop's *Hexaëmeron* he writes, ''For things have three ways of coming to be. The first way is the way they come to be in the eternal uncreated reasons, where all things are life, according to the Scripture: "What was made was life in Him.'[165] This demonstrates, to McEvoy, a clear precedent in chapter X of Eriugena's Homily.[166]

Grosseteste and Eriugena clearly demonstrate a striking noetic resonance regarding their

[163] This, at least, *prima facie*, seems remarkably similar to the tri-incarnational model proposed earlier by Maximus Confessor.
[164] Here Grosseteste writes, '*Ipsa enim thearchia eternaliter in se prehabet omnia in eternis omnium rationibus, in quibus omnia sunt vita, et hee sunt providentia una et eadem'*. F. Ruello (1959), "La Divinorum Nominum reseratio selon Grosseteste et Albert le Grand," *AHDLMA* , (Paris: Librarie Philosophique J. Vrin.): 134-71; 168
[165] Robert Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron* X, IV, 3, ed. R.C. Dales and S. Gieben, 296; *Habent enim res triplicem fiendi modum: Primus est quo fiunt in eternis racionibus increatis, ubi omnia sunt vita, sicut scriptum est: Quod factum est, in ipso vita erat.* Translation from: Robert Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron* X, IV, 3.
[166] It seems that the source for McEvoy's Latin edition of Eriugena's sermon can be found here: Jean Scot, *Homélie Sur Le Prologue De Jean*, trans. Edouard Jeauneau. Sources Chrétiennes (Paris: Éditions du Cerf., 1969).

conflation of life and light within creation. However, this is as far as McEvoy goes with this comparison. The confluence between life and light within creation however reinforces creation's utility as a conduit of divine revelation thereby insisting upon humanity's engagement with it. This is appositely demonstrated in the same source McEvoy uses; chapter X of the Irishman's sermon:

> From the contemplation of such as these [the aforementioned examples such as the Sun and seeds], raised above all things by the wings of natural contemplation, illuminated and supported by divine grace, you will be able to penetrate by the keenness of your mind the secrets of the Word and, to the extent that it is granted to the human being who seeks signs of God, you will see how all things made by the Word live in the Word and are life…[167]

This clearly demonstrates Eriugena's views on humanity's ability to engage with the natural world, and the importance of the natural world as a conduit of divine revelation. This *physike theoria* is an important step towards humanity's spiritual development and their eventually possible deification. It cannot be stressed enough that this is something that is 'safe' to assume Grosseteste has read. Not only has he read it, but he has also promoted its orthodoxy and usefulness by placing it within his *Topical Concordance* in order to aid others' search for truth.

Many of the foundation stones for Grosseteste's naturally philosophic theology rest here, in the thought of Dionysius, Maximus and Eriugena. We see in these Eastern thinkers an inclination to the importance of the material world's potential as a conduit of the divine. It is

[167] Eriugena, *Voice of the Eagle*, 87.

here that this identification of the all-important avenue humanity is to traverse towards their ascent towards God and Godliness can be found. From here we see humanity as the priest of the cosmos, the *officina omnium*, the agent by which humanity and creation will be restored to its greater glory. The following section will demonstrate this by emphasising the link between Grosseteste's light metaphysics and his epistemology as situated as it is in this Greek conceptual paradigm as has been presented throughout this chapter.

2.5. The link between Grosseteste's light metaphysics and epistemology

Thus far this thesis has sought to detail how various important influences on Grosseteste's work explicated a conflation between the spiritual development needed for deification and the acquisition of knowledge, as aptly demonstrated by the above quotation from Eriugena. It would be helpful here however to elaborate on the link between Grosseteste's light metaphysics and his epistemology to further demonstrate the clear thematic parallelism of thought between Eriugena and Grosseteste regarding the importance of light, cosmogony, and knowledge acquisition as well as to further elaborate upon the complexities of Grosseteste's impressive synthesis of Aristotelianism and Neo-Platonic thought.

Grosseteste, according to Christina van Dyke and Simon Oliver, reinvents God's role in the classic illuminationist epistemology and optimistically attempts to reinforce the validity of the utilisation of mankind's sensible and rational powers to attain knowledge, despite humanity's fallen condition.[168] Grosseteste writes:

[168] Oliver's work can be found here: Oliver, Simon. "Robert Grosseteste on Light, Truth and Experimentum." *Vivarium* 42, no. 2 (2004): 151–80. For scholarship on illuminationist epistemologies, see: Steven Marrone, *The Light of thy Countenance: Science and Knowledge of God in the Thirteenth Century* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2001); and Lydia Schumacher, *Divine Illumination: The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge* (Chichester, West Sussex; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).

> And so when – over time – the senses act through their many meetings with sensible things, reason (which is mixed up with these senses and in them as if it were carried toward the sensible things in a boat) is awakened. But once it is awakened, reason begins to distinguish between and to consider separately things that had been confused in the senses – as, for example, sight confuses color, magnitude, shape, and body, and in its judgment these things are all taken as one thing. Awakened reason, however, distinguishes color from magnitude and shape from body and, furthermore, shape and magnitude from the substance of the body. And so, through drawing distinctions and abstracting, it comes to the cognition of the substance of the body that bears (*deferentis*) the magnitude, shape, and color. Nevertheless, reason knows that this universal exists in actuality only after it has made this abstraction from many individuals and after it has occurred to reason that it has found in many individuals what it judges to be one and the same thing. This is the way, therefore, in which the simple universal is obtained from individual things through the help of the senses.[169]

This quite clearly demonstrates his belief in the human ability to utilise their sensible and rational powers in the aid of acquiring knowledge of the world around them. Of course, this is merely a description of the attainment of simple universals and is far removed from the complexities surrounding his emphasis on symbolism, but it adequately demonstrates both his belief in humanity's utilisation of their senses, and that the conclusions of this exercise excite the rational soul, and draw those exercising these powers toward God. The illumination of all things by God, and humanity's microcosmistic creation both serve as the ultimate pre-

[169] This is van Dyke's translation. Her source for Grosseteste's *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics* is Pietro Rossi, 1981, *Commentarius in Posteriorum Analyticorum Libros* (Firenze, Italy: Leo S. Olschki); (I.14.238–52). Grosseteste wrote this work in the 1220s; it is very hard to date this work conclusively to anything more specific.

requisites needed for the human engagement with the corporeal. In fact, much of Grosseteste's *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics* (CPA) deals not with God illuminating our intellects directly, but more God's relation to the objects people are supposed to cognise. Ultimately, God is 'ideogenic' in the sense that His light is still a 'precondition for our being able to grasp truth on any level'.[170]

God illuminates the objects of one's intellection and this happens in much the same way as the Sun illuminates the world of sensible things. Grosseteste states in the CPA, that '…there is a spiritual light which pours over intelligible things and the mind's eye – a light that is related to the interior eye and intelligible things just as the corporeal Sun is related to the corporeal eye and to the corporeal visible things'.[171]

Whilst for van Dyke's Grosseteste simple universals and *phantasmata* do not directly tell one much about God, instead, they are the first crucial step towards knowledge of Him and they can reveal more about other, similar universals.[172] This is not always the case however. Through contemplation, simple universals can be conduits of divine revelation symbolically, as above in Dionysius and Eriugena. Here, however van Dyke is not taking into account the importance of the symbolic nature of that simple universal, rather, she seems to be asserting that the acquisition of this basic universal in and of itself can not tell one much about God. Van Dyke's examples include the teaching of fractions with chocolate cake and teaching numbers with apples (mathematics incidentally being an elevated sort of universal with it being eternal and immutable by nature) for example.[173] Van Dyke demonstrates that God plays a crucial role in the act of ordinary human cognition. But one final question remains: it

[170] Van Dyke, "An Aristotelian Theory," 703.
[171] Rossi, *CPA*, I.17.39-47. This is van Dyke's translation. See also: Ibid., I.19.29-32.
[172] Van Dyke "An Aristotelian Theory," 687-9.
[173] Ibid, 702.

is fine to say that God illuminates intelligible objects for people to then start abstracting data from them, but how would one abstract to the essence of something, and are humans totally left to their own devices after that initial guidance? Van Dyke sees this as unlikely. As well as illuminating the objects of cognition for individuals to be able to grasp them with their mind's eye, van Dyke's Grosseteste also believes that through enough contemplation, through enough experience, enough intellective activity, God can also, in some way, light up an object's true essence. This is very rare however, but the majority of people do have within themselves this capacity.[174]

Elsewhere van Dyke argues for a different interpretation from that of Simon Oliver's on the nature of '*opinio*', which for Grosseteste was the lowest form of knowledge. In this context it is not established which form *opinio* is taking as, according to Stephen Marrone, it takes three forms: opinion properly speaking (*proprie dicta*), broadly speaking (*dicta communiter*) opinion and the third and worst of all, opinion in the strictest sense (*magis proprie dicta*).[175] Nevertheless, according to van Dyke, Oliver obscures Grosseteste's original intent, and argues that *opinio* does not play a 'proper' part in Grosseteste's account of human knowledge in stating that, 'In addition to the four varieties of universal, Grosseteste comments on the very lowest form of 'knowledge' … [which] does not concentrate on universals at all, but is arrived at through the observation of accidents.'[176] This is because, to van Dyke, Grosseteste is explicit in his remarks that even weak intellects have access to genuine principles of cognising:

[174] Van Dyke, "An Aristotelian Theory," 703.
[175] For a detailed breakdown of these degrees of knowledge see: Marrone, *Auvergne and Grosseteste,* 221. Here Marrone argues that *opinio magis proprie dicta* is the worst form of opinion as it leads to the lowest form of knowledge.
[176] Oliver, "Robert Grosseteste on Light, Truth," 164.

> What really marks this sort of principle apart from the previous four [types of universal] is not that it does not involve universals, but the fact that this kind of principle counts only as a principle of cognizing and not also as a principle of being.[177]

Despite van Dyke diminishing the importance of *opinio* by describing it as wholly uncertain, and maintaining that it does not make claims as to the essence of a particular, it does not mean that it does not play a significant role in human intellection. One cannot have certain knowledge of all the possible universals the world has to offer; humans are not capable of acquiring that level of experience with the limitlessness of potential experiences that life proffers. As such, propositional knowledge based on *opinio* plays an incredibly small, albeit necessary role in any full account of human knowledge.

In point of fact, van Dyke's overarching Aristotelian account of Divine Illumination fits very well with Simon Oliver's scientific breakdown of Grosseteste's Illuminationist epistemology. Van Dyke routinely asserts that Grosseteste's Augustinian leanings still allow room for Aristotelian abstraction from sensible particulars, and indeed, this abstraction is a wholly necessary part of the process. This is possible because God illuminates the objects of intellection.

> On my reading of the CPA, in ordinary cases of human cognition, the objects God illuminates are the universals involved in demonstrative science – universals we grasp through the process of abstraction … Rather than placing

[177] Van Dyke, "The Truth, The Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth: Robert Grosseteste on Universals (and the *Posterior Analytics*)," in *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 48 (2010): 153-70; 166.

> knowledge of universals directly in our intellects, as some theories of divine illumination hold, on Grosseteste's account, God makes those universals accessible to our intellects.[178]

This is startlingly close to Simon Oliver's conclusion in 2004. Oliver, similarly to van Dyke, demonstrates the synchronicity between two supposedly antithetical epistemological approaches - Neo-Platonism and Aristotelianism - by seeking to place Grosseteste's use of '*experimentum*' into a wider context of his understanding of truth and illumination. Fundamentally he believes in the epistemological and methodological amalgamation of Neo-Platonism and Aristotelianism because of the Bishop of Lincoln's Neo-Platonic understanding of truth; a version of truth that is defined by the belief that everything is, in some way, divinely illuminated. The effect this has is of utmost importance because it means, for Simon Oliver's Grosseteste at least, that there is no logical gap between the observation of singulars and the positing of universal first principles based on inductive intuition. For him, 'divine illumination is not something added to inductive reasoning associated with systematic, experimental observation of nature; rather, both belong to a single, divine guarantee of truth.'[179]

Oliver begins by expounding the relevance of light as a matter of vigorous study in the medieval period and gives a number of reasons for it being so. The first is that light itself is the basis for many of the fantastical occurrences which at the time were mysterious in their origin, things such as the rainbow, and the halo surrounding the atmosphere. Second is the fact that, especially for Grosseteste, light was the form of truth and is that which makes all

[178] Van Dyke, "Grosseteste on Universals," 165.
[179] Oliver, "Robert Grosseteste on Light, Truth," 154.

things both visible, and ultimately knowable. The third, after thoughtful conclusions made by the likes of Euclid and Ptolemy into the mathematically knowable behaviour of light, medieval natural philosophers realised that distinctions could be drawn between the different degrees of spiritual light that emanate from the Supreme Light. Lastly, and most simply, the much-repeated biblical passages that affirm God as light, and Christ the light of the world (to be found in such places as Genesis I, Isaiah 60:19, John 8.12).

Oliver then goes on to discuss Grosseteste's unique cosmogony. Focussing entirely on the role of light by utilising Grosseteste's *De luce*, he seems to take James McEvoy's chapter Creation and the Cosmology of Aristotle in his *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste* as a rough guide.[180] This is where Oliver cements the scientific foundation to Grosseteste's epistemological position. Light's eminent role in Grosseteste's cosmogony revolves around its actually being corporeity. As Grosseteste puts it in *De luce* (taken from Oliver's article), 'The first corporeal form which some call corporeity is in my opinion light.'[181] Light, as corporeity, in the act of creation, spreads itself omni-directionally taking a spherical shape. Light is the first bodily form, for the only thing that can diffuse itself in this manner is light, and the form of matter is its very diffusion into three dimensions.[182]

Oliver and McEvoy then move on to demonstrate how light, being infinite and the first bodily form, created a finite universe from a single point. The conclusion of this section of Oliver's

[180] This can be found in McEvoy, *The Philosophy of*, 149-162.
[181] Grosseteste, *De Luce*, 51: Oliver uses Baur's Latin text (*Die philosophischen Werke des Robert Grosseteste, Bischofs von Lincoln*, ed. L. Baur (Aschendorff:Münster i. W., 1912) and follows his pagination when discussing *De Luce* and *De veritate*.
[182] "Grosseteste presents two propositions: corporeity is that which necessarily accompanies the extension of matter into three dimensions, yet in themselves matter and corporeity are simple substances lacking dimension. However: … it [matter] cannot be separate from form, and the form of matter we observe in the universe is diffusion into three dimensions. That which … diffuses itself in this fashion is light. Therefore … light is the first bodily form, which some call corporeity; it … enables the diffusion of matter into three dimensions." Simon Oliver, " Robert Grosseteste on Light, Truth," 155.

paper is important; light, as the first bodily form, due to relative infinities of varying degrees, is the 'basis, conceptual and ontological, of all material extension [from the beginning of creation – light]'.[183] For Oliver, mathematics was not just a 'hinge' between the metaphysics and cosmology of Grosseteste, but was in fact an integral part to the '… being of the materially extended, [in a] moving and harmonically unified creation.'[184] It is here that Grosseteste's light metaphysics accounts for Neo-Platonic emanation. God indwells in all of creation in eventually diminishing forms as one goes further along the 'ladder' of creation. Here, Grosseteste manages to develop this very general Neo-Platonic idea by expressing the emanationist process as the one by which God created the universe through the initial propagation of light into three dimensions. God, in Grosseteste's system, exists in the corporeal world of creation by being its corporeity *in some way*.

After securing the mathematical foundation of Grosseteste's cosmogony and the subsequent creation of an ordered universe, Oliver begins to develop Grosseteste's idea of truth and how it is posited through an illuminationist epistemology. For Grosseteste, '…something is true in so far as it is what it should be according to its idea [or exemplar] in the divine mind which emanates from the divine being in the eternal speech of the Father.'[185] To illustrate this point, he quotes Grosseteste's *De veritate*: 'A tree is a true tree when it has the plenitude of being tree and lacks the deficiency of being tree, and what is this plenitude of being except conformity to the reason of tree in the eternal Word?'[186]

For Grosseteste in his *De luce*, there are two forms of light; *lux* (the light of supreme truth which is spiritual) and *lumen* (which is corporeal). The above quotation tacitly suggests that

[183] " Robert Grosseteste on Light, Truth," 157. *De luce* will be explored in chapter five.
[184] Ibid., 158.
[185] Ibid., 160.
[186] Grosseteste, "De veritate," in *Die Philosophischen Werke,* ed. Ludwig Baur, 135.

in order for one to comprehend truth, one must observe both the created object and its divine exemplar. The method this process takes, in terms of illumination, is that the two forms of light combine. Created truth is only achievable through the combination of both of these lights. Oliver discusses this thus:

> …the created light is the secondary but immediate 'cause' of created truth, while the supreme light is the primary and most potent 'cause' of truth, being and goodness … Just as the weak eye is not able to see colour except in the light of the Sun [metaphorically acting as supreme light], so the created mind can only see created truth in the light of the supreme truth, but cannot look directly upon the light of the supreme truth. The supreme truth is always mediated to created being.[187]

Clearly, for the acquisition of knowledge, the amalgamation of both forms of light, also referred to as *lux* and *lumen,* are absolutely crucial. Oliver's argument conforms with the Eriugenian ideas surrounding the manifestations of theophanies. It is important to remember that for Eriugena, essentially, the entirety of created nature is a sea of theophanies. One can most clearly see this resemblance in the first book of the *Periphyseon*. Here Eriugena stresses that the Divine Essence is incomprehensible in and of itself, but when joined to creation, it becomes 'after a wonderous fashion manifest.'[188] If Oliver's approach is accurate, it reinforces the idea of a particularly Eriugenian resonance within the thought of Grosseteste's cosmogony; a cosmogony that is integral to his overall theology. McEvoy stresses something similar when he writes,

[187] Oliver, "Robert Grosseteste on Light, Truth," 161.
[188] Eriugena, *Periphyseon* I, 450a.

> [For Grosseteste] … first being [God] is known in each instance of being, just as the first light is seen in the finite truth of things made. Similarly, each thing according to its participation in being and goodness calls out that it is made, and invites the mind to raise itself to its creative source.[189]

As McEvoy himself notes, this is remarkably resonant of Augustine and Eriugena's notion of God as *forma omnium* as explored previously. Importantly, it also conforms with notions of symbolic microcosmism: the entire universe, a vestige of God and a sea of divine symbols is waiting to be contemplated and studied, all to reinvigorate humanity's power, restore its image, and guide them ever closer to God.

Oliver then details the abstractive process that occurs. He suggests that the act of collecting sensible data from the intelligible world is already an act of abstraction. Sensation is, according to Grosseteste in his *Hexaëmeron*: '… a power of receiving and grasping sensible species without matter.'[190] This is due to what is now termed, the 'emanation of species' and this concept is directly linked to Grosseteste's cosmogony. It is described by Oliver in this way:

> … sensation is integrated into a general light metaphysics, for just as each of the elements is a more or less dense form of light, so too the sensitive souls of animals in their activity of sensing use a form of light … Both the sentient

[189] McEvoy, *The Philosophy* 322.
[190] Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron*, VII.14.1: Oliver uses the translation by C.F.J Martin.

> creature and that which is perceived by the senses are constituted and related in the activity of light.[191]

This abstractive process is pivotal to Oliver's argument as it is the foundation of Grosseteste's emphasis on the theological need for *experimentum*; indeed, he called the yield of this process, *universalia complexa experimentalia* – complex experimental universals. The usage of our senses is imperative to the epistemological process. Both due to humanity's fallen state and the necessity to excite one's senses and rational mind, humans must begin with the knowledge of the corporeal world, what one may deem '*ratio inferior.'* This acts as a preliminary stage with the goal of being able to eventually comprehend '*ratio superior*'. Grosseteste's now famous discussion on the causes of red bile succinctly demonstrates this epistemological process:

> …when someone many times sees the eating of scammony and the accompanying discharge of red bile and he does not see that scammony attracts and draws out red bile, then from the frequent perception of these two visible things [he or she] begins to form a notion of the third, invisible element, that is [in this case] that scammony is the cause that draws out red bile.[192]

Once an individual's reason has been awakened by the perception of such an event, their memory then leads their reason to the conducting of an experiment whereby one eats

[191] Oliver, "Robert Grosseteste on Light, Truth," 167.
[192] Robert Grosseteste, *CPA* 1.14, 256 ff.: '. . . *cum videt quis frequenter comestionem scammonee et comitantem egestionem choleře rubee et non videt quod scammonea attrahit et educit rubeam cholerám, ex frequenti visione horum duorum visibilium incipit estimare tertium invisibile, scilicet, quod scammonea est causa educendi choleram rubeam.*' The in-text translation is Oliver's.

scammony after all other possible causes have been removed from consideration; '…and this is the way by which one proceeds from sensation to an experimental universal principle.'[193] It is precisely here that A.C. Crombie advocates for Grosseteste's scientific originality all the while taking into account Grosseteste's awareness of a logical gap in between the 'assertion of a formal definition or a regularly occurring series of events… [and] the assertion of a theory stating a universal and causal connection'.[194] Essentially, for Grosseteste, something needs to be added to the illuminationist epistemological process extraneously of the individual cognising.[195]

However, Oliver and Eileen Serene both believe Crombie's approach separates Grosseteste's natural philosophy from his theology. According to Serene and Oliver, by insisting that divine illumination is added into the already developing process of generating the complex experimental universal, Crombie is advocating for the slight detachment of Grosseteste's scientific endeavour from his theology and this is surely not the case.[196] In response, Oliver and Serene subscribe Grosseteste to the empiricist peripatetic concept of induction that is defined by its belief that the inductive process alone is sufficient to acquire knowledge of first principles. This inductive process is much more consonant with Grosseteste's light metaphysics and theological cosmogony.

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[193] Grosseteste, *CPA* 1.14, 270-1: "*Et hec est via qua pervenitur a sensu in principium universale experimentale."* The in-text translation is Oliver's. This discussion can be found here: Oliver, "Robert Grosseteste on Light, Truth," 173-174.

[194] Ibid.

[195] On this Crombie writes, "to leap this gap in the logical process of induction he envisaged an act of intuition or scientific imagination, corresponding to Aristotle's nous, by the mind reflecting on the classification of facts produced by induction suddenly grasped a universal or principle or theory explaining the connection between them." Alistair C. Crombie, *Origins* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953): 71

[196] Crombie's account as it is put here is slightly reductionist; for a fuller account, and repudiation by Oliver, see: Oliver, "Robert Grosseteste on Light, Truth," 175 ff..

> The knowledge which comes from the inductive or abstractive process is itself the effect of the species which emanate from every creature … being a more or less rarefied form of light. The soul, into which sense perceptions enter to be gathered into the memory, is a form of dynamic and spiritual light. All of this is a more or less spiritual form of divine illumination, so divine illumination could not be 'added' to inductive or abstractive knowledge of particulars as if it were something juxtaposed.[197]

Grosseteste's illuminationist epistemology and the emphasis he places on the use of human senses is uniquely theological. Necessity forces one to use their senses to grasp knowledge of the corporeal world and this is the first step to exciting the mind and the rational soul, awakening it to the possibility of traversing up the epistemological hierarchy of knowledge, from *opinio*, to the top levels of universal (such as complex experimental universals), to the contemplation of the *ratio superior*; those that reside in the divine mind. For Grosseteste, inductive abstraction is intimately related to knowledge and being, mediated by light. There is no logical gap to be breached between the use of one's senses and the knowledge garnered from their use because the process is already filled with divine light: from the creation of all things, to the interior light a human's rational soul utilises. For Grosseteste, *experimentum*, the repeated observation of particulars, is essential to the entire process of eventually reaching higher forms of knowledge, eventually leading one to knowledge of God himself.[198] Grosseteste has posited a spectrum regarding the varying degrees of truth. From opinion (*opinio*) to the perceptible access of the *visio Dei* and everything in between one can perceive

[197] Oliver, "Robert Grosseteste on Light, Truth," 177
[198] Ibid., 179.

a hierarchy of varying certitude, one that has its own corresponding level of light. This is a hierarchy that may be traversed by the employment of *experimentum*.

Crucially however, Grosseteste's *experimentum* does not offer a different kind of knowledge. Rather, it offers a different degree of knowledge. This is another aspect of his experimental methodology that separates him from more modern approaches to scientific investigation. All knowledge is analogically related to the knowledge proffered by the beatific vision that resides in the supreme light. As Oliver asserts, experimentation is not specifically the criterion for truth for Grosseteste as far as it is the means by which one rouses the intellect to action.

> [*Experimentum*] … provides a knowledge which, although correct and true (but, importantly, not merely probable) is corrigible and capable of being filled with ever greater light … truth is a result of irradiation from a high light, and yet it will pass away at the eschaton.[199]

For van Dyke and Oliver, Grosseteste's concept of Divine Illumination emphasises the illumination of the objects of one's cognition. It is in the very act of creation, unique to Grosseteste's cosmogony, in the act of experiencing the objects of cognition, and in rationalising the outcomes of those experiences and abstracting universals from them, one experiences Divine Illumination. Fundamentally, 'It is not in sensation that we know; but it is as a result of sensation that knowledge of the universal comes to us. This knowledge comes to us via the senses, but not from the senses.'[200]

[199] Oliver, "Robert Grosseteste on Light, Truth," 179.
[200] (Grosseteste, *CPA*, I.18, 205-7): Oliver also uses Pietro Rossi's translation of Grosseteste's *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics*. This translation is his own.

Grosseteste's illuminationist epistemology is centred around humanity's initial efforts to engage with the divinely illuminated cosmos they are in, but not only is this universe divinely illuminated, it is also deeply unified. Indeed, it is the ordered nature of the universe which enables mankind's engagement with it. *Physike theoria*, natural philosophy and particularly *experimentum*, would not work in a universe that was chaotic and *ad hoc*. Grosseteste's cosmic unity rests in the significance of the historical Incarnation. So much so, Grosseteste adopts the little-held belief in the absolute predestination of Christ as found most explicitly in his *On the Cessation of the Laws*.[201]

Grosseteste's rather obscure and certainly unorthodox (in the sense that it is not a strictly defined area of doctrine) belief in the absolute predestination of Christ is the final piece of evidence of Eriugenian influence on Grosseteste put forward by McEvoy. McEvoy believes that the conclusions of Grosseteste's theological speculation on this topic is 'among the most personal and most original in his entire writings.'[202] Here, McEvoy seeks to detail the similarities between Grosseteste's final argument for the Incarnation independent of Adam and Eve, and the work of Honorius Augustodunensis (c.1080 - 1151).

Before the elaboration of McEvoy's work however, it is important to briefly discuss Honorius. Specific details of his life are subject to conjecture, as best demonstrated by his sometime designation as Honorius of Autun. Many phases of his life are unknown.[203] His

[201] Grosseteste first posits this here: Robert Grosseteste, *On the Cessation of the Laws* trans. Hildebrand (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 2012) 165. All subsequent references to *On the Cessation of the Laws* will refer to Hildebrand's translation unless otherwise stated.
[202] McEvoy, "Eriugena redivivus," 215
[203] Indeed, there are various efforts at linking him with Irish heritage – which is particularly important to note considering his engagement with Eriugena's works: R.W. Southern, *Saint Anselm and his Biographer: A Study of Monastic Life and Thought 1059-c.1130* (Cambridge University Press; Cambridge, 1963): 215; Roger Reynolds, "Further Evidence for the Irish Origin of Honorius Augustodunesis," in *Vivarium*, vol. 7 (1969): 1-7.

working career is estimated to be within the years 1098 and 1140, and within this period he wrote a number of fairly popular works.[204] Perhaps his most successful work, the *Imago Mundi*, enjoyed a widely disseminated manuscript tradition that perhaps demonstrates a potential link with Grosseteste.[205] Valerie Flint on the *Imago Mundi* writes that:

> … the *Imago Mundi* was not merely meant to instruct without offence to tradition. It was meant to reassure within tradition, and to encompass within that reassurance an exceptionally broad range of existing beliefs, beliefs to some extent threatened by the innovations by a more demanding 'scientific' understanding. The known world is made in the *Imago Mundi* to a consoling degree familiar and to an acceptable degree confined. The unknown, especially outlandish and monstruous, lends further strength to the contours of the known.[206]

If Flint's description of Honorius' intent rings true, then it seems Grosseteste, as the following evidence suggests, may have found a like-minded scholar early in his life – and importantly, this like-minded scholar was steeped in Eriugena. The *Imago Mundi* is also a work with a large scope, covering cosmology, time, both secular and liturgical, and finally history, with a recapitulation of the course of mankind through the six ages of mankind, ending with the Holy Roman Empire. There are various manuscripts that potentially demonstrate the wide dissemination of Honorius' works (his *Elucidarium*, *Gemma Animae*,

[204] Valerie Flint, "Honorius Augustodunesis' Imago Mundi," *AHDLMA* 49 (1982): 7-153; 7. Honorius is routinely described as popular rather than influential because of his works' lack of originality. That being said, as Flint herself put it, 'It is now becoming a commonplace to attribute complexity of composition disguised by extreme simplicity of exposition to Honorius'. Ibid.
[205] According to Flint's work there are twenty surviving manuscripts of the complete text and nineteen that are fragments. Six of these MSS are identifiably from England. Ibid., 8.
[206] Flint, "Honorius Augustodunesis," 16.

and *Sigillum* also have demonstrably English manuscripts that have survived), throughout England.[207] Valerie Flint's work demonstrates that it is not implausible to suggest that Hereford, being the early centre of Greek thought and astronomy it was, held some of the works of Honorius Augustodunesis.[208] Of course, this is quite the tenuous link, but if Hereford did possess some of Honorius' works, then Grosseteste's early life spent in the household of the Bishop of Hereford, William de Vere, could certainly have precipitated his introduction to some of Honorius' *oeuvre*, potentially enamouring him with some distinctly Eriugenian noetic. There is also some evidence that draws an early link to Lincoln in Grosseteste's life.[209] Many of the surviving manuscripts are from Lincoln Cathedral, and therefore, it is possible there was some ideological transmission, or physical movement of the manuscripts between Hereford and Lincoln.

The thought-parallel that McEvoy draws between Grosseteste and Honorius' *Clavis Physicae* (which is the work that attempts to both summarise and popularise Eriugena's *Periphyseon*) when the former is elucidating his vision of the absolute predestination of Christ can be found in chapter seventy-eight of the aforementioned work. Here, Honorius explicitly links the central notion of humans as a microcosm of the cosmos and the historical Incarnation:

"D. Through these four it seems to me that every nature is assumed by Christ and is established in him.

All Creatures in Christ

[207] Flint, "Honorius Augustodunesis," 9.
[208] Ibid. Three of the manuscripts originate from the diocese of Lincoln, one from Worcester, and one from York. Flint's work suggests a significant amount of source transmission between these early centres of learning that may tenuously support the idea that Honorius' work was in Hereford whilst Grosseteste was employed there. It should be noted however, that McEvoy's treatment of Eriugena's influence on Grosseteste discusses Honorius' *Clavis physicae*, which is not mentioned in Flint's work.
[209] For this evidence, see: Giles M. Gaspar, "Sounding a *Sonativum*: On the Generation of Sounds in Historical Context," in *The Scientific Works of Robert Grosseteste, Volume 1* ed. Giles E. M. Gasper et al.178-198 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019): 186f.

