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The Demonic Arts and the Origin of the Medium

Michael Cole

Guiding us through his exercises in skepticism, seeking to show us how our world might be illusory, René Descartes first invokes the condition of the dream:

Let us suppose, then, that we are dreaming, and that none of these particulars—neither the opening of the eyes, nor the moving of the head, nor the putting forth of the hands, nor even that we have these hands or this whole body—are true; let us suppose, rather, that they are seen in sleep like painted images, which could not be fashioned except in the likeness of real things.¹

For a moment, the dream seems to be a fair model for deception, a familiar experience that involves the feel of both sight and self-motion, but which any of us can also easily appreciate as “unreal.” The dream, remembered from the moments of wakefulness, represents a kind of dispossession; it allows us to imagine how we might no longer have even the things that are most immediate to us, the hands that guarantee the world through their touch, or the bodies that we might think we are.

The dream, however, quickly proves insufficient for Descartes’s purposes:

Nevertheless, we must admit that at least these general things—eyes, head, hands, the entirety of the body—are not imaginary things, but rather things that truly exist. For clearly painters themselves, even when they aim, with the most extraordinary forms, to represent sirens and satyrs, cannot assign them natures that are in every way new, but can only mix the members of different animals; or if by chance they should conceive something so novel that nothing similar has ever been seen before, something that is, therefore, wholly fictitious and false, it is at least certain that the colors of which they composed this must be real.²

Dreams cannot provide a model for true deception because dreams are made of real things. Like paintings, which, however rearranged for perception, nevertheless depend on the existing world for their being, dreams cannot be entirely false. Their most radical fictions are mere Horatian chimeras, and what’s more, even the chimeras are hampered by their dependence on their substance; every invention is an invention built of colors. Dreams have sources in the very things of which they are supposed to dispossess us; they cannot take away our world, because they are made of it.

Dreams and paintings having failed, Descartes finally refers his readers, for their comprehension of deep skepticism, to the experience of demonic possession:

I will suppose, then, that not almighty God, the source of truth, but rather some evil spirit, one that is at once exceedingly potent and cunning, has set all of his industry to deceiving me. I will imagine that sky, air, earth, colors, figures, sounds, and all external things are nothing other than the mockeries of dreams, by means of which this being seduces my credulity. I will consider myself not to have hands, eyes, flesh, blood, or any of the senses, and to have falsely believed that I have these. I will remain resolutely fixed in this meditation, and thus, if indeed it not be in my power to recognize some part of what is true, I will at least, with strengthened mind, beware of what is in me, so that I do not asssess to what is false, and so that that demon, however powerful and however cunning he be, not be able to impose anything on me.³

The demon, like the painter of dreams, is an artificer. Yet for the would-be skeptic, possession by a genio maligno overcomes the drawbacks of mere sleep in its total separability from reality. In this perfect nightmare, all that belongs to us—our bodies, our sensory apparatuses, as well as the colored, figured worlds they take in—can be reduced to the "mockeries of dreams." The condition of true skepticism is the condition of complete painting. Both in its total invention and in its pure illusion, possession promises to be an artifice with nothing behind it. Possession is an art of absolute fiction.

The following essay aims to suggest how Descartes’s intuitions—that dreams are like paintings, that possession resembles, but also trumps, both—come out of a broader tradition, and how that tradition might bear as much on the history of art as it does on the history of philosophy. The idea of the demonic, it will argue, cuts across not only the early modern literature of magic and witchcraft but also that of art, making possible a kind of mutual refraction that illuminates both. In one direction, the figure of the painter provides a function for the demonic magician. Possession can be understood as a kind of art, and the possessive agent as a kind of artist.⁴ In the other direction, the figure of the demon provides the artist with a conception of medium. The literatures of magic and demonology serve a notion of what the artist, who had always to channel expressions through a product, could control.

Some seventy years ago, Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz argued that the rise of pictorial illusionism coincided with the refrigerating of the artist as a kind of magus. Semblance, they proposed, came to be a concern precisely at moments when the power of a culture’s effigies—images magically inseparable from the subjects they depict—collapsed.⁵ “Where the belief in the identity of picture and depicted is in decline,” they wrote, “a new bond makes its appearance to link the two—namely, similarity or likeness. Formulating these remarks differently, we would say: the closer the symbol (picture) stands to what is symbolized (depicted), the less is the
outward resemblance; the further apart, the greater is the resemblance.\textsuperscript{10} Kris and Kurz viewed likeness as a means of revivifying the art object that had become untethered from its living subject. For them, accordingly, illusionistic art had two founding conditions: a difference, even an isolation, from the world in which it found itself, and an aspiration to the vividness, the reality, of that very world. Under these conditions, the artist’s charge came to be that of bringing pictures themselves to life, rehabilitating them to something like their former condition, which now meant spanning the gap between the pictures’ own stoniness and the ensouled animation of their makers and viewers.\textsuperscript{7} As an operator who, through effects of naturalism, created enlivened things, the artist became a kind of magician, an \textit{alter deus}.

One of the remarkable aspects of Kris and Kurz’s book was the attempt to consider illusionistic painting as much in relation to its maker as to its subject. The authors did not limit their argument to an account of pictorial traditions; in addition, they suggested that, given a set of pictorial conditions, the actions an artist performs might themselves be resonant in distinctive ways. For anyone now interested in the poetics of manner or facture, this broad perspective as well as Kris and Kurz’s chosen example, the art that looks like magic, invite further thought. We might recall, for instance, how Renaissance artists, in conducting their operations, might call on supernatural help, asking muses, genii, planetary governors, and even angels to enable their work.\textsuperscript{8} As all such attendant beings could be grouped under the general rubric not only of “spirits” but also (to allow for the congruence of D. P. Walker’s famous categories) of “demons,” the value of such work would vary from case to case.\textsuperscript{9} Just as the furor to which artists were subject had to be fended off from its counterpart, demonic madness, so the assisted operations could be either evil or good.\textsuperscript{10} One’s genius might well be maleficient—even Lucifer, after all, was an angel\textsuperscript{11}—and all knew that witches, no less than artists, pulled off their tricks by summoning demonic aid.\textsuperscript{12} The artist’s very assignment complicated the matter further. It could well seem, for example, that artifice, the opposite of creation but the basic task of the mundane artist, was the very thing that gave devils their own character.\textsuperscript{13} The core image in Kris and Kurz’s account, the artist who attempts to be divine, itself worried many thinkers, for if God was the first Creator, it was Satan who was the first \textit{dieu manqué}, the first actor to pretend overzealously to God’s part.\textsuperscript{14} Reginald Scot, an important sixteenth-century English writer on witchcraft, affirmed that “[Lucifer] would needs be like God, and for his arrogancy was thrown out into destruction.”\textsuperscript{15} The Dominican theologian Andrea Gilio da Fabriano, one year before launching his important attack on Michelangelo’s \textit{Last Judgment}, dedicated an entire book to the demonic project of emulating the divine.\textsuperscript{16} And Giovanni Battista Marino, giving an even more explicitly pictorial spin to the exegetical tradition, asked rhetorically, “Who was this Painter, who was so arrogant, so ignorant, that he wished to correct the perfect images of the great smith of smiths?”\textsuperscript{17} As \textit{audacia} (boldness) and \textit{fierrezze} (pride, fierceness) became newly valued as artistic virtues, as artistic giants attempted to build their way to the heavens, the divinity of the artist became thinkable as it had not been since antiquity.\textsuperscript{18} Precisely for this reason, however, the seductive and dangerous proximity of the artist and the sorceror became a new kind of problem as well.

For Kris and Kurz, it was illusionism that made the artist a magus. The more convincing the painting, the greater the paradox that it was but a reflection or shadow, and the more the painter looked like a prestidigitator. With regard to early modern art, the point is of some consequence: that Narcissus, Leon Battista Alberti’s inventor of painting, should die attempting to grasp the \textit{ombra} he sees shimmering in the water, completes a theory that understood painting as a window, something one looks through no less than at.\textsuperscript{19} If Renaissance painting would make the absent present, it would also allow for a new absence at its core. Insofar as Kris and Kurz also suggested that the making of illusions itself defied the artist, however, their thesis, at least when pursued in relation to the Renaissance material, might be qualified, not only by adding evidence that shades the artist-magician more diabolical than they did, but also by looking further at the nature of the illusions the magus made. Paul Fréart de Chantelou quotes Gian Lorenzo Bernini remarking that painting is a lie and sculpture a verity, inasmuch as “the former is the work of the Devil, and the latter that of God.”\textsuperscript{20} In the literature of art, the theme dates at least as far back as Benvenuto Cellini:

\begin{quote}
Quel immortale Idio della natura, che fece i cieli e ’l mondo, e noi fe’ degni delle sue mani, senza far disegni come quel che ogni arte avea sicura, di terra fece la prima scultura, e la mostrò agli angel de’ suoi regni: per qual ne nacque quei crudeli sedegni, cagion d’inferno, e morte acerba e dura. 

