Edited by Line Cecilie Engh

The Symbolism of Marriage in Early Christianity and the Latin Middle Ages

Images, Impact, Cognition

Amsterdam
University
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Table of Contents

List of Illustrations

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

BHL	Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina (ed. Socii Bollandiani)
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina (Turnhout, 1953–)
CISC SL	Corpus Islamo-Christianorum, Series Latina
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis (Turnhout, 1969–)
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte (Leipzig, 1897)
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
MGH SS	MGH Scriptores
PL	Patrologia Latina (ed. J.-P. Migne, 217 vols., Paris, 1844–64)
SC	Sources Chrétiennes (Paris: Cerf, 1943–)
SeT	Studi e Testi (Rome: Tipografia Vaticana, 1900–)
BAV	Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
BNF	Bibliothèque nationale de France
BM	Bibliothèque municipal
CNRS	Centre national de la Recherche scientifique
arg.	*argumentum*
c.	*canon*
cap./capp.	*capitulum/a*
d.	*distinctio* (in citations)
D.	*distinctio* (in citations of decretals)
lect.	*lectio*
rubr.	*rubrica*
tit.	*titulus*
par.	parallel
q./qq.	*quaestio/nes*
s.c.	*sed contra*
un.	*unicus*

1.   Introduction

A Case Study of Symbolic Cognition

Line Cecilie Engh and Mark Turner

Abstract

The introductory chapter by Engh and Turner gives an overview of how marriage served as a structuring frame in early Christianity and the Latin West and an outline of the individual chapters. Discussing the nature of symbolism and its importance to human cognition, the chapter positions the book within an ongoing dialogue between the humanities and cognitive science. These two fields share the basic assumption that producing, communicating, and recognizing meaning is a creative, contingent process – it is not something 'already there,' in a text or in an image, but is constructed and reconstructed by human minds in human bodies, in social and institutional spaces, and in natural and cultural environments. Understanding the ways humans process metaphor helps us understand the relation between various kinds of discourses and the ways people lived, thought, and believed.

Keywords: cognitive science and humanities; medieval religious symbolism; medieval exegesis; rhetoric; gender; conceptual metaphor theory; blending theory; compression; emergent meaning

Marriage symbolism was a prevalent feature of early Christian and medieval cultures. Practically all Christian writers – bishops, canonists, theologians, monks, friars, and nuns – as well as some manuscript illuminators and artisans portrayed Christ's union with the Church as a marriage. The image of the heavenly nuptials between male divinity (Christ) and female humanity (Church) lies at the heart of the present study, since conceiving of this union as a marriage not only provided the fundamental principle for the doctrine – emergent in the twelfth century – which defined marriage as a

sacrament, but also shaped the metaphorical understanding of virginity as marriage to Christ and priesthood as marriage to the Church. Marriage was a structuring frame, even for men and women who chose not to enter into it.[1]

Grounded on the Letter to the Ephesians 5:22–33, the Song of Songs, Revelation, Psalm 44, and other biblical texts with nuptial themes, early Christian and medieval writers found rich hermeneutical possibilities to explore Christ's union with the Church or the saintly soul as a marriage. Long before the sacramental theories of marriage emerged as a major issue in the medieval West, theologians and exegetes delved into nuptial and conjugal metaphors to negotiate and establish a series of ecclesiological, political, devotional, theological, and juridical concerns. It has been noted that prescholastic theologians and intellectuals possessed not so much a concept of the Church (*Kirchenbegriff*) as an image of the Church (*Kirchenbild*).[2] That image – the Church as bride of Christ (and concurrently as the body of Christ, cf. Eph 5:23, 30) – was one of the most versatile and powerful metaphors in medieval imagination, capable of representing both collective and individual redemption.

In the 'symbolist mentality' of the Middle Ages, in Chenu's influential description, figurative language and 'signs' were brought into play to give expression to a higher reality, the realm of the sacred, which reason could not attain nor conceptualize.[3] Modern commentators sometimes remark that some medieval images are 'more than metaphors', emphasizing the Platonizing assumption of deep ontological connections between the sign and the signified.[4] Metaphors such as the Church as bride, mother, and body were complex concepts possessing a signification which transcended their crude reality and by a certain symbolical affinity revealed another, more intangible reality to the human mind.[5] 'It was one of the fundamental character traits of the early Christian and medieval mentalities', Gerhart Ladner has written, 'that the signifying, symbolizing, and allegorizing function was anything but arbitrary or subjective; symbols were believed to represent objectively and to express faithfully aspects of a universe that was perceived as widely and deeply meaningful'.[6] In some sense, the Church really *was* Christ's bride, and the union between humanity and Christ really was a marriage.[7]

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1   See Elliott, *Bride of Christ*, 2; Karras, *Unmarriages*, 10.
2   Congar, *L'Ecclésiologie*; see also Imkamp, *Das Kirchenbild*.
3   Chenu, 'Symbolist Mentality'.
4   Congar, *L'Ecclésiologie*, 99, and Robinson, 'Church and Papacy', 252.
5   Chenu, 'Symbolist Mentality', 102, and McLaughlin, *Sex, Gender, and Episcopal Authority*, 9.
6   Ladner, 'Medieval and Modern Understanding of Symbolism', 227.
7   See Reynolds, *Marriage*, 65, on St. Paul.

This book interrogates marriage symbolism in the premodern Christian West from its biblical roots to its flowering in theology, canon law, liturgy, monasticism, art, and preaching in the later Middle Ages. Each chapter grapples with the question of symbolic cognition – thinking about marriage and thinking with marriage, thinking analogously, thinking of one thing in terms of another, but not just ad hoc – and its relation to institutional and social realities: How did the symbolism of marriage shape ideas of clerical and monastic celibacy? How did it shape ecclesial, devotional, and political relations and individual and collective identities? And how, in its turn, did the symbolism of marriage shape marriage itself?