> M. Yes. For Christ received four parts of human nature, and in Himself united the whole of creation together; for, in man, from whom He received the whole, the whole creature was created. For receiving the body, he added to himself every corporeal creature; taking on the senses, he conjoined to himself all sensible things through the soul, he associates himself with every rational creature and with all nutritive life; through the intellect which he has assumed, all intellectual essences cleave to each other inseparably.[210]

McEvoy informs his readership that the *Clavis* is a summarisation of Eriugena's *Periphyseon* and briefly explains the composition of the work; the *Clavis* is a summarisation of the first four books of the *Periphyseon,* and the fifth book is a transcription. Interestingly, McEvoy does not seem to pursue this point to any length. There must be a reason Honorius transcribed book V of the *Periphyseon* and none of the other books. A reason certainly comes to mind when one considers the supreme importance of the general cosmic scheme at play in the *Periphyseon*. It is surely unsurprising that arguably the most important section in Eriugena's masterpiece is the cosmos' return to God. Here, in book V, as can be seen earlier in this chapter, Eriugena constantly refers back to humanity's microcosmistic composition, the role that knowledge plays here, and goes into explicit detail regarding his idea of deification. It is hard to believe that it is merely coincidental that the central tenets of Eriugena's *Periphyseon* - truly on display in its final book – prominently feature in the section Honorius thought best

[210] Honorius Augustodunesis, *Clavis Physicae* ed. P. Lucentini (Roma: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1974): 56; *Omnis natura in Christo:*
D. Per hec quatour videtur michi omnis natura a Christo assumpta et in ipso instaurata.
M. Ita est. Christus quippe quattuor humane nature partes accepit et in se ipso universam creaturam coadunavit: in homine enim, quem totum accepit, universa creatura condita est. Corpus siquidem accipiens, omnem corporalem creaturam sibi adiunxit; sensum vero assumens, universam sensibilem sibi copulavit; per animam quam accepit, omnem rationale creaturam et omnem vitam nutritivam et auctivam sibi associavit; per intellectum quem assumpsit, omnes intellectuales essentie sibi inseparabiliter adherent.' This translation into English is my own. This is merely one of many instances where Honorius endorses the microcosm theme.

to remain as close to the original as possible. Therefore, readers of Honorius' *Clavis* would have been made aware of the fundamental doctrines of Eriugena's theology as found in book V – something 'untouched' by the process of summarisation performed by Honorius.[211] The dominant themes pervasive throughout the entirety of the *Periphyseon*'s fifth book are exactly the same themes that demonstrate the synchronicity of the two thinkers' theo-philosophies. As McEvoy writes:

> … one puts together the preoccupation of both authors with the elaboration of a Christology which would be cosmic, rather than primarily soteriological (in the classic Latin style), … which would therefore owe something to the absorption of each in Greek theology, and if one adds to that their exaltation of human nature as *dignissima creatura*; if one recalls, that, in the thought of both men, all things stand together, in unity, in the Word before creation, and that the unity of origin is also the unity of the return, mediated by the Word incarnate who leads all natures and all creation back in a circle towards their primordial origin, and who unites human nature to the divine (*deificatio*) it becomes ever more difficult to account for the similarities between Scotus and Grosseteste in terms of a simple accident…[212]

McEvoy, by means of an extended conclusion, ponders the difficulties surrounding the Grossetestean silence as to the possible relationship between himself and Eriugena. It is

[211] Links between Grosseteste and Honorius past what has been briefly detailed here are scant. However, the possibility of a connection increases when one considers the rarity of medieval arguments surrounding the absolute predestination of Christ. Is it really coincidental that only two writers' works prior to Grosseteste have survived the test of time regarding this fairly novel argument and that, from this rather exclusive group, one of them shares both close ideological connections and their works geographical proximity? Any answers to this question are going to remain tentative; to date there is no direct evidence of Grosseteste having read the *Clavis.*
[212] McEvoy, "Eriugena redivivus," 220-1

certainly possible that such a relationship exists and yet Grosseteste knew not who the originator of this knowledge was (much like his usage of the *Homily on the Gospel of St. John*), but this seems unlikely for various reasons. Firstly, the authorship of the second translations of Dionysius was known to some in England,[213] and secondly, Grosseteste was no doubt aware of Scotus' 'role' in the Lanfrancian eucharistic controversy of the time (Lanfranc misattributed the anti-realist work of Ratramnus of Corbie to Eriugena in his attacks on Berengar of Tours, a subscriber to this view of the eucharist).[214] Grosseteste's distaste for a symbolist approach to the eucharist is fairly well documented across his works.[215]

It seems that there is certainly enough circumstantial evidence to tentatively posit a conceptual relationship between Grosseteste and Eriugena, whether it was indirect or otherwise. The significant overlaps of thought lie in the inherent unity of the cosmos, the concomitant potentiality of the material world, the cosmos' relationship with man through his microcosmistic constitution and its incarnational implications and man's own potential for his return to God and eventual deification. Thus far, this entire thesis has attempted to firstly posit a relationship between microcosmism and deification that is situated in man's role in his salvation and secondly, to formulate a chronological development of the subtle microcosmistic doctrine throughout the works of those who have influenced Grosseteste's work either directly, or indirectly. This has been done, to this point, with some reference to Grosseteste's own work, and secondary source material pertinent to Grosseteste. To seriously demonstrate the relationship between knowledge acquisition and spiritual development

[213] Here McEvoy points to William of Malmesbury, *De gestis regum Anglorum* II, 122, ed. William Stubbs. Series Rolls. (London, 1887-9): 131-132.
[214] McEvoy believes Grosseteste's source could have been Hugh of St. Victor, "Expositione In Hierarchia. Celestium. I, 2," in *Prolegomena : Essai Sur La Fondation De L'école de Saint-Victor de Paris par L'abbe Hugonin* (PL 175): 961b-d.
[215] One such example can be found in his *Hexaëmeron* XI, VIII, 3.

within Grosseteste's *corpus*, one must scrutinise Grosseteste's output as will occur in chapter four. However, before such analysis can take place, it may be helpful to fully appreciate the intellectual proximity between Grosseteste and the school of Chartres: a proximity that hints to more than mere noetic.

Chapter Three - The School of Chartres

3.1. Introduction

Chartres is particularly important to this thesis, however there is an important distinction to be made here before explication of its relevance. The difference is between the schools *of* the respective place, and the schools *at* the respective place. The 'school of' term refers to a certain train of thought that prevailed through a number of students and masters that can arguably be traced back to experiences in, or around, their respective school. For instance, there is a modern debate surrounding whether or not the school of Chartres was particularly humanistic as indeed the wider academic consensus proclaims it to be. The school of Chartres has supposedly played a vital role in the cause of humanism, by publishing and disseminating works of a 'progressive' and optimistic vigour. The works that history has transpired to deem 'Chartrian', have included unique cosmologies, theological tractates, and more philosophical works.

Much of the dialogue surrounding the controversy between the importance placed upon the school of Chartres is between the wider academic community and Richard Southern, who, in 1970, and again some years later (amended with responses to criticism), wrote a persuasive polemic on Chartres' eminent place in the history of scholastic and humanist thought. Southern argues for a number of inaccuracies in the historical scholarship and declares, rather haphazardly, that one cannot be certain as to where some of the relevant scholars were and when, as well as who taught whom and popular possible misidentifications. Southern's responses to his critics are interesting and offer a brief survey on the Chartrian historiography. He categorises his opponents into three. Firstly, the 'outright' defenders of the school of Chartres who maintain that Southern's conceptions are misguided and that the school of Chartres was '… the outstanding school of the first half of the twelfth century in the

quality of its masters, the innovating force of their teaching and the … clarity and peculiar beauty of their doctrinal innovations.'[1] The second is that to which has already been alluded, the more modern approach that develops the idea of Chartrian work not as scholarship originating from a geographical location but rather as a train of thought. The third is once again a single opinion, that of Peter Dronke,[2] which readily lends itself to the first form of criticism with the added idea that whilst many of Southern's criticisms may be true, there is a 'real division between the learning and learned attitudes represented by the school of, and at, Chartres and those of other schools', and therefore enough to vindicate the 'outright defenders' of the school of Chartres.[3] This thesis will combine two of these criticisms to remain as tentative as possible with regard to any conclusions drawn from work on the influence of the school. To be clear, whilst Southern's critiques may or may not be correct, there certainly seems to be a distinctive train of thought prevalent throughout a corpus of work between varying scholars all with an attachment to the school. As such, it is fair to suggest that describing the works explicated by these affiliates of the school as a unique highlight within a growing trend of scholastic thought is a rather safe and tenable position.

The affiliates of the school include illustrious characters such as Bernard of Chartres (1070 - 1130), William of Conches (1090 - 1154), Thierry of Chartres (1100 - 1150), John of Salisbury (1120 - 1180) and Bernard Silvestris (d. 1178). During the Twelfth-Century Renaissance, these scholars' work amongst many others affiliated or unaffiliated with the school, promoted the study of the universe, humanity, and mankind's place within it. It is this cosmology and subsequent anthropology of the Chartrians that is most pertinent to this background chapter as various concepts such as the *anima mundi (*the world soul), and

[1] Southern, *Scholastic Humanism*, 88-89.
[2] As can be seen in Peter Dronke, "New Approaches to the School of Chartres," *Annuario de estudios medievales* 6 (1969): 117-40.
[3] Ibid.

controversies over their theological positions, most notably the more modern debate surrounding either their supposed pantheism or panentheism (the latter distinguishing a distinction between the divine and the non-divine), align them with certain aspects of Grosseteste's own thought. With panentheism God, much like pantheism literally indwells within his creation, and yet for panentheists, He remains distinct from it; he goes beyond it. It is this last discretionary qualifier, this distinctness, that despite the supposed pantheistic view, the created universe is still distinctively non-divine, that brought Chartrian thinking away from heretical boundaries and into the realm of (still) radical, panentheistic, thought. This is a theme of those linked with the school of Chartres, and other slightly more radical scholastics at the time; their possible self-censorship allowed their views to be heard and interpreted whilst still toeing the orthodox line. The cosmologies originating from Chartres were heavily Neo-Platonic and, according to Winthrop Wetherbee, reflect not '…the ingrained idealism of the Augustinian tradition, but … a new interest in Plato himself.'[4] The self-censored panentheism of the Chartrians is important to note because, as will become apparent, Grosseteste's theo-philosophy certainly borders the heterodox boundary more forcefully.

These cosmologies were important because they allowed, and indeed actively encouraged, the use of reason.

> That the visible universe is a coherent cosmos, informed by soul and modelled on an ideal exemplar, was fundamental, and to the extent that the world-soul and the archetype were seen as manifestations of God, of his goodness and

[4] Winthrop Wetherbee, *Platonism and Poetry in the Twelfth Century: The Literary Influence of the School of Chartres* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015): 24.

> wisdom, they could render his activity accessible to reason through the visible universe.[5]

Wetherbee also discusses the anthropological implications of these cosmologies. According to the *Timaeus*, humans are a universe, restricted by the laws of nature and composed by the elements:

> … to know nature was to know man, and hence an appreciation of the organicity and inner coherence of the universe could lead to a view of nature and natural law as a standard for the regulation of human society … and in the philosophical poetry of the later twelfth century, Natura becomes, like Boethius' *Philosophia*, a goddess, a manifestation of wisdom.[6]

The School of Chartres exemplifies the growing trend to apply newer, somewhat experimental and broadly speaking philosophical, approaches to existing Christian and non-Christian texts and the generation of more rational responses. While it may be true that the *Timeaus* for example, could offer little more than it had for the previous centuries it had been circulated in with regards to scientific discovery, it could offer more through novel approaches to it, such as through the concept of *integumentum*.

The concept of *integumentum*, or 'covering', allowed those of the School of Chartres to propose that in some way, the pagan philosophers had almost come to the correct conclusions as revealed by divine revelation. Plato's metaphysical ideas relating to the creation of the world and the divine hierarchy seemed to fit with Christian doctrine, but to say so was

[5] Wetherbee, *Platonism and Poetry in the Twelfth Century*, 25.
[6] Ibid.

heretical, as per Abelard at Soissons.[7] *Integumentum* allowed the interpreter to establish Christian truth underneath the pagan philosophy. As Willemien Otten states:

> …in the 'mileu' of the School of Chartres… the device of *integumentum* was widely used for profane literature in the same manner allegory was being used with regard to biblical literature. It … was used to discover a profound Christian truth, underneath what appeared to be pagan trappings.[8]

Grosseteste's epistemology is the sum of his cosmological and metaphysical understandings of the universe and humanity. These views are in large part owed to the daring of philosophers such as William of Conches, who, by utilising *integumentum* enabled the interpretation of philosophy theologically. Before moving forward, an overview of the Platonic hierarchy will be given.

For Plato, as can seen in his *Timaeus,* the basic structure of the Divine is as follows.[9] Firstly, at the top of the hierarchy sits the Demiurge, or the craftsman: an entity that brings order to eternal chaos. The demiurge brings order to the chaos through two other entities: the *Nous* and the World-Soul. The Nous is the divine intelligence, the mind of this god. It is the location of the divine exemplars of all created things, translated now as 'Forms' or 'Ideas'. What animates these Forms or Ideas is the World-Soul, acting upon the will of the Demiurge. If one were to leave aside the obvious importance of the great craftsman as it parallels to

[7] William Levitan, Peter Abelard, and Debra Nails. "History of Calamities," *New England Review* 25 (2004): 9–35; 21.
[8]Willemien Otten. "Between damnation and restoration: the dynamics of human nature in Eriugena's *Periphyseon* and Alan of Lille's *Anticlaudianus*," in *From Athens to Chartres: neoplatonism and medieval thought: studies in honour of Edouard Jeauneau,* ed. Haijo Wan Westra (New York: E.J. Brill, 1992) 329-349: 342
[9] References this thesis makes towards the *Timaeus* unless otherwise stated will always refer to: Plato, *Timeaus and Critias* trans. Robin Waterfield (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Christian theology, the two entities remaining are imperative to understanding not only the different ways in which medieval Christian theologians attempted to experiment with theological interpretation like the Chartrians', but also their epistemology more generally, due to the historical efforts of Christianising Neo-platonic works.

The World Soul as Holy Spirit theory is perhaps propagated most fully in William of Conches' *De philosophia mundi*, where he advocates that the *anima mundi*, or the World Soul is the same as the Holy Spirit. As Jack Cunningham writes in *Robert Grosseteste and the Pursuit of Learning in the Thirteenth Century*, in the first instance, this is a brave thing to do. It is brave because, thanks to Abelard's *Theologia Sumnii Boni*, this particular theory had already been condemned at the Council of Soissons in 1121 as heretical.[10] In Plato's *Timaeus* he states that the World Soul itself is created by blending together three ingredients; being, difference and substance.[11] It is the 'supreme creation of the supreme intelligible and eternally existing being.'[12] The actual appearance of the World-Soul is that of eight interlocking rings that continuously revolve around each other. Plato's description of the creation of these rings lends to the craftsman's endeavour a mathematical veracity. It is quite a complex mathematical formula, and one that has very important implications. If the World Soul, the very thing that initiates movement in the world is guided by reason, and itself is created due to very precise measurements, then so too must the world that it drives. This theory encouraged those at the School of Chartres to look towards nature as a source of theological knowledge.

[10] Jack P. Cunningham, "Robert Grosseteste and the Pursuit of Learning in the Thirteenth Century," in *Robert Grosseteste and the Pursuit of Religious and Scientific Learning in the Middle Ages* (Switzerland: Springer, 2016): 41-57; 45-6.
[11] *Timaeus* 35b. The ingredients are usually referred to as sameness (identity), substance (being) and difference.
[12] *Timaeus* 37a

As well as the mathematics underpinning the concept of the World-Soul, the way in which the human soul is created is pivotal to developing Plato as a source of theological knowledge. This is because humans, according to the *Timaeus*, are created in the same way the World-Soul was, except to a less pure and less precise extent.

The craftsman returns to the left-overs of the ingredients he used in creating the World-Soul and mixes them together once again. With his creation complete, he dictates to the souls the consequences of their creation, such as perception, desire, pleasure, pain and fear, and passion. He then allows the stars to travel on their 'chariots' (each soul is assigned to a star) and entrusts the creation of their physical bodies to lesser gods, created beforehand. These lesser gods then create the mortal bodies:

> … in imitation of the craftsman-god who had made them, withdrew from the world, as a temporary loan, portions of fire, earth, water and air, and fastened them together. However, they didn't use the indestructible bonds with which they themselves were held together, but joined the portions together with countless rivets, too minute to see, and made each body a unified whole consisting of all four ingredients. They then bound the revolutions of the immortal soul into the body with its ebbs and flows.[13]

An individual's soul is the driver of reason, and the infusion of their soul into a body plagued with sensations that irritate and corrupt the revolutions of their soul complicates their ability to reason. Hence, for Plato, when the soul is first infused into a mortal body (as in, a newly born human) it is so difficult for that body to reason. It is only through time and education

[13] *Timaeus*, 43a.

that the soul's rings manage to return to their original circuits, and then humans are, once again, able to develop themselves;

> … eventually the stream of growth and nurture abates, and with the passage of time the circular motions regain tranquillity and return to their proper courses … From then on, as each of the rings regains its normal shape, their revolutions become less erratic, begin to identify difference and identity correctly, and make their possessor intelligent … if proper nurture is supported by education, a person will become perfectly whole and healthy … but if he cares nothing for education, he will limp his way through life and return to Hades unfulfilled and stupid.[14]

The importance of the World-Soul then is three-fold. Firstly, its formulaic creation hints at a mathematical and structured foundation for the study of the World as a unified totality guided by reason. Secondly, an individual's soul is created by the same essence as that of the universe. This is the development of the Macrocosm/Microcosm theory. Whatever happens in the universe, also applies to human beings, as we are made one and the same. Study of nature is the study of humanity, and this is a highly important piece of anthropology that is picked up on in Grosseteste, and this Macrocosm/Microcosm concept will be central to elucidating Grosseteste's own cosmogony. Thirdly, in demonstrating the application of an individual's immortal soul into their mortal body and emphasising the importance of the soul over the body, Plato highlights one of the most influential aspects of Christian theology, the dichotomy between the body and the soul. The World-Soul as a concept allows the bridging of theology and natural philosophy. The Neo-Platonic elements of Eriugena's is perhaps most

[14] *Timaeus*, 44b-c.

distinctly on show here, and it is here where Grosseteste's own unique philosophy is most easily identifiable. The triple action of allowing nature to become a source of theological knowledge, concreting humanity's creation as fundamental to the entire, grand cosmic narrative and describing how the World-Soul is the mathematical foundation of creation, gave Grosseteste an opportunity to link his extraordinarily complex light metaphysics (itself based on his unique experiences of working with optics) to that of creation, and therefore, the Christian god that is for all intents and purposes the first light, as will be posited in chapter four.

It is this experimental and newly philosophical approach to theological enquiry that personified the period before Grosseteste, especially in Paris. Here, one learnt the skills of logic and reason, and thoroughly applied them to a host of enquiries varied in their subject. Generally speaking, in Laon one would be taught Biblical exegesis, whereas in Bologna, law. In Salerno the scholar pursued medicine and in other cities such as Hereford the specialism has been, somewhat surprisingly, reported to be Arabic and Greek natural philosophy.[15]

The School of Chartres' impact upon the works of Grosseteste however, is hard to ascertain. There are certainly a plethora of conceptual similarities between them. However, conceptual parallelism on its own is not a meaningful requisite for belief in a relationship. However, due to gaps in the historical record, there are questions related to the whereabouts of Grosseteste at numerous times in his life.[16]

[15] This is particularly noteworthy as it is thought that Grosseteste may have been a member of the Bishop of Hereford's household in the 'unknown' period of his life; this could explain his admiration of, and immersion in, Arabic and Greek philosophy despite the generally hostile attitude emanating from the Church regarding it. This will be elaborated upon later.

[16] For a detailed discussion of Grosseteste's whereabouts, see: Giles E. M. Gasper, "Sounding a *Sonativum*," 182-5.

Firstly, geographical proximity. The general academic consensus places Grosseteste's whereabouts for a significant period of time in Paris. Whether this is true or not is based on a variety of factors, mostly, the conceptual similarities with certain Parisian scholars. Secondly, if this is sound reasoning, if one were able to draw conceptual comparisons between Grosseteste and the School of Chartres, alongside the geographical proximity to Paris, one would be inclined to at least suppose the idea as possible, or perhaps even probable. Thirdly, a prominent Chartrian, Alan of Lille, discussed herein, is an early contemporary of Grosseteste. Again, the geographical connection remains, comparisons can be made of a plethora of conceptual ideas,[17] as well as the idea Alan of Lille perhaps continuing and developing the work William of Conches,[18] the Chartrian already drawing comparisons with Grosseteste.[19] Finally, Grosseteste does not always refer to his source material for whatever reason and one could even conclude he has a penchant for dubious doctrine and this is certainly true of the Chartrians, with some of the prominent figures' views being branded as heretical, or at the very least, tainted with suspicion. Therefore, Grosseteste's explicit omission of the school of Chartres in his writing should not reinforce one's belief in there being no connection, rather, with the conceptual comparisons and geographical proximity discussed above in mind as well as his penchant for troublesome doctrine, one might be allowed to suggest that Grosseteste's silence on this possible influence may be evidence of a tacit approval of it.

[17] Grosseteste's 'argument from unity' being the most unorthodox and central to both.
[18] William of Conches and Alan of Lille use the same definition of nature for instance (*natura est ius quaedam rebus insita, similia de similibus operans*). See: Willemien Otten, *From Paradise to Paradigm: a Study of Twelfth Century Humanism* (Netherlands: Brill, 2004): 118.
[19] In this chapter, Cunningham draws the comparison between Grosseteste's usage of the World-Soul in his *De Sphera* with William of Conches' use in his *Philosophia Mundi* and thus asks the question as to whether there is a possible link between them. This is based on the idea that the World-Soul was only really developed as a proper theory during the Twelfth-Century Renaissance.

Chartrian thought, much like Grosseteste's, also emphasises the relationship between humanity and the cosmos as well as several other similar key themes, such as humanity's sensible and rational abilities imparted in the act of creation, our need to use them toward the salvation of the cosmos and toward the attainment of deification. The continued centralisation of man's relationship with nature is perhaps, similarly to the Greek patristic writers and Eriugena, the biggest influence on Grosseteste's thought; this section of the thesis will look to develop this centralisation that itself is built upon microcosmism and culminates in deification. In essence, the Chartrians discussed here proffer a positive anthropology; one in which humans, through the aid of their innate powers and natural (and thus material) surroundings and divine revelation, progress toward deification. As demonstrated earlier, Eriugena, building upon a rich Greek Patristic legacy, glorifies the material world as humanity's instrument with which to return to God. It is this that enables Winthrop Wetherbee to strongly assert that Bernardus Silvestris' (†1178) *Cosmographia*, one of the most influential cosmological (and indeed microcosmistic) medieval works is highly resonant of Eriugena's *Periphyseon*:

> The most important source of this Christian Neo-Platonist element [the idea that 'man will, through knowledge, reattain his original dignity and so become immortal'] in the *Cosmographia* seems to me to be the *De divisione naturae* of Johannes Scotus Eriugena … [it is he who] provides the theological and philosophical basis for the dynamic view of material potentiality which is so important a feature in Bernardus' allegory … I have discovered no single work

> which corresponds so closely to Bernardus' conception of the human situation as the *De divisione*.[20]

'Material potentiality' is the most central theme that runs throughout this chapter's discussion of Grosseteste's sources of influence; materiality, in the natural sense, is another conduit of divine revelation through a symbolic epistemology. It is no coincidence that the very means by which many of the Chartrians demonstrate theological truth is allegory and that their focus is very much on the natural world and its relationship with the divine. However, there are distinct differences, conclusions and approaches that need to be considered across the small cross-section of the Chartrian milieu to be discussed. The central themes of William of Conches' *Dragmaticon philopshiae,* written c.1144 for example, will allow for a greater appreciation for the Chartrian centralisation of the role of natural philosophy. The focus of the work exemplifies the marriage between naturalism and rationalism on display at the school of Chartres and undeniably has a great impact on other works such as Bernardus' *Cosmographia* and Alan of Lille's *Plaint of Nature* and *Anticlaudianus*. It is through the two latter writers that a more direct relationship can be identified with Robert Grosseteste.

3.2. William of Conches

Conches' belief in the *anima mundi* was symptomatic of a larger worldview; a belief that the workings of nature, or *natura operans*, is the window by which man can acquire knowledge of God. *Natura operans* is a very distinct concept;

[20] Winthrop Wetherbee, *The Cosmographia of Bernardus Silvestris: A Translation with Introduction* (Columbia University Press: New York and London, 1973): 32-3.

> [it] indicates a level of independence of the universe from God, as creation departs from its divinely controlled created status to work out its own goals, especially insofar as they relate to nature's detailed governance of the universe … [it] is an integral part of its [the Chartrians'] humanist outlook, [and yet] it cannot so easily be relegated to the status of a mere preamble to thirteenth-century natural science. There is simply too much interweaving with the arts of rhetoric and grammar going on … nature is above all perceived as another voice in the trialogue [between man, nature and God].[21]

The very structure of the universe and its study and elucidation yields knowledge of God. This determination brings a whole new level to the term 'material potentiality'; William surveys the entire make-up of life, death and everything in between in an effort to greater understand God and the way in which He works. As Willemien Otten states, 'The desire to reveal the world as organically tied to its Maker provides the spark, so to speak, which sets the minds of these authors [the other Chartrians discussed herein] ablaze.'[22]

Otten suggests that William of Conches attempts to 'open the universe' in two ways: firstly, he '… expanded the horizon of natural science by developing an interest in even its tiniest parts, stretching its range into its most remote regions.'[23] Yet his rational works are conveyed with a high degree of literary subtlety;

> [it] is almost the opposite of discursive argumentation and linear causality, based as it is on a sophisticated process of evocation imagination. Approached

[21] Otten, *From Paradise to Paradigm*, 4.
[22] Ibid., 10.
[23] Ibid., 87

> from that angle, William belongs more in the company of his twelfth-century literary peers, such as Bernard Silvestris and Alan of Lille.[24]

The blend of serious rational analysis and literary nuance is emblematic of the Chartrians, but whilst the form of the written word is important, an exploration of both William's literary style and his work's focus on natural philosophy is beyond the realms of this section of the thesis. As such, a discussion of his literary style will not occur for William's pertinent legacy lies within his nascent scientific worldview. This naturalism relies upon a definition of philosophy which states that ''Philosophy is the comprehension of those things which are and are not seen, and the true comprehension of those things that are and are seen.'[25] The idea that humanity has the ability to comprehend these things lays the groundwork for the twelfth-century West to promote a newly-invigorated positive anthropology which is supported by microcosmistic implications and ends with the deification and the re-unification of the cosmos with God. As will be suggested, it is within the humanistic endeavour of the twelfth century that a blossoming yearning for the new *libri naturales* of Aristotle began which ultimately led to Neo-Platonism's dwindling pre-eminence in medieval metaphysical thought.[26]

Many scholars of the twelfth century looked to Plato's *Timaeus* like the Greek Fathers did centuries before. It has even been argued that William may have even seen Plato's work as a better source of knowledge concerning the creation of the world than the book of Genesis.[27]

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[24] Otten, *From Paradise to Paradigm*, 86.
[25] William of Conches, "Philosophia Mundi I, I," in *Philosophia mundi: Ausgabe des. 1. Buchs von Wilhelm von Conches' Philosophia mit Anhang, Übersetzung und Anmerkungen,* ed. Maurach (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1974): §418. In Latin: *Philosophia est eorum quae sunt et non videntur, et eorum quae sunt et videntur vera comprehensio'.* All references to the *Philosophia mundi* will refer to this edition unless otherwise stated.
[26] *Libri naturales* refers to works on nature.
[27] Otten, *From Paradise to Paradigm*, 89.

This is a consequence of William's definition of philosophy given above; if philosophy's remit was the comprehension of all things seen and unseen, then Genesis alone simply does not stand up to the more comprehensive *Timaeus*. Again, it is the allure of the knowledge of the invisible through the study of what is visible which tempts. Again, Romans 1:20 is prescient.[28] This is Otten's argument; the 'unseen' becomes conflated with the 'true being' of nature. A notable example of the unseen that is proffered in the *Timaeus* and not in Genesis is that of the *anima mundi*. On the other hand, Genesis discusses, during the second day of creation, God's creation of the supracelestial waters that reside above the firmament. Otten parallels the conflicting deliberations concerning these waters between William and Peter Abelard (1079 - 1142); the latter in effect, dismisses them whereas William, seizing upon their imperceptibility, leaps at the chance to 'inspect the laws of physical causality more closely … It is as if the very fact that he [sic] waters above the firmament were invisible seemed to have launched their case forward … so as to capture William and others interested in explaining the workings of creation'.[29]

William's desire to gain knowledge of the imperceptible is what makes him so eminently pertinent to this thesis. Otten explains:

> The use of this definition [of philosophy] enabled William to make progress in his systemic investigation of the universe on two counts. First, operating on the Platonic premise that unseen reality ranks higher in the hierarchy of nature than visible manifestation, William tended to consider non-visibility as a mystery inspiring him to search for a deeper truth. Second, since this deeper truth was

[28] For clarity, Romans 1:20 states: Ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature, namely, His eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made.
[29] Otten, *From Paradise to Paradigm*, 91. Otten then goes on to discuss how this effects William's conception of the elements on 91-92.

> naturally situated on the level of intelligibility rather than sense perception, knowledge of this truth could help to lay bare the workings of nature on the level of cause rather than effect. In William's view, the only proper way for the scientist or philosopher to arrive at this level of higher truths was by abstracting from the visible effects to capture the invisible causes.[30]

William, due in part to his thoughts on the similarities between the *anima mundi* and the second person of the Trinity, draws many comparisons with Peter Abelard.[31] These comparisons persist because of William's similarly overt belief in the possibility of purely rational explanations pertaining to the structure and workings of nature. This should come as no surprise; the senses are absolutely instrumental in allowing humanity to see, touch, taste, smell and hear the sensible world around them; but it is in combination with humankind's rational powers that one is able to abstract the information from this data, to the imperceptible causes. The combination of humanity's sensible and rational faculties aimed at understanding the causes and effects of natural phenomena (as a means of better understanding God's creative prowess) is, perhaps, put simply, the fundamental approach of scientific investigation. Of course, to modern observers this seems an obvious, reductionist and wholly vague account of the humble beginnings of scientific methodology, and yet, in the twelfth-century Latinate West, this was a new and exciting development.