Cadde nel fuoco colle sue brigate quel ch’ubbidir non volesse ’l suo maggiore, che avea tante gran cose create.

Questo fu ’l primo che si fe’pitore, che con tal ombre ha l’anime ingannate, qual non può far nessun buono scultore.\textsuperscript{21}
\end{quote}

(That immortal God of nature, who made the heavens and the earth, and who made us worthy of his hands, [did this] without making designs, as does the one who practices his art with certainty. He made the first sculpture out of clay, and then he showed this to the angels of his realms, and thence was born those cruel disdains that were the cause of Hell and of bitter, hard death. The one who did not wish to obey his superior, creator of so many great things, fell with his brigades into the fire. He then made himself into the first painter, one who, using shadows, deceived souls, something that no good sculptor could do.)

Though Cellini’s poem is a burlesque, and Bernini’s remark, too, has a humorous element, both statements are nevertheless noteworthy for the evidence they offer of artists imagining their counterparts as Satanic figures as well as for their suggestion that the making of illusions might ultimately differentiate the artist from the divine. Though Cellini, at least, would elsewhere overturn the values apparently at the base of the poem, describing his own sculptural work as demonic,
even there a basic conviction remains: that the problem of the artist’s divine or diabolical status ensued from the sorts of activities he undertook and from the materials and processes he employed.22

While Kris and Kurz considered the ways in which the artist became a magician, Renaissance writers on the demonic explored the converse: that spellbinders, when going about their own works, made themselves into artists. Johannes Weyer’s De Lamias, for example, explained the powers the Devil gave witches by citing Horace’s famous lines on the like capacities of painters and poets,23 while Marino, more succinctly, referred to “Satanasso, Pittore.”24 Such reversals of Kris and Kurz’s formulation ultimately change the nature of the problem, for once magic is treated as an art, as a kind of making, the substance of its illusions itself becomes germane. Consider the remarkably vivid description of demonic activities given in the discourse “On the Art of Magic’s Superstition,” composed in the 1560s by one of Weyer’s Italian contemporaries, Francesco Cattani da Diacceto:

[Demons] can also form themselves into bodies and present themselves to our eyes in various aspects [species], it being within their power to operate those things that one conducts to an end with the local motions of inferior bodies. One of the things demons can do is operate bodies that appear to be men, or some sort of animal, the likeness of this body consisting in its figure and in its color. The figure is induced by means of local motion, just as painters, by means of brushes and other instruments, color their bodies. In this manner, then, they figure and color their bodies, and the bodies then appear at one moment in the form of a man, in the next in the form of a woman, in the next in the form of an animal, or of another thing, according to what the demons judge most harmful to others.25

What is striking in these lines is how, for Diacceto, it is not the hollowness of their products that make demons seem like painters, but rather those products’ very substantiality. Demons approach the viewer in the form of species, images that, according to medieval and Renaissance theories of optics, strike the eye and allow vision.26 Demons, that is to say, transmute themselves into physically apprehensible, persuasive entities: when Diacceto maintains that demons rely on the “local motions of inferior bodies,” he distinguishes demonic works, which operate on the physical, mechanical world, from the actions that take place in the outer, less material rings of the cosmos. It is this specification that underwrites the comparison with painters. As one of Diacceto’s contemporary readers, Girolamo Menghi, put it, the demonic apparition “is nothing other than the depiction of a body,” all made “with local motion,” as we learn “by our experience of the art of painting, since, using local motion, painters make [their figure], adding, taking away, changing, disposing, with this motion and with the said colors and with their instruments.”27 Construing demonic art as the formation of bodies from figure and color, these writers intimate that demonic illusions exist both as things and as the likenesses of things.28 The notion amplifies a more general commonplace: that demons, remixing the things of nature, but creating nothing themselves, were “apes of God.”29

What makes demons deceptive is that, although embodied as species, the aspect they present has nothing behind it. Though they exist as appearances, those appearances do not, as they should, point beyond themselves: “all the efficacy of their art,” Diacceto puts it elsewhere, “consists in making something appear to others that does not exist.”30 Because demons irritate the distinction between representation and thing, the comparison between demons and painters, here and elsewhere, highlights the matter of means. Cellini maintains that demonic painters make illusions because they work with shadows rather than with lights. Descartes concludes that demons make paintings that are better than the pictures found in dreams because they rely on nothing extrinsic to themselves when making them. Diacceto, for his part, adds the following:

It now remains for us to recount how marvelous effects derive from these things, how it is that making needles, nails, bones, or sponges pour from the mouths of others, or causing similar things, are illusions, such that they make things appear to us that are not there, whether they do this by means of some active natural qualities, apt to cause similar effects, by means of the condensation of air, or in some other way.31

Though Diacceto believes that demonic illusions are marvels, or wonders, he does not take this to set those illusions beyond scrutiny. Even illusions, he sees, must be made “by means of [mediante]” some other thing. If demonic productions are special effects, it should be possible to account for how those effects are achieved, and Diacceto’s last lines make it equally plain that he has some ideas of how demons go about their painting. As above, where Diacceto proposed that demons made figures by means of the movement of “inferior bodies,” his comments here bring up a very concrete phenomenon, the “condensation of air.”32 If demons make us see something, that is, Diacceto has a fairly specific idea of what they must use to make us see it, of what materials, or vehicles, make demonic artifice specially deceptive.

Stuart Clark has remarked that it was, in early modern Europe, “virtually the unanimous opinion of the educated that devils, and a fortiori, witches, not merely existed in nature but acted according to its laws.”33 Diacceto’s remark about condensation illustrates this conviction, and it might be normalized in different ways. Consulting any theological authority, to begin, Diacceto could have learned that Saint Paul had referred to Satan as “the prince of the powers of this air,”34 and that Augustine rehearsed arguments by Apuleius and Origen to the effect that demons were made of air.35 Thinkers in Diacceto’s own day, moreover, could have offered varied and elaborate accounts of why demons, when painting, might work with especially subtle materials, “airy” substances such as fog, mist, and smoke. The idea that demons condensed, for example, was consistent with their understanding of the other spiritual beings that visited their worlds—angels—which materialized out of air and into paintings in churches all around them (Fig. 1).36 It corresponded as well to the period’s psychology of love, according to which airy spirits entered the eyes and “figured” themselves in the imagination, imprinting the image of the beloved in the heart.37 It also
made sense of the celestial apparitions they could observe above them: Weyer noted that the Devil “disorders the air, creating prodigies in the sky similar to natural phenomena”; \(^{38}\) Sebastien Michælis wrote similarly that devils could produce rainbows, could shape clouds into dragons and serpents, and could so corrupt the atmosphere that it would rain frogs and toads. \(^{39}\) Both of these writers reflect the comments of the eleventh-century philosopher Michael Psellus, who likewise associated the figurative capacity of demons with the images in air:

The bodies of demons are simple, and are easy to twist and distend; they are by their nature apt for being figured into whatever guise pleases them. Thus it often happens that, in the air, we see clouds take on the semblance and form of men, of bears, of dragons, and of other manners of animal; the same thing also happens with the bodies of spirits. \(^{40}\)

The notion that demons made air into forms could account for everything from normal meteorological events to atmospheric singularities. \(^{41}\) It could also provide clues to how the magus, or artist, might manipulate and use demons. Recalling the way the necromancer he accompanied to the Roman Colosseum summoned demons, Cellini notes that the man used fire and “perfumes,” as if the smoke and fragrances would give the demons something to occupy. \(^{42}\) Later, Cellini reassures a companion at the event that the huge devils flying all about them are not to be feared, since they are “only made of smoke and shadow.” Whether he had learned this from the priest or from another member of his profession, the artist knew what the bodies of demons were like. \(^{43}\)