The Book's Aim and Outline

It is the aim of this book to expand our understanding of the power – and limitations – of religious figurative language to structure the imaginative and real worlds of medieval Christians, and the processes by which such structuring operates. Marriage has attracted much scholarly attention in the past decades, but it has been approached largely from perspectives of either social and political history or systematic theology. There are few recent studies that apply a historical and critical approach to medieval marriage as an idea or concept,[8] despite the fact that it is invoked as a reference point in recurring Western debates on same-sex marriages, forced marriages, and arranged marriages.

While medieval outlooks and modes of representation may sometimes seem elusive and intractable, even alien, to modern conceptions and sensibilities, at the same time they also contain, reflect, and undergird ideas and practices that affect people and institutions today. The indissolubility of marriage is a contested, but still upheld principle in the Catholic Church, as is its conceptual twin, priestly celibacy – ideas supported and elaborated by inferences in marriage symbolism. Pope Francis has repeatedly evoked bridal imagery, stating that 'la chiesa è donna' ('the Church is a woman') with emphasis on the Church's nurturance and (female) humility.[9] Significantly, this language also underlies Pope John Paul II's encyclical letter *Ordinatio sacerdotalis* and the Sacred Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith's *Commentary on the Declaration Inter Insigniores*, § 102 (27 January 1977) as

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8   Notable exceptions include recent studies by Philip Reynolds, David d'Avray, and Ruth Karras.

9   For example, press conference, Philadelphia/Rome, 28 September 2015.

explanans for why women cannot be ordained priests: Christ is bridegroom of the Church, his bride, and since only men can be bridegrooms, only men can represent Christ. Supplying historical motivation and background for practices and ideas that are part of modern societies, this book throws light not just on marriage itself, but also on contemporary concerns such as questions of the symbolic meaning of the veiling of women, the significance of sacramental or sacred symbolism as boundary between Christians and non-Christians, the tacit cognitive work of inferences and entailments in gendered language, and, more broadly still, the potential of shared symbols to both empower and repress.

In a wide sense this book is about how people think – how they employ symbolic language to produce, communicate, and understand complex meaning. The book is a contribution to an ongoing, fruitful dialogue between the humanities and cognitive science. In recent years, many scholars from literary, biblical, and historical studies have participated in the interdisciplinary venture variously called cognitive theory or cognitive science, a scholarly landscape that draws broadly from cognitive linguistics, cognitive cultural studies, cognitive literary theory, as well as from the discipline of cognitive neuroscience (with which it should not be confused).[10] An established insight in cognitive science, relevant to our concerns, has to do with the role of mental images and imagistic thinking for human cognition. Conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) and conceptual integration theory (also called blending theory, BT, developed by Mark Turner and Gilles Fauconnier), have alerted scholars to the ways in which figurative language – such as metaphor, metonymy, and analogy – underlies human cognition.[11] Human thought processes, cognitive scientists claim, are largely metaphorical; we think with images.[12]

As Mark Turner points out below, cognitively modern human beings – and, yes, medieval people *were* cognitively 'modern' within the time frame of evolutionary history! – are constantly involved in conceptual innovation and in conceptual blending. According to BT, a central feature in human

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10   See e.g. Lisa Zunshine's 'Introduction to Cognitive Literary Studies'.

11   For examples of medievalists engaging fruitfully with perspectives from BT, see Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, and Stevenson, *Performance*.

12   On the role of metaphor for human thought and action, the classic study is Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* (1980). Since then, CMT has undergone revision and elaboration in, among others, Fauconnier and Turner's *Way We Think* (2002), and Turner's *Literary Mind* (1996) and *Origin of Ideas* (2014). On visual cognition in humans, see also Slingerland, *What Science Offers the Humanities*, 170, where he argues that image-based perception is fundamental to human thought and knowing, such as language, reason, and concepts of the divine.

cognition is making connections, or 'mapping', from one 'mental space' (or conceptual domain) to another, and blending them by cross-space connections such as analogies, disanalogies, metaphorical connections, etc., which in their turn carry inferences and entailments that create new meaning in the blended mental space.[13] Mapping and conceptual blending are imaginative and creative operations, but do not work randomly; they are constrained by culturally contingent background knowledge and grounded in embodied experience. Metaphors are examples of blending, using a mental frame (e.g. 'marriage') to think about something else entirely (e.g. divine–human relations). To employ the terminology of BT, the subject of this book is the elaborations, entailments, and emergent meaning that arise from the blend 'Christ is bridegroom and the Church is his bride' and their impact on ideas and practices in early Christianity and the Latin Middle Ages. The basic mental operations in Mark Turner and Gilles Fauconnier's theory of conceptual blending are further described below. For the interested, we also supply a short list of key terms at the end of this introductory chapter.

Approaches from CMT and BT may contribute to enrich the historian's methodology, but also provide broader theoretical perspectives. This book engages with cognitive theory in both ways, but the latter is more crucial than the former. Methodologically, BT and CMT furnish analytical tools to recognize implicit or tacit connections and inferences and to analyze with higher precision the ways in which the texts or visual materials prompt for the construction of metaphorical and intertextual blends. Some of the contributors to this volume use, more or less explicitly and extensively, approaches and terminology from cognitive theory in their analyses (Solevåg, Shuve, Scafi, Newman, Salvadó, and Engh). Many do not. However, BT and CMT do not just offer a methodology (or various methodologies); they also offer a broader theoretical outlook within which to frame the cultural and anthropological relevance of our detailed discussions and analyses. It is this aspect that I wish to emphasize here and that I see as fundamental to this book. It is a way of engaging with large-scale questions of how humans create cultural meaning and the interrelation of ideas and practice, perhaps even inspiring the medievalist to ask new questions or to frame questions differently.