Many in academia, for good reason, make much of the reception of Aristotelianism in the Latinate West with regard to the generation of 'scientific' endeavour, but there are many under-appreciated reasons for this process occurring. The Western translation movement

[30] Otten, *From Paradise to Paradigm*, 93.
[31] This can be found in Conches, *Philosophia mundi* I, III § 12-IV § 13: 22-23.

occurred concurrently with the reception of Aristotle; it took a long period of time before the *corpus Aristotelicum* was properly produced and yet, many scholars seemingly paint the picture of a homogenous mass of re-discovered Greek philosophy penetrating theological and philosophical discourse on every level. As Andreas Speer writes, 'Accounts of this sort ultimately prove unsatisfactory. For they leave the decisive questions out of consideration: What sparked interest in the Aristotelian writings? What motivated the desire for comprehensive translations of both Greek and Arabic texts?'[32] Speer argues that the renewed conceptualisation of nature worked out by the Chartrians played an important role in the mediation of the idea of a material world that is eminently symbolic and open to study. He recounts Fr. Chenu's subject-defining *La théologie au douziéme siécle*, and writes,

> There was, he [Chenu] suggests, a transformation in the theoretical conceptualization of nature and thus in man's relationship with nature. Chenu describes the twelfth century's departure from a speculative investigation of nature proceeding through the use of symbols. In this view, nature can be read like a book, indeed, like Scripture, for God is supposed to be the author of both books, and human beings are able to know their creator through both. In place of this symbolic understanding of nature, there emerged an original interest in the structure, constitution, and laws proper to physical reality. Reason begins increasingly to seek to acquire knowledge of these things through scientific methods … [33]

Furthermore, Speer notes the Chartrian trait of always wanting to unify the cosmos:

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[32] Andreas Speer, "The Discovery of Nature: The Contribution of the Chartrians to Twelfth-Century Attempts to Found a "Scientia Naturalis"," *Traditio* 52 (1997): 135-151; 136.
[33] Ibid., 138.

> This [unifying impulse] comes to expression in its claim to lead the mind from the *causae rerum* underlying natural phenomena back to common final causes themselves The underlying engine of the "unifying impulse" attempts to ground a *scientia naturalis* here explored has two constant points of reference: Genesis and the *Timaeus*. The effort to articulate a theoretical account, expressed in certain general principles, of the world as a totality, derives from expositions of the text of Genesis made in accordance with the *Timaeus*'s quest for a cosmogony.[34]

To give an example of Conches' zealous regard for the role of reason, one may look to his case on the supracelestial waters, previously alluded to above. William discusses these waters that are revealed in Genesis 1:6 in a variety of his works, most notably in his commentary on Macrobius' *In somnium Scipionis*, and in his *Philosophia Mundi*.[35] Whilst William's refutation of Macrobius' argument is tangential to this thesis' scope, what is significant is the way in which he builds his own argument. William does not refer to anything religious in his rebuttal of Macrobius; his treatment of the supracelestial waters is entirely constructed within the realms of natural philosophy, an important development highlighting the re-examination of biblical accounts in light of more contemporary scientific understandings of the cosmos, *not* theology.[36]

[34] Speer, "*The Discovery of Nature*," 149.
[35] Genesis 1:6: "And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters."
[36] His rebuttal can be found here: William of Conches, *Glosae super Macrobii in somnium Scipionis* I. 17, 8. For an English translation, see: William of Conches. Glosae super Macrobium, ed. Helen E. Rodnite Lemay. In 'The Doctrine of the Trinity in Guillaume de Conches' Glosses on Macrobius. PhD Columbia University, 1973.

Related to William's convictions surrounding interpretations of scripture, a startling and well-quoted passage is particularly illustrative of William's views on the strained relationship between religious conservatives (who were typically located in the cloisters) and the slow encroachment of rationalism (as found in the newly emergent schools) in the theological realm. He writes:

> But I know what they [the theologians in their cloisters] will say, "We do not know how this might be, but we know God is able to do it." Miserable creatures! What is more miserable than to say something exists simply because God is able to make it and not to see that it exists so, nor to have a reason why it exists so, nor to show any use for which it exists. For God does not make everything he is able to make. As the peasant is accustomed to say, "God can make a calf from a tree trunk. Has he ever done it?" Let them either show a reason or use for which it exists, or let them cease declaring it exists in such a fashion.[37]

Such a statement readily affirms the young William's belief in the power of rationalism as opposed to the ever-growing fideism in the cloisters. Much discourse surrounds William's recantations in his more mature *Dragmaticon*. For instance, his views on the non-conflation of the Holy Spirit and the World Soul, and his views on Eve not actually being created from Adam's rib. Under the onslaught of ecclesial attack, William explicitly concedes his

[37] This quotation is from John Newell, "Rationalism at the School of Chartres," *Vivarium* 23, No. 2 (1983): 108-126. It is a translation from William of Conches, *Philosophia mundi*, I.45: 39. In Latin: *Sed scio quid dicent: 'Nos nescimus, qualiter hoc sit, sed scimus dominum posse facere .' Miseri! Quid miserius quam dicere: 'istud est, quia deus illud facere potest,' nec videre sic esse nec rationem habere, quare sic sit, nec utilitatem ostendere, ad quam hoc sit? Non enim quidquid deus potest facere facit. Ut autem verbis rustici utar: 'Potens est deus de trunco facere vitulum': Fecitne umquam? Vel igitur ostendant rationem quare, vel utilitatem ad quam hoc sit; vel sic esse iudicare desinant.*'

theological theory, and his scientific exegetical account of the creation of Eve. However, whilst at least, for William, these are merely theories, he maintains his position on the waters above the firmament and holds true to his natural philosophical rationale. In the *Dragmaticon*, a dialogue between an unnamed philosopher (William) and the Duke of Normandy and Count of Anjou, William writes: [38]

> What is more foolish to assume that something exists simply because the Creator is able to make it? Does He make whatever He can? Therefore, whoever says that God makes anything contrary to nature should either see that it is so with his own eyes, or show the reason for its being so, or demonstrate the advantage of its being so.[39]

Interestingly, William goes one further; in directly contradicting Bede, as the Duke points out, William replies,

> In those matters that pertain to the Catholic faith or moral instruction, it is not allowed to contradict Bede or any other of the holy fathers. If, however, they err in those matters that pertain to physics, it is permitted to state an opposite view. For although greater than we, they were only human.[40]

[38] The *Dragmaticon* was written after William had left Chartres (or Paris) as a result of the attacks from ecclesiastics, namely William of St. Thierry. The Duke therefore is probably a reference to Geoffrey Plantagenet. William was probably a tutor to the duke's two sons, one of whom, Henry, would become Henry II, king of England.
[39] William of Conches, *A Dialogue on Natural Philosophy* (*Dragmaticon philosophiae*) trans. Italo Ronca and Matthew Curr (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997): 40. All references to the *Dragmaticon* will refer to this English translation unless otherwise stated.
[40] Ibid., 39.

William then posits his fully-fledged support to the utilisation of man's sensible and rational powers; they are to be used together to fully gain as much knowledge of creation as possible. However, belief in the supremacy of one's rational powers resides within William. This can be evidenced in his discussion immediately after he has made his case for the supracelestial waters. William wrote that because our senses fail a lot of the time, one must use reason to comprehend the truth behind the faulty sensible data:

> Although each one of our senses is deceptive in many ways, our sight is the most deceptive of all. A staff, though in one piece, seems broken in the water. Two towers, if viewed from afar, appear joined together, although they are at some distance from each other. Although the Sun is eight times larger than the earth, it appears to be less than two feet in diameter.'[41]

The supremacy of reason for William is evident; it corrects potentially false judgements built upon sensible data. This is what William defines as intelligence; '… intelligence is the true and certain judgement about incorporeal things.'[42] Reason is the very vehicle that transforms mere knowledge of the visible world into intelligence of the invisible. In his *Glosae super Boetium* William posits that:

> … through reason man knows the nature and properties of things and he knows that some naturally heavy bodies, such as the human body, move, and he knows that there is something other than the body itself which so moves the body because since the body is naturally heavy it cannot move itself. It is therefore

[41] Conches, *Dragmaticon*, 40.
[42] Ibid., 171.

> moved by something else. And so with reason leading, man attains knowledge of incorporeals and similarly knowledge of the creator.[43]

As Otten points out, there seems to be, in William, a:

> …fundamental congruity between the cosmological process of creation on the one hand and the epistemological process of human discovery on the other … the *Dragmaticon* seems to make it almost impossible for its readers to adjudicate which comes first…[44]

This congruity can be seen between the first and last of the *Dragmaticon*'s books. It is through the laborious process of contemplating and interpreting the material symbols scattered across the natural world, and in the flexing of his rational prowess, that man reach the 'clarity of intelligence:'[45]

> Intelligence is born of reason not because reason becomes intelligence, but because it is the cause of it. For as most people, led by reason, recognized the nature of bodies, they considered what bodies were able to achieve, and perceiving [certain] actions that could not be from bodies, they realized that their agent could not be anything corporeal. They called this agent the spirit, and directing the sharpness of their intellects to it, first they formed opinions about

[43] This quotation is taken from Newell, *Rationalism at the School of Chartres*, 115. It is a quotation from William of Conches, *Glosae super Boetium* 5, (CCCM 158): "*... per rationem cognoscit homo naturam rerum et proprietates. Et cognoscit quedam corpora gravia naturaliter moveri ut humanum corpus et cognoscit quod aliud est quam corpus quod ita movet corpus quia cum corpus naturaliter sit grave ex se non habet quod movetur. Ergo ex alio. Et ita ratione ducente pervenit homo ad cognitionem incorporeorum. Similiter ad cognitionem creatoris*.'
[44] Otten, *From Paradise to Paradigm*, 122.
[45] Ibid.

> it, some false, some true. They eliminated the false opinions by long and laborious efforts and confirmed the true ones by necessary arguments. And so, under the guidance of reason, intelligence was born. For intelligence is the true and certain judgement about incorporeal things. [46]

The above reflects the cosmological process: 'just as material creation took shape gradually, as the elements began to experience the impulses that stemmed from their innate qualities, so intelligence is born'.[47] William of Conches' world-view parallels that of Grosseteste's. It is humanity's vocation to utilise their own, innate, God-given powers to reckon with their natural surroundings and acquire the knowledge proceeding down from God, through the book of nature, as divine revelation. The natural world, acting as a sea of symbols is a conduit of divine revelation and therefore provides the framework by which man is to ascend to his own divinity and be reunited with his creator. Directly following the above quotation William writes, 'This kind of intelligence ascends from us to the Creator.'[48] As a direct opponent to the fideism emanating from the cloisters, William ferociously attacks the idea that God arbitrarily acts; if his creation is a perfectly ordered cosmos, then it is open to investigation; if it is open to investigation, then it must be investigated; if it must be investigated, then by who else but man, an image of God? Towards the end of his masterful *Dragmaticon* William discusses the importance of teaching and learning, and in so doing recalls a humorous story that perfectly captures the essence of his philosophy:

> The end of learning is nothing but death. So, when a certain learned man was asked at what point in life learning should end, he replied, "When life itself

[46] Conches, *Dragmaticon*, 171.
[47] Otten, *From Paradise to Paradigm*, 123.
[48] Conches, *Dragmaticon*, 171.

> ends." Another one , a philosopher, while he was dying in his nineties, asked by a pupil whether he regretted death, answered, "Yes, I regret it." As the other asked, "Why?" he replied, "Because I was just beginning to learn."[49]

Knowledge is the most important possession of man and the key to his continued understanding of God's work and His glory. The way man attains this knowledge is through the directed use of his innate rational and sensible powers. As William points out in the last line of his *Dragmaticon*, '… it is through the knowledge of the creatures that we arrive at knowledge of the creator.'[50]

3.3. A Chartrian Connection? Material Potentiality and Eriugena

Once again, the potentiality of the material world is of the utmost concern. Dionysius and Eriugena have already developed ideas central to the potential epistemological value inherent within creation acting as a sea of symbols, but now, through a re-reading of Plato's *Timaeus*, the Latin West is adumbrating similarly.[51] Whilst no substantial evidence presently exists on the Eriugenian influence on Chartres, the conceptual similarities are very tempting and persuasive. As above, Wetherbee sees no closer affinity to Bernardus' work than Eriugena's *magnum opus*. Similarly, Otten, in her *From Paradise to Paradigm*, concerned with the humanism on display in the twelfth century and focussing predominately on the school of Chartres, introduces Eriugena on the third page of chapter one, declaring his *Periphyseon* 'arguably the most monumental work discussed in this book.'[52] It is also suspected that

[49] Conches, *Dragmaticon*, 174.
[50] Ibid., 175.
[51] Whilst the Latin West are beginning to think similarly to older thinkers in their re-evaluation of patristic and scriptural sources should be noted here that the Chartrians did not simply rely upon the mythological evidence found within Plato himself (at least, through Calcidius); the Chartrians were heavily indebted to the early works of the Neo-Platonists and Stoics also; for instance, in William's *Dragmaticon* he freely draws from sources such as Macrobius and Seneca. Indeed, it could be said that these are among his most-used sources.
[52] Otten, *From Paradise to Paradigm*, 11.

William of Conches, at the very least held Honorius Augustodunesis in esteem; according to Ronca and Curr, translators of William's *Dragmaticon*, whilst referring to the World as an egg, William invokes the popular writer, as well as others, and describes them as philosophers.[53] This is important due to Honorius' *Clavis*, well-known as a summarisation of Eriugena's *Periphyseon*. Honorius' work is a possible Eriugenian influence on Grosseteste in two ways. Firstly, the vast conceptual similarities between the Chartrian scientific world-view painting Natura as an equal partner to humanity in the universe's quest to its creator. Secondly, the Eriugenian idea of Natura as an imperative, all-encompassing instrument of humanity in its role of effecting cosmic *apokatastatic* union.[54] If one can then be allowed to maintain that Eriugena is a conduit of both Latin and, more pertinently, Greek theology and philosophy, and that the golden thread that connects Eriugena's sources and these intellectual influences on Grosseteste is their shared views on material potentiality, one can then surmise that Grosseteste's works also centred around the symbolic nature of the material world. This, even without adding the deificatory doctrine (arguably a Greek conception itself), demonstrates the under-appreciated Greek influence on Grosseteste. Put simply, Eriugena (in whatever guise), may have played a significant role in the development of Chartrian cosmology, philosophy, and ultimately, their quest for rational explanations of natural phenomena. In this way, it is possible, if Grosseteste was receptive to Chartrian work, as I believes he was, then he could have implicitly taken on some Eriugenian noetic. This is, unfortunately, relatively unsatisfactory in delivering a definitive Eriugenian influence upon Grosseteste on its own. However, when joined with the argument proffered above, much indebted to the work of James McEvoy, the argument becomes slightly more plausible. With

[53] For the reference to the World as an egg, see Conches, *Dragmaticon*, 24. For the World as an egg in Honorius, see Honorius Augustodunesis, "Imago mundi I.I," in *Honorii Augustodunensis, Opera Omnium Tomus Unicus* (P.L. 172.121a); William of Conches, *A Dialogue on Natural Philosophy* trans. Italo Ronca and Matthew Curr).

[54] *Apokatastatic* union refers to the restoration of the universe's perfection.

the Chartrians, Grosseteste could have found a much more palatable – certainly less heretical post 1225 – version of Eriugenian naturalism. However, for one to maintain such an argument, evidential support is necessary. To such an end, the ideas contained within two of Alan of Lille's most important works may suffice.

3.4. Alan of Lille

Alan of Lille was a prominent philosopher, poet and theologian, although for him, such distinctions would not apply. Following notable Chartrians like Bernardus Silvestris and his *Cosmographia*, Alan posits a slightly more ambiguous, but no less progressive anthropology, than William of Conches. He was very well acquainted with much of the Chartrian *oeuvre* and repeatedly cites the 'scientific' theories of William of Conches and others, as well as developing poetical form and the ever-growing quasi-divine character of Natura in line with other Chartrians such as Silvestris.[55] Wetherbee believes Alan's work is closely affiliated to that of Gilbert of Poitiers, who much like many Chartrians, ran afoul of the Church for his own trinitarian beliefs.[56] Being heavily influenced by his Chartrian contemporaries, Alan of Lille's work is largely Neo-Platonic, and sought to set philosophical enquiry alongside theological endeavour. Wetherbee points out that for Alan, the remit of the liberal arts,

[55] Winthrop Wetherbee, "Alan of Lille, "De Planctu Naturae": The Fall of Nature and the Survival of Poetry," *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 21 (2011): 223-251. Alan's Chartrian knowledge is aptly demonstrated in Alan's *Anticlaudianus* in his description of Prudence's vision of the heavens: '…Phronesis' eye enjoys this view of the heavens which her sight cannot penetrate: she misses the familiar matter and is stunned by the wonder of so much light.' Alan of Lille, *Anticlaudianus* trans. James J. Sheridan (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1973): 138. The last sentence is built upon the work by William of Conches in his *Philosophia mundi* whereby he discusses an extramissive theory of perception For this: see William of Conches, *Philosophia mundi* 4.26, (P.L. 172.96). All references to Alan's *Anticlaudianus* will refer to Sheridan's translation unless otherwise stated.

[56] 'While Alan's thought was inevitably conditioned by Platonism of this sort [William of Conches *et. al*.], his debt to Gilbert is overriding, and the activity of his Nature is strictly circumscribed by a view of the scope of human knowledge, and the bearing of the Liberal Arts on theological questions that conforms to Gilbert's … He [Gilbert] granted that ideas and language proper to the Liberal Arts could be "transsumed" or "translated" into theological contexts, providing a necessary basis for discussing theological questions, and he acknowledged that the process of creations entails a *conformativa deductio* such that created things must inevitably imitate their divine exemplars.' Wetherbee, "De Planctu Naturae," 225.

philosophy and theology can be situated within creation; 'they harbour the knowledge that would enable man, fully possessed of natural reason, to realize the full capacity of his own nature, his *proprius status* as the mirror and lord of the created universe…'.[57]

Man as the 'mirror and lord of the created universe' points squarely towards microcosmism. Alan of Lille displays this again in an under-appreciated poem, *De Miseria Mundi*. The first stanza reads:

> The whole created world,
> Like a book and a picture,
> Serves us as a mirror,
> Of our life, our fate,
> our state, our death,
> A trustworthy seal.[58]

[57] Wetherbee, "De Planctu Naturae," 226.

[58] This, and the accompanying translation, can be found in Willemien Otten, "Nature and Scripture: Demise of a medieval analogy," *The Harvard Theological Review* 88. (1995): 257-284. The entire poem can be found on pp.283-284. The original Latin is as follows:

Omnis mundi creatura
Quasi liber et pictura
Nobis est in speculum
Nostrae vitae, nostrae sortis,
Nostri status, nostrae mortis
Fidele signaculum

Otten directs her readers to *Ein Jahrtausend lateinischer Hymnendichtung* (2 vols.; ed. Guido Maria Dreves, rev. Clemens Blume S.J.; Leipzig: Reisland, 1909) I. 288 for the full Latin text. Another subtle example of Alan's belief in microcosmistic doctrine can be found in his *Anticlaudianus*: Reason declares '… I honour her [Natura's] effort, directed to the end that a new Lucifer, over whose pure-bright rising no future setting would cast a cloud, should leave home to live on earth; that at the Sun's setting a new Sun should signal his rising; that a new Sun should rise for earth and that at his rising, the Sun of old should be thought to bewail his defects; that he alone should possess what all of us [the virtues] together possess. Thus this one man shall be all men; thus he shall be everything because he will be the one. He shall be one in being but all in virtues.' Alan of Lille, *Anticlaudianus*, 68 (emphasis mine). Another prime example of Alan's use of microcosmistic doctrine – this time elementaristic - is when he demonstrates his Platonic notion of the creation of human bodies. After Prudence's journey is complete, with the perfect soul in hand Natura begins work fashioning it a body; 'Nature seeks ideal matter from which to shape an outstanding lodging, a dwelling in the flesh that the spirit from heaven may enter … She collects from earth all the more purified parts it contains, all the pure parts that water rightly lays claim to, all the purer parts that pure air chooses for itself, all the refined parts that purer fire keeps for itself.' Alan of Lille, *Anticlaudianus*, 173.

As repeatedly demonstrated, as a consequence of humanity's microcosmistic creation, humans are 'fully possessed of natural reason' as well as enjoying sensible faculties. For Alan, as well as many others with a progressive anthropology including Grosseteste, the utilisation of a combination of these powers, directed towards philosophical and theological pursuits was the road towards reunification with God and an individual's eventual deification. Theology and philosophy should meet each other, and one of those meeting points is God's creation, the natural world. Alan of Lille's *Anticlaudianus* highlights this rationale perfectly. The plot is straightforward: Natura, bemoaning the fact she cannot create the perfect man,[59] summons a council of her sisters, the virtues. They eventually agree to send Prudence on a journey to Heaven to beg God for a soul, that Natura can mould the perfect man to it. Prudence departs, acquires the soul, returns to Earth, and Natura creates the *homo perfectus*. The virtues and this *homo novus* defeat the world's vices and initiate the beginning of a *harmonia mundi*. Whilst the simple plot, in that Alan's perfect man instigates universal harmony, presents the idea that people have the ability to become ennobled and thereby ennoble nature, it is the distinct way Alan creates this drama that makes his positive anthropology explicit.

Prudence's journey to God in search of a perfect soul to wed to nature's perfect body is parallel to the human journey towards knowledge of God. If one is to reach such a lofty destination, then the seven liberal arts are the vehicle of choice. In Alan's work they literally make up the carriage Prudence is to be travelling in, and they are naturally pulled along by horses, which are senses. This parallel perfectly encapsulates the Chartrian vision: the seven liberal arts are essentially humankind's toolkit; they are there to use in the study of the book of nature. The knowledge that results from this study is the vital first step towards spiritual

[59] Here it should be noted that Alan's *Anticlaudianus* somewhat follows his earlier work, *De planctu naturae*.

ascension and deification. Of course, it would be an exaggeration to suggest that any of the luminaries thus discussed within this chapter posit the notion that solely through the book of nature one reaches the kind of intellectualism needed to become deiform. As always, and as was certainly true for Alan of Lille, the apotheosis of the material world's potential resides in its ability to provide mankind with the knowledge needed to properly understand God's work, His creation, and our role within it. After that, it is the application of that knowledge that becomes pivotal. This knowledge only gets one so far. This is exactly the same for Grosseteste. 'Scientific' knowledge is important, but it is only important if it is put to work. Once acquired, this knowledge should be subsumed into the theological/religious realm as, by and large, this knowledge is only useful when it is being used to elucidate fundamental theological questions and when it is being used to alleviate the ignorance of man.[60] Knowledge for knowledge's sake is discouraged by Grosseteste. Because the nature of scientific knowledge is experiential (in the sense that it is at least in part constituted by the culmination of the utilisation of the senses), and that which is experiential is somewhat easier to convey, Grosseteste is able to utilise simple natural philosophical situations as a method to teach simple theology to the laity.[61] This naturally plays into Grosseteste's overtly pastoral concerns. To Grosseteste, the teaching of the theological and the scientific is imperative to creating better Christians because the recipients of this knowledge will then be able to better contemplate God's majesty and His actions and ultimately pass this on to their own peers. Clearly this chain of action is reminiscent of Dionysius' hierarchical structure of reality. It is by pursuing these actions that one is pulled upwards towards the upper echelons of this reality and become more God-like.

[60] For Grosseteste, this is among the most important things a Christian can do. This *dictum* will be discussed in chapter four.
[61] All of the assertions posited on this page will be explicated in the following chapter.

Alan of Lille subscribes to this same rhetoric. Prudence's journey to God comes to an abrupt stop as she reaches the edge of the corporeal:

> After she left the celestial approaches, traversed the depths of the heavens and the wandering paths of the stars and took up her position at the summit of the world, she hesitated in troubled mood and is drawn in different directions … For she fears and wavers, fearing that she will be led astray by the confusion of directions with which the doubtful road ahead confronts her. This road … is placed entirely beyond the impact of worldly things … The ascent to this light is difficult, to slip back is easy; the approach is open to few, mishap awaits all … The horses, overcome with toil, refuse to draw the chariot or to perform their tasks for their mistress and, unacquainted with the road, panic … Reason cannot turn them and rein them upwards.[62]

This unassailable part of the journey is clearly 'made up' of the incorporeal. The horses on their own cannot travel upon the incorporeal and, even if they could, the paths ahead are seemingly confusing and dangerous. This is how Alan depicts theological enquiry; many paths that can lead people astray. Whilst the seven liberal arts and humanity's sensible powers can reach this precipice the only way to overcome it is by the use of theology. Thus, humanity's epistemological journey to God begins with 'scientific' investigation, the knowledge of the sensible, and concludes with theological enquiry.

Whilst belief in the marriage of natural philosophy and theological enquiry was unorthodox, it was still a position held by few prominent twelfth and thirteenth-century characters who

[62] Alan of Lille, *Anticlaudianus*, 139.

flirted with the new ideas emanating from the East. Grosseteste can be situated into a very small wave of experimental theological thought[63] – especially concerning the relationship between humanity and nature – that partially comes to fruition in St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*. Due to this, the above comparison between Grosseteste and Alan of Lille, whilst illustrative of a conceptual similarity, does not strongly suggest a more solid connection. That being said, there is another conceptual similarity that is seemingly much rarer between the two great natural philosophers and theologians. Grosseteste, in his treatise on the human condition, *On the Cessation of the Laws*, constructs various arguments for a theological concept known as the absolute predestination of Christ and Alan's *Anticlaudianus* has cosmological implications that strongly resonate with Grosseteste's belief in an inevitable Incarnation.[64]

The *Anticlaudianus* can be split into three roughly distinct sections. Firstly, Prudence's journey to God, secondly, the creation of the *homo perfectus* and finally, the section relating to the psychomachia and the consequences of it. Some popular discourse on this epic[65] asserts the seemingly superfluous inclusion of the psychomachia.[66] This is not a surprising conclusion considering the work's context. The under-used full title, *Anticlaudianus de*

[63] His closest continental parallel is perhaps Albert the Great, another great Aristotelian synthesiser who taught St. Thomas Aquinas.
[64] This is the idea that the Incarnation would have happened with or without the Fall.
[65] The work is written in dactylic hexameter.
[66] A psychomachia is a battle of the soul, or the spirit. For the relevant work on the *Anticlaudianus*, see: Huizinga discusses the psychomachia in terms of a battle between the courtly virtues and the vices. Jan Huizinga, "Uber die Verknupfung des Poetischen mit dem Theologischen bei Alanus de Insulis," in *Verzamelde Werken* IV, (Harlaam: H.D. Tjeenk Willink & Zoon N.V., 1953): 53-56. Wetherbee sees the entire psychomachia as entirely redundant writing that it 'is a concession to artistic pretensions which almost betray Alan's sure religious instinct.' Wetherbee, *Platonism and Poetry in the Twelfth Century*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press.): 217. G.D. Economou, however, attempts to use the psychomachia to suggest Alan's belief in the Neo-Platonic notion of *reditus* within a Christian framework. G.D. Economou, *The Goddess Natura in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press,1972): 100. This interpretation however is persuasively rebutted by M. L. Führer in: M. L. Führer, "The Cosmological Implications of the Psychomachia in Alan of Lille's "Anticlaudianus,"" in *Studies in Philology* 77. (1980): 344-353. The rebuttal can be found on 346. Another prominent theory originates from Peter Oschenbein and this will be discussed later.

Antirufino, is a clear allusion to Claudian's *In Rufinum*. Clearly Alan is attempting to create, in direct contrast to Claudian's perfectly evil man, the perfectly good man.[67] By the end of book seven this has been accomplished and the work's natural denouement seems to have been reached. Book eight however introduces for the first time Alecto, leader of the Vices, who initiates the psychomachia. One theory for the psychomachia's inclusion originates from M. L. Führer. He suggests that this section of the work explicates Alan's intended cosmological scope. He refers his readers to the prose prologue whereby Alan wrote what is now thought to be a defence of his later work. Führer's specific reference is to the term '*supercelestium formarum*' which refers to the 'forms above the heavens' a frequently-used Neo-Platonic and Chartrian term.[68] For Führer, Alan's psychomachia has far-reaching cosmological implications and these implications can be seen post-psychomachia, during the "golden age" that is brought about by Antirufinus's conquest over the Vices. The key to understanding this lies in Alan's Neo-Platonic notion of ontological continuity. If there is, as Neo-Platonists affirm, a golden chain of being, a hierarchical structure to the cosmos, then each rung of the hierarchy must be filled.[69] As Führer points out, if an ontological gap

[67] Claudian's *In Rufinum* was an invective work directed against the Roman consul and later prefect Flavius Rufinus c.395. For more information, see: Clare Coombe. *Claudian the Poet*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018): 33.

[68] M. L. Führer,"Cosmological Implications," 349.

[69] The great chain of being as a concept is the sum of three distinct yet interrelated principles that describe the universe: the principles of plenitude, continuity and gradation. The first posits that the universe is maximally diverse in that 'all conceptual possibilities must be realized in actuality.' Daniel J. Wilson, "Arthur O. Lovejoy and the Moral of the Great Chain of Being," in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 41, no.2, (1980): 249-265. This quote can be found on 260. 'From the Platonic principle of plenitude, the principle of continuity could be directly deduced. [This principle states that] If there is between two given natural species a theoretically possible intermediate type, that type must be realized.' Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge: Massachusetts, 1936): 58. The principle of gradation asserts that '…all animals [should be arranged] in a single *scala naturae* according to their "degree of perfection." Wilson, "Lovejoy and the Moral," 260.
Führer suggests that a *locus classicus* of this generally Neo-Platonic and Chartrian belief can be found in Macrobius' *Comentarii in somnium Scipionis*, and indeed, this is a much-used source for Alan's *Anticlaudianus*: 'Accordingly, since Mind (*mens*) is from the Supreme God (*summo deo*) and soul (*anima*) is from Mind, and indeed forms and fills all which follow with life, and since this single splendor illuminates all and is apparent in the universe, as a single countenance reflected in many mirrors placed in a series, and since all things follow in a continuous succession (*continuis successionibus*), degenerating in sequence to the very bottom of the series, the careful observer will discern that from the Supreme God even to the bottom- most deep of things there is one tie, binding at every link and never broken (*una mutuis se vinculis religans et nusquam interrupta conexio*). This is the golden chain of Homer, which he tells us God ordered to be suspended from the sky to earth.' Macrobius, (1963). *Commentarii in somnium Scipionis*. I, xiv, 15. This is Führer's translation of the most recent Teubner

existed, then creation would not be as 'full', or as perfect, as it should be. This imperfection is what Natura is lamenting at the beginning of the *Anticlaudianus*; the lack of a *homo perfectus* is the cause of disharmony within the cosmos.[70]

Why, however, would the mere lack of a perfect human cause such a disharmony? The answer is in the individual human's unique position as microcosm. Fuhrer writes, 'The problem of continuity, therefore, is more clearly expressed in the microcosm theme.'[71] As the sum of the material and the divine, he is the being that unites the two into harmony. If mankind fails in this role, then the consequences for this are far-reaching and cosmic in scope. To Alan, humanity has failed in this role thus the need for a *novus homo*. The creation of this new man is Natura's *opus restaurationis*, her work of restoration. This restorative work will occur on two levels. For humanity to be the perfect microcosm one must be morally perfect which, for Alan, resides in the individual human's conquest of the 'dichotomy within himself between his potential virtue and its actual manifestation as habitus'.[72] The exemplification of this moral perfection occurs during the psychomachia. However, what Führer posits is that this exemplification is cosmic; the vices Antirufinus battles and the virtues with which he has been bestowed by Natura, are all themselves exemplars; in order to demonstrate this, Alan personified them. As Führer highlights, the virtues are representations of the divine Ideas but they are also exemplified within people in the form of their habitus.[73] Put simply, as a result of creation humans are a microcosm and

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text. It can be found in M. L. Führer, "Cosmological Implications," 350. For an up to date translated edition of Macrobius' *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, see: William Harris Stahl, *Macrobius' Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* (New York: New York: Columbia University Press, 1990) Alan may actually refer directly to this passage in his *Anticlaudianus* when he describes Reason's three-fold mirror; "She sees the marriage of matter and form… what a thing is or how large, of what kind, how it is and she discovers its other conditions." Alan of Lille, *Anticlaudianus*, 63.

