

**THE INWARD WORK: THE POLITICS OF DEVOTIONAL RHETORIC
IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND**

By

GARY KUCHAR, B.A., M.A.

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THE INWARD WORK

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the forms of cultural labour performed by devotional rhetoric in the writings of Robert Southwell, Richard Crashaw, John Donne, and Thomas Traherne. The general hypothesis here is that devotional forms of expression provided seventeenth-century individuals with much more than a means of expressing praise; they offered an imaginative space in which to articulate and mitigate the psychological effects of the de-animation of the sacramental cosmos. More specifically, the dissertation explores how these four writers record and seek to negotiate processes of de-sacramentalization (the separating of divine from mundane orders) by internalizing such processes, by registering them, that is, as an experience that occurs within the self. This staging of political and theological conflict as a division within the self provides devotional writers with a certain symbolic leverage. By situating external forms of conflict as inwardly experienced dramas, seventeenth-century devotional writers presume that the process of individual self-transformation or *metanoia*, which is the general aim of religious discipline in both Reformation and Counter-Reformation traditions, is also the means for achieving social harmony. In this thesis, I am primarily concerned with how devotional writers use particular rhetorical strategies in an effort to fashion an ideal religious subject, a subject that confronts social and cosmological disorder through acts of devotion and self-discipline. At bottom, then, this thesis examines how the rhetoric of subjection functions in early modern devotional contexts as a means of articulating and mitigating the psychological effects of social and theological crises.

In order to address the forms of cultural work at stake in Counter-Reformational and Anglican acts of praise, particularly the forms of self-transformation towards which devotional practices aim, I situate early modern texts alongside contemporary psychoanalysis. The primary

goal of this juxtaposition is to illuminate the way that early modern devotional writers seek to transform readers in and through verbal acts of praise. Cognizant of the potential for anachronism in such an approach, I place devotional writers and psychoanalytic theory in dialogue with one another, rather than applying psychoanalysis to early modern works as such. In particular, I examine how both devotional discourses and psychoanalytic theory are concerned with understanding and transforming processes of subjection.

Through a series of historically and theoretically informed close readings, this thesis addresses the question of why devotion matters both culturally and psychologically. What is at stake in seventeenth-century Anglican and Catholic forms of devotional writing is nothing less than the most intimate dimensions of sacramental life. What is at stake, in other words, is *how* individuals articulate and experience themselves as images of God. By examining the way that devotional writers structure the experience of subjection to God, the way they give divine subjection concrete form through fantasy, we will better understand the psychic life of power at a moment in Reformation history when traditional forms of devotional and liturgical expression began to lose their authority.

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Introduction: Devotion, Rhetoric and the Politics of Divine Subjection

*Take me to you, imprison me, for I
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free*
-- John Donne

*Now this is quite a familiar and banal
discourse, but at the same time quite
a surprising one*
-- Louis Althusser

When Thomas Traherne writes in *Thanksgivings for a Nation*, a devotional poem first published in 1699, that “My Bowels torn by those Wars, / My Bosom the Stage of those Calamities” he situates England’s civil strife as a state of conflict within the self. By situating religio-political conflict as an inward division that unsettles not only the body-politic but also the interiority of his own body, Traherne articulates a common seventeenth-century variation of the Christian *psychomachia* – the war within the soul between God and the Devil. Traherne’s articulation of civil and religious turmoil as a division within the physiological and spiritual aspects of his being exemplifies the main focus of this thesis: the politicized nature of the ostensibly apolitical world of early modern English devotional writing. Devotional forms of expression provided seventeenth-century individuals with much more than a means of expressing praise; they offered an imaginative space in which to negotiate the forms of political and personal suffering that arise from social antagonisms. Indeed, the crossing of political themes with devotional forms constitutes one of the most culturally significant, but as of yet understudied, aspects of how early modern religious writers articulated and sought to resolve both the psychological and social conflicts arising from processes of de-sacramentalization, the separating of divine from mundane orders. Given the

inseparability of political and religious thought in seventeenth century England, it is not by accident that early modern devotional writers address social conflict within the sphere of private devotion, nor is it particularly surprising that acts of devotion occasion reflections on the political implications of praise.

As Traherne's comment implies, the political dimensions of praise arise from and are structured by the analogical character of early modern conceptions of self. The internalization of socio-religious conflict within devotional modes, in other words, is occasioned by the analogical structure of early modern sacramental thinking, the belief, that is, that the self is an image of the body-politic, the structure of the cosmos and ultimately of God himself. This view of the self extends from the sacramental principle, exemplified by Sir Thomas Browne, that the "Finger of God hath left an Inscription upon all His works, not graphical or composed of Letters, but of their several forms, constitutions, parts, and operations, which, aptly joined together, do make one word that doth express their natures" (*Religio Medici* 68).¹ When properly interpreted in all their complexity, the interlocking elements of the cosmos disclose the word of God, the one thing from which all things emanate. At the center of this sacramental vision of nature as a divine text is man, who holds, at least potentially, all within himself. As John Donne puts it, "our thoughts reach from east to west, from earth to heaven; they do not only bestride all the sea and land, but span the sun and firmament at once; my thoughts reach all, comprehend all" (*Devotions* 23). From this perspective, a crisis in the coherence of the world is at once a crisis within the integrity of the self, just as a crisis in the sacramental structure of the cosmos is at once a crisis in the order of the soul. The four

writers examined in this thesis deploy these interlocking structures in an effort to inscribe within language sacramental conceptions of self at moments of historical crisis, at moments, that is, when the political and metaphysical² foundations of sacramental modes of thinking begin to lose their authority.

In an attempt to explain the metaphysical stakes, the psychological complexity and the social significance – all of which are inextricably interrelated -- of Anglican and Catholic devotional writing, this thesis examines how seventeenth-century writers situate socio-religious conflict within the self as a means of symbolically mitigating it. Taking devotional writing to mean texts that consist of a verbal intercourse (or what Ignatius calls *discurso*) between the soul and God, or texts that theorize the nature of the properly devout soul, I argue that sustained reflection on the internalization of external conflict will occasion a deeper understanding of the forms of cultural work performed by seventeenth-century devotional writing.³ In this respect, I am in agreement with John N. Wall's assertion that we "must seek a social function for [religious] poetry, one in which its goals are understood not in terms of imagining doctrines poetically or in reproducing understandings already arrived at in other words, but in changing things" (6). In order to take account of devotional writing as a series of "life-strategies," as ways of negotiating psychological and social conflict, I examine not only poetic works, but prose works, devotional treatises, and even political pamphlets; for each of these genres participates in the coding of devotion as a social and psychological praxis. In the context of devotional writing, the desire to change "things" to which Wall refers is ultimately achieved by changing the self. Indeed, to act upon the self is, by analogy, to act upon the world. What

is particularly important in the readings that follow is how devotional writers engage in the politics of sublation, the process of recognizing the spiritual in the physical, the eternal in the temporal, the general in the singular, for it is precisely through this process that the self, and in turn the body-politic, undergoes a transformation of being from a state of dividedness to a state of union in and through God.

In large part, this thesis is occasioned by the fact that the socio-cultural significance of devotional writing remains largely unthought. As Ronald Corthell recently asserted, although Barbara Lewalski's theory of a "protestant poetics" seems to have carried the day, the broader question of the cultural work of devotion, and specifically poetic devotion, has not been fully discussed" (*Ideology* 150). The specific forms of cultural labor that are at stake in devotional writing are perhaps best defined in the context of what Traherne, in his poem "Silence," calls "the inward work": "A quiet silent person may possess / All that is great or high in blessedness. / The inward work is the supreme: for all / The other were occasion'd by the Fall. / A man, that seemeth idle to the view / Of others, may the greatest business do" (1-6). For Traherne and the Anglican tradition of devotion in which he writes, the phrase "inward work" names the processes by which the self orders its desires, affections, and faculties in order to come to know itself as an image of God. The "inward work," that is, refers to the processes that give meaning and shape to the self within a sacramental cosmos, allowing the self to conform its faculties of memory, will and understanding to the ideal pattern set forth by the holy trinity. By doing so, "We are not divided from, but united to him, in all his Appearances, Thoughts, Counsels, Operations; we adorn our souls with the Beauty of all objects whatsoever, are

transformed into the Image of God” (Traherne, *Christian Ethics*, 52). The sacramental self is thus understood as “a seeming Intervall between Time and Eternity, the Golden link or Tie of the World, yea the Hymenaeus Marrying the Creator and his Creatures together” (Traherne, *Centuries IV*, 74). An act of devotion means literally to “vow entirely” (*de-entirely, vovere, vow*); it is a promise that binds the self to God, whose image one is.⁴ This thesis examines some of the various forms this promising takes and the stakes inherent in the performance of such a verbal act.