I would like to make two clarifications at this point. First, I wish to make clear immediately that I believe that perspectives from cognitive theory may supplement the medievalist's traditional philological and hermeneutical approaches – consisting of meticulous close readings and complex

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13   The standard account of blending is Fauconnier and Turner, *Way We Think*, 40–50.

contextualizations – but never supplant them. The humanities have their own disciplinary history and identity, the epistemological distinctness of which has been surveyed by Wilhelm Dilthey and Hans-Georg Gadamer. Second, I want to point out that perspectives from cognitive science are not alien to the humanities, or vice versa. We, scholars of the humanities, study representation; we interpret the products of minds – texts and objects. Consider Reinhart Koselleck's *Begriffsgeschichte*, Umberto Eco's semiotics, and studies of intertextuality and literary allusion from Jean Leclercq to Mikhail Bakhtin. Consider, more specifically, Joan Scott's suggestion (based on Foucault and Derrida) of reading gender as a primary way of signifying relationships of power; Caroline Walker Bynum's analyses of the creative flux with which medieval writers used and undercut dichotomies of male/female, powerful/weak, and human/divine; Rachel Fulton Brown's expositions of empathetic immersion and experience in medieval prayer; Brian Stock's reconstructions of the cognizing processes, derived from classical rhetoric and sacred reading, that constitute the self in Augustine's writing; Eric Palazzo's emphasis on sensory perception in medieval cultures; and Mary Carruthers' studies on medieval memory and rhetoric. All of these offer brilliant cognitive analyses: they study, expose, and explain construction and reception of meaning by human minds. They also share with cognitive science the basic assumption that producing, communicating, and recognizing meaning is a creative, contingent process – it is not something 'already there' in a text or in an image, but is constructed and reconstructed by human minds in human bodies, in social and institutional spaces, and in natural and cultural environments. Scholars of the humanities working on interpretations of texts, artifacts, language, and rhetoric are trained to pay attention precisely to the intricate webs of meaning and context. In a sense, then, we were always already cognitive scientists.

The fruitful dialogue I mentioned goes both ways; otherwise it would not be fruitful, nor a dialogue. While we may have something to gain from the claim by cognitive scientists that the mind they study has the same basic features as the minds of medieval people (determining *how* we think, not *what* we think), cognitive scientists have something to gain from us: the attentiveness to the remarkable subtleties and diversities in texts and objects produced by human minds, the extraordinary complexity of religious symbols, and, indeed, also the otherness of medieval culture.[14] From the point of view of the humanities, one way of conceiving of the synergy between the humanities and cognitive science – as recently ventured by

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14   See also discussion in Clark, 'Why All the Fuss about the Mind?'

one medievalist – is to see cognitive theory as a larger platform from which to combine different theoretical approaches current in the humanities, potentially allowing for more encompassing perspectives on material culture, embodiment, and coordination of knowledge across individuals, networks, and communities.[15] From the point of view of cognitive science, Mark Turner has pointed out its deep relation to classical rhetoric, with which it shares many of its central research questions and methods in its search for conscious awareness of cognitive operations and conceptual structures that are used for understanding, judgment, decision, and persuasion.[16]

If this book is about symbolic cognition and religious figurative language, it is also about rhetoric. Early Christian and medieval marriage symbolism is a spectacular display of rhetorical devices such as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, oxymoron, analogy, paradox (to name but some) to describe divine–human relations and their implications. It deals with highly abstract notions of ineffable divine experiences and hermeneutical principles of hidden, spiritual truths (*veritas sub umbra et figura*), which, in Chenu's words, 'reason could not attain or conceptualize', and which, in Turner's description, are intractable for human minds unless we scale these notions down, 'compress' them into a more human-scale blend.[17] Metaphorical language typically conceptualizes a relatively less intersubjectively accessible domain or frame in terms of a more intersubjectively accessible domain or frame.[18] Early Christian and medieval writers made just the same kind of observation, affirming, as they saw it, the epistemological limits of human thought.[19] Following Mary Carruthers' exposition of medieval rhetoric, I suggest that marriage symbolism had both pedagogical (functional) and epistemological (ethical) functions; it both supplied cognitive tools – it was 'good to think with' – and pointed the way towards an 'inner truth concealed beneath a dissimulating "integument"'.[20] Marriage symbolism, then, spanned from rhetorical persuasion, to pious intellectual pursuit, and to more practical pastoral, pedagogical, political, and juridical concerns.

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15   See Eriksen, 'Introduction: Intellectual Culture and Medieval Scandinavia', 5–6; cf. Spolsky, 'Darwin and Derrida', who situates it within post-structuralist theory.

16   Turner, 'Cognitive Study of Art, Language, and Literature'.

17   Chenu, see above; Turner, *Origin of Ideas*, 7–8.

18   See Sweetser and DesCamp, 'Motivating Biblical Metaphors for God', esp. 10–12, developing on the directionality of mapping from familiar to unfamiliar domain from CMT; cf. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*.

19   Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, 118.

20   On 'cognitive images' as both functional and epistemological, see ibid.; on the reference 'good to think with', see Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism*, 89; on 'integument', see Stock, *Listening for the Text*, 39.

The approaches in this book are eclectic and interdisciplinary, bringing together perspectives from the disciplines of history, historical theology, literary studies, art history, intellectual history, as well as metaphor theory and feminist criticism. Contributors to the volume are leading scholars of early Christian and patristic studies and medieval studies. In the course of two workshops at the Norwegian Institute in Rome (2014 and 2016) and by the circulation of specially prepared notes and questions, they have been challenged to think critically and analytically, yet unconventionally and from new perspectives, about concepts and content in the symbolism of marriage appertaining to their respective areas of specialization.