[70] Führer, "Cosmological Implications," 350.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid., 352.

[73] "Where the virtues exist ontologically as exemplars in the mind of God they exist in the moral order in man as habits." Ibid.

the crux of all that is divine and mortal. Therefore, the virtues can only simultaneously exist as cosmic exemplars in the mind of God (divine) and in the virtuous actions of human beings (mortal). Once this occurs, as it does with the conquering of Antirufinus' inner dichotomy (his psychomachia), a new golden age begins ushering in a *harmonia mundi*. If this analysis of Alan's *Anticlaudianus* is to be believed, then the work's message is a simple one. By utilising a combination of the seven liberal arts (and therefore one's rational and sensible powers) and theological enquiry, humans will renew their spirits,[74] and with the knowledge acquired, conquer their inner dichotomies leading to universal restoration.

The *Anticlaudianus*' connection to Grosseteste lies within the third book of the Bishop's *On the Cessation of the Laws*. It is here that Grosseteste posits a total of nineteen arguments on the inevitability of the Incarnation (the absolute predestination of Christ). These nineteen arguments have been fruitfully commented upon, most notably by James McEvoy, James Ginther, and Dominic Unger. [75] This thesis will utilise McEvoy's schema for dividing Grosseteste's arguments. He writes that for the Bishop of Lincoln, the Incarnation was inevitable due to: God's goodness,[76] the absurdity of sin being capable of instantiating the Incarnation,[77] the fact that Christ is the head of the Church,[78] the interdependence of

[74] There are various references throughout the entire medieval period as to the 'awakening of the soul' or such similar statements as a consequence of educative pursuits.
[75] Their discussions can be found in James McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); James Ginther, *Master of the Sacred Page: A Study of the Theology of Robert Grosseteste, ca. 1229/30-1235* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004); Dominic Unger, "Robert Grosseteste Bishop of Lincoln (1235-1253) on the Reasons for the Incarnation," in *Franciscan Studies*, 16 (1956): 1-36; and in the McEvoy work utilised earlier.
[76] '"God is supreme power, wisdom, and goodness, and he is better than can be even thought [clearly this definition stems from Anselm's *Proslogion*]. Therefore, he makes the universe as good as it can be; that is, he pours into it as much goodness as it is capable of. For if the universe were capable of some degree of goodness which he did not pour into it, he would not be supremely generous and so not supremely good." Grosseteste, *On the Cessation of the Laws*, 155.
[77] '" human nature has not been made capable of union with the divine nature in a personal unity because of the fall of man; rather, it was simply and always capable of this union. And so, as was said, the universe cannot fail to to receive this good from the highest good." Grosseteste, *On the Cessation of the Laws* 157.
[78] "In addition, if there were not one Christ, that is, God and man in one person, the Church would not have the head which it now has, nor would it be as the Apostle says, "The husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the

justification and redemption and, perhaps above all, the inherent unity of creation.[79] Grosseteste's belief in the first and last of these categories is what conceptually situates him so closely to the conclusion and consequences of Alan's *Anticlaudianus*. Indeed, in discussion of this topic one is very close to the epicentre of Grosseteste's world-view. His Christocentric notion of the Incarnation (to borrow a term from Saint-Maurice),[80] so pervasive across his life and works, is deeply rooted in the same vein of Neo-Platonic thought that so vivified the thought of the Chartrians, Eriugena, Maximus, Dionysius and the rest of the Fathers discussed herein and overcomes the obstacle of the Neo-Platonic notion of ontological continuity.

Ultimately, God's goodness and the unity of His creation are one and the same when one Christianises the Neo-Platonic notion of ontological continuity as per Alan of Lille and Grosseteste. Ontological continuity literally describes the golden chain of being. From the highest form to the lowest form of reality. However, once Christianised, the term develops, and envelops not just things, *per se*, but abstract notions such as goodness as well. Therefore, God becomes the highest form of reality, but also the Highest Good, and the Most Just for example. Accordingly, the Highest Good, due to being the Highest Good, therefore must fill the universe with as much good as it can possibly take. An example of this simultaneity can be found when the Bishop writes:

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head of the Church" (Ephesians 5.23); and again: the head of a man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God, but the Church would be headless and so would man." Ibid., 159.

[79] "If, therefore, we leave aside the fall of man, it is nonetheless fitting that God assume man into a personal unity, because he could do it and it would not be inappropriate for him to do it; but even more, it would be appropriate, because without this the created universe would lack unity. But if this were done, all creation would have the fullest and the most fitting unity, and through this all natures would be led back into a circular fulfilment [sic]." Grosseteste, *On the Cessation of the Laws,* 167.

[80] Béraud de Saint-Maurice in Béraud de Saint-Maurice, *John Duns Scotus: A Teacher For Our Times*, trans. Columban Duffy. (St. Bonaventure, New York: Franciscan Institute Press, 1955) defines two schools of thought on the Incarnation; Anthropocentric (exemplified in the writings such people as St. Anselm of Canterbury) and Christocentric (such as Grosseteste and Duns Scotus). Anthropocentric refers to the idea that Christ's Incarnation is dependent upon the sinfulness of mankind. Christocentric refers to the school of thought that subscribes to the idea that Christ's Incarnation was inevitable with or without human sinfulness.

> …when God, who is supremely generous and from whom envy is supremely banished, creates every kind of creature that can exist (in order to show that he, who must be participated in by every possible nature, himself shares with each inasmuch as its nature can receive it), and does not leave even the nature of the insect or of some kind of fly or reptile uncreated, how will he not all the more make one person to be God and man, that is, one Christ, because one Christ, God and man, is an incomparably greater good than all of creation by itself? He does not omit the nature of the insect lest the whole of creation be imperfect and less honorable; would he omit Christ, the greatest honor for all creation?[81]

The incarnate Word Jesus Christ, for Grosseteste, performs the same role that Antirufinus does for Alan of Lille; they are both absolutely perfect, devoid of sin, and their suffering has cosmological importance. If nature had a voice within Grosseteste's *Cessatione Legalium*, she would be lamenting the absence of Christ, rather than Alan's Antirufinus because both characters are the missing link in the golden chain of being; they are the key to unlocking a fully united cosmos. Interestingly, for both Alan and Grosseteste, they are the aims of mankind. They are paragons of perfection and yet their example is to be striven toward. Alan's Antirufinus is the exemplar of the mortal. He is the summation of humanity's journey to God made possible by sensible experience, reason and the liberal arts. For Grosseteste, Christ is similar; he is the summation of all that man should strive toward (and yet, as readily apparent in the thought of Dionysius, the Cappadocians, Eriugena, the Chartrians and Grosseteste, will never truly be). Yet knowledge of Him is again made possible through the same, much vaunted, intellectual trinity of sensible experience, reason and the liberal arts.

[81] Grosseteste, *On the Cessation of the Laws*, 158-9.

Both authors utilise their ultimate imitable figures in their quest to unify the cosmos on the basis of ontological continuity.

It is important to reiterate here two very important notions for Grosseteste. In his argument stemming from the need for universal unity, he once again employs microcosmism. Due to humanity's microcosmistic creation, humans are the only possible candidate for incarnation. In his *On the Cessation of the Laws,* Grosseteste writes:

> … the rational soul and the human body come together in a personal unity. The human body, however, has natural communion with all corporeal natures because the celestial bodies and the element of fire are united in the nature of light; fire and air are united in the nature of heat; air and water in the nature of humidity; and water and earth in the nature of coldness. But the human body consists of the four elements, on account of which it is united with them in nature, and accordingly with the celestial bodies which are united to fire in the nature of light. The human body is united, consequently, with all the elemental natures that are united with the elements themselves. The rational soul is also united with the sensible soul of brute animals in the sensitive power, and with the vegetative soul of plants in the vegetative power. Therefore, man is united in nature with every creature … If, then, God should assume man in a personal unity, all creation has been led back to the fullness of unity; but if he should not assume man, all creation has not been drawn to the fullness of unity possible for it.[82]

[82] Grosseteste, *On the Cessation of the Laws* 166-7.

Accordingly, an ordered universe, one that is as perfect as possible, is an ordered universe that can then be studied. A universe that is *ad hoc* and chaotic cannot be studied in the same reliable way a perfectly formulated creation can be. Christ's Incarnation serves to ultimately unite the cosmos, making it perfect; so much so it becomes, to Grosseteste, something that is apprehensible through the study of something as fundamental as lines, angles and figures as repeatedly asserted.[83] This is absolutely foundational to Grosseteste's unique 'scientific' theology. The link between material potentiality (that which is studied) his epistemology (the process by which the studied knowledge is acquired and stored), and his theology (the conclusions of this process) has been made Christologically in the necessity of the Incarnation. This pillar is strengthened further, as has been explored, when in his *De luce*, Grosseteste demonstrates his light metaphysic. It is important to clarify that one is not seeking to posit the idea that Alan's Antirufinus is one and the same as Jesus Christ. The distinction between Christ and Antirufinus is a clear one. Christ is God and Antirufinus is not. However, as noted above, Antirufinus is the exemplar of the mortal. For Alan, he is the product of humanity's search for God and their continued refusal to accept such a vocation to fulfil their antirufinal potential and restore the cosmos is the cause for all the ill in the world. For Grosseteste, Christ's Incarnation perfects the universe by filling in the ontological gap between the truly divine and humanity and thus, the union within Christ as God-man, serves to be the unifying principle of the cosmos thereby enabling proper analysis of it.

[83] Another example of Grosseteste asserting the powerful notion of cosmic unity can be found in his *Dicta*: "Consider how strong in individual creatures is the appetite for unity, so that by comparison of them your minds should amply burn with the appetite for unity. If you cut off a finger, why does it hurt but because the unity of continuity that it seeks is severed? The elements of the world contrary and repugnant to themselves, how do they compose a world with indissoluble concord if not by the appetite for unity? … all the elements of this world, the Sun, the moon, the other heavenly bodies, in the whole machine of the world are gathered into a globe, into spherical figures … If all the creatures of this sensible world, therefore, the sensible as well as the insensible, and even the very sensible, fierce as well as gentle, hold with so great an appetite for unity, so that without it the world would be nothing, and do nothing, how much more then should you, who profess unity both by habit and all the names you bear, seek unity…" Grosseteste, *Dictum 135* XIII, 22.

Chapter Four: Grosseteste's Didactic *Weltanschauung*[1]

4.1. Introduction

Grossetestean discourse seems to agree that Grosseteste's overarching theological vision was deeply tied into his role as Bishop over one of the most important dioceses in England, and this perception has not changed for a long time. His theology is deeply pastoral[2] and therefore almost certainly more 'practical' than a lot of his contemporaries who were in the schools and universities who did not have to actually 'do' anything with the knowledge they acquired.[3] This is absolutely imperative to keep in mind when contemplating Grosseteste's theology; he is seemingly both utterly lofty in his ideals, yet simultaneously open to radical shifts in opinion and forcefully pragmatic. He is pragmatic in the sense that he offers a theology that, by being eminently pastoral, must therefore be practicable, and to some extent, especially with regards to the laity, flexible.[4] His is a simple theology based on a series of complex views, ranging, as previously explored, on Dionysian hierarchy as well as natural

[1] For background information relating to Grosseteste and competing views regarding his works' chronology, see the beginning of the present work's introduction.
[2] 'The most fundamental of Grosseteste's ideas is the supreme importance of the cure of souls; this is the key to all the rest.' William Pantin, "Grosseteste's Relations with the Papacy and the Crown," in *Robert Grosseteste, Scholar and Bishop: Essays in Commemoration of the Seventh Centenary of his Death*, ed. D.A. Callus (Oxford: Clarendon Press, (1955): 179; '…through his service as archdeacon of Leicester and canon of Lincoln, and his more than eighteen years as bishop of Lincoln (1235-53), the proper care of the souls entrusted to him was his great preoccupation.' F.A.C. Mantello and J. Goering, "Introduction", in *Letters,* 18.
[3] As bishop, as will be demonstrated, Grosseteste burdened himself with enormous pressure to lead as many people in his diocese to salvation, believing that if he failed but one of his parishioners he, personally, would be unable to reach salvation. It is due to the sincerity of this belief that Grosseteste intervened in many diocesan matters personally, going as far as to exercise his authority and utilising his rights to visitations of entire parishes (a notable feat considering the then large size of the diocese of Lincoln).
[4] Grosseteste's pastoral theology, whilst in some ways original, was influenced by the newer approaches to pastoral theology developed by Peter the Chanter's circle in Paris that focussed upon 'the everyday implications of theological questions', which may go some way to explaining Grosseteste's emphasis on lay education. Phillipa M. Hoskin, *Grosseteste and the 13th-Century Diocese of Lincoln,* 76. An example of Grosseteste's flexibility can be seen in his correspondence, for example, with Simon de Montford, where he stresses judicial flexibility, '…do not let your conduct be stern and inflexible. Instead let your goodness and mercy triumph over judgment (Jas 2:13)…' Mantello and Goering, *Letters,* 170.

philosophical and theological speculation. The more one learns and the more one disseminates that learned knowledge, the further along the intellectual hierarchy one progresses – perhaps towards their deification. Pointedly, it is the specific function of those 'above' to support those who were further 'below' in this hierarchy.[5] Fundamentally then, if this account of Grosseteste's theology is valid, it could be argued that this theology, whilst overall pastoral in concern, is a didactic theology. It is chiefly through educative means that one will become spiritually developed enough to contemplate God more clearly and potentially reach deification. As has been and will continue to be shown, Grosseteste routinely refers to learning, and the fostering of a learned environment as incredibly important, and the lengths and methods by which he attempts to educate not only his parishioners but also fellow clergymen and kings about their personal accountability regarding their salvation and even, to paraphrase Quinn, to enable them to become co-workers with God, is indicative of this.

Thus far this thesis has referred to many of Grosseteste's works, from *Cessatione Legalium*, to *De luce*, his *Hexaëmeron*, his commentaries and translations on the *corpus Areopagiticum*, the *Dicta*, his collected letters and more. It is the *Dicta* and his collected letters that will be the focus of much of this section of the thesis, although much reference will be made to other related works. This is because these are perhaps two of the works that fully demonstrate Grosseteste's commitment to a didactic theology because they are literal manifestations of it. If Grosseteste's theology is practicable and educative, and his theology emphasises the learning and dissemination of said learning, and these latter two works are sources of his practice, then they are useful in demonstrating two things. They simultaneously highlight the form of his theology (in that he discusses it) as well as being a prime example of it. This is

[5] Mantello and Goering, *Letters*, 20.

because the (planned) delivery of his theological thought to a wider audience than that of many of his more academic contemporaries shows his compunction to disseminate complex theological ideas (especially in creative and engaging ways).

The *Dicta* is a collection of sermons and theological reflections that were especially designed to impart knowledge – and not just impart knowledge to those who were able to access it – but to everyone. This collection was collated by Grosseteste himself with the optimistic and sole purpose of disseminating the knowledge within. Regarding his *Dicta* the Bishop wrote:

> In this book are 147 chapters, some of which are brief notes that I wrote down sketchily while I was in the schools, to assist my memory. They deal with different subjects and are not continuous, and I have supplied titles for them so that the reader will be able to find more easily what he wants in them. The titles therefore sometimes promise more to the reader than they deliver. Some of the chapters, however, are sermons that I preached at the same time, either to the clergy or to the people.[6]

The context surrounding his *Dicta* may further suggest a chiefly educative theme to Grosseteste's theology. The dating of the *Dicta* is a much-contested issue. One can be sure that it was published after Grosseteste's ascendency to the Bishopric of Lincoln because of *Dictum 51's* discussion of the publication of diocesan statutes that occurred in 1238 or 1239, years into his episcopal office.[7] The dating of the composition of individual dicta however is

[6] For this reflection see: S. Harrison Thomson, *The Writings of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940): 214.
[7] Joseph W. Goering, "Robert Grosseteste's Dicta, the State of the Question," in *Robert Grosseteste and His Intellectual Milieu*, ed. John Flood, James R. Ginther and Joseph W. Goering. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2003): 69. Much of the following of the Dicta's context is indebted to Goering's chapter.

harder to ascertain. One is inclined to agree with Southern and Goering's argument of a composition date of around 1230/1, a few years towards the end of his career in the schools.[8] Goering and Southern's argument rests on the 'unity of style and of content' inherent within such a large collection of notes (a difficult proposition if one were to believe in their fifteen year composition proffered by Callus and McEvoy),[9] the notion that many of the issues contained within the Dicta are relevant to Grosseteste's other works of similar concern around 1230, as well as the staggering level of similitude between the *Dicta* and Grosseteste's *Super Psalterium,* his commentary on the first one hundred psalms, also seem to point towards Goering's date.[10] The *Dicta* then is a work that is the culmination of many years of teaching experience and developing thought. The views contained within this collection are clearly important to Grosseteste as he collates and publishes them during the busy early years of his episcopate, an office full of incredibly important responsibility. In fact, the publication of these dicta occurs during his first diocesan tour that commenced around 1238.[11] Therefore, to Grosseteste, the publication of this collection must have served an imminently important function, and yet, any reader of the *Dicta* will find there is no overarching theme, and no internal continuity. Goering is quite correct when he writes,

> I have been unable to discover any principle of organisation whatsoever… the organisation of the collection seems to be truly random. One might well imagine that each dictum was written on a separate piece of parchment, the leaves

[8] Goering, "Robert Grosseteste's Dicta," 69.
[9] For these views see: Daniel A. Callus, "Robert Grosseteste as Scholar," in *Grosseteste: Scholar and Bishop*, 1-69; McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, 19-30.
[10] Goering demonstrates that almost 90% of the first 26 psalms are treated verbatim in the Dicta and the same is true for the following twenty-eight. Goering, Robert Grosseteste's *Dicta*, 70-71.
[11] Phillipa Hoskin, *Grosseteste and the 13th- Century Diocese*, 115.

> thrown into the wind, and then gathered up and copied into this book in the order they were collected.[12]

The *Dicta's* provenance and unorthodox form prompts an obvious question. Why did Grosseteste not write up his collection of notes and present them in a more formal manner as in *Cessatione legalium*? The answer to the *Dicta's* unsystematic presentation is tentatively offered by Goering. Grosseteste may have been influenced by previous *Dicta*, but, perhaps more probably, he was influenced by the organisational brilliance of one of his predecessors, William de Montibus (†1213). William's brilliance shone most brightly in '…the invention of artificial methods for organising theological texts in such a way as to make scholastic teaching accessible to an audience of readers.'[13] It is possibly for this reason, the need for accessibility to a range of potential readers, that Grosseteste, instead of writing them up formally, simply collected them together and added individual titles to them for ease of identification.[14] The *dicta* are not the only example of Grosseteste's educative innovation; this can also be seen in his *Topical Concordance* for instance, which is the symbolic indexing of a large collection of works into more referenceable subjects such as 'light' or 'the trinity'. Other examples of Grosseteste's educational innovation are to be discussed herein.

The *Dicta* then, as Goering himself puts it, perfectly represents an

[12] Goering, "Robert Grosseteste's Dicta", 66-67.
[13] Ibid., 74. Grosseteste may well have known William personally: for the notion that Grosseteste may well have studied under William de Montibus, see: Joseph W. Goering, *William de Montibus (1140-1213): The Schools and the Literature of Pastoral Care* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1992).
[14] Goering, "Robert Grosseteste's Dicta", 74. It is worth noting that the entitlement of constituent parts of an overall work was a rather unique innovation. It certainly was not a routine addition to a medieval individual's work before this point. One can also see the educative essence of this addition in the grand symbolised indexing of Grosseteste's *Topical Concordance*.

> ...aspect of theological education Grosseteste prized highly. The lectures, disputations, and sermons of the schools were all meant, above all, to prepare the student and the master alike for the highest and most noblest task, that of preaching Christian truth in word and in deed. For such a purpose, Grosseteste clearly felt that neither subtlety of argumentation nor profundity of insight was as important as thoughtful observation and a lively human response to the realities of the created universe.[15]

That is not to say that Grosseteste did not care for the arts of argumentation nor the possession of a profundity of insight because his more formal works attest to his intellectual dedication and rigour. But the *Dicta* does highlight the pragmatism and the practicality of a Bishop who wants as many people as possible to fruitfully engage with theological speculation. This is not Dionysian exclusionism; Grosseteste firmly believes that the education of all is possible, and, as will be demonstrated, the education of the *hoi polloi*, unlike Dionysius, was at the centre of his thought.[16]

His letters, on the other hand, are a collection of the Bishop's correspondence with various people and organisations and, amongst the voluminous collection, one cannot fail to

[15] Goering, "Robert Grosseteste's Dicta," 73. Goering immediately continues, drawing parallels between Grosseteste's thought with that of Agnellus of Pisa, the first Minister General of the English Franciscans. Goering reflects that their ideological resemblances may not be coincidental, as Agnellus of Pisa is thought to have been the person responsible for making Grosseteste lector and regent master in Oxford. For this see Thomas of Eccleston, *De Adventu Fratrum Minorum in Anglicam*, ed. and trans. A.G. Little (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1951): 48. One reason for this employment, put forward by Phillipa Hoskin, is that Grosseteste as lector proffered a theology that '…tied learning and pastoral care inextricably [together]'. Hoskin, *Grosseteste and the 13th Century Diocese*, 108.

[16] One might question the accessibility of a range of sermons and theological reflections written in Latin and this is certainly cause for thought. However, as will be demonstrated, Grosseteste placed an enormous emphasis on the role of preaching, and certainly, preaching to the masses was for the most part the only real education the laity would get, certainly of theological matters. Therefore, the masses themselves did not need direct access to the *Dicta* themselves, they need only be able to understand the contents as they were delivered to them by those who could read the Latin. Nevertheless, as demonstrated below, Grosseteste did not only formally attempt to educate with Latin, but also Norman French.

appreciate the prevalence of pastoral themes. Much of these correspondences are more personal than his more academic writings, and thus show, as Grosseteste himself might write, not the solid food of scholasticism, but rather, the milk of simplified doctrine.[17] The quotidian life of a Bishop who takes unprecedented accountability for the saving of each and every one of his parishioners' souls is on display here, and therefore so are the ways in which he practically attempted to save them.

With these two chief sources, supported by others, this thesis will provide more evidential support for the hypothesis developed at length in preceding chapters. To reiterate, this hypothesis is that Grosseteste provides an intensely positive anthropology, which can, by some measures, be described as humanistic.[18] His humanistic theology's foundations are two subtle yet pervasive doctrines: microcosmism and deification. These two theo-philosophic foundations combine: microcosmism gives humanity the tools and unique relationship with the cosmos needed to fulfil its role, and this role is to enact theirs, and the universe's, maximally proximal reunification with God. In other words, achieve deification, and one of the most important tools humanity has at its disposal, thanks to our God-given microcosmistic constitution, is our ability to learn, and the first steps of humanity's learning process begins with the engagement with the perfectly ordered universe humanity shares its make-up with. It is through *physike theoria* of the material world that humanity's educative process truly begins. Humanity and everything else in the universe is perfectly ordered and united together in a kind of hierarchy that stretches from the bottom most depths all the way back up to God, and it is the role of each and every person to pull up those who are below them, and Grosseteste, as a Bishop, is supremely well-placed, and divinely appointed, to tend

[17] Mantello and Goering, *Letters*, 178.
[18] Here one refers to Southern's definition as defined earlier.

to his great flock, hence his overall pastoral *raison d'etre*. It is this dual framework that is all-important. Simultaneously, Grosseteste subscribes to the Dionysian concepts of an ontological, hierarchy founded on Neo-Platonic exemplarism as well as a more general epistemological hierarchy - a ladder of sorts that takes one from *opinio* to surer knowledge, and finally that most secure and yet illusive knowledge of God.

To provide this evidentiary support this section of the thesis will be split into distinct stages that are all inter-connected. The first stage of this thesis will do two things. Firstly, it will convey the centrality of the *cura animarum* for Grosseteste post Lateran IV, and its relationship with the Dionysian form of hierarchy, all the while showing the pervasiveness of microcosmism and deification through the exploration of these themes in a selection of Grosseteste's earlier 'scientific' *opuscula*. The second stage will attempt to demonstrate the importance Grosseteste places on education within the context of his pastoral responsibilities. Here, an examination of the epistemological platform Grosseteste bases his ideas regarding the transformative effects education can have will take place, followed by an elaboration of how Grosseteste attempted to enact this philosophically-driven theology into practice. The second stage sets up the third; this stage will seek to display the materialistic emphasis Grosseteste places upon his *weltanschauung* and how this emphasis relates to the two much-discussed theo-philosophical foundations of his theology. It will begin by evidencing the educational role that the material world plays in Grosseteste's epistemology and pastoral theology more broadly. It will then offer the suggestion that Grosseteste's aspirations for the intellectual aptitude of his 'eco-system' of the learned, pre-empts an epistemological notion of St. Bonaventure, namely contuition. Following this, more evidence will be presented as to how Grosseteste actually subjugated the conclusions of his life-long *physike theoria* – enabled by our microcosmistic constitution - to his educationally-focussed pastoral theology,

which has, as its ultimate purpose, the salvation and possible deification of souls. From this position will come the conclusion that Grosseteste's view of humanity is brilliantly optimistic and that it rests, at its most fundamental level, in both his belief in microcosmism and deification, insofar as they affect humanity's ability, desire, and need to learn.

4.2. The *cura animarum*: Grosseteste, Lateran IV and the Pervasiveness of the Dionysian Hierarchy

Grosseteste's career as a bishop occurred twenty years after the Fourth Lateran Council was convened in 1215 by Pope Innocent III, which has been described as '...by far the most important ecclesiastical assembly of the Middle Ages' and that it, '...marks the zenith of ecclesiastical life and papal power'.[19] Many of Lateran IV's canons were an attempt to reinvigorate the Church's commitments to the laity,[20] as was hoped by Innocent III, who proclaimed that the desired effect of the Council was to ensure that, 'evils... be uprooted, virtues implanted, mistakes corrected, morals reformed, heresies extirpated, [and] the faith strengthened...'[21] In order to do this, after the conclusion of the council the canons were disseminated internationally along with an introduction to aid their contextualisation.[22]

Lateran IV's canons, according to Philippa Hoskin's persuasive account, '...emphasised the importance of the pastoral care of the individual at parish level, of preaching and teaching to laypeople and of hearing confession.'[23] This is abundantly clear when one looks at the canons themselves. The following canons are all-important in exemplifying Hoskin's account of the

[19] H. J. Schroeder O.P., *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils: Text, Translation, and Commentary* [DDGC] (St Louis, MO: B. Herder, 1937): 236. Henceforth, all references to Lateran IV's canons will be from this work unless otherwise stated. Schroeder's pagination will still be given for ease.
[20] "Overall, they were intended to stimulate a new enthusiasm for, and dedication to, pastoral care." Philippa Hoskin, *Grosseteste and the 13th-Century Diocese*, 21
[21] Ibid.
[22] John C. Moore, *Pope Innocent III (1160/1–1216): To Root Up and To Plant* (Leiden: Brill, 2003): 231–3.
[23] Hoskin, *Grosseteste and the 13th-Century Diocese,* 22.

pastoral intent of the Council, and some specifically detail the need for preaching and teaching to the laity.

Canon 9 is perhaps the first that details the needs of the laity specifically. This canon insists upon the need for the laity to be approached in their own language, so as to maximise the potential benefits they will attain.[24] Canon 10 is perhaps the first canon to explicitly emphasise the importance of preaching and, as will be shown, is one of the many canons Grosseteste dutifully follows, if not surpasses, in his pastoral zeal and innovation.

> Among other things that pertain to the salvation of the Christian people, the food of the word of God is above all necessary … [due to unforeseen circumstances bishops] are themselves unable to minister the word of God to the people, especially in large and widespread dioceses. Wherefore we decree that bishops provide suitable men, powerful in work and word, to exercise with fruitful results the office of preaching, who in place of the bishops … may instruct them by word and by example.[25]

Canon 11 continues the educative theme by developing on a previous decree from the Third Lateran Council, that there should be in every school with the required means a master that will teach freely:

[24] "Since in many places within the same city and diocese there are people of different languages having one faith but various rites and customs, we strictly command that bishops of these cities and dioceses provide suitable men who will, according to the different rites and languages, celebrate the divine offices for them, administer the sacraments of the Church and instruct them by word and example." Lateran IV, canon 9, (DDGC): 250-1.
[25] Lateran IV, canon 10, (DDGC): 251-2.

> …the clerics of that church and other poor students … In the art of grammar and in other branches of knowledge. In addition to a master, let the metropolitan church also have a theologian, who shall instruct the priests and others in the Sacred Scriptures and in those things especially that pertain to the *cura animarum*.[26]

Canon 21 is perhaps the most well-known of the canons of Lateran IV: in it the council decree that the laity must confess at least once every year.[27] This is perhaps the most individualistic of the canons. It is the parish priest's best chance of instructing and educating the laity one on one, especially in such an intimate setting. Grosseteste places an enormous emphasis on the need for confession and his *pastoralia* output is significant. '*Pastoralia*' is the term given to the newly-popular literature contemporary to Grosseteste that served an educational purpose to clerics.[28] It is not coincidental that there was an immense effort by the Council to ensure the correct training and education was given to the clergy; without such a sustained effort, it is not unreasonable to doubt the viability of confession as a successful practice. Along the same lines, canon 27 insists on the need to ensure incompetent people are not ordained or given the honour to direct souls (a phrase referring to pastoral care), otherwise known as the 'art of arts'. As will be discussed in more detail, this is a canon Grosseteste adheres vehemently to and on multiple occasions.[29] Canon 33 is another canon

[26] Lateran IV, canon 11, (DDGC): 252.
[27] Lateran IV, canon 21, (DDGC): 259-260.
[28] '*Pastoralia*' is the term given to the newly-popular literature contemporary to Grosseteste that served an educational purpose to clerics. For a general survey of this literature, see: Leonard E. Boyle, 1982, "Summa confessorum," in *Les Genres littéraire dans les sources théologiques et philosophiques médiévales: Definition, critique, et exploitation, Actes du Colloque international de Louvain-la-Neuve, 25-27 Mai 1981* (Paris: Publications de l'Institut d'études médiévales, 1981): 227-37. Grosseteste's short works on the psychology of confession are numerous, but arguably the most well-renowned and best-survived are *Templum Dei*, and *Deus est*. For *Templum De*i, see: Grosseteste, *Templum Dei* trans. Joseph Goering and F.A.C. Mantello (Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies: Toronto). For *Deus est*, see: Grosseteste, *Deus est*, in, Siegfried Wenzel, "Robert Grosseteste's Treatise on Confession," Deus est, in *Franciscan Studies* 30 (1970): 218-93. Henceforth, all references to *Deus Est* will be from this work.
[29] Lateran IV, canon 27, (DDGC): 267.

that Grosseteste's episcopal praxis exemplifies. In fact, it is through his unique method of visitation that Grosseteste believed he made significant educational innovation, as will be explored. In this canon, the council insist that a bishop's visitations must be devoted to preaching and reform:

> Moreover, those conducting the visitation shall not seek their own interests, but those of Jesus Christ, devoting themselves to preaching, exhortation, correction, and reform, that they may bring back fruit that perishes not.[30]

The canons all attempted to focus the Church's efforts on to the laity, pushing an educative and reforming agenda, and, at various points of his bishopric and even before then, Grosseteste acts on them all. Thus, despite the problems one may have in detailing the tangible influence of Lateran IV in England (something always hard to ascertain), one can be sure that, at least for Grosseteste, many of the canons were zealously adhered to, and in some cases, elaborated upon.[31] The list above is not exhaustive; there are further examples of Grosseteste adhering to the canons of Lateran IV that however, whilst not completely unrelated, are not explicitly linked to his pastoral efforts.[32]

[30] Lateran IV, canon 33, (DDGC): 270.
[31] An example of Grosseteste's focus on education, and possibly even on the laity specifically, can be found in his numerous Anglo-Norman treatises, all designed to impart various forms of knowledge. One prime example was the formulation of the *Rules of Saint Robert* which are, in essence, a short treatise on estate management for a lord or lady. This treatise was actually created to aid the Countess of Lincoln in shortly after the death of her husband. It ranges from advice regarding the importance of judicious understanding of the intricacies of their estate, and even goes as far to offer husbandry advice. This rule can be found in Elizabeth Lamond, *Walter of Henley's Husbandry Together With An Anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie and Robert Grosseteste's Rules* (London: Spottiswoode And Co., 1890): 121-145. See also: Dorothea Oschinsky, *Walter of Henley and Other Treatises on Estate Management and Accounting* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).
[32] An example of this adherence tangential to Grosseteste's pastoral efforts is his refusal to maintain two benefices at the same time. Southern, *Growth of an English Mind*, 75; and see letters 8 and 9 in Mantello and Goering *Letters*, 75-80.