The materials with which demons worked were fundamental to the illusions of which they were capable. And if, as Descartes supposed, the power of their painting was achieved through possession, such dynamics must have been important, for they would have helped to explain how it was that demons got under their victims’ skin. In his Discourse on Demons, for example, Francesco de’ Vieri drew the following conclusions about how demons use bodies:

When spirits move themselves, they do this with simple motions, taking some body of air and entering into a human body—spirits being between forms and souls. Once in the bodies, they stop, and then, retracting themselves, they take shape and they figure the air, being of their own nature without figure. \(^{44}\)

Vieri’s comments depend on a distinction, rooted in Paul’s epistles and theorized by Marsilio Ficino, between soul, spirit, and body. \(^{45}\) Being of the middle nature—what Ficino refers to as the medium, and what Vieri, best known otherwise for his writings on meteorology, identifies with air (aria)—demons were incorporeal enough to pass through the body’s boundaries, yet bodily enough to move the works once inside. \(^{46}\) The self-transformation that put them in position to possess the victim’s faculties was inseparable from the demons’ work of figuration itself. The victim was detached from his or her previous position of self-control through the demon’s act of taking shape. \(^{47}\)

Vieri’s comments presume that figuration involves the closing of the circuit between the possessing artificer and the fascinated viewer. And in this, his ideas are consonant with widespread notions about air’s conductive capacities, its poten-
phantasms, simulacra of things like those that healthy people form with their fantasia (imagination), but which the Devil could place both before one’s eyes and inside one’s head. And the popular German preacher Johannes Geiler von Kais-erberg, for one, suggested that this capacity was one that depended precisely on the Devil’s facility with given media. “Since the Devil brings it about that something appears and you see something in your eyes,” he writes, “there must be a medium between what you see and your eyes, for the sensible applied to the sense does not make the sensation.” “The Devil can create a medium,” Geiler adds, “such that a thing appears to be different than it is.” Further along, Geiler rephrases the claim, putting the point in terms of visual rays: “The Devil can also change the streams [that go from the visible object to the eye] and can make other streams go into your eye . . . such that you think that you are seeing one thing, when in fact you are seeing another.”

The widespread interest in phantasms illustrates the geographic breadth of the discourse on demons and their media. And inasmuch as this discourse was sustained not only through the circulation of Latin texts but also, more locally, through vernacular booklets and sermons, it is hardly surprising that artists, too, would come to think about the simulacra that the Devil could make. The wit in Niklaus Manuel Deutsch’s Temptation of Saint Anthony (Fig. 2), for example, is that the vision appearing before the hermit seems in all wise a perfect likeness of a woman, betrayed as an illusion only by the demonic claw (which we see, but which Anthony does not) emerging from the back of the costume. The detail may reflect the belief, reported by GiovanFrancesco Pico, that the Devil, when taking human form, could not transform his feet. More generally, however, pictures like this offer a model for how demonic species and phantasms might work, operating through what the German literature refers to as Blendwerken or Blendungen, the Devil wrapping himself in a false shape, or hanging a picture between himself and his viewer. The writings we have been looking at, of course, suggest that Blendungen could happen behind, no less than in front of, a viewer’s eyes, and artists, too, seem to have considered this. Whereas the Devil in Deutsch’s Saint Anthony works primarily with a disguise, the one in Albrecht Dürer’s (Fig. 3) is aided by a demon, which bellows air into the saint’s head. In this instance, the tempter not only interferes with
visual rays but also bypasses the outer instruments of sight altogether.56

Saint Anthony became a popular subject for German and Flemish artists in the sixteenth century, perhaps, as Weyer himself suggests, because the saint provided an example for others trying to resist the Devil’s temptations.57 The conceit, nevertheless, is not limited to that subject; it is also strikingly close to an idea Dürer had used in earlier works, including, most famously, the Dream of the Doctor (Fig. 4). With the whole sequence of bedevilment images in view, it should not seem remarkable that the demons’ airy medium, their work of picturing, and their ability to possess people could eventually encourage a writer like Descartes to compare demonic possession with dreaming. In Italy, as Robert Klein and Charles Dempsey have shown, writers from Dante to Politian, and artists from Botticelli to Michelangelo were fascinated with the contributions spirits, demons, and phantasms made to the nightmares sleepers experienced.58 Writers on magic, meanwhile, made the mechanics of dreaming, and the role airs played in this, accessible to readers through imaginative, and often detailed, vernacular tracts. In England, for example, Scot explained:
Physical dreames are naturall, and the cause of them dwelleth in the nature of man. For they are the inward actions of the mind in the spirits of the braine, whilest the bodie is occupied with sleepe: for as touching the mind it selfe, it never sleepeeth. These dreames varie, according to the difference of humors and vapors.\textsuperscript{60}

Scot's remarks, to the effect that dreams might be "physical" and that they depend on "vapors," agree in large measure with the thoughts he would have come across in Giovanbat-tista Della Porta:

The Head grows full and heavy, and is overwhelmed in a deep sleep. Whence it comes to pass, that the species descending, meet and mix with other vapors, which make them appear preposterous and monstrous: especially, in the quiet of the night. But in the morning, when the excrementitious and foul Blood is separated from the pure and good, and become cool and allayed; then pure, and unmixed, and pleasant visions appear.\textsuperscript{60}

Della Porta, like Scot after him, suggested that dreams have natural, internal causes; what Scot acknowledges with his reference to the "spirits of the braine," Della Porta explains more fully, hypothesizing that the vapors generated during the digestion of food reshape the other internal vapors, which carry "species." Significantly, both writers bring up the topic while discussing magic. The passage excerpted here from Della Porta appears in his book Natural Magick, in the chapter entitled "To Cause Several Kindes of Dreams." Its broader topic is that of how the monsters of the mind can be controlled (Della Porta's recommendation: eat "windy" foods).\textsuperscript{61} Scot, by contrast, insists on the naturalness of dreams in his book on witchcraft, in the course of reviewing the possibility that dreams might have extrinsic origins. In-sisting that the causes of dreams "dwelleth in the nature of man," Scot allows for inferences like Della Porta's, and accepts that dreams might be informed by the airs released during digestion. In contrast to Della Porta, though, Scot is not ostensibly interested in manipulating dreams himself, and he casts doubt on most possibilities for accomplishing this, including especially the possibility of importing dreams through techniques more direct than Della Porta's. In particular, he opposes the notion sketched in the widely read writings of Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, who maintained, as the later writers did, that dreams were airy and volatile, but who also made more radical claims:

[Air] receives into itself, as if it were a divine looking glass, the species of all things, natural as well as artificial, and also of all manner of speeches, and retains them. Carrying these species with it, and entering the bodies of men and other animals through their pores, and making an impression upon them, both when they sleep and when they be awake, [air] affords the matter for diverse strange dreams, foresights, and divinations... It is for this reason that many philosophers were of the opinion that air is the cause of dreams, and of many other impressions of the mind, through the prolonging of images, or similitudes, or species.\textsuperscript{62}

Like Pselius, Ficino, and others, Agrippa suggested that air is specially conductive; he effectively gives air (\textit{aer}) a role much like the one Ficino gives to \textit{spiritus}, claiming that air carries \textit{species} into the body. His discussion, nevertheless, must count among the most materialist statements of the position argued later by Descartes, that dreams cannot serve a suspension of belief in reality, since they are made up of things brought in from outside.\textsuperscript{53} If Della Porta maintains that the alchemy effected from the kitchen might itself be sufficient to change the forms of dreams, Agrippa makes it easier to understand why Scot might become worried about a related scenario, in which demonic rather than gastric vapors enter the head. Dürrer’s \textit{Dream of the Doctor} had already presented the possibility that the Devil, using air, could occupy a dreamer, and Scot records a troubling implication of this idea—that the magus, invoking demons, could attempt the same:

There are diabolical dreames, which Nicolaus Hemingius divideth into three sortes. The first is, when the divell immediatlie of himselfe (he meaneth corporallie) offereth anie matter of dreame. Secondlie, when the divell sheweth revelations to them that have made request upon him

\textsuperscript{5} Vicenzo Cartari, \textit{Sleep and Dreaming} (photo: courtesy of the American Academy in Rome)
Therefore, Thirdlie, when magicians by art bring to passe, that other men dreame what they will.64

In what Scot, following Hemingius, calls the first sort of dream, the Devil actually makes his own body into the dreamer’s dream. Given the contention we have encountered in various texts that the demonic body is already inherently airy, the proposal may seem almost natural: Agrrippa, for his part, states explicitly that dreams have matter as well as form; air not only brings dreams about, it constitutes them. The idea can hardly be regarded as eccentric. The assertion that dreams are made of air, for example, helps explain the iconography in Vicenzo Cartari’s Imagini dei Dei, which gives its personification of Sleep a horn filled with air as an attribute (Fig. 5). It likewise helps explain a representational convention of the time, that of showing thoughts, dreams, and visions taking place within a cloud (Fig. 6). If, even today, we encounter hints that speech, rendered as breath, is materially different from thought, made of cloud (Fig. 7), the distinction must have been still clearer in a time when the artifice of thought clouds was itself of interest.65 Karel van Mander, elaborating the construction of the dream (Fig. 8), actually shows little spirits painting castles in the air. The cloud frame in which all of the activity takes place indicates both that the spirits in our heads use air as their basic material and, more generally, that even at the level of thought, every image has its substance.