Specifically, contributors were asked to consider the role of symbolism in medieval thought about marriage (the union between Christ and Church as the *res* of the sacrament of marriage), and how, contrariwise, the concept of marriage helped people think about other things – things that are *not* marriage – such as celibacy, ecclesial and political relations, devotional relations, social identities and communal identities, etc. Some contributors even venture into the thorny question of how, if at all, these two directions of thinking were related (see chapters by Reynolds, Hunter, Scafı, Engh, and Müller). Several chapters engage directly with David d'Avray's thesis in *Medieval Marriage: Symbolism and Society* from 2005 that marriage symbolism had direct impact on juridical and social practice in the medieval period (Reynolds, Hunter, Scafı, and Müller). Arguing that abstract ideas became a social force, d'Avray's work compels us to reconsider the relation between the realm of figurative language and high theology on one hand and the world of institutional and social realities on the other. But rather than offering any neat model of currents of influence, these chapters allude to more messy and complex processes, where nuptial and conjugal metaphors produced and constrained cultural meaning in ways that had impact on people's thought and action, but that were open to constant negotiation. What emerges from this kaleidoscopic tour of marriage symbolism is the pervasiveness of symbolic cognition and sacramental imagination in medieval Latin knowledge communities. Yet the chapters also suggest that there was nothing straightforward or easy about thinking with marriage symbolism in the Middle Ages. Instead the book draws attention to conceptual slippages, improvisation, contested and malleable meanings, tensions, conceptual quirks, and, above all, the immense mental effort that went into all this, epitomized by Huguccio's exasperated plea, paraphrased by Wolfgang Müller: 'Please don't mind if I got this wrong'!

So why did theologians, canonists, and mystics insist on marriage symbolism when it presented them with potential problems and confusion? Part of

the answer, indicated by the various chapters, lies in the canonicity of this motif in the textual and visual cultures of the early Christian and medieval West. A recurrent subtheme in the volume is the interpretative challenge posed by the twelfth-century apse mosaic of Santa Maria in Trastevere: the cover illustration for this book. Showing Christ as bridegroom and Mary as bride, these mosaics point to the force of sacramental and hermeneutical imagination, to the multivocality of marriage symbolism in the medieval period, and to its role in cognition, visualization, and persuasion. The mosaics remind us that we are dealing with a special case of conceptualization and representation – one that was institutionalized, canonized, and even officially sanctioned.

The present book deploys an array of denotations available to speak about imagery and figurative language, including medieval terms like *figura*, *allegoria*, *signum*, *translatio*, and *analogia* as well as terms in current usage like metaphor and symbolism.[21] Striving for a high degree of terminological precision, the contributors take into account variations in meaning and context, using the terms accordingly and conscientiously. Yet, as an overarching and common term, reflected in the title of this volume, we have singled out 'symbolism'. Although we recognize the term's obvious limitations, since it had no equivalent in the medieval Latin tradition, it is nonetheless an immediately understood and indispensable term in discussions of medieval Christian thought and practice.[22] We have therefore settled on a notion of symbolism that is intentionally rather 'thin' in certain respects, in order to be adaptable to a wide variety of uses and comparisons.

Philip L. Reynolds' chapter is a broad survey of medieval marriage symbolism. While it is a highly personal contribution and no introductory chapter, it is also a cornerstone in this book, touching on vital aspects of marriage symbolism to emerge in the following chapters. Reynolds explores the various modes of marriage symbolism, considering them in light of both medieval and modern theories of interpretation and cognition. He argues

21   Different medieval authors used different terms to denote what we call 'symbol' or 'metaphor' and there were no standardized categories that corresponded to modern ones. One term could often have confusingly many uses: e.g. 'allegory' which could imply one specific way of reading scripture, or else all non-literal ways of reading scripture, or, yet again, a literary form used by the poets and by the philosophers. Augustine, in *De doctrina christiana*, used *signum* which became common in medieval usage. In addition to *allegoria* and *signum*, also *translatio* and *figura* were current, less so *symbolum*. For general discussion, see Reynolds' chapter in this volume; on the Augustinian 'sign' vs. the Pseudo-Dionysian 'symbol', see Chenu, 'Symbolist Mentality', 124-28, cf. Gadamer's discussion of 'symbol' vs. 'allegory' in *Truth and Method*, 70-81.
22   See Reynolds' chapter in this volume.

that there was a common underlying basis in medieval thought and imagination, which he characterizes as *representation*: a resemblance between corresponding items on two hierarchically ordered planes, respectively spiritual (or divine) and corporeal (or created). Lower things, functioning as signs or figures, could provide cognitive access to higher things, whereas higher things could function normatively as exemplars that lower things should or must emulate. Our capacious term 'symbolism' embraces both relationships. But whereas we tend to assume that these two relationships, respectively epistemological and exemplary, always coincided, Reynolds argues that this was not so in the case of medieval marriage symbolism.

The subsequent chapters follow a loose chronological organization: from analyses of New Testament texts to analyses of later medieval textual and visual materials, albeit with a marked emphasis on the central medieval period. Anna Rebecca Solevåg examines the biblical basis for medieval symbolism in the New Testament. Her chapter contributes to a reflection on the multidirectional influences of metaphorical thinking and social reality, as well as the roots and longevity of marriage symbolism. Disentangling two distinct images, first, that of patriarchal marriage mapped onto the organizational structure of early Christ-believing communities, and second, that of the bridegroom at a wedding feast mapped onto the second coming of Christ, she analyzes these images in light of intersectionality, emphasizing how 'kyriarchal' structures were mapped onto ecclesial relations and divine–human relations, with practical and symbolical implications such as female veiling and male headship.