Lateran IV's objectives then were congruent to Grosseteste's own developing pastoral and theological vision. *Lincolniensis'* pastoral theology was already beginning to develop much before his bishopric, as would be the case for somebody already well-acquainted with the schools and a life within the church.[33] Some of his myriad *pastoralia* were published before his bishopric and it is extremely unlikely that, whilst he was publishing these early pastoral works, that he did not encounter questions related to the *cura animarum* in the schools.[34] One of the most prominent manifestations of Grosseteste's pastoral vision can be seen in the statutes he issued c.1238.These set out exactly what he wanted the clergy to preach and educate the laity on, but he was the first to stipulate what the clergy themselves should learn.[35] One can see the importance Grosseteste places on his subordinates having at the very least, a more-than-rudimentary level of understanding regarding the Christian faith. Since, in his words, he is duty-bound to be a good steward over his people, Grosseteste wrote:

> Because souls are not saved without obeying the Ten Commandments, I exhort in the Lord and firmly charge that every shepherd of souls and each and every parish priest know the *Decalogue* … these he should frequently preach and explain to the people subject to him.[36]

[33] Grosseteste became a parish priest in Leicester c.1227 and his ascension to archdeacon followed soon after. Much earlier in his life he was also attached to the episcopal households discussed earlier in this thesis affording him an early introduction to the realities of pastoral care.
[34] For a detailed summarisation and edition of some of Grosseteste's early penitential works, see: Goering and Mantello, "The Early Penitential Writings," 52-112. Within the collection Goering and Mantello offer there is an innovative confessional interrogatory, a prime example of Grosseteste's commitment to pastoral innovation, and the cure and direction of souls more generally.
[35] Hoskin, *Grosseteste and the 13th-Century Diocese*, 40.
[36] Mantello and Goering, *Letters,* 183. Hoskin draws a connection between Grosseteste's work *On The Ten Commandments*, the circumstances of sin and penance with that of the Lincoln schools under Thomas of Chobham and William de Montibus, which Grosseteste may have seen in person. Hoskin, *Grosseteste and the 13th-Century Diocese,* 51. For the idea Grosseteste may have studied under de Montibus, see above.

The clergy must also possess knowledge of the seven deadly sins and preach to the people how to avoid them; they must know the seven sacraments (at least basically), and should 'especially know what constitutes a true confession and the sacrament of penance.'[37] Finally, every priest should also have a rudimentary understanding of the major and minor creeds, which are the Nicene, the Apostles', and the Athanasian.[38] Each and every part of this significant amount of knowledge is contained within the very first statute Grosseteste issues. From there, the majority seek to reform the behaviour of the clergy, as opposed to their knowledge.[39] These Lincoln statutes also proved influential: records show that during the 1240s the bishops of Worcester and Norwich also issued decrees commanding similar instruction.[40]

The prominent place of specifically educational reform in the statutes is clearly illustrative of Grosseteste's concern. It seems likely that he placed education at the forefront of his pastoral vision for a very pragmatic and simple reason: every action that needs to be taken to guide as many as possible to salvation and to ensure the truly righteous achieve their deification, is necessarily precipitated by the knowledge of how to perform them. In other words, one must first understand what the Ten Commandments are before they can preach and abide by them; one should learn how to fruitfully perform confession before one actually goes out to hear it; the layman must be able to comprehend the necessity of sinless behaviour and the virtue of

[37] Mantello and Goering, *Letters*, 183.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Interestingly, and perhaps to make it a matter of easy reference, Grosseteste, in presenting these constitutions to his diocese, prepares a summarised form of them. For this list see Ibid., 191-193. Goering and Mantello in the same place suggest that this distillation may have offered 'articles of inquiry' for his visitations.
[40] Hoskin, *Grosseteste and the 13th-Century Diocese*, 41. Hoskin also notes that the bishop of Worcester, even more similarly to Grosseteste, emphasised the provision of confession by disseminating a tract on it alongside the statutes themselves. This may not be coincidental; Grosseteste and Walter de Cantilupe had a strong bond, as evidenced by their correspondence in Grosseteste's letters, asking each other for counsel. It is not beyond the realms of impossibility that through their discussions de Cantilupe was impressed by Grosseteste's personal emphasis on the successful application of confession. For evidence of their correspondence see: Mantello and Goering, *Letters*, 318-322.

religious education before actually being sinless and seeking it. In essence, one's flesh must follow its head.[41] In this way Grosseteste's educative and pastoral vision was both parallel to and legitimised by Lateran IV. However, Grosseteste's insistence on the education of the clergy and the laity is not simply fuelled by pragmatism, it is also the product of the much wider relationship between his epistemology and 'scientific' theology more generally. To fully appreciate this connection however, it is first important to reiterate the importance Grosseteste places on Dionysian theology, especially his unique and pervasive doctrine of hierarchy. This is crucial because it is here, in Dionysian hierarchy and its intimate relationship with the concept of deification, that Grosseteste finds what he sees as vindication for his educative *weltanschauung* and the concomitant emphasis on universal personal accountability.

The canons of Lateran IV certainly placed the burden of responsibility firmly on the shoulders of Christendom's bishops. As Hoskin writes:

> [They were] …to carry forward the reform movement's plan to separate the Church from secular authority … They were to engage with [their flocks] … through regular synods and they were to ensure that parish priests also engaged directly with their parishioners … by preaching and by performing the sacraments, in particular by hearing confession. The salvation of individual men and women was the focus.[42]

[41] This is a reference to Grosseteste's *Dictum 50*, in which he writes: "But where he ascends to in the flesh it now behoves us to ascend in the mind, so that in due time we may follow indeed in the flesh. In order to ascend with him in the mind we have to do spiritually what he did bodily in the ascent…" Grosseteste, *Dicta* 4, 27.
[42] Hoskin, *Grosseteste and the 13th-Century Diocese*, 30.

Crucially, as Hoskin concludes, the salvation of individual men and women was of the utmost concern. Lateran IV gave bishops unprecedented power over their subordinates whilst simultaneously burdening them with ever more responsibility. This double-edged sword is wielded most prominently in canon 7, which gave bishops more powers to investigate and correct abuses than ever before, with the caveat that if they did not perform this role adequately, the blood of their clergy would be on their hands.[43] Grosseteste's own views certainly conformed with the culpability being placed upon him by Lateran IV; this can be seen in his Lyon sermon in 1245 addressed to the Pope where he defends his rights to visitation by professing his strong belief in his own personal accountability.[44]

This level of responsibility placed on bishops by Lateran IV also conforms with Grosseteste's reading of the *corpus Dionysiacum* previously discussed. As briefly set out in chapter two, Grosseteste is impressed by the symbology inherent within the mystic's work as well as the distinctly Dionysian form of hierarchy, but these two Dionysian ideas are not exclusive to each other, and in fact, they are entwined. The Dionysian form of hierarchy is perhaps alien to modern sensibility; to Dionysius 'hierarchy meant a great deal more than a stratified order [although stratification is also an integral part]; rather it is seen as an enormous duty of care on those who had been elevated to serve those beneath them.'[45] Furthermore, and crucially, it

[43] 'By an irrefragable decree we ordain that prelates make a prudent and earnest effort to correct the excesses and reform the morals of their subjects, especially of the clergy, lest their blood be demanded at their hands. But that they may perform unhindered the duty of correction and reform, we decree that no custom or appeal shall stand in the way of their efforts…' Lateran IV, canon 7, (DDGC): 247.
[44] Mantello and Goering, *Letters* 374-431. A good distillation of this long sermon can be found on 409 when Grosseteste uses the metaphor of himself as the chief watchmen atop a watchtower. In his *Dicta* Grosseteste discussed this kind of responsibility: ''Woe to shepherds.' This is the 'woe' that is written in the Book of Wisdom (6.5) 'A sharp judgement shall be to them that be in such high places' for (6.6) 'mighty men shall be mightily tormented (6.8) 'but a sore trial shall come upon the mighty … Moreover, the bad shepherd will be punished for his own faults, and those of his flock as well, for though everyone will bear the burden of his own sins, yet it is so that the shepherd will be punished or his flock's offences … so it's right, then, that those who have good charge are worthy of a double honour, and those who exercise it badly warrant double the blame.' Grosseteste, *Dictum 90,* vol. VIII, 5-6.
[45] Jack P. Cunningham, "So that we might be made God': Pseudo-Dionysius and Robert Grosseteste's Episcopal Career," in *Episcopal Power and Personality in Medieval Europe, 900-1480*, ed. Peter Coss et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020): 141-158; 148.

was the hierarch's or bishop's role (for Grosseteste these terms are seemingly interchangeable) to 'facilitate the process of *theosis* and bring to perfection those in their charge.'[46]

Grosseteste not only finds canonical legitimisation through the Fourth Lateran Council, but also through the influence of the Areopagite, yet the dating of this influence is hard to ascertain. McEvoy dates Grosseteste's translation and commentary of the four major Dionysian works at 1243, beginning perhaps, at the earliest, in 1238, and yet the Dionysian influence can be seen much earlier than this.[47] Such examples of this Dionysian influence can be seen in Grosseteste's letter to his friend Giles de Torres († 1255), a new cardinal deacon in 1236, and even earlier, in the aforementioned *Deus Est* written around 1230.[48] To reiterate the conclusions of chapter two, Grosseteste, in the form of the *Corpus Areopagiticum*, finds vindication for the fundamental notions his theology would latterly pivot upon. Cunningham explicates many of these such vindications. In Grosseteste's earliest work, *De artibus liberalibus*, written in 1198, he sets out the utility of the seven liberal arts. Cunningham states Grosseteste is 'hinting' at the deification he would later find in Dionysius, but one would suggest differently. Grosseteste more than hints at the deificatory potential of humanity, and

[46] Cunningham, "So that we might be made God," 148. Cunningham also utilises Candice Taylor Quinn for a purpose slightly different to this thesis. Where Quinn writes that those who are deified become workers, or co-workers with God, Cunningham refers to Taylor's deified as specifically bishops; '…by placing the Bible on the head of the bishop at ordination, it is signified that they must be the conduit through which the light, that is, God's Word, passes to humanity. In this way the sacrament of episcopal ordination can be seen as a form of deification for the purpose of transmitting sanctification'. Ibid. Cunningham may have a point; bishops are certainly much closer to God than the average layperson according to Dionysius' hierarchy, but it must be stressed that with despite his use of Quinn's work to conflate a bishop's ordination and deification, the ordination of bishops does not preclude the potential divinisation of those who are not bishops, and that even laypeople, through enough spiritual development, can also be co-workers with God.

[47] McEvoy, *The Philosophy*, 69. These major works are, in order of their translation, *The Celestial Hierarchy, The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, The Divine Names, and Mystical Theology*.

[48] Mantello and Goering, *Letters*, 153-154. In the letter to Giles, Grosseteste is at pains to demonstrate the mirroring between the order of the heavens and the earthly hierarchy of the church. In Deus Est one can easily see what Cunningham describes as 'descriptive accounts of [how] God's beauty and goodness [is] flowing from himself [sic], or from a superior creature, and onto the creatures below.' Cunningham, "So that we might be made God," 150. Such accounts are patently both exemplarist and hinged upon Dionysius' form of hierarchy.

is characteristically bold in his assertion regarding the liberal arts' use in aiding the fulfilment of such potential. Due to its importance, Grosseteste is quoted here at length:

> Error and imperfection force themselves into human works for three reasons: because the mind is clouded by ignorance; and because its desire falls short of what is due, or goes beyond it through lack of moderation; and because the motive powers and instruments of the body are weak and imperfect on account of the corruption of the flesh … Now, there are seven arts that purge human works of error and lead them to perfection … it is their [the arts'] effect alone to lead human operations towards perfection through correction. The works within our capacity consist either in the mind's sight, or in the desire of the same, or in bodily movements, or in the dispositions of these movements … These three virtues [grammar, rhetoric and logic], then, rectify the sight and desire of the mind and lead them towards perfection.[49]

Because of the suggested date of composition for *De artibus liberalibus*, it could be quite difficult to maintain any conflation between Grosseteste's use of the word 'perfection' and deification. None of the other works whereby Grosseteste signals his assent to deification are close to such a date. *De artibus liberalibus* is also prior to the first twenty years of the thirteenth century, a period that is formative for Grosseteste's thought. If one were to suggest possible avenues towards the defence of such a position however, one could proffer argumentation already developed. This thesis has argued previously that a potential, if rather tenuous, link exists between the whereabouts of Grosseteste within William de Vere's

[49] Robert Grosseteste, "*De artibus liberalibus*," trans. Sigbjørn O. Sønnesyn, in *Knowing and Speaking* ed. Giles E. M. Gasper (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019): 74-95; 98.

household in Hereford and in the school of William de Montibus in Lincoln, and the works of Honorius Augustodunesis. Also, more generally, Hereford itself was an early English centre of Greek study.[50] The contextual arguments suggested above however all remain fragile, and perhaps to many, unsatisfactory. Yet it does seem that Grosseteste is conflating 'perfection' in *De artibus liberalibus* with deification. The reason this seems to be the case is simply because, if he does not mean deification, what could he mean instead? What is the perfection of human activity if not them being made deiform?[51] The perfection of a human's sight (*aspectus*), the perfection of their desire (*affectus*) and of their bodily movements, is surely the apotheosis of human spiritual development. Perhaps in this early instance, if Grosseteste had conflated 'perfection' and deification, he had not done it within the strict definitional parameters mandated by medieval deification discourse today, such as in the dichotomy between scholars offering a rigid theology of deification, and merely the positing of deificatory themes. It may simply be yet another example of Grosseteste finding future validation for his earlier speculative (yet assertive) theology in the work of the Areopagite.

The second vindication Grosseteste finds in the theology of Dionysius expressed by Cunningham can be found in the cosmogony within *Lincolniensis' De luce*. De luce's centrality to Grosseteste's theological 'system' cannot be overestimated. The *lux* and *lumen* distinction, whilst somewhat confused in his later life, and the idea of light being the first form of corporeity is fundamental to Grosseteste's theo-philosophy because it explicates the very real, 'scientific', and immanent method by which God can be within all of creation. Cunningham explicates the parallelism between Grosseteste's *De luce* and Dionysius' unique

[50] For Hereford as a seat of learning, see: Giles E. M Gaspar, "On the Liberal Arts and its Historical Context," in *Knowing and Speaking,* ed. Giles E.M et al. 25-44; 37-40.
[51] What constitutes 'works' is also a matter of debate. Here one defers to Sønnesyn, Gasper, Panti and Lewis; 'Grosseteste begins by focusing on human works understood in a comprehensive sense as the sum of characteristically human activities.' Sigbjørn O. Sønnesyn et al., "On the Liberal Arts: Translation, Historiography, and Synopsis," in *Knowing and Speaking,* ed. Giles E. M. Gasper et al. 96-111; 71.

views on hierarchy, and, due to light's initial movements and its role as corporeity as developed in *De luce*, there are a plethora of implications between the Dionysian form of hierarchy and Grosseteste's cosmogony, general ontology and epistemology. *De luce*, despite its short length, is a supremely important convergence of ideas, and the light metaphysics thus formed proved to be immeasurably important to the 'scientific' viability of Grosseteste's theo-philosophic enterprise and thus has a pervasive influence across his entire theo-philosophical outlook.

De luce begins with primordial light emanating from a single point. This 'instantaneous' diffusion from this single point spreads omnidirectionally, taking matter with it, forming the universe.[52] Light then, is corporeity. This omnidirectional travel however only reaches so far, eventually coming to a halt, thereby forming the outermost edges of the universe. This first sphere, or the first body, is entirely made of 'first matter' and 'first form' and is the most simple. This first sphere of light shines back towards its origin diffusing a different kind of light, lumen, and spreads its luminosity instantaneously back towards its centre. This process leads to the creation of a second body, or sphere of light, more dense than the first (because it has a greater concentration of light, and is closer to the centre).[53] However, despite each consecutive sphere possessing a greater density of light, each of the following spheres are less pure than the one preceding it. The second sphere's luminosity thus creates a third, and

[52] All the following excerpts from *De luce* are taken from: Neil Lewis, "Robert Grosseteste's *On Light*: An English Translation," in *Intellectual Milieu*, ed. John Flood, James R. Ginther, and Joseph W. Goering (Toronto: Pontifical Institute for Mediaeval Studies, 2013): 239-247; 239-240. 'The first corporeal form, which they name corporeity, I consider to be light. For by its very nature light spreads itself in every direction in such a way that as large as possible a sphere of light is instantaneously generated from a point of light… a form that is in itself simple and lacking dimension could only introduce omnidirectional dimension into matter that is equally simple and without dimension by multiplying itself and instantaneously spreading itself in every direction and by extending matter in spreading itself, since from cannot leave matter … and matter cannot be emptied of form … whatever engages in this activity [then] is either light itself or else engages in it insofar as it is participating in light itself.'

[53] "Thus the luminosity begotten from the first sphere is the completion of the second sphere, and light, which is simple in the first sphere, is doubled in the second." Ibid., 242.

so on until a total of nine spheres are created and finally the light converges into the middle of the universe. This final concentrated mass is Earth.[54]

These nine heavenly spheres, the celestial bodies, mirror the stratification in Dionysius' heaven. As Cunningham points out, in *De luce*, one sees a 'cosmology that sets out a natural hierarchy' and he states that each sphere:

> …transmits something of its light to the … [next], less powerful/pure, sphere, without any diminution of its own in an echo of the seraphim's purity infusing and enabling the cherubim, or the pope's power … invest[ing] the consecrated bishops beneath him with something of the supremacy he had inherited from Peter. It is important to realize that the *lumen* that is being passed from sphere to sphere in Grosseteste's act of creation is 'light from Light', it is something of God, and therefore in a very real way we might say that each sphere, to a greater and lesser extent, deifies the one beneath it.[55]

Putting the importance of deification briefly aside, this is why, in conjunction with the idea of the Earth being constituted fundamentally by light, Simon Oliver's interpretation of Grosseteste's epistemology of Divine Illumination is so convincing; for Oliver, Grosseteste firmly believes that the objects of our cognition, as in, the material things we perceive, are constituted by light, and this light is, in some way, God. Therefore, there is no epistemological gap for God to fill between the perception of material particulars and the cognitive processes of abstraction to universals because the objects of those cognitive

[54] "This concentration resulting in dispersal went on in this order until the nine celestial spheres were completed and a condensed mass, the matter of the four elements, was concentrated below the ninth and lowest sphere." Ibid., 243.
[55] Cunningham, "So That we Might be Made God," 151.

processes are already illuminated. The cosmos, materiality, is divinely illuminated and is, in some way, God Himself. One might suppose that this divine cosmogony sounds somewhat pantheistic, and yet Grosseteste was never charged as such by his contemporaries. This could be for a host of reasons, from lack of dissemination to different interpretations. The schoolmen were usually sharp to the threat of pantheism but Grosseteste is not being explicitly pantheistic. The consequences of *De luce* are that because God is light, and the universe is constituted by light, God is within all of creation in some way. The mysterious relationship between God and Grosseteste's concept of light as referenced here certainly alludes to panentheism. Here, he is saying though perhaps not explicitly, that because God is light and light constitutes the cosmos, that God quite literally is His creation, which would be resonant of Eriugena who previously described creation as God's self-manifestation.

Furthermore, the entirety of Earth, humanity's immediate environment, the lowest sphere and the sphere of the four elements, is the most dense location in the universe and also possesses the highest concentration of light. This may seem counter-intuitive to the location Grosseteste proclaims is the least pure. However, the varying levels of purity in this scenario is merely synonymous with the varying levels of simplicity each sphere possesses. It is a common-place medieval theme that that which is more simple is most pure. Yet luminosity is also important, especially in illuminationist epistemologies, even if simply metaphorical. God for example, being perfect, is commonly the brightest light of all (indeed, for Dionysius he is so bright He blinds). The sphere of the four elements, then, humanity's immediate environment, to also be the most dense and luminous sphere of the entire cosmos, may hint at Grosseteste' proclivity regarding the utility of the material world and God's immanent relationship within it. Indeed, this conforms with Grosseteste's views on the incarnation and its supreme importance epistemologically. The material world around humanity may be the most light

dense sphere within the celestial system and therefore the brightest, and that may be a symbol in and of itself of the regard God places on the utility of it, but equally as importantly, it is also, because of its diversity, the most symbolically resplendent location in the universe.[56] However, post-Fall, humanity has fallen, and, as a result, one's ability to fruitfully engage with the material world, the brightest sphere of the universe and most complex concatenation of divine symbology, has come to an abrupt end. Humans are, by and large, no longer able to meaningfully access the *lumen* materiality is composed of and are therefore unable to abstract from that data knowledge of God. Suddenly, the light of the material world becomes inaccessible. This is one of the reasons, albeit, for Grosseteste, not the most important reason the Incarnation occurs; the God-Man's existence perfects the chain of ontological continuity, bringing together the universe in the most ultimate of unities. Here, Christ is the unifying principle of the universe. He is 'the way, the truth and the life';[57] He is the 'light of the world. Whoever follows [Him] will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'[58] He is at once humanity's guide towards their perceiving the light of their universe whilst being the light itself; He is the macrocosm and the microcosm; He is the ultimate mediator between humanity and the light of God that is physically manifest around them.

To reiterate in simpler terms: materiality, by which one takes to mean Earth, the sphere of the four elements, is entirely made from light; specifically, *lumen*. But, because of the way in which Grosseteste sets out his cosmogony, a part of the luminosity from the initial sphere, that made up of *lux,* is passed on through each sphere, and therefore, with each sphere

[56] The confluence between nobility and light-density is expressed in McEvoy's discussion of it: 'The heritage of Plotinus made light the substance of colour and the condition of its visibility, and this more sensuous idea of beauty gathered a small constellation of ideas around it as it moved through Basil, Augustine, Ps. Dionysius and Scotus Eriugena into the high Middle Ages. Light is beautiful of its very nature, and the source of beauty in all material things it informs. *The more noble a thing is, the more beautiful, for intensity of constitutive light-energy is the determinant of nobility.'* James McEvoy, *Exegete and Philosopher,* 53-4 (emphasis mine).
[57] John 14:6
[58] John 8:12

passing something of itself to the next, God, being the origin of this process, is in some way within each sphere. Therefore, for Grosseteste, God is within the light that makes up the bottommost sphere, Earth. Earth, being the lowest sphere, possesses the highest concentration of this light; it is here on Earth that light is at its most powerful and dense (regardless of its purity, or simplicity). Pre-lapsarian humans were able to access this light inherent within their material environment and, without fault, access the divine knowledge thus held within. Adam and Eve could see God in, and through, the particulars within the Garden of Eden. Post-Fall however, humanity's faculties, their means of access to this divine knowledge, are diminished. To use a metaphor: if we can imagine the material world's network of light is an apple tree, and this apple tree holds all of the knowledge one needs to enjoy maximally proximal unification with God. Access to this apple tree was totally unhindered prior to the Fall and Adam and Eve were perfect. However, since the Fall, barriers have been raised. An almost-impenetrable wall now prevents one from being able to reach such knowledge. Thus, the divine knowledge contained within materiality is much harder to acquire. However, through the Incarnation and passion of Christ, humanity is saved, and, to reference the above biblical quotation, Christ literally becomes the way to scale the wall, the light behind the wall (being the life of the universe), and the truth contained therein. The incarnation of Christ means that, whilst difficult, humanity's ability to access God through materiality is more possible, and it requires hard work in the form of education, living in imitation of Christ, and the partaking of the sacraments.

Prima facie, one may take issue with the idea that Christ's incarnation and death essentially leads the way back for humans' perception of the primordial light beyond the vestiges of materiality when one also considers the prior discussion of Grosseteste's Christocentric incarnational views. Reticence on this, whilst understandable, is not needed; Grosseteste's

belief in an inevitable Incarnation takes nothing away from the fact that for Grosseteste Christ *has* come, and *has* saved humanity, and therefore is 'the way, the truth, and the life', and is, therefore, the way towards the Light and all of the knowledge that participation in it entails.

It is now apparent that there is a parallel between Grosseteste's light metaphysics and the celestial hierarchy of Dionysius, and the ontological ramifications of this light metaphysics and Grosseteste's Christocentric incarnational theology's impact upon his epistemology. This complex combination creates an epistemology that is greatly indebted to the potentiality of materiality as a network of divine symbols. It is here that another direct link can be made to the concept of hierarchy in Dionysius. As previously explored, the apotheosis of Dionysius' hierarchical structure is deification, and whilst the form of such a deification may be different between Dionysius and Grosseteste, the method by which humanity is to traverse this hierarchical structure towards its deification, is not. Dionysius insists that the aim of hierarchy is salvific in and of itself, and, that humanity being 'formed by light, [and as] initiates of God's works, *we shall be perfected and bring about perfection*.'[59]

The italicised section of the above perfectly demonstrates the mode of transportation through Dionysius' hierarchy. Humans, enabled by their microcosmistic constitution and the ontological implications of Grosseteste's light metaphysics and Christocentric incarnational theology on materiality, are to engage sensibly and intellectually with their environment. However, the final italicised part of the above quotation demonstrates that there is a certain responsibility upon those who are being deified through the hierarchy by this epistemological process to enact further deification. This is the responsibility of bishops, the simple parish

[59]Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, 372b-c. Emphasis added.

priest, and even, at least for Grosseteste and the council of Lateran IV, the *hoi polloi* themselves.[60]

The final vindication Grosseteste would eventually find in the thought parallelism between himself and Dionysius would be their joint assent to microcosmism. In chapter one, this thesis explicated the various modes of microcosmism more generally and specifically detailed Grosseteste's microcosmistic relationship with Dionysius through the elaboration of a symbolic microcosmism in the chapter following. To reiterate, symbolic microcosmism is the idea that the microcosm is a holistic reflection of the macrocosm and that this relationship is manifested in the microcosm being a symbol of the macrocosm. The microcosm specifically exists as a network of symbols that somehow reflect the macrocosm. Symbolic microcosmism in this instance is central to Grosseteste's epistemology pertaining to its focus on materiality. In this scenario, God is the macrocosm and the material world is the microcosm. This is because the material world around us - constituted by light – is, *in some way*, both symbolically and ontologically God.

For Grosseteste there are various microcosmistic relationships occurring simultaneously. There is also the relationship between individual humans and the universe. The human, *imago Dei* and priest of the cosmos, is in some way a *minor mundus* (a small world); a microcosm of the universe, which is the macrocosm. It is important to re-stress however that microcosmism is an incredibly complex concept. The relationships between the microcosm and macrocosm can be defined in various ways: humans are both symbols of the universe, in that what occurs in the wider world can be seen in humanity, and vice-versa, but that relationship can also be described as elementaristic because both the microcosm and

[60] Evidence of this view can be seen earlier, as referenced in *Dictum* 2.

macrocosm are constituted by the same elements. Grosseteste's *Quod homo sit minor mundus* perfectly demonstrates these different relationships and how they can combine:

> The human body consists of flesh and bone. Now it is divided into the four elements, for it contains a portion of fire, air, water, and earth … earth is in its flesh … water in its blood … air in its breath … and of fire in its vital heat. Moreover, the fourfold division of the body represents the forms of the four elements, for the head is borne towards the heavens and has two lights, as it were, Sun and moon…[61]

There is more to the microcosmistic relationships than just the identification of them however.

The implications of the various microcosmistic relationships implicit within Grosseteste's *weltanschauung* as manifested in his *corpus* are also influenced by the Bishop's assent to Dionysian hierarchy. As Cunningham writes,

> Intrinsic to [the microcosm and macrocosm relationship] … is the idea of a divinely ordained order. It is incumbent on every being, whether it is a community or an individual, to order itself on the basis of the blueprint provided by natural law … Grosseteste would have expected to find the structure and functioning of the universe to be an echo of the structure and functioning of heaven.[62]

[61] This translation is James McEvoy's. It can be found in: McEvoy, *The Philosophy* 369-70.
[62] Cunningham, "So that we might be made God," 152.

Since a key part of the order of the universe is hierarchy, it is also therefore 'incumbent on these beings to take up their allotted place in the stratum that has been allocated to them as part of the divine mandate',[63] alongside the individual acceptance of such responsibility. This is a crucial belief for Grosseteste; it is here that he finds legitimisation for his repeated efforts to instil upon his laity universal personal accountability. In the *Dicta* Grosseteste discusses in detail the need for every person to appreciate their lot in life, in accordance with the divine mandate, and the responsibilities that such a role entails.[64]

Humanity's vocation, for Eriugena, was to be the vehicle of universal salvation, enabled by his salvation by degree doctrine. Grosseteste does not seem to have subscribed to any such doctrine, and yet the Dionysian concept of hierarchy facilitates the deification of humanity. James McEvoy describes Grosseteste's theological use of microcosmism as teleological and hierarchical in nature.[65] The goal for each being wherever they may reside within the hierarchy is their ascent towards God at its summit; the method of traversal being the acting upon their personal responsibilities which is the pulling up of those below. Cunningham states that Grosseteste's understanding of the term *hieron* (sacred) is important here because it describes a movement or direction to God that is facilitated by the hierarchy. Each creature

[63] Cunningham, "So that we might be made God," 152.
[64] There are two concurrent *dicta* that discuss humility, 141 and 142, and through the latter one can identify Grosseteste's advocacy for proactivity, something especially interesting regarding the emphasis placed upon his belief in Dionysius' hierarchy. Firstly, he wrote that humility is the first (and therefore amongst the most important) of the virtues, and then goes on to state that '… the more he reaches downward in serving, the more he will reach upwards to the branches of the rewards … order consists in three things, in being under, in being equal, in being over, humility is sometimes called the love of being subject'. Robert Grosseteste, *Dictum 141* trans. Gordon Jackson, XIII, 14. He continues the communal theme in relation to humility further when he wrote that, 'So, since God subjects himself to man, with what from is it that man will not submit himself to man, even on however beneath him? And since goodness is to give oneself to the advantage of all, the better a person is the more he will offer himself to the advantage of all; and through this to the work and ministry'. Robert Grosseteste, *Dictum 142* XIII, 18.
[65] McEvoy, *The Philosophy*, 408 ff.

within the order is imbued with a knowledge of God proportionate to their place.'[66] Crucially, the best way an individual can pull up 'those below' themselves is to understand the world and God more clearly. This knowledge gives them both a fuller appreciation of the majesty, glory and love of God, the concomitant desire to share such knowledge, as well as the requisite knowledge to disseminate it to their fellows. Critically, there is a significant communal aspect of this that will be elaborated upon further in the next section of this chapter.