The proximity of the dream made of the demon’s body to the dream made by what Scot calls the magician’s art must have provoked both fascination and fear. Scot himself devotes an entire chapter to proving “[t]hat neither witches, nor anie other, can either by words or hearbs, thrust into the mind of a sleeping man, what cogitations or dreames they list.” The Venus before Dürer’s sleeping doctor, which might read as the demon responsible for the doctor’s deception, as the artful vision being blown in his ear, or as both, shows what Scot had to argue against. It is not difficult to conclude, in fact, that the dreams and phantasms made of air could, at moments, seem even constituent of witchcraft. When Hans
Baldung’s or Domenico Veneziano’s witches hold their sabbats, they direct themselves to working airs (Fig. 9). And though recent writers on these pictures have appropriately drawn attention to a number of things that the witches in these pictures do—kill infants, brew potions, fly—these operations, too, deserve attention, for they are inextricable from the period’s larger vision of what sorcery involves. The witches’ airs, no doubt, could be put to various ends: clouds might initiate the storms for which witches were sometimes blamed, and airs might facilitate the invocation of the demons with which witches were thought to copulate.67 No less relevant, however, is Scot’s denial, and its implication that in the views of some, witches also made dreams.

Dürer’s print and van Mander’s drawing bear on the history of both superstition and artistic creativity. For if art was, at least on some accounts, a product of fantasy, and if fantasies were built of air, then air itself could be understood not only as the demon’s but also as the artist’s first medium.68 Whatever van Mander’s drawing shows about spirits and their materials, it also demonstrates that painting can come uit den gheest (from the spirit), the Dutch gheest, like the German Geist, serving to denote both the painter’s thought and the specter that haunts him.69 In Italy, similar intuitions seem to have guided the creation of groteschi. Sixteenth-century writers connected inventions like these, which were frequently rendered as air or smoke, both with the artist’s fantasia and, more generally, with dreams.70 If the arrival of an idea is, furthermore, a movement or a condensation of air, then we have a literal way of thinking about the condition that all artists depend on, inspiration. This, too, had its demonic counterpart; occultists writing in Italian referred to those possessed by demons as spiritati—literally, “spirited,” but also, in a literal sense, inspired victims. Dürer’s doctor (Fig. 4) may represent a kind of mirror for the visionary painter, insofar as both find themselves with new thoughts placed in their heads. At the same time, Dürer’s print also raises the question of how the agency of inspiration would ideally work. In his still fundamental discussion of the image, Erwin Panofsky proposed that the combined presence of the ball in the foreground and the ring on Venus’s finger bespeak the artist’s awareness of a medieval legend according to which a boy, playing with a ball, became bewitched by, and then engaged to, a statue of Venus that the Devil had entered.71 Panofsky went on to argue that Dürer’s image contained a moral lesson, one that turned on the dangers of sleep. Yet since the Venus’s form, as numerous writers on the image have remarked, specifically evokes that of ancient statuary, it seems possible to read the print in a different way as well, namely, as a study in occupied bodies, a meditation on the relation between the possessed and the enlivened and, by implication, on the nature of the artist who might be involved with both. It is easy to imagine that the artist would seek to internalize the demon, to draw from the heavens the ideas that could guide his work. Yet in Dürer’s time, any wizard worth his salt could not only receive demons but also send them on his bidding. Good or evil, the would-be magus had to deploy the
spirits that would make marvelous works possible. Magical artifice involved the transmutation and control of the air, incorporating air into work.72 Such a principle might be relevant to any number of pictorial categories. It is worth thinking, for example, about the advent of sfumatura, the technique by which the painter made illusions more convincing by allowing subjects to dissolve into or resolve out of atmosphere.73 Leonardo, who gave elaborate instructions for the rendering of the smoke, dust, and vapor that should shroud the contents of a painting, also advised painters to study the stains on walls, since the artist, using his invention, could see battles, “strange airs of faces and costumes,” and other such things in these blurs. Giorgio Vasari, attributing a similar inventive mode to Piero di Cosimo, wrote that the artist found his material in a wall on which sick persons had spat and in the clouds; he remarked that Piero was inspired to do this “because he had seen certain things that had been smoked and finished [fumeggiate e finite] by Leonardo.”74 Comments like these suggest how the sfumato painting (Fig. 10) might represent, include, or even constitute a kind of condensation, drawing aerial materials into shapes. Sfumatura, as air, can, like the grotesque, depict the spiritually charged fantasia, or it can, like a demon, carry out its own meteorological operations. Furthermore, as David Summers has demonstrated, a painting did not need to be sfumato to suggest its air. Throughout the Renaissance, artists employed various means—swirling draperies, fluttering hair, translucent aureoles, even wind gods themselves—to unify their components and to imbue the whole with spirit.75 Renaissance pictures were filled with air, and once this quality is extracted from stories of progressive realism and treated rather as a trick, datable to a historical moment, by which painters intensified their illusions, those paintings serve as fitting illustrations for one of Kris and Kurz’s main points: that the artist becomes a magus precisely by attempting “to bring pictorial conventions to life.”76 Such an approach to Renaissance painting would, among other things, undermine the arguments of contemporary paragons that the atmosphere of paintings makes them fundamentally different from (and better than) sculptures. What Vasari says of Leonardo’s paintings—that they were “smoked and finished”—might, for example, bear comparison with what Filippo Baldinucci later said of Giambologna—that he finished the model he had invented “with his breath.”77 The air in painting can play a role analogous to that of air in sculptures, completing the work by entering its “body.” To follow the lead of Kris and Kurz, we might even conclude that the issues here have as much to do with a vision of artistic performance as with
depiction as such: the air that pervades the pictorial figure is not only a record of the world but also a trace of the inspiration that the artist has, at least notionally, enacted.\textsuperscript{76}

At stake here is both the ontology of the artwork and the status of the artist who creates it, and on these topics, the magical literature is a helpful guide. Especially where the demonological version of such processes was concerned, for example, influential ideas would have been available in the Asclepius of Hermes Trismegistus. This dialogue, which Renaissance readers held to be a work of deepest antiquity and authority, provided them with a powerful view of the divine nature of human artifice: “Just as the master and father—or god, to use his greatest name—is maker of the gods in heaven, so is man the maker of the gods that are in the temple, content to be near to humans. Not only are humans illuminated; they illuminate as well.”\textsuperscript{77} The practice of art among humans, the Asclepius stated, is inherently divine. If the things that God created were other gods, so were the statues humans made. The process of making statues (the field of art most at issue in the dialogue) was something more than the mere act of giving materials a shape. What God did with his own works was to “illuminate” them, and humans, if they were to follow his lead, had to do the same. What this required emerges further along:

The image of gods that humans form has been formed of both natures—of the divine, which is primary and more divine by far, and of that which is found among humans, namely, the material of which they are built. [In making gods, humans] represent them not only with the heads but with all the limbs and the whole body. Always mindful of its own nature and origin, humanity persists in that imitation of divinity; just as the father and master made his gods eternal to resemble him, so does humanity make its gods with the likeness of its own features.\textsuperscript{80}

Central to the passage is the question of what humans might use to make god statues. While it acknowledges that any selected materials will fall short of God’s own—the substance of the temple god will never match human flesh, just as the human body itself is less than divine—it nevertheless suggests that the creation of gods requires the artist to imitate all of the features of his prototype, be they spiritual or material. It is a notion that amounts, on one reading, to a defense of anthropocentrism: the student of Hermes would know, roughly, what temple gods should look like. At the same time, the proposal also raises the consequential difficulty, as technical as it is theological, of how to represent the most important part of the human model. It is this problem that the dialogue’s most notorious passage confronts directly:

Our ancestors, having once erred gravely, being skeptical of the divine plan, and inattentive in their worship of and reverence for the divine, discovered the art of making gods, and to this, they added a conformable power, drawing this from the nature of the world. Because they could not make souls, they mixed this power in and, calling up the souls of demons or angels, they implanted them in their images using holy and divine rites. Only through these souls could the idols have the power to do good and evil.\textsuperscript{81}

In what was, to Renaissance readers, a shocking passage, the Asclepius indicated that statues of gods, in antiquity, were brought to completion through the invocation of demons.\textsuperscript{82} To follow the Asclepius, the creation and adoration of semidivine images, which arose from a desire to demonstrate humanity’s reverence for its maker, ultimately led to a demonic approximation of God’s generative operations.