As socially innocuous as it may first appear, Traherne’s phrase, “the inward work,” names the same processes that Stanley Fish addresses with the phrase the “politics of being.” According to Fish, a politics of being “begins not with the desire for a certain outcome – although the desire for a certain outcome may be its local vehicle – but with a desire always to be in tune with Heaven” (*How Milton Works*, 322).⁵ Rather than obscuring the specific political and intellectual contexts that structure this “politics of being,” as Fish’s work tends to do, I focus attention on the way that the cultural and linguistic grammar which grounds the sacramental, analogical view of the self is in the seventeenth century in the process of being displaced by changes in cosmological, theological, economic, and ecclesiastical structures. Under the pressures of history, the music of the spheres is losing its harmony. In turn, individual subjects experience themselves as being “out of tune.” The devotional writers in this thesis are responding to this loss, a loss that depletes the conditions which make devotional desire meaningful, but which thereby exacerbates, all the more, the desire for God’s presence. As Michel de Certeau puts it in the context of early modern mystical writing, “sixteenth- and

seventeenth-century mysticism proliferated about a loss. It is the historical figure of that loss, making readable an absence that multiplied the productions of [religious] desire” (13 Translation modified). For de Certeau, early modern mysticism constitutes a “quest for a common speech after its breakdown” (157). The authority of religious forms of expression, that is to say, are under question and are being reconfigured in order to meet the changing demands of a post-Reformation world. The devotional writers studied in this thesis, no less than the mystics examined in de Certeau’s *The Mystic Fable*, pursue “a new manner of speaking” – a way of re-formulating sacramental conceptions of identity through a re-making of the dialogue between the *conversar* and God. Writing amidst such unprecedented change, sacramentally invested seventeenth-century writers seek to reform (or counter-reform) the grammar of the sacramental self, imagining new possibilities of how such a view of the self might be articulated. Thus when I speak of “spiritual labor” or “inward work” I am not speaking of all things non-political, but rather I am referring to processes of subject-formation, to a “politics of being” that occurs in and through changes in devotional expression. I am speaking, that is, of the modes of subjection, identification, imitation and incorporation that constitute how one comes to know oneself as an object of God’s desire, processes that, as we shall see, are anything but apolitical. This thesis addresses the question of how devotional writing represents and seeks to engender ideal religious subjects by representing such processes. More specifically, it tests the claim, so often heard in religious poems and treatises of the period, that early modern devotional literature aims to transform readers into ideal religious subjects in the face of, and indeed as a response to, religious and social disorder.

This coincidence between devotional practice and ideological conflict is articulated in the opening of Bishop Joseph Hall's treatise *The Devout Soul*. Writing amidst the civil conflicts of 1643, Hall suggests that devotional discipline is not only justified in times of social conflict, but is indeed a means of resolving it:

That in a time when we hear no noise but of Drums and Trumpets, and talk of nothing but Arms, and Sieges, and Battels, I should write of Devotion, may seem to some of you strange and unseasonable; to me, contrarily, it seems most fit and opportune; For when can it be more proper to direct our address to the throne of grace, then when we are in the very jaws of Death? or when should we go to seek the face of our God, rather then in the needfull time of trouble? (*Diverse Treatises* 466)

For Hall, "the tears of penitence, were more fit to quench the public flame, than blood" (466). Even more strongly, Hall sees the origins of civil conflict as an effect of improper or ineffective devotion: "That duty [of devotion], the neglect whereof is guilty of our calamity, must in the affectual performance of it, be the means of our recovery" (466). Like many of his contemporaries, Hall believed that the renewal of the soul would bring about a renewal of the nation. He thus contextualizes his treatise on devotion by not only asserting that "devotion is the life of Religion," but by asking: "How soon would it clear up above head, if we were but holily affected within?" (466).

While the "arms, sieges and battles" that occasion Hall's treatise are often waged as a conflict within the landscape of the soul, such disorder is also registered at cosmological levels throughout the seventeenth century. One particularly revealing instance in which social tension is registered as both an internal conflict within the self and as a decay of cosmological order occurs in the closing figure of Andrew Marvell's meditation on the nature of the contemplative life in the context of Civil War in "Upon Appleton House":

But now the salmon-fishers moist
 Their leathern boats begin to hoist;
 And, like Antipodes in shoes,
 Have shod their heads in their canoes.
 How tortoise-like, but not so slow,
 These rational amphibii go!
 Let's in: for the dark hemisphere
 Does now like one of them appear (769-776).

Putting an ironic last turn on the self-reflexive screw, the speaker's imperative "Let's in" repeats the image of cosmological disorder that it ostensibly resists as the speaker verbally mimics the gesture of withdrawal that he, at one and the same time, mocks: the sticking of heads in canoes. As such, the speaker inadvertently participates in the chaotic inversions from which he seeks to withdraw, thereby implicating himself in the very disorder that he diagnoses throughout the poem, a disorder now mirrored in the darkening hemisphere of the firmament itself.⁶ By doing so he renders the very gesture of "retreat" both an answer and a problem, a cure and an illness. To this extent, Marvell's poem implies that the gesture of "retreat" ("Let's in") has the structure of a *pharmakon*: it is both remedy and poison. Marvell's closing figure abstracts the way that the inward turning gestures of devotional practice constitute the very crisis that they, at one and the same time, seek to mitigate. Marvell's ambivalent call to the "inward work" of retreat is exemplary in the way that it discloses how devotional practices, and the forms of subjectivity that they imply, become increasingly stressed in the period. By shuffling from personal to cosmological, from historical to anagogic perspectives, Marvell's closing figure makes clear, as does Hall's religious treatise, that what is at stake in devotion is nothing less than the order of the soul, an order that is becoming increasingly difficult to perceive, let alone establish.

These inward turns, and the ambivalences registered therein, are occasioned by the various dislocations being perceived in the correspondences between divine and mundane orders.⁷ We see this inward turn occur in cultural phenomena as distinct as the re-emergence of Benedictine Orders, with their emphasis on the contemplative life, in Milton's protestant re-assertion of the "paradise within," and the proliferation of Augustinian, Bonaventurian, Ignatian and other methods of private devotional practices in both Protestant and Catholic camps.⁸ Thus while Marvell's inward turning call bespeaks a poetic response to the events resulting in Lord Fairfax's withdrawal from his military role in the Civil War, it is also emblematic of a broad shift in the religious and devotional life of early modern England; it encapsulates the transformation from the affective practices of late medieval devotion, which were generally focused on the concrete events of Christ's suffering on the Cross, to more abstracted yet more inwardly focused practices that aim at properly organizing the three faculties of the soul.⁹ While Louis L. Martz's work on meditative poetry and the broad range of scholarship it inspired has made this devotional and epistemological transformation familiar to students of the English Renaissance, scholars have not generally situated devotional writing within the ideological conflicts of the age. Thus rather than continuing the debate between Lewalski's conception of a distinctly protestant poetics and Martz's commitment to the continuity between English and Counter-Reformational poetic traditions, I address a different set of literary-historical questions. I examine how the devotional rhetoric of Robert Southwell, John Donne, Richard Crashaw, and Thomas Traherne establishes a wide range of representative possibilities for recording and mitigating the disjunction

between divine and mundane orders by situating this disjunction as an inward division within the self. It is precisely this focus on how devotional writing consists of a set of rhetorical strategies for constituting the self as a subject realized in and through religious modes of subjection which distinguishes this thesis from studies that focus on the specific literary, devotional, and theological traditions informing English devotional writing.¹⁰ Suffice it to point out, for instance, that Martz's *Paradise Within: Studies in Vaughan, Traherne, and Milton* examines the impact of Augustinian and Bonaventurian meditative traditions on seventeenth-century poetics without considering the fact that all three poets in his study write within the context of religious conflict and/or defeat. In my view, the re-emergence of meditative traditions is, in large part, symptomatic of social and ideological antagonisms, for the inward turning character of such meditative practices enabled writers to re-constitute within the self a sense of spiritual order that was often absent from the social sphere.¹¹