Thus, numerous implications have arisen all due to the network of microcosmistic relationships in Grosseteste's theology. For example, one of the consequences of the microcosmistic relationship between materiality and God is epistemological, the idea that materiality is a network of divine symbols. Another microcosmistic implication arises in the relationship between man and the universe, which is also epistemological, in that humans have the necessary tools to fruitfully engage with this sea of divine symbols around them. Lastly, the microcosmistic relationship as promulgated by Cunningham, between the cosmos and heaven, instils upon the universe the Dionysian form of hierarchy, which is the idea that epistemologically combines the two previous examples together by providing the framework that facilitates humanity's progress (as defined by the success humanity has in the application of their God-given sensible and rational powers toward the material, divinely symbolic world) towards God. Cunningham expertly summarises this position, in words that perhaps unknowingly hint towards and Eriugenian reading of Grosseteste:

> Here [in Grosseteste's thought generally] we have a single purpose to all of Creation, whether it is heavenly or ecclesiastical; all are called upon to play

[66] Cunningham, "So that we might be made God", 152.

> their designated part in the ordered machine of their stratified existence so that they might fulfil their vocational purpose as a being, that is, the drawing of all things back to their source.[67]

This is the cornerstone of Grosseteste's pastoral vision, and if current Grossetestean consensus is correct in describing his theology as predominately concerned with the *cura animarum*, then it would not be unreasonable to describe Grosseteste's theology as a didactic theology.

Grosseteste himself offers a brilliant summary of his views on pastoral responsibilities and stresses the importance of education: '… note here six things omitted that ought to be observed in pastoral care: first, to feed with information and learning of the faith, by teaching the precepts of conduct without which there is no health, and in which health consists; second, to encourage the infirm and weak in strength by hopes of heavenly rewards to make progress on the way of conduct; third to sustain those who have fallen into vice, but are not yet despairing, with the medicine of healthy penitence; fourth, to bind and support those already broken by despair by showing the greatness of God's mercy, from which the Son of God wished to be incarnate for the sake of sinners, and be bound and crucified, and to pray for his enemies who crucify him; fifth, to bring back those who have fallen away from the communion of the faithful through excommunication by means of canonical absolution; and sixth, to seek those who had strayed by recession from the unity of the church through schism or heresy or unbelief, that they might be restored to the faith … In these six points the office of pastoral care is complete.'[68]

[67] Cunningham, "So that we might be made God," 152.
[68] Grosseteste, *Dictum 90* VIII, 8.

4.3. Virtue, Visitation and the Learned

The central facet to Grosseteste's theological anthropology and its possible destination in humanity's deification resides in the conflation between the acquisition of knowledge and becoming more virtuous, or simply being a better, more accountable, Christian. Some might persuasively argue that the acquisition of knowledge does not necessarily lead to virtuosity, and this could indeed be the case. However, it does seem that for Grosseteste, the opposite is true, and as such, the acquisition of knowledge allows for a greater appreciation of the divine which then imbues the holder of such knowledge with the wisdom to be more accountable for their own salvation. Steven Puttick's work on Grosseteste and virtue epistemology will be invaluable here, but not without critical elaboration. Before detailing how Puttick combines the Grossetestean epistemological process as found herein with virtuosity, it is important to first briefly survey the beginning of his argument.

Puttick writes that:

> …for Grosseteste, education has a powerful reordering function in driving human flourishing and maximising potential, and this belief in the potential of education to reorder humans is intrinsically linked to his epistemology…[69]

Importantly, this reordering is available to all. Puttick's Grosseteste believes in education for everyone and that 'reordering' is possible irrespective of social class or wealth. He goes on to draw a connection with Tom Wright's notion of 'virtue reborn'; 'the Aristotelian aim of

[69] Steven Puttick, "Knowledge and Virtue," in *Robert Grosseteste and Theories of Education: The Ordered Human,* ed. Jack P. Cunningham and Steven Puttick (London: Routledge, 2021): 103-17; 104.

eudaimonia is expanded … courage, justice, prudence and temperance … are enriched and transformed by … love, kindness, forgiveness …and humility.'[70] It is in this virtuous process that Puttick sees a resonance with Grosseteste. Wright advocates for a process of character development, with 'process' being the operative word. In *Virtue Reborn*, Wright offers the 'virtuous circle' made up of 'Scripture' at the top, followed by 'stories', 'examples', 'community' and finally 'practices' with all of these virtues being, as one commentator described them, 'mutually implicative of Christian character.'[71] For Grosseteste, who subscribes to an 'Aristotelian epistemology within a framework of illumination',[72] the repeated performance of these virtues lead to them becoming habitual, therefore creating 'character.'

The reordering of humans then involves a self-driven process of overcoming one's disarray. As Puttick highlights, 'disorder' is a leitmotif that runs right through the entirety of Grosseteste's letters.[73] It is something that Grosseteste bemoaned of himself, and constantly sought to address. Crucially, humanity's disorder is a combination of the Fall and the Grossetestean problem of the relationship between the *aspectus* and the *affectus*. Here, the mind's eye is not perceiving what it should, and thus affects one's ability to properly perceive truth. Puttick then details his interpretation of the relationship between Grosseteste's light metaphysic and epistemology, which runs parallel to van Dyke's interpretation as previously explored. From there, he writes that:

[70] Puttick, "Knowledge and Virtue," 104. Here Puttick refers to Harry Wright, *Virtue Reborn* (London: SPCK, 2010): 31-34.
[71] Dana Bates, "Review: Virtue Reborn by Tom Wright," *Transformation* 33.(2016): 81-83; 82.
[72] Van Dyke, "An Aristotelian Theory," 685.
[73] Puttick, "Knowledge and Virtue,": 105-6.

> For Grosseteste, education is a process of introduction to, being in (or being disciplined into), working through and being transformed by this light. Education thus offers a powerful route towards reordering and flourishing.[74]

Despite Puttick's assent to van Dyke's interpretation of Grosseteste's epistemology and how it is related to his metaphysics, his conclusion remains in agreement with this thesis. As explained previously, and to be slightly reductionist, the subtle difference between Simon Oliver and van Dyke's interpretations of this relationship is where in the epistemological process light performs its role. Put simply, in section 2.5, the divergence of interpretation places light either as a bridge towards knowledge added to the inductivist epistemological methodology (as for van Dyke), or it is already implicit in the objects of cognition (as for Oliver). In section 2.5, it was argued that the two varying interpretations are not entirely mutually exclusive, and, where there is the possibility of convergence, that might actually represent Grosseteste's epistemology more holistically. That being said, by omitting Simon Oliver's interpretation of the said epistemological process, Puttick's development of the directly above quote, whereby he explains the process of humans collecting sense data and abstracting from those particulars to universal truths, he misses a vital piece of the puzzle that is Grosseteste's search for truth.

For Grosseteste, education truly is a process of being introduced to, surrounded by, working through, and being transformed by the light of God. For him, 'the awakening of reason can only take place through sense experience'[75] and that 'apart from the work of the senses there would be no beginning of knowledge, no abstraction or demonstration from universals, [and]

[74] Puttick, "Knowledge and Virtue,": 108.
[75] James McEvoy, *The Philosophy*, 329.

no science'.[76] With this in mind, surely God is not just the Sun that illuminates the material world and nor is He merely the light within our minds that fills the intellective gap? His light is, in some way, the materiality our senses are engaging with, which is the definition given by Oliver so crucially missed in Puttick's assessment.

Nevertheless, there are two processes on display here. Firstly, the epistemological process of abstracting from sensible data, and the continued reawakening of the *aspectus* or (in Puttick's words) the reordering of the human, and the concomitant growth of virtue and knowledge. These two processes are related: the more one utilises their God-given sensible powers, the more they rouse their *aspectus*, which then stirs their *affectus* leading them towards the acquisition of more knowledge and so on and so forth.

Puttick demonstrates through Grosseteste's humility and emphasis on authority the Bishop's assent to virtue epistemology and thus the dual process of learning and virtue growth. This Grossetestean 'darkness of ignorance' is discussed in letter four, and is:

> …combatted through the developing and practising [of] the virtues, and doing so in community …with the Franciscan monks [sic] …[and] other persons he comes into dialogue with, including … Aristotle, Augustine and many others.[77]

Grosseteste's use of 'authorities' simply on the grounds of their perceived authority is a testament to the dual process. Augustine for example has enormous epistemic character

[76] James McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, 84.
[77] Puttick, "Knowledge and Virtue," 109. For 'letter 4', see: Mantello and Goering, *The letters of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln*, 58-65.

because of the breadth of his knowledge and theological and philosophical output. According to Puttick:

> Virtue epistemology foregrounds the intellectual virtues of persons, arguing that these should become the primary source of justification for true beliefs … and praising knowledge as inherently value-laden.[78]

Augustine, to continue the example then, has become an authority based upon his intellectual virtue which is now the primary source of justification for true beliefs. This intellectual virtuosity has been accumulated throughout his own education, throughout his engagement with God's light and the epistemological process it begins.

David Carr writes that 'virtue epistemology aims … to account for knowledge in terms of epistemic character rather than truth-supporting properties of belief.'[79] But for Puttick, Grosseteste disagrees with Carr's 'rather than' and expands upon the virtue epistemology he assents to by placing, unsurprisingly, an emphasis on the acquisition of truth.[80]

Puttick succinctly summarises his entire argument thus:

> … the point of education is to seek truth … to do this you need to develop wisdom to discern right from wrong – truth from falsehood – and by doing this, by becoming educated, you are engaged in a virtuous cycle of transformation

[78] Puttick, "Knowledge and Virtue," 110.
[79] David Carr, "The Human and Educational Significance of Honesty as an Epistemic and Moral Virtue," *Educational Theory*, 64 no. 1 (2014): 1–14; 3.
[80] Puttick, "Knowledge and Virtue," 110. In the same place he writes: '[For Grosseteste] … the truth-supporting properties of belief remain important and are integrated into the rationale for and the telos towards which virtue growth aims. 'Truth' plays an important discursive role in his letters, for he appeals to it, claims it, seeks it and asks to be pointed towards it: 'And if you find that, in their view or in your own, I have anywhere deviated from the truth, please write back and correct my error.'

> into an increasingly wise and virtuous person. Grosseteste takes on the development of Aristotelian virtues and practical wisdom in the generation of virtuous persons, and extends this by conceiving of an increasingly developing ecosystem of persons gaining knowledge and increasing in virtue, the practice of which leads to further wisdom and knowledge, and so on … The 'ordered human project' is, for Grosseteste, the project we individually and collectively take on. Because of what it is aiming at – truth – and because of the means through which it seeks to get there – gaining wisdom – education offers incredible potential for transformation.[81]

The idea of an 'ecosystem of persons gaining knowledge and increasing in virtue' sounds remarkably resonant of the much-discussed notion of hierarchy; indeed, the people within the hierarchy are the eco-system and the increasing of their virtue is the same as their either being pulled up or pulling themselves up. This is reinforced by a further conclusive remark. Puttick writes,

> The strong role that testimonial knowledge takes on makes the community of educated persons a vital dimension without which individual knowers cannot flourish. Grosseteste offers a vision of a growing community of persons gaining knowledge and increasing in virtue, the further practice of which leads to further wisdom and knowledge.[82]

This is central to Grosseteste's pastoral, and imminently educative theology. He attempted, through legislated educational reform (as discussed above), and calculated recruitment (as will be discussed forthwith), to foster an inclusive - in that it included the laity - community

[81] Puttick, "Knowledge and Virtue," 111.
[82] Ibid., 116.

invested in the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. This is because those actions increase the virtuosity of those performing them and thus gave them the wisdom to continue to learn, as well as supply them with a greater appreciation of their own agency and personal responsibilities in the saving of their own, and others', souls. And yet, all of these processes are ultimately precipitated by the grace of God imbuing humanity with the tools necessary to accomplish their vocation and by dynamically sustaining the material world that forms the basis of their epistemological journey back to Him. An illustrative example of how Grosseteste attempted to enact educative reform can be seen in his demonstration of shrewd recruitment, his innovative method of visitation, and his utilisation of the Franciscans whom he developed a close bond with.[83]

Grosseteste's enamoured relationship with the Franciscan order has been well-documented; Thomas of Eccleston's (*fl.* c.1231 - 1258) *De adventu Fratrum minorum* abounds with details showing the affection to which the Franciscans and Grosseteste held each other and demonstrates the informative role Grosseteste played in their nascent years in England.[84] He was the Franciscans' first teacher in Oxford, and his best survived correspondences are with his close companion Adam Marsh, a noted contemporary Franciscan. Marsh's brother, Robert, even worked within his diocese during his episcopacy.[85] However, it is important to note that it was not simply the Franciscans whom Grosseteste welcomed, but also the Dominicans. Evidence of Grosseteste's communications with friars of both colours can be found in his correspondence: luminaries such as Elias of Cortona, Raymond of Pennafort,

[83] It should be noted that Grosseteste did not only utilise the merits of the Franciscans, he did also, to a lesser degree, make use of Dominican friars also.
[84] Thomas Eccleston, *De adventu Fratrum minorum* 15. Various insightful anecdotes can be found in the English translation regarding the paradoxical character of Grosseteste, and the esteem to which the Franciscans placed in him in Thomas of Eccleston, *The Coming of the Franciscans*, trans. Leo Sherley-price (Mowbrays: London): 72-74. Henceforth, all subsequent references to *The Coming of the Franciscans*, or its Latin equivalent will come from this work.
[85] Mantello and Goering, *Letters,* 96.

John of St. Giles, Hugh of Digne, and Jordan of Saxony all feature. Adam Rufus, a student of Grosseteste also took the Franciscan habit. It was also to the Oxford Franciscans that Grosseteste left his library, and it was them that he defended and recommended to the Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, Alexander Stavensby, on account of him forbidding their preaching in favour of the then significant population of Dominicans in Chester.[86]

What made the Franciscans 'so great a good' was their dual ability to impress upon the laity their humility and godliness all the while demonstrating their skills in taking confession, issuing penance, and preaching.[87] In 1238, Grosseteste wrote to Pope Gregory IX to aid in the plight of the Franciscans under their controversial Minister-General Elias of Cortona.[88] He wrote:

> … the English friars are responsible for incalculably good benefits, for they illuminate our whole land with the brilliant light of their preaching and teaching. Their most holy way of poverty strongly inspires people … Oh if only your holiness could see with what devotion and humility the people rush to hear from them the word of life, to confess their sins, and to be instructed…[89]

[86]Grosseteste in their defence writes that the Franciscans 'continuously and tirelessly promote peace and illuminate the country' and that, 'Because, then, the way of life of the Friars Minor enlightens the people with whom they dwell to recognize the truth … and propels them to hasten along the path of peace … anyone who truly loves the good cannot deliberately reject so great a good as this…' Grosseteste, *Letters* 34, 148-149.
[87] Grosseteste placed a great deal of emphasis on the godliness of character because of the moral impression it had on the laity. Easily imitable behaviours led to character reform because of the importance of forming good habits. In his *Dicta* Grosseteste wrote: 'For our holy conduct and sound doctrine ought to be models for our subjects and a pattern of living, and just as soft wax is impressed and figured with the inscription of a silver seal so ought the fluxible and formless lives of subjects be stamped with the inscription of our life and doctrine, and be brought back into good shape.' Robert Grosseteste, *Dictum 51* V, 8.
[88]Grosseteste was concerned that the Franciscan order would collapse under Elias' leadership: many English Franciscans were appalled by Elias' personal conduct, the ostentatiousness of the new San Francesco Basilica, and Elias' policies, including the conduct of his general 'visitators'. Michael Robson, "Two Sermons to the Friars Minor," in *Intellectual Milieu*, ed. John Flood, James R. Ginther, Joseph W. Goering (Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies: Toronto): 109.
[89]Grosseteste, *Letters*, 206.

It is for these reasons then that Grosseteste sought to recruit Franciscans and Dominicans to aid in the administration of his diocese, the largest in England. He wrote to Elias himself in c.1236:

> … because my diocese is much larger … than any other in the kingdom of England … I therefore need more, and more effective, help in preaching God's word, hearing confessions, and imposing penances … because there are no assistants I know of for these and similar responsibilities so effective as your friars…[90]

He also demonstrated his zeal for their utility when he wrote to Adam Marsh: 'please, on Christ's behalf, arrange for me to have some friars from your order with me, since their presence is of vital importance to me and the Church.'[91]

It is clear that Grosseteste enjoyed a beneficial relationship with the Friars Minor and routinely attempted to utilise them within his diocese.[92] The utilisation of the friars is symptomatic of Grosseteste's insistence on his own salvific culpability. His pastoral vision sought to emphasise the role of personal accountability to all climbing the Dionysian hierarchy, and his role as bishop was of immense import. The friars improved the administrative and therefore salvific capabilities of Grosseteste's episcopacy and he truly

[90] Grosseteste, *Letters*, 161.
[91] Grosseteste, *Letters*, 102.
[92] Boyle suggests that it is the Franciscans that may have actually impressed upon Grosseteste the importance of the *cura animarum*: 'it is not unlikely that in the ten or eleven years preceding his provision to Lincoln as bishop he caught some of the apostolic spirit of the friars with whom he was in daily contact at Oxford. Possibly it was this that impelled him in 1225 to take up the *cura animarum* for the very first time.' Boyle, "Robert Grosseteste and the Pastoral Care," 3.

believed in their importance in establishing what Hoskin aptly defines as a 'pastoral safety-net.'[93] With their help he was much closer to the laity than he would normally have been able to be.[94]

The key to understanding the direction Grosseteste's episcopate took is to attempt to comprehend the sheer level of culpability Grosseteste felt towards his salvific responsibilities. The link between Grosseteste's epistemological views, his anthropology, and the pastoral nature of his theology can be situated in the importance he places on education, as has been shown throughout this thesis. Grosseteste's didactic theology ultimately places its emphasis on the God-given vocation and ability of humankind - one's ability to learn - and his recruitment of Franciscans and other learned men, are a testament to this viewpoint. In point of fact: 'Grosseteste's Rolls show that during his episcopate clergy instituted to parochial care with the title of "Magister" … represent between thirteen and fourteen percent of the whole number instituted'.[95] This is a significant proportion of learned men. The Bishop of Lincoln also refused benefices to those he deemed either unworthy of such noble work or who were illiterate, such as when he denied a papal request for a lucrative benefice to be given to the Pope's nephew.[96] He may also have enabled clergy to receive money to aid in their educational endeavours,[97] and possibly initiated the medieval version of student

[93] Hoskin, *Grosseteste and the Diocese*, 112.
[94] Throughout her work Hoskin attempts to demonstrate the development of the quotidian life of a Bishop within England: bishops were being burdened with ever more administrative distractions which inevitably took them away from the people that Grosseteste thought needed them most; those towards the bottom of the hierarchy. Hoskin, *Grosseteste and the Diocese*, 5.
[95] James Herbert Srawley, *Grosseteste's Administration of the Diocese of Lincoln, Robert Grosseteste, Scholar and Bishop* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955): 169-70.
[96] Mantello and Goering, *Letters*, 441-47.
[97] Grosseteste gained papal provision for Robert de Melkeley, rector at Clothall, and an unnamed Archdeacon of Buckingham to receive the proceeds of their livings while they attended to their studies. Barbara Hutchinson, "Robert Grosseteste: The Role of Education in the Reform of Thirteenth Century English Society," *History of Education Quarterly*, 5, (1965): 26-39; 35: 'Thus, he accomplished three things: he attracted to the ranks of the clergy a better class of men; he promoted the increase of their knowledge with the object of increasing their efficiency; and he imparted to them a sense of dedication and of the nobility of their calling.' Ibid.

scholarships in England.[98] Not only did Grosseteste admire those who were learned, but he clearly also saw their intellectual prowess as a powerful weapon against lay religious apathy and heresy.

Grosseteste's salvific zealousness led to him personally intervening in matters right across his entire diocesan structure and the geographic diocese itself. His influence in the direction of souls can be seen by his development of a rather novel method of visitation. Before Grosseteste, episcopal visitations lacked any significant lay involvement; 'scrutiny was usually only given to the fabric of local churches, and correction either limited to the exhortation and encouragement of local priests.'[99] Grosseteste's belief in his own salvific culpability, developed by his reading of Dionysius, deepened his resolve and encouraged him to go even further.[100] Grosseteste himself set out exactly what his visitorial innovation entailed to the Pope in 1250. He wrote,

> After I became bishop, I reflected that I was both a bishop and a pastor of souls, and it was necessary to look after the sheep committed to me with all diligence … so that the blood of my sheep would not be on my hands at the Last Judgement.
>
> Thus, during my episcopacy I began to make a circuit through every rural deanery, ordering the clergy of each deanery to gather together at a certain day

[98] Francis S. Stevenson, 1899, *Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln: A Contribution to the Religious, Political and Intellectual History of the Thirteenth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1899): 237.
[99] Ian Forrest, "The Transformation of Visitation in Thirteenth-Century England," *Past & Present,* No. 221 (2013): 3-38; 6-7.
[100] The sincerity of Grosseteste's pastoral ambitions were patent from the outset of his bishopric: during his more routine visitations of religious houses and monasteries he forced the resignation of at least ten Augustinian abbots and priors. Mantello and Goering, *Letters*, 196. Grosseteste's Greek inclination began to develop around 1232, and records support this assertion; Nicholas Graecus, Grosseteste's great Greek teacher appears in Lincoln's diocesan rolls throughout the entirety of his time as Bishop of Lincoln. McEvoy, *The Philosophy,* 21.

> and place and forewarning the people to be present at the same day and place with their children who needed to be confirmed and to hear the word of God and to confess. When the clergy and people had gathered, as often as not I myself expounded the word of God to the clergy and a friar preacher or friar minor preached to the people. Afterwards … [on] the following day, my clergy and I would attend to investigating, correcting, and reforming abuses in accordance with the duties of visitation.[101]

Grosseteste's deeply-held convictions regarding the importance of lay salvation are patent in the above; his visitations sought to correct, reform and, perhaps mostly importantly, teach. Every action within Grosseteste's newly formed parochial visitation was intended to educate, and always to the benefit of the laity. He utilised his closely trusted friars, renowned for their skills in preaching, to preach to the laity and to hear their confession. He taught the local clergy in theology and best pastoral practice so that they might better affect their own role in the salvific hierarchy and save as many souls as possible. He even communed with a small number of local lay representatives and held what can only be described as an open confession whilst undergoing his 'investigating.'[102]

Grosseteste's direct involvement with the laity and the manner in which it happened is surprising and particularly illustrative of his pastoral intent for a variety of reasons. Firstly, for the laity to have a direct acquaintance at all with their bishop would have been an event of considerable rarity, and his insistence on such a personal relationship should be considered strong evidence of a sincere and novel approach to the cure of souls.

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[101] F.M Powicke and C.R. Cheney, *Councils and Synods With Other Documents Relating to the English Church*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964): II, 265.
[102] Hoskin, *Grosseteste and the 13th-Century Diocese*, 124

Secondly, the form of Grosseteste's visitations as described above is also important. As previously stated, Hoskin points out the similarities between the practice advocated by Grosseteste in the confessional and these public meetings, and it does seem that there are a number of parallels between the questions Grosseteste advocates the use of during confession (in his *Templum Dei*) and the questions asked of the lay representation during parochial visitation.[103] Moreover, not only do Grosseteste's investigations represent normative confessional concerns, but there is also a patent theme that emerges throughout the collection of possible questions related to the laity's experience of the Church, as well as the local clergy's ability to dispense proper pastoral care. For example, he may have asked if priests had used sour wine during mass, or if priests charged for penance. Other questions considered the possibility of absent clergy, the holding of numerous benefices, and the neglect of the ill. More questions explored the clergy's personal behaviour; a specific concern for Grosseteste considering the emphasis his pastoral vision placed on the moral conduct of his clergy. Crucially, and perhaps something that runs across a significant amount of the previous concerns, is the substantial proportion of the questions that also considered the priests' level of education, such as their levels of literacy.[104]

Thirdly, albeit related to the visitorial form, is the unprecedented use of extracting oaths from those who took part. This is a rather extraordinary use of episcopal power, and an action that went far beyond Grosseteste's actual jurisdiction. Answers regarding whether or not he was aware of the legality of his actions would be somewhat conjectural, but the sources suggest that he was obstinately aware of the problems he was creating. Grosseteste's routine practice

[103] For more, see: Hoskin, *Grosseteste and the 13th-Century Diocese,* 124.
[104] For a discussion of these questions and more, see: Ibid., 120-122.

of extracting oaths from the laity regularly drew the ire of the King, who believed the practice to be 'to the prejudice of the crown', and on numerous occasions the King told the Bishop of Lincoln to halt such a practice.[105] The Bishop's response to such royal warnings was to continue regardless and in 1253 he denounced the King's efforts to stop him thoroughly examining his parishioners.[106] Grosseteste's hostility towards the royal determination to curb his visitorial and therefore pastoral efforts, surely goes a long way to explicating the importance he placed on the educative aspect of his theological *weltanschaaung* and the significance he assigned to the salvation of those, who, prior to Lateran IV, may have been under-appreciated by the Church.

The link between Grosseteste's epistemological views, his anthropology and the pastoral nature of his theology then can be situated in the importance he places on education, as has been shown throughout this thesis. Grosseteste's didactic theology ultimately places its emphasis on the God-given vocation and ability of humankind, one's ability to learn and develop virtue, and his episcopal practice reflects this view, as demonstrated, in a variety of ways. As bishop, Grosseteste wielded immense power, and he apportioned it in such a way so as to develop the laity's abilities to learn theological truths, manifest virtue, develop a greater appreciation of their own spiritual accountability, and strengthen their faith in God. This, in turn, created a cycle whereby the learning Christian, now wiser, has the ability to disseminate their own knowledge, further developing themselves in relation to the Dionysian hierarchy. All of the evidence in this chapter thus far underpins the idea that Grosseteste truly seemed to want to foster an 'ecosystem of persons gaining knowledge and increasing in virtue'

[105] Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, IV. 579-80. For this work, see: Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora* ed. H. R. Luard, Rolls Series, 7 vols. (London, 1872–83). For an English translation see: Vaughan, R., *The Illustrated Chronicles of Matthew Paris: Monastic Life in the Thirteenth-Century* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1984). Paris here quotes a royal writ complaining about the oaths archdeacons were attempting to extract by order of the Bishop of Lincoln in 1246. A further royal warning came in 1249.
[106] Hoskin, *Grosseteste and the 13th-Century Diocese*, 119.

throughout his diocese, with the aim of eliminating heresy, developing faithfulness, and enabling as many people as possible to strive toward 'transformation', or in other words, deification in God; objectives congruent to the aims of Lateran IV.[107] Evidence of Grosseteste's desire for the fostering of such an intellectual community of learners throughout the laity can be seen in *dictum three*, whereby he expounds on Psalm 132:9 and encourages the notion that all of the faithful should be seen as priests.[108] This idea is further strengthened by Grosseteste's emphasis on preaching as a force for educational transformation as alluded to throughout.[109] Indeed, contemporary attitudes to preaching declared it to be a powerful educational tool; according to Peter the Chanter's renowned expression, 'if reading is the foundation, and disputing the walls, then preaching is the roof, the culmination of study',[110] and this is something Grosseteste certainly agreed with.[111] Crucially, as Anna Siebach-Larsen succinctly asserts:

> [Grosseteste's use of the mendicant orders] … helped bring the laity into the nexus of intellectual and devotional exchange initially centered at the universities … Grosseteste … incorporated the mendicant orders into his larger efforts to reform … in order to more effectively lead individual souls to salvation … the evangelizing aims of the mendicant orders and those of

[107] Puttick, "Knowledge and Virtue," 111.
[108] He does this by referencing Exodus 19:6: 'All the earth is mine; and you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests…''. Grosseteste, *Dictum 3* 1, 15.
[109] Grosseteste's emphasis on preaching coincides with a more general revival of preaching in the thirteenth century; see the first chapter of: David L. D'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). D'Avray posits that Lateran IV promoted 'the beginning of a new age of preaching'. Ibid., 16.
[110] This is a translation from Suzanne Paul in their doctoral thesis. See: Suzanne Paul, 2002, An Edition and Study of Selected Sermons of Robert Grosseteste vol. 1, (The University of Leeds, Centre of Medieval Studies): 4. They have translated: `*In tribus autem consistit exercitium sacre scripture: in lectione, disputatione, praedicatione* [... *] Lectio ergo primo iacitur quasi stratorium et fundamentum sequentium* [... *J Supponitur secundo structura vel panes disputationis* [...] *Tercio erigitur tectum praedicationis*' from: John Baldwin, *Masters, Princes and Merchants: The Social Views of Peter the Chanter and His Circle* 2 (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970): 63.
[111] Conflating ignorance with suffering Grosseteste wrote: 'Of all the works of mercy, therefore, preaching is most worthy, most noble, and most effectual'. Robert Grosseteste, *Dictum 2* 1, 10.

> Grosseteste coincided and reinforced each other, playing out in Grosseteste's efforts … to educate the laity.[112]

4.4. Grosseteste's Sea of Symbols

The link between Grosseteste's epistemological thought, his cosmogony, and light metaphysics can be situated in the Bishop's pastoral theology and, specifically, in its educational character. This is something that has been almost entirely neglected in Grossetestean discourse until now. Various scholars have discussed Grosseteste's views on Dionysius, Eriugena, his light metaphysics, his epistemology, and some have related his earlier 'scientific' works to his later theology, but none have sought to absorb all of these constituent elements together and use the resulting amalgam to define something as broad in scope as an educational *weltanschauung*. When they are pulled together however, they create what this thesis has attempted to gradually elucidate: a predominately pastoral worldview built upon the combination of an epistemological and metaphysical understanding of the cosmos, largely indebted to Greek thinking, and a rigorous positivity surrounding the human condition, and its potential for godliness.

Grosseteste subscribed to a variety of notions that ultimately led to his anthropological views. He subscribed to Dionysian hierarchy, the notion of a complex light metaphysics creating a complex concatenation of divine symbols - especially within humanity's most local 'sphere' – that possibly proffer theological revelation to those wise enough to interpret them, and that humanity's potential originates in their microcosmistic creation and inbuilt desire for deification. These constituent parts of the thesis, when examined together, only offer one

[112] Anna Siebach-Larsen, *"For in the Boke of God is No Such Matter': Visual Epistemologies and vernacular Reading Culture in Thirteenth-Century England,"* PhD diss., (University of Notre Dame, 2016): 136.

conclusion; Grosseteste subscribed to an unusually positive anthropology and thus encouraged education at every available opportunity as the vehicle to man attaining deification. Various aspects of this formula have already been demonstrated previously by exploring influences on Grosseteste. Now that the philosophical and theological reasons for Grosseteste's didactic theology have been explicated, it is prudent to present further evidence for Grosseteste's advocacy for the potentiality of the material world in developing humanity's virtuosity; in line with the virtue epistemological system and general intellectual environment he tried to foster, as previously investigated.