The Asclepius suggested that divine artists sent demons into partially fashioned, but not yet breathing, bodies, bringing them to life, and Renaissance readers, looking to other sources, could have encountered any number of ideas on how the artist might do this. Psellus, for example, wrote that certain materials, when properly employed, could themselves draw life heat into statues, while Trithemius instructed the magician to model spirits in wax, with the expectation that the representation itself could invoke the thing represented.\textsuperscript{83} A more vernacular version of such a conjuration can be found in Cellini’s account of the casting of the Perseus, wherein the statue comes to life on the artist’s invocation of Christ’s name. Cellini notes that to complete the task, he had entered into a “diabolico furore,” and that, through what sounds like both an exorcism and an act of metempsychosis, the enlivening of the statue helped chase away the fever that had occupied him.\textsuperscript{84}

If Michael Camille is right in suggesting that the Renaissance saw the rebirth of the pagan idol, one consequence of this might be that the Renaissance statue became a type of spirito, and the statue maker a double for the witch or necromancer.\textsuperscript{85} Spirits could be a sculptor’s basic medium, and, as was true for the painter as well, awareness of such a medium could shape conceptions of the body that served as the vehicle for his art.\textsuperscript{86} It is worth asking here about why it was sometimes dangerous, in these years, for artists to render demons in paintings: Was the problem simply that vivid portrayals betrayed something about the painter’s own knowledge or allegiance, or was it that, when convincing, the painter might well seem to introduce living devils into the picture’s body and, therewith, into the church or home?\textsuperscript{87} To follow the demonological literature, devils were perfectly capable of invading artworks, especially statues, making their lifeless bodies, like artificial cadavers, begin to move and speak.\textsuperscript{88} What’s more, the artifice that Manierist animators carried out with clay and colors could seem uncomfortably close to the operations that the Satanic trickster performed with living victims, using air to cloud those victims’ perception and change their visible behavior.\textsuperscript{89} When François Duquesnoy’s student Orfeo Boselli writes that the sculptor should arrange his figure in a pose that is spirito, but not spirito, we might be reminded either of Reformist complaints like Gilio’s, about the “modern painters” who, “when they have to make some work, have as their first intent to twist the head, arms, or legs of their figures,”\textsuperscript{90} or of Weyer’s nearly contemporary description of what the Devil does:

He is able, against the will of his victim, to contract nerves and muscles; often he paralyzes the body of a person, so that the neck cannot, as it could previously, turn left and
right, and moves like a piece of wood. Sometimes he pulls together the veins around one’s neck in such a strange and marvelous fashion that the head, neck, and whole body must hang down. At other times, he does the opposite, making the head bend back as far as the shoulders, and the shinbone twist and turn backward over itself. And who can imagine and tell of all the marvelous and strange contortions of the body’s members?²⁹¹

The fine line, often indiscernible, between the spirituoso and the spiritato raises the question of whether any animated artwork might smack of the demonic. When, within the artwork, there appears a figure that is simultaneously a demonstration of artistic virtuosity, a response to antique forms, and a representation of possession, what does this make of the artist?

If all of this points up the connections between magic, the medium, and the Renaissance idol, it may be useful here to consider yet another category of late Renaissance motifs, the bind, which, beginning in the time of Michelangelo, came to be a widespread visual topos. Michelangelo himself included what appear to be ligatures not only on his figures of prisoners but also on his Moses, his Victory (Fig. 11), and his Aurora, among other works. Leone Leoni, Pietro Tacca, and Giambologna all treated the enchained figure as a basic module for invention. Cellini wound his statuettes of Perseus and Danaë together with a ribbon (Fig. 12), while Vincenzo Danti used binds to control his two figures of Honor and Falsehood, all but compressing them back into the block from which they should emerge. On some of these figures, the binds seem to serve a relatively straightforward attributive function, indicating that the figure they wrap has, in one way or another, been subjigated. In other cases, however, the motif is more intriguing, for it is not everywhere easy to determine whether it is a single figure, or two, or even a whole composition—that is, the work itself—that is bound. In Vincenzo Danti’s Honor and Falsehood, the victor, no less than the victim, is wrapped up. In Cellini’s Perseus and Danaë, the tie mysteriously joins the two characters, whose bodies have been expressively turned. In Michelangelo’s Victory, the binds creep up the ostensible conqueror’s leg. In the same artist’s Prisoners, the bound figures paradoxically break away from their monument to become “independent” characters.

If we allow that some artists, at least, must have hoped that viewers would associate their work with the moving of bodies, then it is worth noting that binding could serve both as a trace and as a cause of motion, especially where statues were concerned. As Plato twice recounted, the ancient sculptor Daedalus, after infusing his statue and causing it to move, lost control of it and had to tie it up.²⁹² When we find sixteenth-century writers like Vieri remarking, with reference to Plato, that “statues would not stay still were they not bound with ropes,” it is tempting to conclude that the binds on later statues suggest that their artists, like Daedalus, have at least notionally made two successive moves, first starting their statues, then stopping them.²⁹³ Just as relevant, however, might seem another perspective on the bound, moving statue, one that returns us directly to the matter of idols and demons. This alternative could take its orientation from an-

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other text well known in later periods, Saint Augustine’s etiology of the idol:

For what are idols but what the same Scripture describes in these words: “Eyes have they, and they do not see,” and whatever else may be said of substances however skillfully carved into shape, but withal lacking life and sense? But unclean spirits, bound to these same images by that wicked art, had miserably enslaved the souls of their devotees by bringing them into fellowship with themselves.94

In the present context, what is significant about Augustine’s lines is not their objection to idolatry as such, but rather their explanation of how idols work. In revisiting the Hermetic operation, and in accounting for how it is that demons mix with human images, Augustine relies not on the dynamics of air or breath, but rather on the image of the bind. As he says explicitly further along, “a demon bound to an idol by impious art is a god made by man.”95

That binding counted among the ancient magus’s most basic operations no doubt informed Augustine’s thought here, and Augustine’s own words, in turn, only added to the legacy, literary and material, that passed on to the Renaissance.96 The Spanish mystic Francisco de Ossuna assembled quotations from various theological authorities to support his belief that when doctors attempted to cure patients by wrapping them in ligatures, they were in fact employing “devilish arts.”97 Weyer dedicated an entire chapter to binding, identifying it explicitly with possession.98 Menghi writes that “sometimes, using certain valueless trinkets, [demons] can easily be made into slaves and servants of magi and enchanters, and sometimes they are constrained, either in hair, or in nails, or in wax, or in lead, or they are bound with a weak piece of thread.”99 Agrippa, thinking either more metaphorically or more metaphysically, gives the impression that virtually every trick in the magician’s repertoire amounts to a sort of enchainment:

It remains now that we understand a thing of great wonderment, and that is the binding of men into love, or hatred, sickness or health, and such like. Also the binding of thieves, and robbers, so that they cannot steal in any place; the binding of merchants, so that they cannot buy, or sell in any place; the binding of an army, so that it cannot pass over any bound; the binding of ships, so that they be entirely unable to exit the port by any force of winds, even with limitless sails stretched to the wind. Also the binding of a mill, so that it can by no force whatsoever be turned round; the binding of a cistern, or fountain, so that the water cannot be drawn up out of them; the binding of the field, so that it cannot bring forth fruit; the binding of any place, so that nothing can be built upon it; the binding of fire, so that it cannot be lit in a certain place, and that anything, however combustible, not be able to burn, even if a very strong fire is put to it.100