Needless to say, we must resist any temptation to see such inward turning gestures as solipsistic attempts at withdrawing from social engagement. Such modern assumptions are anachronistic to the extent that they overlook how seventeenth-century writers experienced and engaged social conflict as a conflict within the self: to heal the self's spiritual body is, at once, to participate in the healing of the body politic. The idea that the self mirrors both the body-politic and the cosmos is not an empty abstraction but is an integral structure of feeling organizing the inner experience of many early modern subjects. This is particularly, though not exclusively, true of ceremonialist Anglican and Catholic subjects who remained committed to a sacramental mode of thinking based on a

series of analogic correspondences between creation and the divine order of ideas.¹²

Stephen Greenblatt describes the dividing of these mundane and celestial orders in the context of the debates between the Catholic Sir Thomas More and the father of the English Bible William Tyndale, remarking that it

is as if the great crisis in the Church had forced into the consciousness of Catholics and Protestants alike the wrenching possibility that their theological system was a fictional construction; that the whole, vast edifice of church and state rested on certain imaginary postulates; that social hierarchy, the distribution of property, sexual and political order bore no guaranteed correspondence to the actual structure of the cosmos. (*Renaissance* 113)

Living amidst this de-sacramentalization of the Christian firmament, devotional writers such as Southwell, Crashaw, Donne, and Traherne record and attempt to mitigate this crisis. In particular, they symbolically negotiate the ideological and metaphysical pressures threatening the coherence of what Marshall Grossman calls Augustine's "iconic I" and the broad theological infrastructure from which it derives its meaning. As Grossman puts it, Augustine's Christian Ego "rescues itself from time by seeking and asserting its identity with the ideal that it contemplates and represents, holding the 'mirror up to nature' that it may show 'the very age and body of the time his form and pressure'" (*Story* 58, *Hamlet* 3.2.23-25). In practice, this gesture of recognizing one's true self as an image of an immutable Other is not merely mimetic but symbolic in the sense that Kenneth Burke gives the term. It is an action designed to change, or in the case of seventeenth-century sacramental writing to re-organize, the co-ordinates of socio-symbolic space. Early modern devotional writers, that is, act upon the contexts which occasion their production.¹³ Perhaps more in keeping with the analogical structures grounding the sacramental cosmology at stake in the texts at issue here, we might say that

devotional literature presents strategies for transforming the self as a way of mitigating broader processes of de-sacramentalization and religious marginalization. Such transformation occurs within and through changes in the rhetorical structures that inform the experience of devotion. Rhetoric, that is to say, is not merely a means of expressing a pre-existing set of religious feelings; particular rhetorical structures produce specific forms of desire, just as they organize the specific modes of subjection at work in devotional discourse. As we shall see, the structure of devotional experience, its *modus operandi*, is rhetorical through and through; its grammar is determined by figures such as apostrophe, complaint, hyperbole, chiasmus, and emblazon-- to name but the most prevalent.

Given this list of rhetorical terms it should be obvious that the primary verbal discourse at issue in devotional writing is epideictic rhetoric, more specifically the language of praise. The specific figures that devotional poets employ come to structure not only *how* they articulate desire for God, but they organize the very nature of that desire itself. Most importantly, they make possible the increasingly fragile hope that language can permit an immediate encounter with the divine. In other words, devotional poets who are committed to a Counter-Reformational or High Church view of the cosmos seek rhetorical forms that can give expression to the belief in ontological participation with God precisely at the moment when theories of language and literary practices more generally had become any thing but confident in the isomorphic power of human expression. The belief that the power of human language could express a sacramental continuity between words and Word had begun to wane considerably in the seventeenth-

century. This demise of an isomorphic view of language in the early modern period is concomitant with such events as the reformation resistance to theories of Eucharistic transubstantiation, changes in anatomical and cosmological structures, as well as the demise of the mystifying power of monarchy and Roman authority – to name but those most relevant to this thesis. The belief that inspired forms of language might permit a sense of sacramental participation is grounded in the assumption that nature is formed by a series of divine signs or letters. And by these letters, as Browne puts it, “God calls the Stars by their names; and by this Alphabet Adam assigned to every creature a name peculiar to its Nature. Now there are, besides these Characters in our Faces, certain mystical figures in our Hands, which I dare not call meer dashes, strokes *à la volée*, or at random, because delineated by a Pencil that never works in vain” (*Religio* 68). Southwell, Donne, Crashaw and Traherne diagnose and attempt to mitigate the pressures bearing upon this sacramental conception of nature and the implications it has for human language to imitate its divine origins. Indeed, the hope that one might come to a hieratic conception of things in and through the operations of an inspired form of human language is implicit within the rhetorical practices of these four writers. The discussions that follow pursue in close detail this quest after a sacramental language. More specifically, I am concerned with the capacity of sacramentally invested forms of written devotion to articulate and resolve the sense of self-division that is occasioned by both socio-religious conflict and disruptions in the coherence of the analogical cosmos. In this respect, the studies in this thesis are dialectical in the sense that they examine how specific instances of praise function as socio-symbolic acts, as interventions, as it were, into the larger

discourse of the “politics of being” at issue during particular moments in early modern England.

Metanoia: the turning of the subject

My focus on the intersection between the language of praise and the predication of religious identity is occasioned by a number of important studies, such as Joan Webber’s *The Eloquent “I,”* Anne Ferry’s *The Inward Language*, Stephen Greenblatt’s *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, Debora Shuger’s *Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance* and *The Renaissance Bible*, Linda Gregerson’s *The Reformation of the Subject* and more recently Ronald Corthell’s *Ideology and Desire in Renaissance Poetry* and Richard Rambuss’ *Closet Devotions*. Unlike these works however, my thesis looks more closely at the specific ways that Southwell, Donne, Crashaw and Traherne return, in an almost obsessive fashion, to the specific moment at which the self becomes aware of itself as a subject of God’s desire, to the moment when the subject, captured by the gaze of God, is transformed through the sheer force of the *mysterium tremendum*. Such moments not only situate socio-religious conflict within the self, they enact the precipitation or emergence of the self as a Christian being; they are, as it were, originary scenes. Jacques Derrida speaks to this process when he suggests that such “trembling seizes one at the moment of becoming a person, and the person can become what it is only in being paralyzed [*transie*], in its very singularity, by the gaze of God. Then it sees itself seen by the gaze of another, a supreme, absolute and inaccessible being who holds

us in his hand not by exterior but by interior force" (*Gift* 6). Examining some of the many versions of this moment in early modern devotional writing, I consider how the desacramentalization of the cosmos occasions a deepened fascination with how divine authority inscribes itself upon or "lodges" itself in the human soul, how it makes itself more intimate to one's own being than even oneself, for it is this fascination that allows us privileged access to the psychic life of power in the period. To put this more technically, I consider how devotional writing consistently returns to the scene of interpellation, to the moment when the subject is "hailed," to use Louis Althusser's term, by God.¹⁴ In its basic form, this "hailing" has the structure of a question, the answer to which is the grammatical position the subject will come to inhabit. As Michel de Certeau sees it, the subject is an answer in pursuit of what it is an answer to and the speaking that takes place in the process of response is called the soul (*Mystic* 189). Representations of the specific moment at which the subject becomes subject to the *mysterium tremendum* provide the symbolic space in which this quest for the fully realized soul is enacted.¹⁵

Rather than focusing, as Ronald Corthell and Richard Rambuss do, on the sorts of erotically subversive readings made available by the transgressive dimensions implicit within devotional conventions, I am interested in how these returns to the scene of interpellation perform a socially conservative, if individually transformative, function. I am concerned, that is, with how devotional representations of subjection both record and resist the historical pressures bearing upon the sacramental notion of the self as a reflection of God and all the ideological permutations therein. Each of my readings examines how specific uses of devotional forms constitute an intervention into a

particular moment of crisis, be it the crisis of the recusant subject in Elizabethan England, the challenge to doctrines of Real Presence in the Anglican Eucharist, or the loss of a sacramental/analogical view of the human body due to emerging discourses of anatomy. In each instance, socio-religious crises are situated in and engaged with through a recognition scene, the moment at which the self becomes subject to God. While these scenes are symptomatic of an increasing sense of religious and political instability, they also aim to be “therapeutic” in the most radical sense. They try to make possible, that is, a *renewal* of the self, a re-making of the subject which conforms to what the New Testament calls *metanoia*, the penitential transformation or re-birth of the subject in and through its recognition of itself in God.