Even if one were to deny Grosseteste's early natural philosophy as evidence for a nascent subscription to the idea of the material world's dual potential as a complex network of symbols of the divine and an aid to humanity's spiritual development, such refutations would become harder to sustain when one considers the topics on show in Grosseteste's important inception sermon.[113] Inception sermons occurred when one became a *magister*, and were generally used to set out one's stall, so to speak; to elaborate to a wide audience their general theological views and interests. Throughout the entirety of this significant sermon for Grosseteste the Bishop asserts his assent to the ideas this thesis seeks to attribute to him. For instance, toward the introduction he wrote:

> By so remarkable a work then, Scripture excites us to consider the wonderful things of God, so that what we see outwardly with our eyes we might approach inwardly to the knowledge of truth: so the psalmist says as if calling to mind some great things that God had done, declaring them present, and what he

[113] The evidence for this particular sermon being Grosseteste's inception sermon, and for a general history of the importance of inceptions sermons more generally, see: James R. Ginther, "Natural Philosophy and Theology at Oxford in the Early Thirteenth Century: an edition and study of Robert Grosseteste's inception sermon (dictum 19)," *Medieval Sermon Studies* 44 (2000): 127–8.

> promised to do in the future: … *I will meditate also on all your work, and talk of what you have done* (Psa.77.11-12).[114]

Clearly intellectually engaging with all of God's 'work' and disseminating the knowledge from such a process is an important practice for Grosseteste. This is because there is nobody 'endowed with so much knowledge that what he knows regarding the wonders of God's creation is more than he doesn't know'.[115] Knowledge of things outside of scripture are very useful for humanity, Grosseteste continues, referring to Augustine. He then writes:

> … how can a true thing, especially what is true of a creature's being, not its deficiency, ever be of no use, since every creature, as Christ's own words testify, carry some exemplary value to an honest man; and *as Augustine says, we need to grasp the mystical signification of each and every creature.* Every creature is good, and thereby useful, for God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was good (Gen. 1.31).[116]

Crucially however, Grosseteste then presses forward and forcefully, if somewhat surprisingly, conflates the knowledge gained from 'science' with theology:

> Any truth then concerning the being of creatures, particularly what is learnt in the various sciences, is useful; it must be useful to learn it, unless perhaps the man were to misuse as much truth as he managed to amass. *But if learning is to be called useless for its misuse, then there can be no truth in theology either; which knowledge clearly cannot be called useless.*[117]

[114] Robert Grosseteste, *Dictum 19,* 26. The italicised section clearly indicates the process Grosseteste's pastoral practice has attempted to create. A learned environment focussed on the preaching of the knowledge they have accrued.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid., 27 (emphasis added).
[117] Ibid.

Another section of *Lincolniensis*' inception sermon defends the use of the external senses and ponders the inevitable conclusion that it is undeniable that unquestionable truths are also present outside of Holy Writ:

> …someone might say that the parts of syllogisms, the names of figures, the terms of various disciplines are mentioned nowhere in the psalms; surely they are to be found in virtue of the senses, not in the performing of words; for so we can contemplate wine in the grapevine, harvest in the seed, leaves in roots, fruits in branches and even trees in their nuclei…[118]

Similarly, perhaps the most fundamental piece of evidence for Grosseteste's endorsement of the potentiality and utility of the material and sensible world can be found in *Dictum 7* entitled, *How the Five Senses Are Gates and What People Go Through Them.* Here, Grosseteste sets out his position on the use of humanity's sensible powers and how important sensible phenomena can be. He begins with a very brief *precis* on the acquisition of knowledge, describing the mind as a palace 'roomy enough to hold everything', and how the various people who enter it are different types of sensible phenomena. The 'vital force' of the senses receives them and then leads them to common sense whereby a steward, 'Phantasy', leads them into the memory'.[119] From there, Grosseteste describes the varying types and reactions one has to sensible phenomena. There are 'enticing sensory things' that force their way in eventually leading 'into fornication'; a more modest set of 'people' that lead to 'the good use of sensible things;'[120] and most importantly, there is a more 'venerable' group, 'namely the traces and indications of the creator … and if speculative science will accord them a courteous welcome … they will share together in the canticle of praise and

[118] Robert Grosseteste, *Dictum 19,* 28.
[119] Robert Grosseteste, *Dictum 8,* 30. "Phantasy" refers to the mental constructs one has having sensibly perceived something, otherwise known as a phantasm.
[120] Ibid., 31.

exultation.'[121] Here Grosseteste is patently demonstrating an exemplarist tendency in his view of the natural world and its potential benefits for the spiritual development of humanity.

Servus Gieben's work as discussed in the introduction of this thesis very briefly touches upon a possible link between the works of St. Bonaventure (1221 - 1274) and Grosseteste that further develops the importance of such exemplarist thought, and offers some enticing evidence towards an intellectual relationship between the two.[122] Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* is a microcosmistic work that details the mind's journey to God through what is, fundamentally, an epistemological process. Coupled with the evidence for Bonaventure knowing of Grosseteste's works, the tentative connection is a compelling one. Some Grossetestean scholars have sought to bridge this gap since but none have yet identified a key connection between the two bishops bar the exemplarist relationship they have with the world around them. However, crucially and perhaps most accurately they share in the notion that humanity has the ability to interpret the natural world as a network of symbols of the divine.

Bonaventure's notion of 'contuition' is a product of his 'cosmic exemplarism' and is of utmost relevance here. 'Contuition' is humanity's ability to see God 'in and through' His creation, and this is something Grosseteste appears to pre-empt.[123] In fact, Grosseteste's entire *weltanschauung* as it has been explicated here certainly seems to bear a striking resemblance to Bonaventure's later *magnum opus*, the *Itinerarium*.[124] Leonard Bowman

[121] Robert Grosseteste, *Dictum 8,* 30.
[122] Servus Gieben O.F.M., "Traces of God in Nature According to Robert Grosseteste: With the Text of the Dictum: *Omnis Creature Speculum Est*," *Franciscan Studies*, 24, (1964): 144-58; 151. Here Gieben points to Bonaventure having a copy made of Grosseteste's *De subsistentia rerum* for his own use, as can be seen in: Assisi, Bibl. Comm. 138, f.262rb- va.
[123] An alternative definition, equally as fitting, is: an understanding of 'a simultaneity of form in the created thing or mirror and in the Eternal Exemplar an awareness of the ontological presence of God attained in the consciousness of being'. Alvin Black, "The Doctrine of the Image and Similitude in St. Bonaventure," *Cord* 12.9 (1962):269-275; 272.
[124] Grosseteste's educational vision seeks to re-unite humanity with God through the creation of, and participation in, an intellectual community that fosters virtuosity that begins its epistemological journey with knowledge of the natural world. Bonaventure's most influential work seeks to detail how the mind is to re-unite with God through its engagement with the natural world, the expression of God Himself.

describes Bonaventure's thought as the product of three core concepts that are the sum total of his metaphysics: emanation, exemplarity and consummation.[125] He writes, 'These three concepts describe a process in which created beings come forth from God, reflect and express him [sic] in their being, and then return to him [sic].'[126] Grosseteste's tacit subscription to the Greek thought of Dionysius and Eriugena enamoured him with the notion of deification, despite their differences of opinion on how it would actually look. This consummation with or participation in God, the *visio Dei*, or seeing God *facie ad faciem* (face to face), is the end result of humanity's engagement with the cosmic exemplarism on display. This 'engagement' with the expressions of God in His creation is 'contuition'; the act of seeing God in and through His expressions. Put simply, humanity is to attempt to 'contuit' the world around them – see God in and through His creation – and as such, re-unite with Him.

For Bonaventure, a thing in the world, a particular expression of God, can only be fully known when it is 'known in relation to the Word, the eternal Exemplar'.[127] It is only when one can fully see God in and through His creation that one can fully appreciate the world around them. Grosseteste's assent to this idea is explicit right throughout his *Dicta*. For example:

> … there is nothing of any science that, if fully grasped in theology, is not understood, and indeed more surely than in its own science. Whatever there is, therefore, that makes any science worthwhile is more truly understood in theology. It is this that reveals true marvels to knowledge, that works true wonders, that furnishes true wealth. That's why it should be sought urgently by

[125] He also defines 'exemplarism' as '…the doctrine of the relations of expressions between God and creatures. It presupposes that God is the prototype of all that exists and that he expresses himself [sic] in creatures, so that as a result creatures express their creator.' Leonard Bowman, "The Cosmic Exemplarism of Bonaventure," *The Journal of Religion* 55 (1975): 181-98; 184.
[126] Bowman, "Cosmic Exemplarism," 181.
[127] Bowman, "Cosmic Exemplarism," 89.

> those who love real good, so that by its means they might accomplish a true work of compassion … Even so, it is not to be attained by skipping steps; on the contrary, it is most readily approached by the steps of the other sciences.[128]

It is clear that Grosseteste is advocating for the use of 'science' here, and yet, it is the theological conclusions of such scientific investigations that reveal 'true wonders'. This is an example of Grosseteste describing, in a rather oblique way, the process that Bonaventure latterly defines as 'contuition'; the seeing of God in and through the objects subjected to *physike theoria* or natural philosophy. This, combined with the conclusions previously made regarding Grosseteste's light metaphysics and epistemology, make it very hard not to accept such a conclusion. Grosseteste's view, when considering his light metaphysics, may have gone even further than Bonaventure's. Rather than just being a mirror, a sign, or an expression of God, for Grosseteste, these created particulars are made of light, a light that shares in the same light as the first light, God and is, therefore, in some way God Himself.

Possibly the most prime example of Grosseteste describing this very process can be found in *Dictum* 60. Here, Grosseteste demonstrates how through a rather 'scientific' examination of something as insignificant as a speck of dust one can reach theological conclusions surrounding God's infinite power, goodness and wisdom.

He begins, unknowingly asserting his ideological proximity with the later Bonaventure, by writing that 'Every creature is a mirror in which is seen an image of the Creator i.e of unity, and trinity.'[129] He then posits a thought experiment to begin his argument:[130] imagine the sole existence of only two creatures, one that is rational and the other physical. The physical

[128] Grosseteste, *Dictum 2* 1, 11.
[129] Grosseteste, *Dictum 60* VI, 5
[130] This argument is very briefly summarised – out of context - here: Robert Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron* VIII.4.1 Grosseteste explains that the trinity can be found 'in anything universally.' Ibid., 226-227.

creature is a speck of dust, swirling in the wind; the most insignificant of bodies, and yet under investigation, he remarks, it will reveal the character of a creative, triune God.

To begin his argument, he states that the rational creature must, upon investigating the dust, reason that it is mutable and material. One must then reason that it did not appear in a vacuum; it must have been made from nothing (being the most insignificant of creatures it is not a mere constituent part of some larger whole). Thus, '… from the maker then he reasons to the making and from the making he reasons to the power, not just to the finite but to the immense and infinite.'[131] This is because the creation of anything from nothing requires an infinite amount of power. Thus, Grosseteste has shown how one arrives at a creator's infinite power through the engagement with a physical, material thing. He continues: if the same rational creature persevered, it would find that the physical body is three-dimensional, and in every three-dimensional thing it is possible to create a sphere, and within that sphere an infinite number of circles, and within those circles an infinite amount of figures from which one could create a demonstrative science. Therefore, there must be an infinite number of sciences 'inscribed in the dust.'[132] An infinite amount of science requires an infinite amount of wisdom. Thus, Grosseteste concludes from a speck of dust the infinite power and infinite wisdom of its creator. The last section of his argument precedes from this penultimate conclusion; to reach this point is a remarkable achievement. To proceed from a simple speck of dust in the wind to knowledge of its infinitely wise and powerful creator is clearly an impressive feat of intellectualism. Therefore, the dust's creator has created something very useful indeed, as it has facilitated the realisation that one can reach conclusions of such majesty. Moreover, because of the usefulness inherent within this creation one can reach the conclusion that its infinitely powerful and wise creator must be good. Not only is it good, it is

[131] Grosseteste, *Dictum* 60 VI, 6.
[132] Gieben, *Traces of God in Nature*, 149.

infinitely good, because the usefulness of the dust is not merely limited to one rational creature, but to an infinite number of possible rational creatures. Therefore, Grosseteste manages to concoct an argument for the character of a triune God; one that is infinitely powerful, wise and good from a single speck of dust.[133]

This is perhaps the most illustrative example of Grosseteste's unknowing subscription to the later Bonaventuran notion of 'contuition'. From the intellectual engagement above, the hypothetical rational creature has managed to see God 'in and through' something as trivial as a speck of dust. For Grosseteste, the knowledge acquired through such an examination of the material world leads to a fuller appreciation of God and the creation He has created, which leads to virtue development as in the system presented by the scrutiny of Puttick's work earlier.[134] Thus for Grosseteste, this in turn leads humanity to further examination of the material world until they have the sufficient knowledge base with which to intellectually engage with more abstract notions.

[133] Importantly however, Grosseteste's argument never once suggests that through enough intellectual engagement with sensible phenomena one will actually *directly apprehend* God in and through them, but rather, similarly to Bonaventure's notion of contuition, it seems that he is suggesting that one is to attempt to see the thing precisely as a symbol of the divine; rather than seek direct perception of God Himself. One is supposed to see the thing 'in light of its relation to the exemplar which it reflects and signifies … The eternal idea [God] is not clearly and directly known but is that by which and in the light of which the thing can be truly and fully known. The eternal idea then is really but indirectly apprehended in contuition'. Bowman, "Cosmic Exemplarism," 197. James McEvoy describes Grosseteste's exemplarism in similar vein when he writes about the constitution of symbols for Grosseteste: 'An object which is chosen as the material support for a symbolic operation should not be etherealized but must be allowed to retain its full ontological and epistemological density' McEvoy, *The Philosophy*, 363; Panti elaborates on this point thus: 'If the object's natural consistency, operative functions and physical characteristics were not considered, the object itself would be unintelligible and, consequently, incapable of being used symbolically.' Panti, "Grosseteste's Cosmology of Light and Light-Metaphors," 69. Put simply, because of Grosseteste's light metaphysic, ontology and symbology are intrinsically linked together.

[134] A similar and superb example can be found in the *Dicta*: ''In all things as well,' as Augustine says in the same place, 'as you see that measures and numbers and order require an originator, and you will not find any other but where the supreme measure and number and order are, i.e. the Lord, of who it must truly said that he has disposed all things in measure and number and weight; so you will perhaps gain a more productive result when you praise God in the humility of the ant than when you cross a stream mounted on high on some beast of burden.' Grosseteste, *Dictum 91* VIII, 18.

Through this intellectualism, humanity is to ascend the Dionysian hierarchy and climb closer towards their deification.[135] Crucially, whilst this is a cognitive practice, it is not simply humanity that is consummated in God through this process but rather creation itself. Reminiscent of Eriugena's universal salvation, it is because of humanity's microcosmistic constitution that this occurs. Humans share in the materiality of God's creation whilst partaking in His divine rationalism, and thus, when a human is deified, the whole of the human is deified including their material composition, and since this material element of humanity encapsulates the whole of creation because humanity is a microcosm of creation, the whole of creation is also deified, fundamentally re-uniting God's creation with Himself.[136] This is a consequence of humanity's microcosmistic constitution and a significant contributing factor to Grosseteste's argument in *On the Cessation of the Laws* for the absolute predestination of Christ. There is surely no optimism more optimistic than the idea that God created the entire cosmos and put humanity in the centre of it, complete with all the tools (the implications of our microcosmistic constitution) it needs, and all of the materials (humanity's local sphere is the most symbolically resplendent of all the spheres) it needs to reach its apotheosis in God.[137]

Grosseteste's belief in the above led to him routinely utilising the environment he found replete with theological symbolism, and he exploited the potentiality of the material world in

[135] Interestingly, the idea of 'contuiting' something, that one is fully able to understand something iff they see it as a symbol of the divine is very reminiscent of a key element in Dionysius' definition of deification as expressed in the present work in section 2.2.

[136]Earlier, Cunningham was quoted as asserting Grosseteste's belief in a single purpose to all of Creation, and that this purpose was the idea that everybody and everything within creation fulfils its role so that it might eventually result in the return of all things to their source, God. Here, the role materiality plays is in its existence as a symbol, a mirror or an expression of the divine creator and a means of deciphering truth and for developing virtue ultimately enabling His creation's return to Him. The role humanity plays is in interpreting these symbols, attaining knowledge, developing virtue, and reaching deification.

[137] This conclusion may go so far to explain the despondency and authoritarian tone as identified by many Grossetestean contemporaries and scholars*;* for Grosseteste there must have been nothing worse than seeing humanity's failure to grasp and develop such immense potential within reach for every man, woman and child; especially concerning the cosmic gravity of the consequences.

a didactic way as evidenced in *Dictum 60*. There are at least two good reasons for this. Firstly, because of his subscription to the philosophy and theology as explicated thus far, and secondly, because the use of the natural world can be a particularly powerful tool because it is something that most people are attuned to. Whilst it is possible to surmise that Grosseteste was merely utilising the material world simply because of its usefulness educationally, this does not seem to be the case, and yet, that is not to say that this did not happen some of the time. *Dictum* 31 entitled *Grasping God,* is a good example of Grosseteste employing creative language and the material world to convey what could be interpreted as a deificatory or salvific theme. Here he wrote:

> If anyone were lying supine on the ground, unable through weakness to get up on his own, the best way for him to get up would be for him to stretch one hand upwards for someone to pull while the other hand pushed from the ground, and so he might ease himself up. So for them to get up they should stretch out the right hand for God to pull, that is, the will to live and do well, and with the left hand they should push up from the ground, that is, the hatred of doing evil, for by hating earthly works he as it were lifts himself up from the earth. And indeed God's love at once grasps the love of doing well, and by that same grasping of God's love, as if we took hold of his hand, our right hand, that is, the will to do what is right, is held, and by this grasping hand we are pulled upwards.[138]

Here, Grosseteste is referring to humanity making two choices: with our left hand to lift 'himself up from the earth' and with our right, to 'will to do what is right' by taking God's aid. The action by the left hand seems to refer to 'good works' which is compounded by the right's action, which may refer to the acceptance of God's grace. Combined through good

[138] Grosseteste, *Dictum 39* IV, 12.

works and through God's grace, humanity will rise again from their fall. When considered alongside the epistemological implications Grosseteste saw as arising from the fall as thoroughly evaluated throughout, this sermon takes on a new level of significance. The relationship between good works and spiritual 'ascent' (note the tacit understanding of hierarchy) or development are also attested to in other *dicta*. In *Dictum 50,* Grosseteste wrote:

> … in a spiritual ascent we have need of the ascending steps … the first step accordingly is faith … the step [is] … doing works of mercy [and] … this second step is followed by knowledge, the third; as Augustine says, what should pertain to action is clear knowledge of what has to be done and what is right to do.[139]

Whilst in this sermon Grosseteste is not explicitly demonstrating his overall subscription to the idea that God's presence can be felt within all of creation in the form of the material world being a sea of divine symbols, it does still have an important theological message. Other *dicta* certainly do present this noetic much more clearly however. Grosseteste pointed to the Sun as a light source for example in *Dictum 8,* and explicitly employed it in his sermon to mean both God as symbol, and actually God. This a particularly strong message because of its simplicity, because of the levels of similarity Grosseteste's audiences would have with such an object, and because of the severe regard in which he held such a notion.

For instance, in *Dictum 8* Grosseteste consistently refers to God as the Sun, a source of light that proffers enlightenment and progress towards consummation: 'It is not without reason that Holy Scripture so repeatedly beseeches us to look eagerly towards God; for God is the Sun of righteousness directing the heart, the Sun of intelligence lighting up the mind, his countenance like the Sun's rays clearing the darkness of sin and mists of mental dullness

[139] Grosseteste, *Dictum 50* IV, 29-31.

arising from indulgence'.[140] Grosseteste does something similar in *Dictum 147* when he compares moral purity to the purity of a diaphanous medium: 'These are the contemplatives of whom it is said … are white because whiteness is a very clear light, pure, perspicuous. And they have this perspicuity by purification from earthly stains.'[141]

Grosseteste also used the 'God as Sun' idea in *Dictum 141*, clearly developing some more of his earlier scientific work for a theological context. Here he explained that humility is the 'love of persisting in the order fitting to oneself according to all one's conditions', and to better elucidate that idea he gave an example. He explained that when the Sun's rays (in this metaphor the universal of humility – originating in the mind of God) shines through a coloured lens (humanity), it will naturally take on the colour of the coloured lens it is passing through, thereby assimilating the Sun's rays with the colour of the lens it has passed through. ' … the love that is humility … is like the light that now receives coloration.'[142] This is clearly a theological development from earlier works such as *De colore* and *De operationibus solis.*[143] The shared nature of light is explained further by McEvoy, which also goes a long way to strengthening Grosseteste's light metaphysics as explicated earlier, as a form of God dynamically sustaining corporeity by being, *in some way*, corporeity itself:

> "the Sun is in the presence of God" can be interpreted in other ways, perhaps because its light is the first visible light that shows the species of all colours; and since colour is incorporated light, which due to its incorporation does not

[140] Grosseteste, *Dictum 8* 1, 31.
[141] Grosseteste, *Dictum 147* XIII, 25.
[142] Grosseteste, *Dictum 141* XIII, 13-14.
[143] In these closely related works Grosseteste develops his theory of colour and combines it with the operations of the Sun (although these works are not an exhaustive list of Grosseteste's focus on colour and optics more generally). Grosseteste claimed that light can only be perceptible when it is combined with an exterior light, a *lux superfusa*. 'This "added light" is that of the Sun, which makes incorporated light perceptible, noting also that the latter is of the same nature (*radix*) as Sun-light. The rays emitted from the eye (*spiritus visibilis oculi*) also share this nature.' Robert Grosseteste, "De colore." Translated by Greti Dinkova-Bruun, Giles E. M. Gasper, Michael Huxtable, Tom C.B. McLeish, Cecilia Panti, and Hannah Smithson, in *The Dimensions of Colour: Robert Grosseteste's De Colore*, 16-19. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2013): 33.

> move itself to become visible except when <an external> light is poured onto it, it is clear that colour is born together with visible light. So if the source of the light that is visible to our eyes is in the Sun, every colour has something of sunlight in its own substance, which is combined with the added <external> light to make the colour visible by this act … the Sun is "in the presence", because *it is in everything that you can see, by virtue of its light*.[144]

It might seem unorthodox to suggest that Grosseteste utilises the natural world as educational symbols whilst simultaneously subscribing to the belief that they are, *in some way*, God. However, the 'Sun as God' symbol is a particularly illustrative example of how this might just be the case. This is because, not only has Grosseteste used the Sun theologically, such as in the case above, but he has also looked to it for actual advice. Indeed, the very novel and influential mode of visitation, so crucially constructed and representative of his theology, was perhaps influenced by the circuits made by the Sun. The Sun's behaviour is something to be replicated; it is something that is instructive, and furthermore, the description of the Sun runs parallel to common cataphatic descriptions of God.[145]

The 'God as Sun' symbol is probably the most explicit example of how Grosseteste's combination of light metaphysics and epistemology come together in a pastoral, and therefore didactic, sense. This symbol represents the idea that, because of Grosseteste's light metaphysics and cosmogony, God is *in some way* corporeity, but He is also present in the

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[144] James McEvoy, "The Sun as *res* and *signum*: Grosseteste's Commentary on Ecclesiasticus ch. 43, vv.i-5," *RTAM* 41 (1974): 38-91; 69-70. (Emphasis added). For this translation see the preceding note.

[145] Grosseteste, when defending his right to visitation during the infamous dispute with Lincoln's chapter wrote: 'Just as the Sun every 24-hour day makes a complete circuit over the world as it moves from east to west and east again, and every year gives light to the whole world as it moves … shining many times upon most parts of the world, leaving no part devoid of its presence and light, and at least, occasionally providing that part with beneficial warmth of its light, so should the bishop follow in Samuel's steps *and every year make a circuit* [1 Sm. 7:16] of his diocese with such care that by his presence he many times gives light to many parts, and leaves no part behind that he has not visited at least once.' Grosseteste, *Letters*, Mantello and Goering, 178 (emphasis author's own).

sense that our ability to perceive Him in His creation is fundamentally based upon the incorporation of the Sun's light into the light of the material world. This must have been a stark realisation for Grosseteste. Not only is God corporeity itself, *in some way*, He is its colour as well as humanity's very means of being able to perceive it at all. Not only this, but God's presence can also be interpreted via the sensible method He Himself enables, through something akin to the Bonventurian notion of contuition. Put simply; God is (*in some way*) corporeity, humanity's means to perceive it, and by those means, he is also the object of our intellection.[146] The epistemological process that begins with the *physike theoria* of the natural, symbolic world leading to gradual knowledge of the divine is at every step dynamically enabled by God. This rather simple symbol is just one instance of how Grosseteste combines various strands of his philosophy into a coherent theological whole. Not all of Grosseteste's deliberations upon the symbology of the natural world however are quite as explicit nor as explanatorily ambitious, but they all offer the possibility of religious revelation.

Examples can be found in *Dictum 54* where Grosseteste expounds on the spiritual meaning behind such physical things such as a pen, a tongue and a pumice stone. This theological development amounts to a 'sophisticated "morality"' according to Goering and Randall Rosenfeld.[147] Of importance here is the continued use of simple material objects as symbols of revelation. Indeed, it is precisely because of the 'ontological density' of these everyday

[146] This is something Panti may agree with; 'The idea of the incorporation of light into matter and the theory of colour generation is used to show how created things manifest their nature not in themselves, but thanks to God's enlightenment, as Grosseteste states in his treatise *On Truth* (*De veritate) …* 'God's enlightenment of the universe, … shows the truth of everything (*ostendit rem veram*) because divine light is like sunshine – not when it obfuscates the other celestial bodies, but when it enlightens (*illustrat*) colours.' Panti, "Grosseteste's Cosmology of light and Light Metaphors," 69.

[147] Joseph Goering and Randall Rosenfeld, "The Tongue is a Pen: Robert Grosseteste's "Dictum 54" and Scribal Technology," *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 12 (2002) 114-40; 116. This thesis will only refer to this translation of *Dictum 54* as provided by Goering and Rosenfeld.

objects that they can be used as symbols in this manner at all.[148] Grosseteste is deliberately and methodically evaluating the intricate forms and functions of pens, tongues and pumice stones – which is, in essence, *physike theoria*. Grosseteste begins on of his many 'subtle moralities suitable for preaching'[149] by quoting Psalm 44.2: 'The tongue of the wise man is the pen of the writer, as the Psalmist says: "My tongue is the pen of the scribe writing quickly"'.[150] From this position Grosseteste delves deep into the necessary preparation of traditional pens and what it means symbolically for the person whose pen is actually a tongue: 'The sharp edge trimming the pen and making it fit for writing is the fear of punishments ensuing from vices of the tongue.'[151] He continues:

> Solomon splits this pen with discretion when he says in Proverbs, chapter thirteen: "He who is thoughtless will encounter evils," [Prov. 13.3] as if to say that reflection and discretion should precede discourse. And the same writer again: "The mouth of the just shall bring forth wisdom," [Prov. 10.31] since in deliberating with discretion one brings forth [wise speech] … Solomon, moreover, in Parables chapter eight, inculcates rigidity, lest the pen twist in its double-tongued duplicity, when he says "I detest the double-tongued mouth [Prov. 8.13] … Let this pen proclaim nothing dark in whispering or murmuring, just as Wisdom admonishes in chapter one: "Guard yourselves from murmuring, which is good for nothing" … The pen ought to be dipped in the pure highest truth, where it is moistened, not with the blackness of ink, but the golden lustre

[148] Goering and Rosenfeld agree: 'Put simply, if the mundane equipment, actions, and circumstances lack verisimilitude, the moral conceptions lose their force.' Ibid., 129. It is almost as if, in some way, the material world's form and function were designed to enable their exhortation precisely as symbols of the divine, an idea that may have been subscribed to Grosseteste. Curiously, what may be surprising is the fact that Grosseteste seemingly did not differentiate between the importance of natural symbols, directly created by God (such as tongues and pumice stones) and those that are man-made, such as pens. Both types of material thing offer the opportunity for divine revelation through *physike theoria.*
[149] Thomas Eccleston, *The Coming of the Franciscans,* 11.
[150] Goering and Rosenfeld, "The Tongue is a Pen," 119.
[151] Ibid.

> of wisdom. Whence it ought not to write black letters on a dead skin, but golden letters on a live mind. Dead skin is fit for the use of another pen, but with this pen a dead mind can be made live.[152]

This is only a short excerpt of what I has come to term 'physical exegesis.' This type of exegesis continues throughout the entirety of the work. A particularly illustrative example of Grosseteste's avowed use of the material world symbolically arises when he amalgamates two examples:

> That upon which this pen writes [i.e. the mind] ought to be abraded with the razor of the fear of the punishments of Gehenna, and afterwards made smooth by the attrition of a pitted stone [i.e. pumice], that is, by frequent recollection of the wounded Christ, because Christ is the stone pitted through wounding. [cf. Act. 4.11; Cant. 2.14]'.[153]

This example describes the necessary work undertaken to prepare something to be written on.[154] However, in this specific instance, it is the mind that needs to be clean (fearing the punishments of Hell), so it can be re-written with the considerations of Christ, who is the pumice stone. This notion of Christ being a pumice stone is probably the most explicit use of symbolism in the text. Goering and Rosenfeld also attest to the originality of such a symbolism.[155] They believe that this could have originated from the commentary tradition

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[152] Goering and Rosenfeld, "The Tongue is a Pen," 119.
[153] Ibid., 123. Acts 4.11: 'This Jesus is 'the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone'; The Song of Solomon 2.14:
'O my dove, in the clefts of the rock,
in the covert of the cliff,
let me see your face,
let me hear your voice;
for your voice is sweet,
and your face is lovely.
[154] Pumice was routinely used to clean writing materials and to enable their re-use, also known as a palimpsest.
[155] Goering and Rosenfeld, "The Tongue is a Pen," 131.

surrounding Corinthians 2.14.[156] This is another prime example of Grosseteste utilising the material world as a symbol of the divine; indeed, in this instance, it truly reflects the properties of Christ himself. A pumice is a porous rock, replicating Christ's injuries during his crucifixion. A pumice stone's function is to cleanse; much like Christ's redeeming qualities. Goering and Rosenfeld describe it as an 'inspired development, a rock with an instructive dimension, for this pumice effects the right receptivity of the reader's mind'.[157] Indeed, such a symbol fits with McEvoy's explanation of them; one must consider not only the ontological significance of such symbolism, but also its epistemological implications, and the Incarnation's epistemological and ontological significance to Grosseteste's system have already been developed at length throughout this thesis. Indeed, Grosseteste clearly had education on his mind throughout his development of this *dictum*:

> 'It is notable that in two instances Grosseteste bypasses common technical terms in favour of more vivid metonymic and synecdochic constructions. There is good didactic reason in this. Rather than refer to the "pen-knife" simply as "pen-knife" (*scalpellum, artavus*, or *cultellus)*, he refers to it by the part which does the cutting, the "sharp edge" to bring home to his reader that he must cut away undesirable traits in thought and speech for the health of his soul. Likewise, with "pumice" (*pumex*), he precisely refers to the mineral through one of its most obvious physical characteristics, its open cellular structure. The open cells recall the open wounds of Christ, the recollection of which prepare the mind of Grosseteste 's reader to receive the highest truth, an analogy with the pumice used on parchment so that it can take ink … here the intent is to aid the reader's understanding of something which cannot really be understood simply through observing material things. In avoiding the

[156] Goering and Rosenfeld, "The Tongue is a Pen," 131.
[157] Ibid.