David G. Hunter brings us to patristic ideas and debates on marriage symbolism. The chapter argues, first, that a variety of texts from the third to the fifth centuries reveal a developing tradition in which the single marriage of the clergy (that is, the prohibition of twice-married men from ordination) became a privileged symbol of divine–human union, and eventually the union of Christ and the Church; second, that this tradition of single marriage among the clergy was directly connected to an increased sacralizing of marriage in liturgical practice; and, third, that both seeing clerical marriage as a symbol and its liturgical enactment were central aspects in the formation of a priestly identity of the clergy in the Western Church.

Karl Shuve's discussion of marriage symbolism shifts the perspective from priests to women. Shuve traces the development of the prominent idea that women, specifically virgin women, can embody the bride of Christ in the writings of Tertullian, linking this to Hildegard of Bingen and medieval debates on female religious attire. Exploring veiling, dress, and comportment as inferences from nuptial and bridal metaphors, Shuve asks what kind of

'marriage' it was that these virgins were believed to enter into with Christ, and what this meant for their social identities.

Abigail Firey develops further on the preceding chapters' focus on women's veiling and questions of identity and authority in light of marriage symbolism. Firey argues that polyvalent symbolism and intermittent use produced competing understandings of the veil prior to the tenth century, a competition which culminated in efforts in the ninth century to regulate the practice of veiling, and also in discursive shifts in representation of the veil's significance. Thereby she invites us to consider the possible function of symbolism as a device for parties with opposing views to negotiate contested positions, practices, and meanings.

With Alessandro Scafi's chapter we enter definitely into the Central Middle Ages, unfolding further aspects of marriage symbolism. Scafi approaches the medieval Christians' use of sexual and nuptial imagery – primarily drawn from the Song of Songs – to convey the delights of divine love and paradisiacal bliss, problematizing their concurrent critique of sensual images in the Islamic notion of heaven. The Christian theologians' positive attitude to sensual and sensuous imagery constitutes not just a linguistic strategy based on creating an analogy between human sexual love and divine love, he argues, but reflects the emergence of the sacramental doctrine of marriage where the physical union of a wife and husband was understood to be an actual embodiment of the sacred union between Christ and the Church.

Martha G. Newman examines marriage symbolism in a monastic context, namely the writings of the Cistercian Engelhard of Langheim, using cognitive and literary analyses to understand the historical and social contexts of a text's audience. She argues that an ideology of gender difference was embedded in Engelhard's marital imagery but that by employing gender-neutral metaphors he encouraged both monks and nuns to recollect their own experiences and blend them with the narration of the stories. These *exempla* taught both Cistercian monks and nuns a sacramental imagination whereby a non-sacerdotal audience could imagine connections between heaven and earth.

Marta Pavón Ramírez explores marriage symbolism in twelfth- and thirteenth-century illuminated manuscripts. Visual representations of weddings and marriages were neither straightforward nor immediate, she points out, but challenged the artists to make conceptual and interpretative choices. Applying Reynolds' division between nuptial and conjugal symbolism, Pavón Ramírez discusses salient features of iconographic expression in illustrations of both spiritual and carnal marriages found in Song of Songs commentaries, juridical manuscripts, and liturgical books. The rich

material that Pavón Ramírez discusses has been extensively digitized in recent years, but the well-known problems of digital 'silos' and erratic search terms continue to limit general availability. Pavón Ramírez therefore supplies the reader with necessary details (in the notes) to access a wide range of medieval illustrations of marriage, which are otherwise trapped inside different digitized archives.

Like the previous chapter Lasse Hodne approaches marriage symbolism in visual material, namely the apse mosaics in Santa Maria in Trastevere. Showing the Virgin Mary's marital union with Christ, these mosaics may be distinguished from a traditional *Coronation of the Virgin*, Hodne points out, and argues that they are better understood as part of a Marian picture cycle. Reading the mosaics in light of the celibacy ideals of the Gregorian Church, Hodne points to Mary's marriage to her son as a symbol for salvation and union with God that clerics and monastics could project their own salvation onto.

Sebastian Salvadó uses marriage symbolism as a lens to approach liturgical performance. Clergy, by definition, were wed to Christ and the Church. A large part of their duty as participants in this relationship was the daily performance of liturgy. Through an examination of liturgical glosses, Salvadó discusses how prominent liturgists at the time established liturgical performances that cast the clergy in shifting roles of bride and bridegroom, shaping collective and individual identity by blending the celebrants' viewpoint with characters from the Song of Songs and nuptial intertexts.

Line Cecilie Engh's chapter considers how marriage symbolism shaped notions of papal authority. Interrogating Pope Innocent III's depictions and descriptions of his own marriage to the Roman Church, Engh discusses the inferences and entailments that arose from this metaphorical language, their function and usefulness in delineating papal prerogatives, and the relation between the pope's marriage and regulations of marriage in contemporary canon law, both that between a bishop and his see and that between a man and a woman.

In the final chapter, Wolfgang P. Müller assesses the influence of marriage symbolism on twelfth- and thirteenth-century canon law and legal doctrine, which regulated actual marital unions. Discussing canonical bigamy and the principle of matrimonial indissolubility, Müller challenges d'Avray's assertion of the deep influence of marriage symbolism on medieval law. Canonists, Müller argues, welcomed biblical imagery as a treasure trove that facilitated their habit of reasoning by analogy, but were rather opportunistic in their reliance on authority, be it biblical or papal, and quite inclined to let interpretations roam freely.