While the AV translates *metanoia* as “repentance,” indicating a fundamental “turning” in one’s moral and spiritual life, and while the Vulgate uses the phrase *poenitentiam agere*, indicating an ongoing practice of penance, the concept carries with it, in both Protestant and Counter-Reformational traditions, more than merely moral connotations of acknowledging one’s sins.¹⁶ Northrop Frye makes this point in a manner that is reminiscent of Traherne when he defines *metanoia* “as a form of vision [that] reverses our usual conceptions of time and space,” revealing the “eternal now” that discloses these two categories of experience (*Great Code* 130). According to Frye, the change of outlook or spiritual metamorphosis that *metanoia* signifies “consists of detaching oneself from one’s primary community” and becoming attached to another more universal community (130). *Metanoia* thus demarcates what Slavoj Žižek calls in relation to Christ, “the uncoupling” of the subject from his or her immediate social circumstances as a means for

opening the subject to the absolute. By approaching the dimension of the absolute, the subject, according to Žižek, undergoes a violent re-birth, a radical turning towards the Other's desire. There is, as Žižek puts it "a terrifying *violence* at work in this 'uncoupling' that of the *death drive*, the radical 'wiping the slate clear' as the condition of the New Beginning" (*Fragile* 127). Unlike Frye, who emphasizes the utopian dissolution of social antagonism that is operative within Christian eschatology,¹⁷ Žižek emphasizes the violent, traumatic character involved in this "remaking" of the self – the way it is both remedy and poison. It is precisely this threat of "coming undone" that haunts the seventeenth-century sacramental imagination as it attempts to re-structure, but nonetheless sustain, the relations between the contingent and the absolute, time and eternity. Moreover, in Žižek's account of *metanoia*, the identification of the self with the "absolute" does not, as it appears to for Frye, involve an escape into a "universe in which all concrete social differences magically disappear" (Žižek, *Fragile* 127), but rather it demarcates the "*work* of love – the hard and arduous work of repeated 'uncoupling' in which, again and again, we have to disengage ourselves from the inertia that constrains us to identify with the particular order we were born into" (129 italics in original).

Southwell, Crashaw, Donne and Traherne all oscillate between Žižek's and Frye's respective readings of *metanoia*. While they, like Žižek, acknowledge the violent and traumatic nature of relinquishing their narcissistic attachments – their investment in themselves as socio-temporal creatures -- the process of doing so is, as with Frye, concomitant with the symbolic resolution of social antagonisms: the postulating of a universe in which all concrete social differences magically disappear. The gesture of

imagining such a resolution always occurs in these texts from a particular theological and political standpoint and as such is ideological in the most basic sense. Often the process of being “made anew,” (whether it takes place, as in Anglican versions of Calvinism, in one brilliant moment or, as in Catholicism, over a long arduous process) occurs through a deepened identification with a religio-political authority that is mystified as divinely sanctioned. Such identifications disclose the extent to which the re-making of the subject-without-antagonism is analogous for Anglican and Catholic writers with the re-making of an ideally ordered social body. It is this mode of thinking that underlies Joseph Hall’s imperative declaration in his treatise on the *Devout Soul*: “Brethren, all ye that Love God, and his Church, and his Truth, and his Anointed, and your Country, and your selves, and yours, join your forces with mine and let us by a holy violence make way to the gates of Heaven with our petition for mercy and peace” (466). The scene of this “holy violence” is the soul itself: the battle an interior dialogue between those elements that conform to the divine will and those that do not.

For Hall and presumably every other devotional writer steeped in the medieval tradition of *imitatio Christi*, Christ provides the model of supplicatory devotion. Taking Christ as their ideal prototype, the writers studied in this thesis articulate the process of *metanoia* through a rhetoric that is characterized by what Paul Riceour calls the Gospels’ “logic of excess.” Riceour addresses the scriptural origins of this rhetoric of excess when he argues that St. Paul’s rhetorical procedure in Romans 5:9, 10, 15 and 17 constitutes the theoretical articulation of the principles underlying Christ’s parables, particularly the sermon on the mount which, along with the Psalms, is of particular importance for

renaissance devotional literature. Riceour insists that St. Paul's repetition of the phrase "how much more" in relation to Christ's sacrifice theorizes the principle underlying Christ's parabolic strategies, especially the Sermon on the Mount. Christ's parables invite, Riceour argues, an "excess of response in relation to the response which is normally expected"--"if anyone forces you to go one mile [. . .] go with him two miles"--"if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* cloke also" (Mt 5:39-42). "Yes, each response *gives more* than that asked by ordinary prudence" ("Logic" 39). The point here, as Žižek asserts in a similar scriptural context, "is not stupid masochism, humble acceptance of one's humiliation, but simply to *interrupt the circular logic of re-establishing balance*" (*Fragile* 125). The point of such logical excess, in other words, is to break out of a relationship to the other that is premised upon the law of equivalent exchange of the "eye for an eye" variety, a law that is premised upon a defensive rather than generous (even "illogical") relation to the other. By disrupting the balance of this equivalence the subject opens up the possibility of allowing for a radical change to occur, a change that is premised upon a break from logical or conventional expectations. As Riceour puts it, this rhetoric of excess aims at disorientation as a means for reorientation. Through a disorientation of the ego's defensive mechanisms and its tendency to pursue comfort and worldly pleasure one is reoriented to "new possibilities" to a discovery of "another way of seeing" ("Logic" 39). Each chapter in this thesis is a study in this logic of excess, of a reaching beyond the self -- and at times a striking at oneself -- in order to become violently uncoupled from narcissistic attachments so as to be made "anew" by the "how much more" that is God.

As Joseph Hall describes it, “the fire of heavenly love in the devout soul is, and must be *heightened more and more* by the addition of the holy incentives of divine thoughts concerning the means of our freedom and deliverance” (476, my emphasis). George Herbert makes the same point in *Praise* (III) when he asserts that if his heart should cease praising due to a “want of store, / Then will I wring it with a sigh or groan, / That thou mayst yet have more” (4-6). In the works that follow, this excessive logic is generally marshaled for the sake of re-organizing or restoring rather than overturning social balance. As such, the process of “uncoupling” does not simply occasion a “disorienting” withdrawal from social conflict, but rather it presents the necessary gesture for re-making or re-orienting the self as the precondition for reforming social bonds and re-asserting the balance that the gesture of excess momentarily unsettles. The view of Donne as a “conservative revolutionary” accurately captures how he and the other three writers in this thesis carry out this renewal; for while each of them remains committed to a waning cosmology, they are also willing to engage the revolutionary process of *metanoia*, the violent detaching or remaking of the self within and against hostile social or cosmological circumstances as a means for sustaining the authority of the analogical cosmos.