> obvious terms like "pen knife" and "pumice", Grosseteste's lesson is more vivid and memorable.' [158]

Dictum 101 is an excellent example of how Grosseteste synthesises various philosophical strands, uses such a synthesis for theological exhortation and attempts to make his lessons more memorable.[159] Firstly, he reiterates the importance of Christ to His relation to the utility of the material world as symbols of the divine. Even here, in setting up his belief in the potentiality of materiality, Grosseteste's makes strong use of naturalistic imagery:

> The Son of God … wanted to show why he came in the flesh and for what purpose he set us prelates in charge of his flock … To this end he came into the flesh, that he might feed us, the sheep of his pasture, with the seed-bearing grass of the doctrine of Holy Scripture, that he might feed us with the flowers of all manner of creatures, that he might feed us with the fruit of examples, that he might feed us with the milk of his flesh, that he might feed us with the solid food of divinity. And to this end he set his prelates in charge of his simple folk as a flock of sheep that in the same way they feed the Lord's flock with the moral precepts of Scripture, and with the moral principles derived from similitudes of all kinds of creature, because every species of creature has something to teach the honest man, and the invisible things of God are revealed through the facts we have understood.[160]

Here, in the introduction to the work, Grosseteste has succinctly summarised and revealed the theme of the entire sermon. He then continues and describes the various foods the Lord's

[158] Goering and Rosenfeld, "The Tongue is a Pen," 136.
[159] For his sermons truly are lessons in that they are opportunities for Grosseteste to impart knowledge and were always treated as such.
[160] Grosseteste, *Dictum 101* IX, 21.

flock need for their salvation. The first pasture the flock are to be fed is Scripture, with Grosseteste referring to Matthew 13:44.[161] The second pasture is 'the field of the whole breadth of creation'.[162] Here, '… the beauties of individual species are like individual flowers with which the flocks of the folk are fed, when they are informed by the doctrine and learning of prelates from the similitudes of some particular characteristic of the species of creation.'[163] The third is the 'life and good conduct of the prelate himself in respect of his example', and the fourth is the incarnate Word Himself; 'for the divinity itself of the Word, as Augustine teaches (*Confessions* 7.18), was made milk for our feeding…'[164] Having being nourished by these first four foods, the Lord's flock will arrive at the 'pasture of solid food of the divine vision.'[165]

Prima facie, Dictum 101 seems to be a straightforward, yet particularly illustrative example of explaining simple theology; all of these four different 'pastures' are simply important facets to Christian life. However, not only does it demonstrate Grosseteste's subscription to notions such as the potentiality of materiality (in the second pasture), it also reveals Grosseteste's proposed epistemological and spiritual journey to deification. The first two 'pastures' are the books of Scripture and nature, the two complementary modes of divine revelation. The third is good conduct or works. Following on from attainment of a strong knowledge base of the material world and Scripture, and having built good habits through good works and conduct, one can then begin to contemplate more abstract notions, such as the divinity of the Word itself. Through enough of this contemplation, and the combined efforts of the other 'pastures' humans can attain deification, or the *visio Dei*. Crucially, Grosseteste is demonstrating this process in a similetic manner, not just for pedagogical

[161] 'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field'.
[162] Grosseteste, *Dictum 101* IX, 22.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid.

reasons, although it was clearly an important consideration, but also because of his subscription to the idea that the material world is a interpretable conduit of divine revelation.

Indeed, theological study itself gets the same treatment. In *Dictum 118* Grosseteste refers to everything's 'dual perfection;' its form and function. Theology, unlike the sciences, can be seen to align with both a net's form and its function, whereas science only conforms with its form. Grosseteste wrote: 'All syllogistic knowledge is like a net woven out of triangular shapes', unlike theology, which, 'has the likeness of a net according to both its perfections: for this alone draws men out like fishes into the dry world of everlasting stability from the waves of the world's mutability.'[166]

Grosseteste clearly utilises symbolism in a variety of ways. Firstly, due to the implications of his theo-philosophy, the material world is constituted, *in some way*, by God Himself. Consequently, God's creation can be and should be subject to serious study and interpretation, as this *physike theoria* will lead one to knowledge of its Creator. This 'book of nature' however uncoincidentally lends itself well to sustained enquiry: not only is it perfectly structured, but humanity is intimately aware of a significant proportion of its form and function already. Pumice stones and the Sun for example are commonplace for most medieval minds, and as such lend themselves supremely well to such *physike theoria*. Not only are these symbols as well as all others ontologically divine *in some way*, their forms and functions actually enable their potency as a possible conduit of divine revelation. Because of this, it is understandable why there is a lacuna in the Grossetestean scholarship related to his use of symbology: *prima facie* it seems as if Grosseteste is simply utilising the material world's varied form and function to usefully explicate theological messages to a wide audience but he is not; he is also positing the existence of the divine in creation as well.

[166] Grosseteste, *Dictum 118* XI, 8-9.

However, Grosseteste does not simply point to corporeal instances and explicate their symbolism; he also utilises them in other ways through a variety of media. There is very clearly a strong link between Grosseteste's 'scientific' understanding of the cosmos, his theology, his didactive pastoral work and his resultantly unique symbolic methodology. However, whilst the vast majority of his use of natural symbolism as an educative tool can be evidenced, one must not dismiss the significance of other forms of symbolism, as patently on display in his important work *Le Chateau D'amour*.[167]

Le Chateau D'amour is a striking example of Grosseteste's use of symbolism in a narrative and allegorical fashion. Southern once described this epic poem as '… the nearest [Grosseteste] came to a *Summa Theologiae* … the fullest expression of his pastoral theology for a popular audience.'[168] The manuscript evidence certainly attests to the poem's popularity amongst both the laity and the religious.[169] The *Chateau*'s importance as a distillation of Grosseteste's theology is also manifested in its growing prominence in Grossetestean discourse. [170] Whilst the *Chateau*'s readership has increased in more modern times, its originally intended audience is the cause for much academic debate.[171]

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[167] This thesis will follow the dating of Grosseteste's *Chateau D'amour* as posited by Mackie, who places its composition between 1230 and 1235. Evelyn Mackie, *Robert Grosseteste's "Chasteau d'amur": a Text in Context*, PhD diss., (University of Toronto, 2002): 65. This work is, to perhaps be somewhat reductive, a *précis* of the entirety of
Scripture.

[168] Southern, *Robert Grosseteste*, 224-5.

[169] For a discussion of the MS tradition see: Evelyn Mackie, "Robert Grosseteste's Anglo-Norman Treatise on the Loss and Restoration of Creation, Commonly Known as Le Château D'Amour: An English Prose Translation," in *Robert Grosseteste and the Beginnings*, 151-79. For a detailed cataloguing of the *Chateau* in monastic houses see: Mackie, *Chasteau d'amur*, 17-23.
Interestingly, Lambeth 522 includes an image of Grosseteste preaching to five people, mostly women, only strengthening the idea that Grosseteste placed a great deal of emphasis on the education of all.

[170] Hereafter, the edition referred to throughout will be the English prose translation of the Anglo-Norman as can be found in Evelyn A. Mackie, "Le Chateau d'Amour: an English Prose Translation", in *Robert Grosseteste and the Beginnings* ed. Maura O'Carroll, 160-179. The often neglected poem is also discussed in Kari Sajavaara, "The Middle English Translations of Robert Grosseteste's 'Château d'Amour," *Mémoires de La Société Néophilologique de Helsinki* 32 (Helsinki: Société néophilologique, 1967): 54-101; and Christiania Whitehead, *Castles of the Mind: A Study of Medieval Architectural Allegory* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003).

[171] For an overview of these arguments see: Mackie, " Robert Grosseteste's Anglo-Norman Treatise", 152-6.

The *Chateau*, unsurprisingly as a distillation of Grosseteste's *oeuvre,* is patently didactic. Firstly, as the debate surrounding its audience demonstrates, it was written in Anglo-Norman, and one can only surmise that this was to broaden its educative scope. This educative intent is most explicit toward the beginning of the poem when Grosseteste wrote:

> We are all in need of assistance, and many will never be able to know the languages of Hebrew, Greek or Latin in order to praise their creator … So that each in his own language might truly know his God and his redemption, I begin my account in French for those who have no acquaintance with learning or Latin.[172]

Clearly, Grosseteste's intent was to supply a creative medium by which he would inform his audience of his complex theologically-driven pastoral *weltanschauung;* and crucially, the epicentre of the epic poem is a supremely complex, yet solitary symbol, the allegory of the castle itself.

Siebach-Larsen believes that light is the 'primary aesthetic and metaphysical justification and subject of the *Chasteau.*'[173] This is because the only thing in the universe to both be material and immaterial is light, which is what 'renders it the perfect analogue to represent God symbolically, as it is God, is the means of knowing God, and as a natural force leads one to knowing God by working within the cognitive process both physically and symbolically.'[174] In fact, 'the formal structure of the *Chasteau* works to exert the intellect and soul simultaneously…[175]

[172] Robert Grosseteste, *Le Chateau,* 160
[173] Siebach-Larsen, "*For in the Boke,"* 156.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid., 155

> [and] These workings and their products are simultaneously material and immaterial. We come to know through a physical process predicated upon an understanding of the relationship between the material and the immaterial, in which the former leads us to the latter … For Grosseteste, divine ideas are the ontological basis of finite realities.[176]

The *Chateau'*s narrative symbolism works in exactly the same manner as the natural world's: it is the 'ontological and epistemological density' of material phenomena that give them their symbolic resplendence and utility as discussed above, and this conclusion applies to the physical referents throughout the poem. However, as noted previously, the role that light plays in the epistemological journey is of utmost significance, and, in relation to this particular process, an understanding of light's transformative effects are critical for a full understanding regarding the allegory of the castle. In his commentary on *Ecclesiasticus* Grosseteste wrote:

> Since the species and forms and figures of things are like a kind of writing, and the sensible causes, up to the reasons [*rationes*] in the divine mind, are like certain spoken words, the *speeded course* [Ecclesiasticus 43:5] is in the words of the Sun because in the forms, figures and species impressed by the Sun, or drawn out through its efficacy, a course to the visible causes is prepared for human intelligence and inquiry, as if in its word, by ascending in sequence to the *invisible things of God* that *are clearly seen, being understood through the* visible *things that were made* [Romans 1:20].[177]

[176] Siebach-Larsen, "*For in the Boke,"* 156.
[177] This English translation was conducted by Aden Kumler, in Aden Kumler and Christopher Lakey, "*Res et significatio:* The Material Sense of Things," *Gesta* 51.1 (2012): 1-17; 5 (emphasis translator's). For the Latin see: McEvoy, *The Sun as* res, 90-91.

The idea that light not only constitutes the material world but crucially enables one to sensibly perceive it and intellectually engage with it is pivotal to understanding the transformative role Mary plays in the *Chateau*. External light enables the senses, but inner light enables the mind throughout the epistemological process; it is the light that is being irradiated from the material phenomena that enter our mind's eye (*aspectus*) that literally transform one's desire (*affectus*) leading to an epistemological, and truly significant transformation of the self. This is a process that Mary herself goes through, as Siebach-Larsen asserts.[178] Mary's transformation occurs because 'her soul became wholly beautiful only through her gain of knowledge through the vision of the eternal light and her increase of affection (*affectus*) through love.'[179]

Through the *Chateau*'s narrative, Grosseteste is advocating for one of the key elements of his *weltanschauung*; the inescapable responsibility upon the individual to fill themselves with God's light; towards the denouement of the *Chateau* Grosseteste wrote that those that follow this path become 'bright like the Sun… [in fact] There will be no need of the Sun, for everyone will be so brilliant, and many more times more beautiful will be the one who deserved it most.'[180] Mary is, of course, not the only significant symbol within the narrative: the chateau/ castle/ cathedral itself plays a pivotal role, and it is one that Grosseteste makes use of in various works.[181] Siebach-Larsen writes:

[178] Siebach-Larsen, *For in the Boke*, 161. Siebach-Larsen also connects Mary's being filled with light with Grosseteste's notion of colour and his sermon, *Tota pulchra es*. It is because Mary has been filled with light - she has literally allowed Jesus into her body - that she becomes the perfect vessel for Him in much the same way that the 'contemplatives' are 'white' in Dictum 147; for Grosseteste 'color is embodied, and the presence of light manifests it…' Ibid., 162.
[179] Ibid., 163.
[180] Grosseteste, *Chateau* trans. Mackie, 178. And as Siebach-Larsen affirms, because only those who desire the light of God can be transformed, Grosseteste variously described the castle in terms of desire. Siebach-Larsen, *For the in the Boke*, 164.
[181] Grosseteste frequently refers to temples and castles throughout his pastoral works. See his *Templum Dei* for example (it is quite literally The *Lord's* Temple).

> Alongside possible connections to his theology and natural philosophy, there are ties between Grosseteste's pastoral efforts and the cathedral as a specific monument and as a symbol. These connections tie back to idea [sic] of the cathedral or church as a sanctuary and protection against evil, in which the community of the Church is gathered together.[182]

Most interesting however is Siebach-Larsen's response to the *Chateau* and her opinion of how it was received contemporaneously. Siebach-Larsen maintains that an edition of the *Chateau* can be located within the possession of Joan Tateshal (c.1266 - c.1329), an aristocratic woman within Grosseteste's diocese, specifically within the Tateshal Miscellany. She persuasively asserts that Grosseteste's work, and all of the noetic that informed it:

> … open[ed] the door for Joan Tateshal to become an active and authoritative creator of her own pastoral care. As an active co-creator, Joan remains within the community of the educated laity … [and] also claims a measure of authority and participation within the intellective and imaginative communities of the learned religious.[183]

Joan Tateshal is a prime example of the picture this thesis has attempted to portray of Grosseteste's educational *weltanshauung*. The Bishop of Lincoln attempted to foster a vibrant intellectual community: one that 'pulls up' those 'below', and enables all humans, be they man or woman, learned or unlearned, religious or lay, to be responsible for their own spiritual development ultimately precipitated by God's creational display of omnipotence and metaphysical omnipresence.[184] Joan's self-transformation, inspired by the consequences of

[182] Siebach-Larsen, *For in the Boke*, 171.
[183] Ibid., 173ff.
[184] Grosseteste's gender egalitarianism is quite well-attested to. McEvoy's short work on the matter can be found here: James McEvoy, *"Dignitas Humana*: The Equal Dignity of Man and Woman through their Creation in the Image of God: Basil the Great's Outlook and Robert Grosseteste's Reception of it," in *Maynooth*

Grosseteste's didactic *weltanschauung* and enabled by God and His light, is exactly the kind of eventuality *Lincolniensis* toiled for: she is the personification of his life's work: the encouragement of a an unyielding quest through God and His work toward deification.

Philosophical Papers 2 (2004): 84-88. He briefly discusses humanity's microcosmistic creation as *imago Dei* and quotes Grosseteste in his *Hexaëmeron*: 'And so the woman comes to be according to the image of God as much as does the man. For their natures are of the same dignity, their virtues are equal , their struggles are equal, and their rewards are equal … For in all things that have to do with true virtues the woman can be equal to the man, if she wants'. McEvoy, "Dignitas humana," 86.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

Considering the overall picture this thesis' argument has attempted to sketch, a panentheistic conclusion, as presented in the opening of this thesis, should not come as a surprise. That Grosseteste had deep sympathies with panentheistic thought, if not quite being demonstrably panentheistic in a similar vein to those subscribers of a possibly Eriugenian, Chartrian and overtly Greek school of theo-philosophic thought, seems to be a patent reality, and yet not one that is encountered in the Grossetestean historiography. Every time this thesis has referred to God being '*in some way*' His creation has been a specific reference to his clear assent to such a position.

Grosseteste's ingenuity is a stark reality to all who read his work; yet that ingenuity goes further than has been considered to date. Grosseteste seriously flirts with heterodox lines of thought, even while seeking to extirpate heresy and fulfil his sacred role in the *cura animarum*. Indeed, the key weapon in his spiritual arsenal was his powerful ability to seemingly synthesise dubious doctrine with orthodoxy. The explication of these dubious and subtle doctrines and their affect upon *Lincolniensis*' pastoral praxis, the most significant responsibility of his life, has been the objective of this work. Here, in conclusion, this thesis will re-iterate its fundamental lines of argumentation. That God, for Grosseteste, is 'All things in All'; the potentiality of the material world, and that crucially, it is humanity's God-given vocation to unlock that perfection, as only we can, and to thereby enact through the grace of God our, and the cosmos' reunification with Him.

5.2. God Truly is 'All Things in All'

The most striking evidence for God being immanently present within His creation originates from Grosseteste's innovative *De luce*. This thesis has repeatedly referred to one of its central tenets, the idea that God is, *in some way,* corporeity. The entirety of the corporeal and incorporeal world is nothing more than a supremely complex network of light and this light *is* God. This is a fairly straight-forward assertion, albeit novel, that affirmatively describes God as being His creation, and this notion is clearly very important to Grosseteste. In his symbolistic *Topical Concordance*, the work that he designed to aid in the analysis and study of works he deemed to be important theologically and philosophically, he signifies the idea that God is 'all things in all' with a triangle pointing upwards inside a square.[1] Here, his list of sources that refer to such an idea is relatively small, and yet in his *Hexaëmeron* he goes on to excitedly deliberate upon such a topic for a protracted period of time.[2] He begins his long argument thus:

> God is all things in all things; the life of living things, the form of things with forms the species of things with species [or, the beauty of beautiful things]: and human beings are in all things God's closest likeness in resemblance. For this reason human beings, in so far as they are the image of God, are also in some way all things.[3]

From this juncture he discusses the intimate relationship between God as 'all things in all' and humanity. Crucially, it is Grosseteste's drive to express God's creational and ontological diversity that spurs this discussion forward. Furthermore, one must also consider Grosseteste's discussion of the potentially Eriugenian problem, that God is the form of all things, or *forma omnium* in his letters, and his discussion of the same in *De veritate*. As

[1] Southern, *Robert Grosseteste,* 213.
[2]His list refers his audience to John of Damascus' *De fide orthodoxa* and Bernard of Clairvaux's *Song of Songs*.
[3] Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron* VIII, I, 2.

McEvoy makes clear, these discussions are related to the notion that 'the first being [God] is known in each instance of being.'[4] Grosseteste even supplies an example in *De veritate:*

> … water is of itself fluid and takes its shape from its container, wherefore it would make no sense to try to describe, for instance, water in a cubic shape, without adverting to the cubic form of its container. Now, all being, excepting the Creator alone, is likewise labile, and save for his support would of itself return to the non-being from which it came; therefore, *to define the being of a finite thing can only be in the last analysis to demonstrate its dependence on the power of the Word.*[5]

Combining the conclusions of Grosseteste's *De luce* to this discussion in his *Hexaëmeron*, it is clear to see the panentheism, and when one fully considers the significance of his cosmogonical thought as per his *De luce* to his overall theology, the extent to which one can describe Grosseteste as panentheistic only magnifies.

The epistemological implications of such ideas are obvious: Grosseteste's illuminationist epistemology relies upon God's light 'making' the objects of cognition, or His natural symbols of divine revelation, perceivable and therefore cognisable. Not only are these objects themselves *in some way* God, it is God's light that makes them apprehensible in the first instance. Then begins the process of contuition and the concomitant development of virtue.

When one takes into consideration the cosmological centrality of humankind and their relationship to God's creation, Grosseteste's panentheism comes into even sharper focus. God is, for all intents and purposes 'all things in all', and His creation is the chief instrument humanity has to engage with to reveal God, acquire virtue, and regain one's prelapsarian

[4] James McEvoy, *The Philosophy,* 322.
[5] Ibid (emphasis mine).

perfection. Put simply, humanity is to directly engage with God through His creation. As Southern puts it:

> [For Grosseteste] The physical universe is both a reality and a symbol of reality; and this conjunction of symbol and reality extended upwards to the celestial spheres and downwards to the most minute atoms. *Everything in the universe provides material for studying the nature of God* … the physical objects of our sense perceptions, the general laws of nature, the symbolic meanings of every creature … [and] the nature of God, are all parts of a single field of knowledge.[6]

The dominion over creation as promised in Genesis 1:26 takes on a much larger significance when one considers these creatures as conduits of divine revelation:

> … if all created things have a symbolic value, the centrality of man stretches further than practical dominion over other creatures. Ants and lions [for example] become the instructors of mankind; and to investigate their natures becomes a scientific duty if the maximum amount of instruction is to be extracted from them.[7]

Grosseteste's elaborate use of the natural world has already been attested to throughout this thesis, a particularly illustrative example being *Dictum* 60.[8] Grosseteste's commentary on the Psalms is another prime example of him performing his scientific and religious duty to maximise the natural world's potential for theological instruction. Southern details Grosseteste's attempts on the very first Psalm:

[6] Southern, *Growth of an English Mind,* 216 (emphasis mine).
[7] Ibid., 211-12.
[8] For this discussion see 211 of the present work.

> It [the Psalm] begins by saying that the just man is like a tree planted by the waterside: it will bring forth fruit in due season, and its leaves will not fall…[9] The leaves, he [Grosseteste] says, are the words of God, which the just man does not let fall. *The image is apt because the structure of the leaf mimics in shape and function the structure of the organs of speech: the stalk, the windpipe; the leaf; the tongue the sap, the words of God; the water whence the sap arises, God*.[10]

This natural, or physical exegesis can also be seen regarding 'mountains (ps. 2:6), morning and night (5:4), tears (6:7), lions (7:7), the moon (8:4), asps (13:2), the heart (32:15)' et al.. [11] It is also here, deep in the Psalms, that Grosseteste reveals some of his assent to deification by expounding upon the works of Boethius' *Consolation.* Commenting upon Psalm 81:6, 'Ye are gods', *Lincolniensis* wrote:

> Nothing can be concluded more truly or firmly or more worthy of God. To this, following the practice of geometers who are accustomed to add corollaries to their demonstrations by way of corroboration, I will add: if men become blessed by participation in blessedness, and if blessedness is divine, then clearly the greatest blessedness is in attaining divinity … to be blessed is to obtain divinity, to 'to be gods'.[12]

Attaining divinity is the end-goal of humanity's educational and spiritual journey, for indeed they are one and the same, and this journey is a collective enterprise, as will be reiterated below. An example within Grosseteste's *Dicta* unites the symbolism, the pastoral and the

[9] Falling leaves was a matter that previously preoccupied Grosseteste. He had sought to correct Aristotle's theory for the phenomenon.
[10] Southern, *Growth of an English Mind,* 176 (emphasis mine).
[11] Ibid., 177.
[12] Ibid., 179.

communal aspects of Grosseteste's thought. In *Dictum 50*, where he expounds upon the need to perform good works and 'ascend' like Christ did in the mind and body, he wrote:

> But the unity of the hand is distributed into a fivefold group of fingers; so, the whole good work should be distributed into five, because you owe the whole good work to God the Creator, the whole to Christ the Redeemer, the whole to attainment of heaven, the whole for the purging of sin, the whole for relieving one's neighbour of hardship and promoting his good.[13]

In this excerpt one can clearly see the symbolism of the hand; but not only are the hands the human instruments by which to perform good works, their form can reveal a theological truth to the nature of good works themselves, and this truth reveals Christian imperatives, such as aiding neighbours and revering God. This is an example of rudimentary *physike theoria.*

5.3. The Workshop of all Creation: Spiritual Mobility and the Unlocking of the Material World's Potential; Humanity's Calling.

The illuminationist aspect of Grosseteste's epistemology emphasises the engagement with corporeal objects as these objects of cognition are themselves divinely illuminated, as posited in *De luce*. Grosseteste's pastoral theology is didactic in nature; thus his epistemological views are imperative to any strategy he employed in his work on the *cura animarum.* Furthermore, because Grosseteste's epistemology is deeply entwined with deification as a possibility, and with his epistemology being so central to any understanding of his theology, Grosseteste is clearly peddling a theology of deification, as opposed to a clearly defined doctrine,[14] and crucially, one that begins with the apprehension of the corporeal world, or

[13] Grosseteste, *Dictum 50* 4, 28.
[14] For the differences between these terms consult the first chapter of the present work.

God, who '… is always *one whole in all places*, and gives life, movement, and government to all things.'[15]

Southern describes Grosseteste's *physike theoria* in his commentary on the Psalms as an example of 'mystical theology', and despite Grosseteste's engagement with the *corpus Areopagiticum* coming at a later date, it is not surprising to see why Grosseteste found such vindication in the seemingly sub-Apostolic mystic's work, as replete with symbolism as it is.[16] Grosseteste began to incorporate symbols into his pastorally-oriented work; and not simply because of the educational benefits of doing so, but because the natural world really is a network of divine symbols, and he wished to disseminate this interpretative model of the cosmos as far as he could. God truly is 'all things in all things'; He is the material world's potential, and through Him, it is humanity's vocation to unlock it and return to Him. Grosseteste's realisation of this reinforced his pastoral pursuits, it spurred on his notion of the universal accessibility of the Christian revelation and this conclusion, combined with the legitimisation and power of Lateran IV, enabled him to set forth his didactic vision, a vision that emphasised spiritual educational inclusivity.

For Grosseteste, the etiology of humanity's epistemological and spiritual journey towards God begins with the material world. This journey is facilitated by Dionysius' notion of hierarchy, and this stratification, broadly conceived, imparts upon those further 'up' a responsibility for those who are 'below' (and 'up' and 'below' refer to proximity to God). However, Dionysius' hierarchy is only scalable by humanity. It is humanity's vocation, as priest of the cosmos, the workshop of all creation, to bring about the return of all to God, as far as possible, through our microcosmistic constitution. Humanity needs to pursue this vocation; facilitated by the divine hierarchy, by one's constitution and by the divine

[15] Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron* VIII, VII, 1. Here Grosseteste is quoting James 3:7.
[16] Southern, *Growth of an English Mind*, 179.

illumination and immanence within corporeality, it is to reunite with God and achieve deification. As Grosseteste wrote:

> … it is left to me to make myself into the likeness of God. I am in God's image in that I am rational: I am made in God's likeness in that I am made a Christian. 'Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect' … he left you imperfect, so that you might perfect yourself with the help of grace, and become worthy … if the rational creature serves its Creator by whom it was made, and through whom it was made, and to whom it was made, all other things will serve it.[17]

Humanity is the key to everything. The entire cosmos is at one's disposal to fully enable one's return to God, and this power, this cosmic centrality is entirely due to humankind's God-given microcosmistic constitution.[18] Our power stems from our relationship with the rest of God's creation, and whilst there are various faciliatory elements provided by God, our ability to utilise them in this spiritual journey is precipitated by microcosmism; as McEvoy writes:

> There were *a priori* grounds for believing that Grosseteste might have something worthwhile to say concerning microcosmism. When he attended the schools as a young man the glory of Chartres was still a recent memory … His later-acquired Aristotelianism was never doctrinaire … [and] He was avid of Neoplatonic ideas. He produced the only original cosmogony of the later Middle Ages, and the double concern which invigorated this speculative enterprise was sympathetic to microcosmic speculation: [his] passion [was] to grasp the whole of the physical cosmos in its moment of generation and [he

[17] Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron* VIII, VIII, 1-IX, 5.
[18] McEvoy, *The Philosophy*, 394. More evidence of this can be found here: Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron* VIII, XIV-XV.

> had] the desire to translate the creation-narrative into a philosophical prose … [and] his preoccupation during his later years with the assimilation of the Greek patristic tradition … [all helped] to catalyse in a single reaction.[19]

As has been shown throughout this present work, microcosmism pervades the entirety of Grosseteste's thought, and it is at its most forceful when he considers the dignity of humanity. The ideological proximity with Eriugena and the school of Chartres is tantalising, and most certainly a very real possibility. His *weltanschauung's* debt to them, if so, is immeasurable. Eriugena's work sought to situate humans into the centre of God's creation, making them the pivot by which the grand narrative of *exitus* and *reditus* would occur. To echo Taylor-Quinn's words as above, for Grosseteste, humans are to become 'co-workers' with God; indeed, humans are the only creature capable; McEvoy writes:

> Man as image shares at an infinite distance all that is in God, even creativity, for he must actively co-operate with God in the renovation of the creation, the order of which has been upset by sin.[20]

For Grosseteste, humanity's dignity exceeds that even of the angels;

> … does the human have dominion over the angels? … perhaps it was said that the human being would have dominion over the whole of creation, and therefore even over the angels, since one who sits at table [sic] is greater than the one who ministers. All the angels, as the Apostle says to the Hebrews, are 'ministering

[19] McEvoy, *The Philosophy*, 370-1.
[20] Ibid., 399. Here McEvoy is quoting Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron* VIII, XVII, 4; "… the human being has a participation in eternity and in creation, by a kind of resemblance [with God] that is closer and more like than is that of any creature that is lacking in reason. For when, by the inspiration of the grace of God, we are made a new creature, and when we are helpers and co-workers with God in this, we are a kind of origin of this creation and we bear a very clear trace of all the other things which are said of God…"

> spirits, sent to minister for them, who shall receive the inheritance of salvation'.[21]

Elsewhere Grosseteste wrote:

> In the last place the All-High established a product, man, who would be at once the exemplar of all … For man is on the same level as the angel in his soul, his sensibility relates him to the animals and he shares his lowest organic level with all growing things, while certain parts of his body bear a likeness to other material things. In his physical aspect, therefore, he resembles the most lowly of things … but his soul is the equal of the highest creature … Taken in all of what he is, however, he is the most worthy creature that exists … for man had been conceived as the model of the whole universe.[22]

For Grosseteste, through God, who is mystically and metaphysically immanent in His creation, who illuminates the objects of our intellection and who created us microcosmistically and in His image, humanity is to reunite with Him by scaling the epistemological and spiritual Dionysian hierarchy, thereby attaining, as much as is possible, its perfection:

> Man is 'more especially' the image of God, as *minor mundus* … It is his privilege to mirror the integrality of creation, and hence of the divine ideas that generated it. Only through man's free co-operation can the total divine plan be effectuated, so that all other things are somehow saved in his restoration.[23]

[21] Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron* VIII, XV, 1-2. Grosseteste also writes this in his commentary on *The Celestial Hierarchy*. For information regarding this, see: McEvoy, *The Philosophy*, 402-403.
[22] Grosseteste in Ibid., 408.
[23] Ibid.

As the virtue epistemology posited by Puttick attests above, this process, beginning with maximising the noetic and symbolic potential of the material world, leads to the acquisition of virtue, which is an act which in and of itself enables the acquirer the wherewithal to extract further knowledge via their *physike theoria*. This is why it is possible to define Grosseteste's *weltanschauung* as didactic: his attempt as Bishop of Lincoln to foster an intellective community that was truly designed to fulfil his sacred and zealously upheld obligations to the *cura animarum* centred on widening the universal accessibility of revelation; Grosseteste attempted to open the book of nature to all, and in so doing, enable the salvation of as many souls as possible. It is in doing this that, for Grosseteste, the divine plan is effectuated, because through humanity's microcosmistic constitution, when humanity reaches its deification, so does the rest of creation.

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