It should be clear that the conceptual frames and mappings discussed in this book were not random, nor peripheral but constrained and productive. They were deeply intellectually and emotionally charged patterns of metaphors and convoluted intertextual threads that imparted highly intersubjectively inaccessible experiences and extremely rich and complex meaning, yet were able to exercise deep impact. Based on the rich analyses in this volume and supported by insights from CMT and BT, I would like to emphasize that imagining the relation between the feminized Church (or the human soul) and masculine divinity (or a bishop) carried entailments and inferences, that is, implicit assumptions and inexplicit claims related to concepts of sexuality, procreation, female fecundity, paternal authority, patronage, and extended social and familial roles and relations. As concepts from the domain of marriage were mapped onto ideas of ecclesiology, political theology, Christology, Mariology, redemption, community, heresy, divine love, and the contemplative's relation with God, entailments embedded in discourses on sexuality and the body and in intersecting gender and household structures arose as inferences. The chapters in this volume illuminate in various ways how entailments and inferences produced new interpretations and imaginative elaborations and sometimes violent conceptual clashes.[23] Clearly there was not just one symbol or metaphor involved in the symbolism of marriage but rather many overlapping and expanding, and at times conflicting, clusters of metaphors and interrelated stories, a vast web of blends. Like a road map held in the mind,[24] images of bride and bridegroom, marriage and reproduction, and household and gender hierarchies created a dynamic, expansive, and constantly fluctuating mental web that structured – and was structured by – political and theological ideas, albeit in malleable ways.

Marriage symbolism, however, provided more than just vectors for thought and interpretation. From the chapters of this book, seeking to assess the impact of marriage symbolism on both ideas and practices in the Christian premodern period, it emerges that marriage symbolism oscillated between the abstract and the concrete in ways that impinged on lived experiences, that forged identities, and that underpinned legal constraints.

23   Whereas CMT uses 'entailments', BT uses more often 'inferences' and introduces 'emergent structure' as a key analytical category; Derrida, 'Retrait', speaks of the metaphor's 'surplus value'; Turner, *Origin of Ideas*, discusses 'clashes' between mental spaces as a crucial feature of blending, esp. 107–15.
24   On biblical images as mental 'maps', see Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, esp. 42–43; cf. Turner, *Origin of Ideas*, 8–9.

The chapters show how marriage symbolism ordered gender relations in the Church and relations between celibates and between married lay couples; they point to how it channeled contestations for female empowerment and authority as well as how it established and negotiated power structures. All the chapters address, implicitly or explicitly, processes of 'realization', enactment, performance, embodiment, or appropriation whereby the identities and agency of individuals and communities were circumscribed by evoking their role within a broader frame of marriage and household relations. But in many cases the chapters provide diverging interpretations of the relation between mundane marriage and its imaginary counterpart; some of the authors in this book perceive of the two as deeply interrelated, with currents of influence moving multidirectionally, while others see them as fundamentally separate. Ultimately, in light of the vexing questions of directionality, causality and impact between the literal and spiritual understandings of marriage, we may, if nothing else, affirm that the central idea of the marriage between Christ and the Church established a common symbolic ground, since this was the paradigmatic union in which other forms of marriage were seen to participate – in superior or inferior ways. As Mark Turner says below, 'All marriage is imaginary, especially real marriages.'

<div align="right">LCE</div>

Imaginary Marriage

Pair-bonding is a hot topic in evolutionary biology. Its incidence, variety, and causes are the focus of wide and nuanced research and the subject of sustained, energetic, and sophisticated scientific disagreement. Pair-bonding can include aspects of reproductive monogamy, or aspects of social collaboration (male swans are awesome fathers), or both. Something like (this is a contentious field!) 3 percent of mammalian species exhibit significant pair-bonding. The standard examples are wolves and beavers. Some primates bond in pairs – gibbons and some monkeys.

But among the great apes, human beings are the only species that exhibits anything remotely like pair-bonding. There are deep and wide cultural differences in human pair-bonding, and to say that human beings bond in pairs does not suggest that they do it strictly. But sometimes they do, and even when the bonding is notoriously weak, the level of pair-bonding in human beings is so remarkable among great apes as to lead to an overwhelming question: how could it possibly have arisen, and why has it proved to be so powerfully influential?

The question of *marriage* concerns not only how cognitively modern human beings developed concepts and practices of pair-bonding but also whether some of those early concepts and practices helped make us human – helped *Homo sapiens sapiens* develop into cognitively modern human beings, perhaps during the Upper Paleolithic Age or somewhat before, 40,000 to 100,000 years ago, give or take several thousand years. The mental invention of *marriage* – with its vast systems of rituals and practices, expectations and stories, cascades of generational relation and influence – was astonishingly creative. It accordingly created a variety of products and controversies.[25] Does marriage require the consent of those married? Does it require the consent of family? Of Church? Who is authorized to perform a marriage? Who is authorized to recognize a marriage? Does the state of being married depend upon recognition? Are there impediments, such as the ages or the kinship of the two people? Can members of the higher clergy marry? Can a free person marry an enslaved person? Can a Christian marry a Jew? Those beautiful pair-bonded swans face none of these questions, because animal pair-bonding is only one influence in the human creation of the concept of *marriage*. All marriage is imaginary, especially real marriages.

The authors represented in this book race far beyond the evolutionary conundrum of human pair-bonding and the initial invention of *marriage* for the obvious reason that the mental creativity that made it possible to create ideas of *marriage* in the first place never slackened its pace. As these authors show, marriage has been for cognitively modern human beings a constant arena of conceptual innovation, usually involving influence from other concepts. The concept of *marriage* has been blended creatively with other concepts to produce innovations in those concepts. In this book, we see such innovations in theology, canon law, liturgy, monasticism, art, and preaching. But there were also, as a result of this blending, innovations in the concept of marriage itself – most remarkably the transformation of *marriage* into a *sacrament.* Far from taking *marriage* as a fixed departure point from which to try to understand other things that are certainly not marriage, the research in this book equally investigates how innovative blends that have *marriage* as one of their influences applied pressure back on the input concept of *marriage*, to great consequence. The pace of these mental innovations makes biological evolutionary mechanisms look as if they are standing still.