History, Devotion and Psychoanalysis

My discussion of how Southwell, Crashaw, Donne and Traherne sustain this analogical vision of the self within epideictic modes is designed to broaden the analysis

of the more secular “poetic-subject” in Joel Fineman’s *Shakespeare’s Perjured-Eye* and the recasting of that subject in Marshall Grossman’s *The Story of All Things*. In his far reaching work on Shakespeare’s sonnets, Fineman demonstrates how Shakespeare substitutes a duplicitously verbal, self-consciously ironic poetic subject for the ideally self-present, or “iconic I” of the early Renaissance sonnet tradition. While Fineman suggests this iconic I is visible in the Petrarchan sonnet tradition, it appears more clearly in Neoplatonized devotional writing, particularly in its most explicitly mystical forms. As Linda Gregerson has observed, Fineman’s assessment of Petrarchan writing coarsens “beyond recognition the structure of Petrarchan desire and the subjectivity that was always, *throughout* the Petrarchan tradition, predicated upon absence” (127). Although Fineman overstates his case in the context of Petrarchan verse, he nonetheless captures a highly conventional strain of Neoplatonized thinking that structures, at its most basic conceptual level, much Anglican and Catholic devotional writing. The iconic subject that Fineman addresses is characterized, in its most pristine form, as being ideally self-present to itself. Such a subject is an image of God insofar as it is characterized as seeing the place from which it sees. As Meister Eckhart puts it, “the eye by which I see God is the same eye by which God sees me, my eye and God’s eye are one and the same” (206). In poetic rather than mystical discourses this economy of being is configured, as Grossman and Fineman have demonstrated, through a lexicon in which being is equivalent to seeing. Within this metaphysical structure, the poet, to quote Tasso, “is a maker of images in the fashion of a speaking painter, and in that is like the divine theologian who forms images and commands them to be” (*Discourses* in Grossman 31). The

displacement that Fineman traces, from a self-coherent I/eye that is grounded in a spatialized logic of identity to a de-centered subject that is based on a temporalized rhetoric of difference, creates the phenomenology of “withinness,” of psychological depth that would become characteristic of novelistic writing and modernism more generally. At stake in this transformation from an iconic subject that rescues itself from time to a subject wholly de-limited by temporality is nothing less than the most intimate aspects of the sacramental cosmos, the lived-experience, as it were, of an animate world in which creation is God’s Book. In this thesis, I linger over various incarnations and deformations of the “iconic subject” as it occurs in devotional contexts. In particular, I focus on the complex forms of cultural work that it makes possible at the very moment of its literary-historical demise.

My analysis of how devotional writers both record and resist a change in the experience of self from an iconic to an historical subject, from a metaphysically to a psychologically experienced self, is further occasioned by Grossman’s re-thinking of Fineman’s account of the shift towards a poetic subject that is characterized by its difference from itself. Grossman broadens Fineman’s thesis by examining how narrative modes of expression become the means by which early modern writers accommodate the dissolution of Neoplatonic forms of self-predication. Through rigorous dialectical analysis, Grossman examines the “formal decay of epideictic *vision* in favor of a sharpened focus on an ideology of narrative *bildung* that emerges as a response to that decay. In this displacement, the epideictic ideal of *ut pictura poesis* yields to a series of scenes giving the appearance of motion: still life gives way to montage” (59). While

Fineman examines the secular epideictic modes of the sonnets and while Grossman examines the way that Renaissance narrative modes accommodate, rather than simply reflect, the de-centering of self that Fineman locates in Elizabethan sonnets, I focus on the forms of cultural work made possible by the iconic I at the very moment that the form itself is being de-figured by the de-animating pressures of both material and literary history. While I follow Fineman and Grossman in pursuing the Renaissance predication of self in relation to Lacanian psychoanalysis for reasons I explain below, my focus on the theme of *metanoia* and its relation to processes of subjection necessitates a closer focus on the transformative aspects of psychoanalytic theory than either Fineman or Grossman engage.

Grossman more or less disavows the importance of the transformative aspects of psychoanalysis for literary criticism remarking that “Lacan is more pertinent than the clinical pragmatics of [Heinz] Kohut” to literary critics partly because “neither history nor literary history need aspire to be therapeutic” (299). I concur with Grossman on the point that Lacan’s account of the subject, with its dialectical view of the relationship between language and the material conditions of existence, enables a mode of generic analysis that is beyond the reach of self-psychology. By conceiving of language and human desire in dialectical terms, as a confrontation between the limits of representation and the material conditions within and against which such representations occur, Lacan is of use for articulating how particular texts name and seek to mitigate instances of de-sublimation – those socially traumatic moments when conventions of representation no longer effectively articulate constitutive aspects of human experience, be it love, death,

desire, labor, embodiment etc. Such moments of de-sublimation might be conceptualized as those points when a particular genre is no longer operative within wholly conventional terms, when its conventions become simply too conventional. Such moments often occasion some form of dialectical negation or transformation of generic conventions in order to re-accommodate the dimension of human experience that is made inaccessible by changes in the conditions of lived-experience. Shakespeare's transformation of the Elizabethan sonnet, as Fineman describes it, is a case in point. I differ from Grossman, however, insofar as he is concerned with psychoanalysis solely as a descriptive discourse. Both Grossman and Fineman set aside the question of how psychoanalysis is, like Marxism, designed to change, rather than merely describe, its object of study. Yet, it is precisely this focus on altering the way that the self experiences its own desires and the way the self is structured by its identifications with *ideal images* -- parental, specular, etc. -- that makes psychoanalysis pertinent to the forms of cultural work carried out in devotional writing, just as it makes devotional writing relevant to a cultural history of psychoanalysis itself. What psychoanalysis describes is not merely differing modes of self-narration but strategies and mechanisms of transformation. Devotional writing is, in this respect, very much like psychoanalysis: it not only diagnoses the devotee's incapacity to desire (God), but it provides strategies for enabling him/her to desire and experience the divine, to overcome, that is, a sense of alienation from the object of a devotee's desire. As Žižek summarizes it, "the lesson of both psychoanalysis and the Judeo-Christian tradition [is that] the specific human vocation does not rely on the development of man's inherent potentials (on the

awakening of the dormant spiritual forces); it is triggered by an external traumatic encounter, by the encounter of the Other's desire" (*On Belief* 47). Devotional rhetoric, no less than the language of psychoanalysis, articulates and seeks to alter the constitutive effects of this encounter.

Douglas Trevor speaks to the coincidence of devotional and psychoanalytic thought when he situates George Herbert's view of repentance alongside Lacanian analysis, arguing that when "Lacan describes the episodes of resistance and transference that mark the scene of analysis he echoes confessional lyricists like Herbert, in part because the retrospective idealization of inner conflict holds the same place in the devotional practices of early modern Protestants as it does in psychoanalysis; in both cases, dramatic revelation must precede any acquisition of happiness" (237). While I wholly agree with Trevor that "early modern confessional lyricists offer a way of historicizing and explicating fundamental concepts and concerns of Lacanian psychoanalysis" (230), particularly insofar as psychoanalysis conceives of the mechanisms of ego-formation in rhetorical terms,¹⁸ Lacan's account of the interminable nature of desire and the excessive structure of human subjectivity, the way the subject is always eccentric to itself, is self-consciously situated in the context of Baroque art.¹⁹ Indeed, Lacan's relevance to devotional literature becomes explicitly apparent, in an a chapter titled "On the Baroque," when he rebukes early psychoanalytic reductions of mysticism to base forms of sublimation, remarking in the context of Bernini's sculpture of St. Theresa:

What was attempted at the end of the last century, in Freud's time, what all sorts of decent souls around Charcot and others were trying to do, was to reduce mysticism to questions of cum (*affaires de foutre*). If you look closely, that's not it at all. Doesn't this jouissance one experiences and yet knows nothing about put us on the

path of ex-sistence? And why not interpret one face of the Other, the God face, as based on feminine jouissance? (*On Feminine Sexuality* 77)

Lacan here suggests that intense religious experiences of the sort represented by St. Theresa are not transcendent encounters as such, but rather they record how the subject re-lives its own advent as a subject; it involves the process of being put on the path of the signifier, of becoming subject to the institution of language. Lacan adopts Heidegger's neologism "ex-sistence" in order to express the process of becoming a subject, because it signifies the idea that subjectivity is characterized by, indeed is grounded in, a process of "standing outside oneself." Ex-sistence, the root meaning of which is to "stand outside,"²⁰ is conditioned by a mode of intimacy with an outside that is not exterior to oneself nor is it, properly speaking, interior but rather it is, what Lacan calls, "ex-timate"; it is so close to oneself that it is not immediately perceptible as such. Lacan is not the first to have addressed this strange logic. Augustine addresses a certain version of this logic, albeit one that is in the service of a view of immanence that is quite alien to Lacan, when he describes how God "wert more inward to me, than my most inward part" (*Confessions*, 44). Access to being, for both Lacan and Augustine, lies in a relationship with an interiority that is, also, an exteriority. Being is configured, here, in the form of an inwardness unlike any other form of interiority. What is most oneself, in other words, is other than oneself. St. Theresa's vision, like the concept of metanoia, is nothing if not the re-constitution of the attitude one takes towards the ex-timate nature of existence, towards the traumatic encounter with an Other that is more oneself than oneself.