His inventory goes on, and when he comes to cataloguing the instruments that the binder might employ, he lists not only rings, sounds, and “strong imaginations” but also images, suggesting how pictures might participate in the fantasy of control.101 Agrippa’s thoughts on art and binding can be

12 Benvenuto Cellini, Perseus and Danaë. Florence, Museo Nazionale (photo: Kunsthistorisches Institut)
assimilated both to demonology broadly and to the more narrow Hermetic pursuit of talismanic statues: here, too, after all, the objective of the magus is to capture the demon—to put the genie in the bottle, so to speak—and to use the captured mover to his own ends.\textsuperscript{102}

This literature may well be relevant to the way the bind emerges as a Renaissance visual motif. It seems telling, for example, that Michelangelo’s sonnets include figures like the lover, “bound and fettered though free and unfettered,” and the beloved, who can “enchain without a chain.”\textsuperscript{103} In Michelangelo, to be sure, the mode is lyrical, and the context is generically different from that of, say, Agrippa. Yet following Ioan Couliano’s demonstration of how the Ficinian tradition conflated eros and magic, or Charles Dempsey’s study of the place of possession in the poesie, textual and visual, that Lorenzo the Magnificent’s courtiers generated, it seems telling that even Agrippa himself, giving his first example of what the magus might do, points to “the binding of men into love.”\textsuperscript{104} When the lover in Michelangelo’s poetry longs for the power to cast spells, when Cellini’s Perseus and Danaë reincarnates Amor and his mother, when Dossi transforms the seductive beauties of Titian and Giorgione into Melissa or Circe (Fig. 13)—adding, in the upper left, small male figures (figurines?) bound to a tree—the possession at issue is no doubt that of the enchanter.\textsuperscript{105} And though such material may, in the end, encourage a rethinking of Couliano’s thesis, bewitchment, in all of its aspects, is still very much to the point. The magus need not be a Machiavellian manipulator: though Giordano Bruno, it is true, would write of how “the artisan binds with his art,” and though the artist, like some Gallic Hercules, might ultimately aim to bind an audience, the poetics of Michelangelo allow that the maker, too, can be a subject, with a master.\textsuperscript{106} The bound statue may mark a fantasy of power, or it may merely analogize the conditions of the artwork and the lover. Even in these cases, though, what matters is that where binding is eros, both magic and the medium remain central. The bind figures the difference, spanned by art, between the body and its distant movers.

As a model, binding both complicates and expands the artist-magus’s work. Whereas the pictures of Dürer and van Mander may simply demonstrate that there is no such thing as a pure image, these last figures point, beyond this, to the artistic necessity of constraint. Still, the tropes of chains and laces, in their way, do lead back to those of demons and airs, for if there is one condition that motivates the use of air to generate thought and illusion, it is that air itself is both pervasive and binding, connecting its subject to the agent that shapes it and disarming that subject in the process. The painter, and the demon, resort to air for the same reason that they resort to other binds: without it, all becomes discrete, things fall apart. The medium points to inevitable embodiment, but it also implies a kind of alienation, an otherness in the world the artist confronts. Such otherness in-
cludes the object itself, the cold, dead thing that must somehow be both moved and moving. If art, as a medium, is to bind, it must also be bound. The work, to be expressive, must be possessed.

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Notes

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1. René Descartes, Meditationes de prima philosophia, ed. Geneviève Lewis (Paris: Vrin, 1944), 19.23–28: “Age ergo somnium, nec particularia ista vera sint, nos oculos aperire, caput movere, manus extenderre, nec forte etiam nos habe se tales manus, nec tale totum corpus; tamen profecto fatendum est visa in quieti esse veluti quasdam pictas imagines, quae non nisi ad similium dinem rerum verarum fingi potuerunt.”

2. ibid., 19.28–20.8: “ideoque saltem generalia haec, oculos, caput, manus, totumque corpus, res quidam non imaginariarum, sed verae existere. Name satis pictores ipsi, ne tum quidem, cum Sirenas & Sirenycos maxime insue- tatis formis fingere student, natu ros omnè exparte novas ii possunt assignare, sed tantummodo diversorum animalium membra permiscit; vel si forte aliquot exquiri adeo novum, ut nihil omnino ei simile fueri visum, atque ut plane fictitioni sit & falsum, certe tamen ad minimum veri colores esse debent, ex quibus illius confusus.”

3. ibid., 22.23–23.9: “Supponam igitur non optimum Deum, fontem veri- tatis, sed genium aliquot malignum, eundemque sumum potentem & calli- dum, omnem sumum industriam in eos posuisse, ut me falleret: tabu caecum, aetrum, terram, colores, figuras, sonos, cunctaque externa nihil aliud esse quam ludications somniorum, quibus insidias credullitatis meae tendetendi: considerabo meipsum tanquam manus non habentem, non oculos, non carnem, non sanguinem, non aliquam sensum, sed haec omnia me habe falso opinor: maneo obscurum in hac mediocris definitione, a sibi siquidem non in potestate mea sit aliud veri cognoscere, at certe hoc quod in me est, ne fabis assentiar, nec mihi quidquam iste decepte, quantumvis potens, quantumvis calidus, possim imponere, obfumatismente cavebo.”

4. for the concept of the devil, see the devil whom Aristotle speaks of from Demokriti, “representation” or “image,” and who strikes terror “with faces and pictures,” see Weyer, 62 (1.22). Weyer published De praestigiis daemonum in Latin in 1565, and in his own German edition in 1566. An excellent English translation of the first Latin edition was edited by John Sharp in Ariz.: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998, and in order to facilitate its consultation, I have provided book and chapter references with all of my citations. As the present essay aims more to explore the range of ideas available to demonologists such as the thoughts and remarks of Weyer per se, I have for the most part opted to draw on a more expansive 17th-century German edition of the text rather than on the early Latin version.

5. Kris and Kurz, 77: “the stronger the belief in the magic function of the image, in the identity of picture and depicted, the less important is the nature of that image. . . . Whenever a high degree of magic power is attributed to an object—whether this be the fetish of primitive men or the miracle-working ritual image of civilized man—it resembles to nature is rarely of decisive importance.”

6. ibid., 77–78.

7. As Kris and Kurz explained, in qualifying their terminology: “We should, however, make it clear what we mean by likeness. It has nothing to do with the ideal image of nature, which has the aim of exact photologic reproduction; rather it may be more generally described as the attempt to bring pictorial conventions to life.” See Kris and Kurz, 79. With the rise of the likeness, the artist ceased to be a maker of clones and became something close to a demigurge. This is a useful anachronism, but the demonic: “When St. Augustine (citing Apuleius) reiterates the view of the much-quoted Egyptian Hermes that the demonic arts have the power ‘to install invisible spirits in visible objects formed of matter,’ he is in fact referring to the secret bond between art and thuggery.” See Kris and Kurz, 79.


9. As later writers knew, Plato’s term for the spirit of afflatus was ἑλπιοῦ, Latinized by Apuleius and others as daemon. The late 16th-century meteorologist Francesco de’ Vieri, for example, identifies demoni with spirit, which he divides into three categories. The first kind of spirit or demon is “the power in our mind, by which we are governed” [quella potenza dell’animo nostra, dalla quale siamo governati].” As an example of this he points to the Demon of Socrates. Vieri also comments that “every artist, operating with knowledge, is accompanied and guided by the Demon, that is, by the soul of someone who, being formerly embodied, exercised that art [ogni artefice, con scienza operante, è scoerto, e retto, da l’Daimon, cioè da alcuna anima, che esercita prima nel corpo, dell’arte esercitata.” See Vieri, Discorsi intorno a’ demoni, volgarmente chiamati spiriti (Florence: Bartolomeo Sermartelli, 1576), 10; Weyer, 56 (1.20), who cites Lactantius as evidence that the Latin for daemones is Genious; and in the secondary literature, the recent discussion in Dempsey, 41 and passim. Although it should be clear throughout the following text: I stress that all current writers on Renaissance magic, have depended on D. P. Walker’s Spiritual and Demonical Magic from Ficino to Campanella (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), my approach has also been informed by recent criticisms of his dichotomy between the spiritual and the demonic. See esp. Coulianto, 136; and Gary Tomlinson, Music in Renaissance Magic: Toward a Historiography of Others (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 120.