The deployment of the concept of *marriage* to influence the development of other concepts follows a standard human mental pattern: once a concept becomes widely familiar and established, it can be recruited to ground

25 Karras, *Unmarriages*, 4–5.

and influence the construction of other concepts. For example, embodied concepts of *force dynamics* and *image schemas* are widely recruited as inputs to help form other concepts; *marriage* itself often recruits conceptual structure from force dynamic concepts such as *join* and image schemas such as *link*. Consider as an example aside from marriage the domain of self-management. How shall we understand our efforts and practices in designing our behavior and in presenting a self? One common answer, among many, is that we can recruit from the familiar and widely shared concept of *conversation*, including the influence of one participant upon another. We can blend the familiar concept of *conversation* with our idea of dealing with our *personal impulses*, so that, in the innovative blend, self-management is an internal conversation. Language for referring to *conversation* then becomes available for evoking the blend, with some remarkable creativity: 'I know what to do and I keep telling myself to do it but it's like talking to a deaf person' or 'Twelve-year-old me is pleading with me to have some fun but twelve-year-old me doesn't know what I know and I can't even explain it to him.' *Marriage*, like *hand-to-hand combat*, *conversation*, *disease*, *journey*, and many other concepts, is central to cultures, familiar to human beings, and widely shared, and the events associated with it are observable and at human scale, congenial to the scope of human cognition. It has the extraordinarily useful structure of *interaction between two things*, *transformation in the relationship between those two things*, *constraining the behavior of those two things*, and *constitutive of personal and social identity.* This structure, and much else, has proved to be repeatedly useful in conceiving of other ideas, many of them not so congenial to local personal experience. As Engh writes,

> Practically all Christian writers – bishops, canonists, theologians, monks, friars, and nuns – as well as some manuscript illuminators and artisans portrayed Christ's union with the Church as a marriage. The image of the heavenly nuptials between male divinity (Christ) and female humanity (Church) lies at the heart of the present study, since conceiving of this union as a marriage not only provided the fundamental principle for the doctrine – emergent in the twelfth century – which defined marriage as a sacrament, but also shaped the metaphorical understanding of virginity as marriage to Christ or priesthood as marriage to the Church. Marriage was a structuring frame, even for men and women who chose not to enter into it.

We see in the construction of these innovative ideas and in all marriage symbolism standard principles of the mental operation of *conceptual blending*:

1. *Vital connections between inputs.* Blending cannot begin without such
    connections. For example, take the very common frame of *protection
    of the vulnerable by the strong.* If that frame is applied to marriage
    (husband protects the wife) and to Christianity (Christ protects the
    Church), then the frame connections alone prompt for the exploration
    of a blend in which 'the Church is the bride of Christ' – here expressed
    in an extremely frequent general construction in English, called the
    XYZ construction, whose purpose is to prompt for such blends. Other
    examples are 'Causation (x) is the cement (y) of the universe (z)' or 'The
    Pope (x) is the father (y) of all Catholics (z)'.[26] Vital connections between
    inputs are indispensable for blending to begin, and the blending that
    can result is often astonishingly complicated. (Indeed, making any vital
    connection, including identity, between two conceptions of Christ – as
    human and as divine – prompts for blending that throws us straight
    into the doctrinal disputes of Christology.) Although most blending is
    done in the backstage of cognition, unavailable to consciousness, and
    although most blending falls apart before achieving anything that
    bubbles into conscious awareness, and although most blends that bubble
    into conscious awareness have very temporary lives, we see by contrast
    in this book the highly conscious exploration over hundreds of years
    and in many fields the usefulness of such marriage blends.
2. *Selective projection of structure from inputs to the blend.* One of the
    central dimensions of the frame of marriage in the High Middle Ages was
    regular sex acts associated with pair-bonding – the opposite of celibacy.
    This component was defeasible – meaning that when the frame was
    used to make sense of some specific couple, there might be variability
    in the projection of regular dyadic heterosexual sex. Perhaps the two
    people who bonded were delaying consummation; perhaps they no
    longer had sex because of some condition (e.g. separation, health, etc.).
    In the case of celibacy and virginity as marriage, we see a high point
    of selectivity: in this case, from the frame of marriage, we project no
    heterosexual dyadic bodily sex at all; and yet, the resulting blends can
    be the basis for sophisticated and creative conceptions of celibacy and
    virginity according to which they are high forms of marriage. They have
    the astonishing emergent structure that the lone person in the blend is
    half of a pair-bond, and the additional astonishing emergent structure
    that one entity – Christ or Church, for example – can be involved in
    innumerably many pair-bonds.

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26   Fauconnier and Turner, *Way We Think*, ch. 8.

3. *Compression across time, space, causation, and agency.* One of the most
    useful features of *marriage* is that it is familiar and observable, at hu-
    man scale, a frequent part of life. At the opposite end of the scale, we
    have eternity; the relation of divinity to humanity; the past, present,
    and future of human religious practices; and unobservable aspects of
    existence that pose the greatest challenges to human understanding.
    Blending typically creates a compression across time, space, causa-
    tion, and agency to provide the human understander with something
    congenial to human ways of thinking. The eternal order, through a
    marriage-symbolism blend, becomes a familiar, intimate relationship
    between two people. This is *compression*.