What distinguishes metanoia from psychosis, religious ecstasy from sheer madness, is that the attitude which one assumes as a result of an encounter with the Other's desire involves a relinquishing, rather than a hardening, of narcissistic defenses. This mode of being conforms, in some rather unexpected ways, to the production of subjectivities in Counter-Reformational and Laudian writing, particularly, as we shall see, in the work of Southwell and Crashaw. For Lacan this so-called "non-phallic" subject position tends towards dialogism rather than narcissism; it is characterized by a capacity for the traumatic excesses of *jouissance*, a psychologically unsettling mode of enjoyment that threatens the stability of the ego but which, by unsettling it, makes radical change possible. It is the excessive position that is co-relative with (indeed is the occasion for the invention of) the "how much more" that is God. This excessive position in which one opens up rather than defends against one's lack is, as Lacan puts it, "the God face." It is a subject position that Jesuits like Southwell know more intimately and speak of just as eloquently as do twentieth-century French psychoanalysts.

To approach this issue another way, the distinction between desire and *jouissance* is the distinction between a finite mode of longing that defends against the lack from which it originates and an infinite (traumatic) "enjoyment" that brings one into a full recognition of the lack that is before and beyond the subject. Desire, then, is circular because it conceals the source of desire itself, while *jouissance* opens the subject to the intensity of a lack at the heart of ex-sistence itself. Desire is thus finite or enclosed, structured, as it is, by the limits inherent within a symbolic formation, while *jouissance* remains unbounded insofar as it is eccentric to all symbolic formations. Robert

Southwell makes a similar distinction in his poem “Of the Blessed Sacrament” when he criticizes narcissistically motivated desire on the basis that it fails to aspire to the infinite capacity of the soul: “Selfelove [. . .] cannot crave more then it fyndes, / Ambition to noe higher worth aspire, / The eagrest famyn of most hungry myndes / May fill, yea farre exceede their owne desire” (“Sacrament” 25-28). Desire for God, on the other hand, is inexhaustible because it originates “before” and “beyond” the subject. Traherne implies this same notion of a lack that is both before and beyond the subject when he writes of how, “things unkown have a secret influence on the soul: and like the centre of the earth unseen, violently attract it. There are invisible ways of conveyance, by which some great thing doth touch our souls, and by which we tend to it. Do you not feel yourself drawn with the expectation and desire of some great thing?” (*Centuries*, I.2). For Southwell and Traherne the distinction between an infinite and a finite mode of desire is a function of the object to which desire is aimed. For Lacan, on the other hand, it is an existential matter of *how* one comports oneself towards the trauma of encountering the Other’s desire and the absolute lack such an encounter discloses. What Lacan shares with these two early moderns, however, is the recognition that the desire of the Other/God is traumatic rather than pacifying in nature, overwhelming rather than comforting. This distinction between infinite and finite modes of desire informs the devotional texts in this thesis just as it informs contemporary debates regarding the role of desire in the constitution of the subject. What needs to be emphasized here is that the ideal subject postulated in each of the four chapters in this thesis is characterized by an infinite capacity for desire, by a willingness to be “broken” and “made anew” by God. Each of

the writers studied here articulates a different version of the “God face”; they offer, that is, varying forms of the subject of excess, each of which is a response to a determinate historical crisis. Moreover, each writer meditates upon the economies of subjection and desire implicit within such a view of the subject, economies that are, as I have suggested, fundamentally rhetorical in structure. In the devotional space, no less than in the psychoanalytic session, one encounters oneself as other and in this linguistic encounter one either recoils into oneself or one opens up towards the “excess” that is the “other within.” The revelation that God “is more inward to me than my most inward part” is as terrifying as it is renewing. It is because Lacan is aware that sophisticated forms of religious thought, particularly in their early modern incarnations, are often concerned with the precipitation of subjectivity and with articulating and transforming the subject’s capacity for desire/jouissance that he grants religious thinking an importance that Freud does not.²¹ I shall do the same.

According to Michel de Certeau, comparison of psychoanalysis and early modern writers like Ignatius and St. Theresa is authorized not by shared sources, but by “procedures common to both” (8). Although de Certeau lists five basic strategies that psychoanalysis and early modern mystical writing share, it is the last two that are of particular relevance to the devotional writers at issue here. First, both psychoanalysis and early modern mysticism suppose that “the body, far from being ruled by discourse, is itself a symbolic language and that it is the body that is responsible for a truth (of which it is unaware)” (8). This granting the body a signifying function in the constitution of the subject will become particularly important in our readings of Donne and Traherne

in the second half of this thesis. In these chapters, the body is the site of individual and cosmological disease in both physiological and existential senses. In an effort to sustain a sacramental experience of the body in the face of emerging anatomical discourses, Donne and Traherne imagine a new language of the body, one that reveals to the soul the hieratic power of the Word made flesh. In this respect, both Donne and Traherne re-imagine the precipitation of the Christian subject as an embodied being. As Donne puts it, “all that the soul does, it does in and with and by the body” (*Sermons* 4:358).

Secondly, both psychoanalysis and early modern mystical writing seek to articulate how representations embody “the traces of affects (intentions, desires, motives and drives)” and how such representations can be marshaled in order to transform the affective life of the subject (de Certeau 8). This shared emphasis on the meaning of affects, the objects to which they are directed, and the linguistic means by which desires are expressed determines our analysis, in the first half of this thesis, of how Robert Southwell and Richard Crashaw imagine the advent of the subject. In both these instances – the shared focus on the body as a signifying agent and on the structure of the subject’s identity as a function of its desire – what is at stake is the existential comportment of the devotee, the manner or mode in which she relates to God and thus to herself.²² What is at stake in devotion, in other words, is nothing less than the *being* of the subject, its sense of itself as a *relation* to Being. As with psychoanalysis, this relation is linguistic through and through. The soul of a man, as Donne puts it, “is incorporate in his words.”

Insofar as early modern devotional writing is an attempt to re-make the self’s experience of itself through language, it is concerned with re-articulating the

possibilities of desiring God. It is often designed, as Debora Shuger observes, to exacerbate and thereby inspire desire for Christ (*Bible*, 167). Richard Rambuss makes this same point when he cites Francis Rous' devotional imperative as representative of how seventeenth-century religious writers see devotion in terms of affect and desire: "If [Christ] come not yet into thee, *stirre up* thy spirituall concupiscence" (Rous in Rambuss 1). This view of devotion as an exercise in increasing one's affectual response to God has revealing parallels with the aims of psychoanalytic practice. Freud indirectly addresses the conceptual and historical analogs between Christian devotion and psychoanalytic thought when he speculates that the emergence of a Judeo-Christian culture out of Greek antiquity instituted a fundamental change in the structure of human desire:

The most striking distinction between the erotic life of antiquity and our own no doubt lies in the fact that the ancients laid the stress upon the instinct itself, whereas we emphasize its object. The ancients glorified the instinct and were prepared on its account to honour even an inferior object; while we despise the instinctual activity in itself, and find excuses for it only in the merits of the object. (*On Sexuality*, 61 ft. 1)

Freud here echoes, albeit with a focus on solely the erotic passions, Augustine's distinction between Christian and Roman disciplinary regimes: "in our discipline, the question is not *whether* the devout soul is angry, but why; not whether it is sad, but what causes its sadness; not whether it is afraid, but what is the object of its fear (*City of God*, Bettenson 349). Needless to say, though, Freud's and Augustine's distinctions are ones of degree not kind. While the four writers studied in this thesis place the accent on the object of desire, they also interrogate, reflect upon, and seek to transform the nature of the desire itself. They constantly return to the question: should my love of God be

temperate or excessive and on what grounds and at what times can one make this distinction? Perhaps most importantly, early modern devotional writers ask how should an excessive love for God be localized in speech and what is at stake in such speech?