In his essay *Von Gespenstern, usweheneder, Fällen, oder Poltern, und anderem wunderbaren ding*., Ludwig Lavater writes succinctly that "the pagans believed (as their writings show) that every person has a good and an evil genius for spirit, or soul." The first origins being what is good, and the second being what is bad. Lavater advises him: the second leads him to harm whenever he can and wherever he wishes."The Heiden haben es auch daruber gehalten (wie die Schriften bezeugen) ein jeglicher Mensch habe ein gutes und ein bires Genium, Geist oder Engel. Der ein weise in seiner Tat, der andere aber verderbt man zuliebe unmic herzliche und mägliche." For Lavater, I have consulted the edition included in the compendium *Theatrum de veneficiis* (Frankfurt: Basle, 1586), 165. Wever, 56 (12.9), suggests that all genii are evil: "And Lacantius discusses this matter repeatedly, saying that only the true genii are the same as the spirits roaming all the world. It doesn't matter if they have any other corruption, they see how they can draw people into corruption as well. Thus they look how they can fill every corner with secret entanglements, tears, and fears. They follow every person around, and they never let up, and they take places behind the house after the news is over (for this is what the Romans called evil spirits)." [I] And abermals spricht Lacantius von diesem handel also: Die unwechselt Verkehrle geni stets, aber auch in der Welt, und damit sie in ihren verderben zu kommen, sehen sie auch die Menschen mit sich ins verderben ziehen. Deshalb lügen sie wie sie alle wunself mit menschlichen stricken, betriegen und schrecken es. Dann jeden einen Menschen hängen sie nach und lassen nicht ab, so nennen sie auch ein haus nach dem anderen ein, und nennen sich Geni (dann also heissen die Latiner die bires Geni)." *Citing Dionysius Stier also observes, 164 (5.8), that the Devil, being an angel, had the same capacities for inspiration: "Nicht Demionysius denkt dass eine person's intellect or understanding may be illuminated by something like an angel, in that (this angel-like being) draws or paints in the understanding of a person a hand, his imagination, to disclose it. The Devil is less capable of this, but on account of his [angelic] nature, which he did not entirely lose in the Fall, except that he does not, like good angels, illuminate the judgment and understanding of a person, but rather convives his angel-like things, seducing him im (Zu Dionysius nicht derselben, dass der Intellekt oder verstand eines Menschen ehn der ein Engel müge erleuchtet werden, so er hennlich ein Speicm oder eblichen, dessen, so er im offenbar, im verstand entwirft und abnhaltet. Gleich verrim bes ist auch noch den Cult der Treff, ja von natur her, welche Natur er, wie ausgenutzt, beigt, und unter der durch den fall verloren hat, ausgenommen, dass er nicht wie den guten Engel dess Menschen wthiel und verstand erleuchtet, unders fächlicher erleuchtet und verführt.*

18. In Curt, Clark, and Ruest, esp. 186: "In and out themselves, after all, magicians and other witches had no greater capacity to effect things with the means they used than other human beings. All alike were constrained by the same natural laws that control earthly powers. . . . It followed that effects beyond their capabilities could only be achieved, or even hoped for, if some agent with superhuman (though not, we recall, super-natural) powers was also involved." 19. Michael Pessel's book *On Demons*, which was translated into Latin by Marsilio Ficino and into Italian by a mid-16th-century scholar, and which was widely cited during the later Renaissance, contended that artifice properly happened only in the base realms, and that its operator was God's double and more his counterpart: "to God, the creator of all good things, there is added another god, artificer of evils; to the god who is lord of celestial things is added a god who is lord of subcelestial things. And this god, who is lord of subcelestial things, is not in the form of God, but in the form of soul, body, and spirit."

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deceive; Menghi, 100, that the Devil is like a monkey because he is forced to imitate human operations. See Clark’s chapter “The Devil, God’s ‘Ape,” as well as Reinhold Hugonnard, Diabolus in Musica: Studien zur Bono- graphie des Teufels (Munich: Franz, 1974). For the artist as the ape, the classic study remains that of H. W. Janson, Apes and Ape Love in the Middle Ages and Renaissance (London: Warburg Institute, University of Lon-дон, 1952).

30. Diaceto (as in n. 25), 21v: “tutta l’efficacia di quest’arte consiste nel far parer’ altrui quel che non è.”

31. Ibid., 27r: “Resta hora che dopo questo diciamo qualmente que- rauigliosi effetti che da essi derivano, come è il far’ gutiere fuori di bocca altrui, come vuoi chiamargli, stupori, apopie, e grandissimi effetti che ci fanno parer’ quel che non è, è mediante alcune qualità naturali attive, atte a cagionar’ simili effetti, mediante la condensazion’ dell’aria, o altro modo.”

32. Cf. Menghi, 43, who writes that demons make their false images by “adding, by diminishing, by changing colors, by hardening, and by condens- ing the air [aggiungendo, sminuendo, mutando, & dispondendo gli colori, indiu- nando, & condensando l’aria.]….”

33. Clark, 152.

34. See Eph. 2:2; biblical citations here are keyed to the Vulgata, ed. Robert Weber (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1969). The 16th-century physician Johannes Ewich, who served as a judge at which trials, refers to the Devil as “Spiritus” and presence in the air [en Geist und Fürst in der lüft’]; see Ewich, Von der Heesen / Die man gemainliebig Zaubern nennt. /… in Theatrum de veneficis (as in n. 11), 328.


36. Weyer, 1998 (as in n. 4), 36–37 (1.12), paraphrases Tertullian on the breath of demons: “The breath of demons and angels causes corruption of the mind by its treachery and madness and by foul and savage lusts, along with various delusions. Of these delusions the greatest is that this demon-breathe, carrying with it demons men’s minds, devours these men so as to procure for itself its special sustenance of savors and blood offered to the statues and images.”

37. Cf. Klein, “Spirituro Peregrino” (as in n. 8), 76–77; and Dempsey, 43–45.

38. Weyer, 36 (1.12). Cf. Psellus, whom Weyer later quotes to the effect that demons “change their airy body in various forms, as when the wind blows the clouds. They contrast it and extend it (as worms are seen to do because of their softness and great pliability); and not only do they show diversity in size, but they also change their shapes and colors in many ways, because a demon’s body is naturally equipped to do both of these things. Inasmuch as it is by nature yielding, it transforms itself into figures of various appearance; inasmuch as it is air, it takes on diverse colors like the air;” Weyer, 40 (1.14).


40. Psellus, 7r: “i corpi deli demoni sono semplici e facili da toccare e distitare, e naturalmente atti a figurarsi in qual guisa lor piace. Onde sì come sta sull’aria uggiamo i nusoli pigliar sembianza e forma hor d’uomini, hosti orvandosi, or del dragoni, or del altre maniere di animali; così anche i corpi de’ spiriti.”

41. Klein notes that when Dante describes the shades encountered in Purgatory taking form out of the wet, surrounding air, his terms closely resemble those used by Neoplatonic writers on demons. See Purgatorio 25.88– 96; and Klein, “Spirito Peregrino” (as in n. 8), 67–68.

42. Cellini (as in n. 21), 211: “ci avea fatto portare profumi preziosi e fuoco, ancora profumì canti.”

43. 215: “e che i corpi di spirito non dissi al fanciullo: ‘Queste creature son tutte sotto di a noi, e ciò che tu vedi si è fumo e ombra.’”

44. Vieri (as in n. 9), 20–21: “Quando adunque gli spiriti si muovono, ciò fanno di semplice moto, prendendo alcun corpo d’aria, et entrando in un corpo humano, essendo gli Spiriti, infra le forme, & Animé, terminino, e ristringono in se stessa formino, e figurino l’aria, per propria natura senza figura.”