4. The blending of deeply *incompatible inputs* and the development of
    emergent structure in the blend. Other species have rudimentary blend-
    ing abilities – a dog who has learned how to play fetch from only the
    master can accept some other human being in the role of 'thrower'
    even though the frame has had a fixed value for this role; the dog may
    even nudge and prompt the newcomer to play fetch. But in such cases,
    the frame exists exactly to organize certain kinds of experience, and
    the new thing to be framed fits that experience very closely. Human
    beings of course make these types of blending networks, but, shockingly,
    they also blend inputs that have central incompatibilities of causality,
    intentionality, participants, time, and space. For example, consider a
    standard expression like 'you are digging your own financial grave'.
    In the frame of gravedigging, the causality runs from the death of
    the person to the digging of the grave; but in the frame of investing,
    the causality runs in the opposite direction, from the investing to the
    bankruptcy. Gravediggers know completely that they are digging a
    grave, and they are the experts in how graves are dug; but the entire
    justification for the warning is that the investor is oblivious to the fact
    that he is producing bankruptcy. A gravedigger is a single person who
    performs a single bodily action with one tool, repeatedly, until the
    result is achieved; but the investing frame involves a vast plethora of
    interacting people, actions, events, and intentions over temporal spans
    distributed across space. A human being easily blends such things to
    create emergent structure: in the blend, the bad consequences are
    unmistakable to anyone, but the actor mistakes them. The hyperbole
    is evaluative: the gravedigger is doing nothing wrong, and the investor
    thinks he is doing nothing wrong, but in the blend, the wrongness is
    absolute and clear. This book is an extravaganza of blends of incompat-
    ibilities, which produced emergent structure so innovative, powerful,

and useful as to create some of the central cultural conceptions of their time. Here are some of them: fecund celibacy, spiritual procreation, marriage as a preserver of virginity, mute events and actions (*facta*) as a voice of divinity, water (in baptism) as a visible word with spiritual efficacy, signification as causation of what it signifies (in sacraments), the kingdom of heaven as a wedding host who judges the worthiness of the guests at the feast and throws some of them out, lay people as priests, ... The full list is staggering.

This book should not be thought of as a florilegium of scattered bits from history, divinity, anthropology, cognitive science, and so on. Its central point is that, although these disciplines have different names, they are inseparable because – unlike e.g. the birth of galaxies or the chemistry of petroleum – they have at their core *human mental construction of meaning.* The human being is a seamless unity of evolution, biology, emotion, individual developmental history, local history, cultural conditions deriving from medium and deep history, institutional position, and higher-order cognition. The academic disciplines represented in this book separated themselves from each other during their histories into different bureaucratic homes, but that ill-advised separation makes them a poor match for their subject of study, namely, the human construction of meaning. This book is motivated by the aspiration to create new communities of transdisciplinary researchers who approach the study of human beings without channelling the atavistic fragmentation of our universities.

MT

Appendix: Some Key Terms in Blending Theory and Conceptual Metaphor Theory

blending (sometimes called *conceptual integration*): Blending theory (BT) holds that as we navigate in and interact with the world, we reconstruct it into mental spaces. Conceptual blending is a cognitive process by which we transform various 'input spaces' into coherent, compressed structures of meaning. We can organize, comprehend, and create complex meaning by connecting or selectively blending these spaces into integration networks (or 'blends'). Projections from input mental spaces to the blended space are partial and selective. BT offers as a critical feature the notion of emergent properties or emergent meaning in the blended space. It holds that the various input spaces are selectively drawn upon and combined in the blend, with the result that new meanings not present in the original input spaces emerge. In turn, these blended mental spaces (or just 'blends') retrospectively affect the original inputs. Fauconnier and Turner's BT is a generalization across many more specific theories of meaning construction, including the theory of framing, mental space theory, and, notably conceptual metaphor theory (CMT), especially in that BT approaches metaphor as a conceptual rather than a purely linguistic phenomenon. But whereas CMT posits projection between only two mental representations ('source domain' and 'target domain') and is unidirectional, BT has at least four (a 'generic space', two or more 'input spaces', and a 'blended space') and is multidirectional, allowing for more oscillation and complexity. Blending theory is not an alternative to such more special-purpose theories but a generalization that includes them.

blend or **blended space:** The conceptual integration or 'fusion' of two or more mental spaces, creating a new mental space. Conceptual metaphor is as a special case of blending, but most blends are not metaphoric and even in blending networks that are felt to be metaphoric, most of the conceptual relations are not metaphoric. A crucial element in the blend or blended space is emergent meaning.

conceptual metaphor: When one conceptual domain is understood in terms of another conceptual domain and that understanding has become entrenched, we have a conceptual metaphor. Such understanding is achieved by seeing a set of systematic correspondences, or mappings, between the two domains. Conceptual metaphor can be given by means of the formula A IS B, where A and B indicate different conceptual domains.

elaboration: In blending theory, elaboration develops the blend through imaginative mental simulation according to principles and logic in the blend.

The online elaboration of blended spaces is called 'running the blend'. We can 'run the blend' indefinitely so **blended spaces** can become extremely elaborated.

mappings: Conceptual metaphors are characterized by a set of conceptual relations between elements of the source and target domains or – in blending theory – between different mental spaces. These projections or correspondences are called mappings.

mental spaces: Mental spaces are small conceptual packets constructed as we think and talk, for purposes of local understanding and action. Mental spaces are very partial assemblies containing elements, and structured by frames and cognitive models. The input structures, generic structures, and blend structures are all mental spaces.

source domain: This is a conceptual domain that we use to understand another conceptual domain (**target**). Source domains are typically less abstract and complex than target domains. In conceptual metaphor theory, mappings typically move from source to target, causing entailments to be transferred from source to target, but not the other way around.

target domain: This is a conceptual domain that we try to understand with the help of another conceptual domain (**source**). Target domains are typically more abstract and complex than source domains.

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