My hypothesis is that psychoanalytic discourse can not only help us read how devotional writers respond to these questions, but that it is, in a variety of ways, a cultural heir of the politics of devotion. Psychoanalysis, like devotional writing, focuses on the elaboration of desire and identity through processes of identification, citation, and incorporation – the mechanisms by which the self is made and unmade in and through language. While Michel Foucault’s notion that religious practices constitute “technologies of the self” certainly informs my understanding of how devotional writing operates as a means of shaping or fashioning the self, Foucault, unlike Lacan, does not address how affective investments can determine the structure of one’s own subjection.²³ Subjection is not determined simply by the epistemological conditions of possibility within a determinate social field. On the contrary, it is also informed by the way in which discourse orients the affective life of the subject. In short, Foucauldians generally do not take account of how ideology mobilizes *jouissance*— the name Lacan gives to the ontological rather than intersubjective de-centering of the subject, the “inherent and irreducible *traumatic* status” of an encounter with the Other’s desire (Žižek, *Plague*, 48).²⁴ As I have suggested, it is precisely this excess that the ideology of Christian *metanoia* addresses and seeks to contain; *metanoia* articulates and seeks to neutralize the “how much more” implicit within human subjectivity. The basic principle of Lacanian psychoanalysis is that ideology gives a specific shape, a particular, though by definition

incomplete, symbolic form to the excessive desire or *jouissance* around which (and against which) a subject's ego is constituted. While the specific content of this traumatic desire is contingent -- sometimes appearing as religious ecstasy, erotic love, or political commitment, -- the form of *jouissance* itself is absolute, inherent to human subjectivity itself. Freudian clinical designations (hysteria, perversion etc.) are thus not objective classifications, but rather they refer to the specific comportment of a subject towards *jouissance*. We will come across such traditional psychoanalytic comportments and discover new ones in the devotional texts that follow. These comportments demarcate *how* a subject relates to the desire of the Other. It is precisely the traumatic or excessive elements inherent in this relation to the Other that devotional writing addresses in an effort to transform and thereby contain.

Just as psychoanalysts try to get their patients to break out of their solipsistic loops in order to address the other as distinct from themselves, so early modern devotional writers seek to apostrophize God as the Other that is more oneself than oneself. In both cases, the change that occurs is effected by and registered in language. Often early modern devotional texts enact a process in which the *conversar* moves from a monotonous language of self-love to a metaphorically and typologically enriched language of love for God as the interiorized Other. This transformation can be characterized by the distinction in modes of speech that Lacan sees in the psychoanalytic session. In the ideal psychoanalytic session the patient or analysand moves from an empty, narcissistically motivated speech to the metaphorically saturated utterance of the "full word." Unlike empty speech, in which the subject is spoken by his or her

unacknowledged desires, “full speech” constitutes an authentic utterance that addresses the unsaid within language – that surplus – the “how much more” – that is the condition of speech itself. As Anthony Wilden explains, “whereas linguists tend to view speech as essentially static – that is to say, as subject to the mechanics of articulation and to time in a non-essential way – Lacan views speech as a movement towards something, an attempt to fill the gaps without which speech could not be articulated” (164). A. Leigh Deneef makes precisely this point in relation to Traherne, when he suggests that “it cannot be emphasized too much that Traherne is especially committed to hearing what conceals itself as unsaid in language” (65). Traherne himself makes this point when he suggests that inward devotion fills an “empty voice”: “To see, approve, take pleasure, and rejoice / Within, is better than an empty voice” (“Silence” 29-30). The “Full Word,” for Lacan, is a mode of speech (and a particular existential comportment) in which this unsaid is put into discourse, re-installed, that is, into the dialect of being and time. As Lacan puts it, “the effect of a full Word is to reorder the past contingent events by conferring on them the sense of necessities to come” (18). The full Word, that is to say, enables the subject to project itself into the future while not disavowing, but rather existentially re-constituting, the past. This is psychoanalysis’ response to Christian metanoia.

While Lacan’s Heideggerian analysis of psychoanalytic speech will allow us to articulate the rhetorical and existential motions of devotional writing, just as the devotional writing will clarify psychoanalytic theory, there is a fundamental distinction one must make here. For Lacan the “unsaid” in language is the unconscious of the

subject, whereas for Traherne and the other writers in this thesis it is Being itself. Thus when I speak of the full Word in relation to the seventeenth-century writers in this thesis I am speaking of a mode of utterance in which it is not really the subject that speaks but rather it is the Other that speaks him/her. Augustine describes this mode of speech when he says that if “any other than you [God] were to inspire me, I do not believe that my words would be true, for you are the Truth, whereas every man is a liar, and for this reason *he who utters falsehood is only uttering what is natural to him*, what is his alone. If then, I am to speak the truth, let me utter not what is mine, but what is yours” (*Confessions*, Pine-Coffin Trans, 337). The distinction here is between a pre-modern iconic structure in which the full Word escapes the mediations of time and one in which the full Word is characterized by the re-installation of the “unsaid” into the dialectic of being and time. In other words, the notion of the self as an image of God is based on the principle that the subject’s relation to time is non-essential, individuation occurs despite the operations of time, while the psychoanalytic subject is fully, that is, essentially mediated by temporality. Psychoanalysis thus sees the process of individuation as a coming to terms with temporality as the *sine qua non* of existence, while the idea that the self is an image of God assumes a version of individuation in which time is sublated into eternity.²⁵ This latter position can be clarified with reference to the key verb that devotional writers use when speaking of the process by which the subject realizes itself as an image of God. The verb most often used to configure the “incorporation” of the divine image is “lodge” as in the sense of “to provide with a habitation.” Although the “lodging” of this divine image within the heart occurs in time, and can even intensify

one's experience as a temporal being, it is an ideal, immutable form that, in the final analysis, vertically sutures the self and God, words and Word, time and eternity. As such, it is ontologically distinct from a Lacanian/Heideggerian view in which death is the absolute limit of one's being. Keeping this distinction in mind, I will not simply pursue psychoanalytic interpretations of devotional texts, but will examine devotional texts as resources that both reveal and unsettle psychoanalytic insights. My aim, in other words, is to allow the discourses' differences as well as similarities to historicize and explain how each imagines the "coming to be" of the subject, how each configures the way that the individual becomes a subject of the Logos. To situate, or implicate,²⁶ devotional writing alongside psychoanalysis in this way is not to engage in an arbitrary choosing of theoretical models, but it is itself an historicizing gesture. As Fineman and Grossman have demonstrated, and as I will summarize in the section that follows, the psychoanalytic subject follows dialectically upon the "iconic subject" of Neoplatonized Christian thought. Yet even more than this, both psychoanalytic and Christian devotional thought sought to diagnose and alleviate what they perceived as the failure of human desire to attain a *relationship* with its object. At bottom, both devotional expression and psychoanalytic thought are theories of human desire designed to transform the desiring subject's relationship with its objects. As John Davies of Hereford exclaims, affect is the very means by which one becomes united with God: "O let me stretch the armes of mine affects / to hold thee to the breast of my desires" (*Muses Sacrifice* 20). Similarly, Bruce Fink defines Lacanian psychoanalysis as an attempt to foster or further the analysand's eros (3-10). In order to further clarify each through juxtaposition with the other I will

now explain how psychoanalysis and early modern devotional writers represent the dialectic of self that structures their respective discourses.