...
dano Bruno," in Klein 1970 (as in n. 8), 65— Emision (as in n. 66), 629; and Dempsey, 94—95, 106.
69. On painting lyt den ghost, see Walter S. Melion, Shaping the Netherlandish Cathedrals (Aurora, Colo.: Schilder-Boek—Chicago University of Chicago Press, 1991), 66 and passim, with further references. Cf. also Weyer, 35 (11.4), which describes how demonic Geister breathe thoughts into the Geister der einbildung (which he also calls the phantasis): "The spirits approach and act upon the spirit of the imagination or phantasia that is inside of us, and breathe a word of joy or sadness into it, not with an audible voice, but without any sound whatsoever.[Die Geister nehm v unnd sich zu dem Geist der einbildung oder phantasia, so in uns ist, unnd hauchen ihm ein, ein vor der freud und unnd leid, so in uns ist, unnd laestern ihm allen.
70. On grotesques and fantasy, see Summers (as in n. 8), 103, 135. On gotoschi as "oneiric painting," see André Chastel, La grotesque (Paris: Le Promeneur, 1988), 12, 47—52.
71. "Zwei Dürerrerprobleme (Der sorgenname 'Traum des Dokters' und die sorgenmanen 'Vier Apostel')." Münchener Jahrbuch der Bil-
72. Menghi writes that "the malefiant man, or the sorceress, looking at the body of some young boy, moves him with the gaze, and with the imagination." He does this by using his eyes: "the eyes having been transmuted into some harmful force, it can happen that the transmute the nearby air, which is between them and the eyes of the boy who is being watched; and that contiguous air sometimes works even better with material more disposed than with material less disposed, where it is also the case to transmute the eyes of that boy in and by means of that boy's eyes, his other, internal parts". Menghi, 192—93: [il] huomo Malefico, [lo]a Maha, riguardando il corpo di qualche fanciullo lo muove col uedere, [con] l'imaginatione... sendo gli occhi a quella maestosa omdienza ecco che trasmutino alcune altre facce del fanciullo qual è quella omonome: che è fra se, gli occhi del fanciullo qual è qui quell'aria con poterast marble, e allora dare che la statua loro sorregendo e con quelle fianche anchora si ascensione se l'aire lance." For Trithemius, see, for example, his discussion of Orpheus, in bk. 1, ch. 3, "Das Horum in der handschriftlichen Buchstaben (Darmstadt: Batsbahr Hofmann, 1600), as well as the discussion in Couiliano, 172. Notions derived from and comparable to his can be found in Agrippa, Paracelsus, and Bruno, among others. To follow Gilio (as in n. 16), 14v, Renaissance sorcerers would use bole sape stances and capti
\n\nvisions are there today who, in order to apply themselves to the art of magic and to witchcraft, sacrifice human blood and birds to the demon, and make human and invisible or in other words as visions of virgin wax, because the great god said that he would be worshiped with these things. And, the Christian, that to attend an arte magica, and to le strage sacrificar off all monsangue umano, socciov, fanno una statu di cera urgener, suscignj d'incensi, & altri odds, che l'umano udio ne volle esser adonato lii." cellini (as in n. 21), 520.
75. See Michael Camille, The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-Making in Medi-
76. The point is made explicitly by Cardano, Offenbarung der Natur und Natürlichen Dingen... trans. Hufrlicher Fröhlich von Plawen (Basel: Sæbas-
tians Henrikpus, 1991), 629: "Trismegistus, however, explains why pictures were originally conceived—namely, that [their creators], through these pictures, understood that Devils existed, and thus converted to the worship of God. Then they realized that they had something before which their works honored, even though this thing was invisible. Devils, however, for this reason like to enter into human bodies, for just as a person, through looking at divine things, becomes a vessel for the Gods, so, through evil and useless thoughts, which derive either from evil deeds or from melancholy, does the body become a vessel or home for Devils [Es sagt aber Trismegistus warum die Bildts imen seylich zu erstanden, namlich dass sie durch dieselben vorsten das Teuschent, und also sich zu dienent, der feur unand die Pocrans fast ohne von ihnen ad in der bezt der imal zu bemerkensber art zu haben, welche vorhanden unserer Werken acht hette, wien das unsichtbarer ware. The Teufel aber fahrend darum gien in die Menschlichen börden, dann gleich wie der Mensch aum Göttlicher betrachtung ein behausung der Göterin wird, also werden durch diese unsichtbarer, or die samt ist in demen beran, und den die Melan-
cholike herkommen, die ein behausung unand wohnung der Teufeln]."
77. On the image as a vehicle for evil spirits, see Camille (as in n. 85), 58. For his depiction of demons, Jacob Isaacas van Swansenburg was called before the Inquisition; see Ernst van de Wetting et al., eds., The Mystery of the Young Rembrandt (Wolfraatshausen: Minerva, 2001), art. no. 1.
78. See Camille (as in n. 85), 58—72, as well as Clark, 172.
79. Concern about such pompliny is palpable in Oussou's theological hair-
splitting (as in n. 14), 8v: "Sanat can (through God's will) take on bodies and appear within them—he does not, however, bring such bodies to life, for he is not joined and unified with that body (as the soul is with the body); rather, he stands with that body in the manner of a mover of mobile things. Therefore, he does not truly make the vital operations and living effects in them, but does so only apparently, and seemingly. [Zum andern, kan der Satan (durch Verherrlungs Gottes) an sich nehmen die Körper, und in denselben erscheinen: Aber dann macht er solche Kör per als Lebendig, dann er wird mit jenem nit (wie die See dem Leb) umbriert und versiegelt, sondern allan stehet er jenem bie, sichs muter mobiles. Und dessenwegen macht er in jenitnit warichfuglich die operationes vitales oder berndliche Werckungen, sondern allan apperrent und zum schein]."
80. See Orfeo Boselli, Diversezione della scultura antica, ed. Phoebe Dent Well (Florence: SPES, 1978), fol. 39v: "The figure's attitude, in order to be good, ought—beyond being appropriate to the action, as has been said—to be spirited, rather than cold, but with care that it not be possessed [1.1o per esser beno; ma con motivo e si diletto, che essen nitato freddo: ma con reguardo che non sia spiritato]." Giovanni Andrea Gilio da Fab-
\n\nriano, De gli errori, e de gli abusi de' pittores circa l'istorie: Con molle annotatio fatte sopra qui in Giadagione di Michelagnolu, & altre figure (Camerino: Antonio Gioioso, 1562), 76v: "Onde mi pare che a un opera, a qualsche opera, il primo intento è di torcere è le figure il capo, le braccia, o le gambe. accio si dica che sono fiorate, e quei sforzi a le volte sono...

91. Weyer, 30 (1.12): “Gleichcr gestalt vermag er auch auf alle bewelligung dess nechsten, die Nerven und Musculos zerstossen, auch offererzals den Leib dess Menschen so gar erstarrat machen, dass Genick nicht mehr wie vor, auff beyde seiten wenden mag, und sic ein scheit Holtz regt. Bald zeichet er einem die Adern, welche umb den Hals her seyn, so gar seltsam unnd wunderbarlich zusammen, dass Kopff, Genick, und der garzthe Leib mit einander vor sich hangen muss. Zuweilen richtet er gar das wiederspiel an, dass Kopff zu nuck abwert wol ersan bis auff die Schultern sich hiegen muss, die Schinbein aber hindersich, ubwerz sich kreimen unnd kehren. Unnd wer kan die wunderbarlichen selzamn verstellungen der Glieder am Leib alle erzehлен oder aussedencken.”

92. See Plato, Mensa i-ii. and Euthyphro i-ii.

93. Francesco de’ Vieri, Discoro . . . delle maraviglie opere di Protazio et d’Amour (Florence: Giorgio Maresco, 1586); “Platone similmente verso la fine del Menonese fa memoria di queste mobili statu di Dedalo, et dice, che si come queste non istanno ferme, se non si legono con le funi.”


95. Ibid., 127r: “Demon quippe simulacrum arte impia colligitus ab homine factus est deus.”


97. Ossuna (as in n. 14), 48v–49v.

98. See Weyer, 280, chap. 21 of bk. 4, which is entitled “Von mancherlei Ligaturen, das ist, zauberischen verknoten, binden verstricken: Iem von vielerlei zufellet der Besessenen.”

99. Menghi, 13: “alcuna volta con certe cosetta superflue, & di minor valore facilmente si fanno mancipij, servii de’ Maghi. & Incantatori, & alcuna volta gli contrigono, o nelle unghie, o nella cera, o nel piombo, ouero con un debile filo si legano.”


101. Agrippa, 159.

102. Agrippa’s discussion of binding, like his discussion of air, may depend on his reading of Cicero. See Gualino, 88.


104. On love’s binds, see the discussion in Gualino, 87–89 and passim; and in Dempsey, 73–86. On the artist enamored with his works, cf. Pfisterer (as in n. 19).


106. Recent writers on ancient binding spells have stressed how desire and impotence could be powerful motivations for magic; see, for example, the important discussion of transference in John J. Winkler, The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece (New York: Routledge, 1990), 87–91. The approach offers a helpful model for thinking about the role of magic in a lyric sonnet, where the position of the author is typically that of the captivated, sometimes powerless, victim.