Mirror Scenes: Henry Suso Avec Jacques Lacan

*A man that looks on glass
On it may stay his eye.
Or, if he pleaseth, through it pass,
And then the heaven espy – George Herbert*

Both psychoanalysis and the Western devotional tradition represent the subject's process of coming-into-being through a specular scene of interpellation in which the self becomes an object of desire for and of the Other by means of an intense, unsymbolizable mode of enjoyment. For psychoanalysis, the specular nature of such a scene betrays the extent to which the subject stands outside itself in order to see itself seeing. In other words, the psychoanalytic subject is a *constitutively* divided one. In the Neo-Platonic devotional tradition informing the writers examined in this thesis, however, the specular nature of divine interpellation consists, in its most fully realized form, of an immediate, internalized encounter with God as Other, rather than one in which the subject is divided from itself. What is at stake in both cases is *how* ideal images play a constitutive role in the realization of becoming a fully realized subject. While the identification with ideal images in Neo-Platonic Christianity is always asymptotic, even in its most intense forms, the form of the image itself is conceptualized as the "real thing" – the divine spark that

grounds being. In Lacan's account, however, the ideal image to which one identifies in the process of coming-to-be is an illusion, a misidentification that holds no claim to reality outside the subject. In both cases, however, access to being is conceptualized in terms of gazing, looking, and being seen.

The English mystic Henry Suso describes the process of coming into a full relationship with Being, along with the enjoyment that accompanies such a mystic experience, through the following mirror scene:

Look upwards then with sparkling eyes and radiant face and bounding heart, and behold Him and embrace Him with the infinite outstretched arms of thy soul and thy affections, and give thanks and praise to Him. See how by gazing on this mirror, there springs up speedily, in a soul susceptible of such impressions, an intense inward jubilee; for by jubilee is meant a joy which no tongue can tell, but which pours itself with might through the heart and soul. (*Suso* 281, qtd. in Collins 64)

In this scene of ideal praise in which the subject has access to Being the act of drawing oneself towards God is akin to looking into a mirror that reflects back to the self an image of absolute unity. In turn, this image produces an *impression*, a "joy which no tongue can tell," an "inward jubilee" that is evidence of God's infusing himself into the heart, an infusion so intense that afterwards "a man's own soul is not so intimate to himself, as God is to his soul" (Hall, 469). Plotinus describes the reflexive nature of this process when he says, "He who then sees himself, when he sees will see himself a simple being, will be united to himself as such, will feel himself become such. We ought not even to say that he will *see*, but he will *be* that which he sees, if indeed it is possible any longer to distinguish seer and seen, and not boldly to affirm that the two are one" (II, 141). Suso's mirror scene is modeled on Augustine's reading of Genesis 1:3 as providing an account

of the “spiritual creation” – the point at which the Word converted nature into its image. This image, for Augustine, is the light to which God refers when he declares: “Let there be light and there was light.” Following this logic, the origin of the spiritual world is configured as a scene in which creation itself gazes at God in order to enter the order of being:

In its formless state it would not have been pleasing to you unless it became light. And it became light, not simply by existing, but by fixing its gaze upon you and clinging to you, the Light which shone upon it. In this way it owes to your grace, and to your grace alone, both the gift of its very existence and the gift of a life that is lived in happiness. For, by undergoing a change which bettered it, it was turned towards that which cannot change, either for better or for worse, that is, towards you. (313, Pine-Coffin Trans.)

Suso’s mystical revision of Augustine’s creation scene is uncannily reminiscent of, while at the same time dialectically distinct from, Lacan’s mirror stage. Lacan’s mirror stage is a narrative index designed to demonstrate how the emergence of the subject is predicated upon the process of first assuming an image of corporeal wholeness, be it in the form of an adult or a mirror image of one’s own infantile body.²⁷ In this respect, “the child anticipates on the mental plane the conquest of the functional unity of his own body, which, at that stage [under eighteen months] is still incomplete on the plane of motor motility” (Lacan, *Ecrits* 18). The mirror phase is thus “an identification, in the full sense which analysis gives to the term: namely, the transformation which takes place in the subject when he assumes an image” (94). By identifying with an image of bodily integrity at a point in development when full motor capacity has not yet set in, the infant begins the process of generating an *ideal-I*, an imaginary wholeness or bodily totality to which it becomes emotionally and psychically attached. This ideal image provides the

imaginary bedrock, as it were, for subsequent or secondary identifications through which the ego begins to form into a distinct personality:

This *jubilant* assumption of his mirror-image by the little man, at the *infans* stage, still sunk in his motor incapacity and nursing dependency, would seem to exhibit in an exemplary situation the symbolic matrix in which the *I* is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject. (94)

Both Lacan's and Suso's scenes are concerned with how the subject gains access to being through an identification with an Other. Moreover, both are structured around a specular logic of unity and fragmentation, of jubilant enjoyment and painful dejection. On the one hand, the self identifies with an image of bodily coherence, while on the other the threat of a withdrawal or separation from this unity remains either, as with Lacan, implicit within the very structure of misidentification, or with Suso, implicit in one's capacity for sin. More precisely, in Lacan's account, the resolution of the dialectic into unity is structurally impossible because the image of wholeness is, by its very nature, an imaginary projection rather than a revelation. In this sense, the ego is premised upon a primordial misrecognition: "The only homogenous function of consciousness is the imaginary capture of the ego by its mirror reflection and the function of misrecognition which remains attached to it" (Lacan, *Ecrits* 32). In Suso's scene, on the other hand, the incorporation of God into the self is more real than the self. For Suso and the western devotional tradition more broadly, identification with God constitutes the *substance* of the self rather than providing an imaginary basis for the illusion of identity. This substantial identity is grounded on the idea that the process of identifying with God is enabled by a divine faculty that is itself the thing it sees. For

Augustine this means that “when men see your [God’s] works by your Spirit, it is you who see through their eyes. When they see that your works are good, it is you who see that they are good” (*Confessions*, Pine-Coffin Trans. 342). This ontology of self finds one of its most compelling visual representations in George Wither’s 1635 emblem book in which an eye is placed at the center of a heart (Figure 1). This uncanny juxtaposition of the eye into the heart explicitly signifies “the inward sense” that contemplates God and divine things. In Augustine’s and Eckhart’s terms, it is the eye that is the thing it sees.²⁸ As Wither’s image suggests, the dialectic of self that is at issue in this Neo-Platonic tradition has an uncanny structure insofar as the self is more itself when it is Other. As Augustine puts it, “Thou wert more inward to me, than my most inward part” (*Confessions*, Warner Trans. 44). The literary history at issue in this thesis might thus be summarized as involving a transition from the immediate specularity of the Neo-Platonic tradition to a Lacanian position in which the self must split from itself in order to take itself as an object. While Fineman and Grossman have laid out this history in relation to Renaissance literature in much broader terms than I am capable of, they overlook some of the tensions and complexities implicit in the uncanny structure of the iconic subject and thus tend to focus solely on those moments when the iconicity of the subject gives way to internal tensions. My focus is less on the transition away from iconicity, than it is on how the rhetorical modes and forms which both sustain and deform it allow devotional writers to perform socio-symbolic acts, acts which have, as I have suggested, a therapeutic or transformative aim.²⁹ In other words, I focus on how the ideal of the “iconic self” becomes in the course of the seventeenth century a highly productive site

in which to play out and symbolically resolve socio-political tensions threatening the coherence of sacramental identity. For it is at the point of its religio-literary demise that the iconic ego performs an enormous amount of ideological labor, carrying, as it were, the sacramental cosmos within itself.

Christian Interpellation

As we have seen, the iconic self is constituted by a specularized relation to an internalized Other. The specular logic involved in such a process is given one of its most important theoretical elaborations in Louis Althusser's "Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatus." Interpellation and Christian interpellation in particular entails, as Althusser puts it, a mirror structure that is *doubly* specular. By this Althusser means that the self becomes a subject by recognizing itself as an image of the Absolute Subject, who is, in a Lacanian turn of events, his own image. This means that the "Absolute Subject [God] who occupies the unique place of the Centre, interpellates around it the infinity of individuals into subjects in a double mirror-connexion such that it *subjects* the subjects to the Subject" (179). The interpellative scene par excellence for such a model is God's "hailing" of Moses in which God "defines himself as the Subject *par excellence*, he who is through himself and for himself ("I am that I am), and he who interpellates his subject, the individual subjected to him by his very interpellation, ie. the individual named Moses" (179).

In her essay, *Althusser's Subjection*, Judith Butler critiques Althusser's idea of interpellation on the grounds that his scriptural examples do not serve a merely exemplary function but rather they reveal the tautological metaphysics structuring the theory itself. As Butler convincingly puts it, the "force of interpellation in Althusser is derived from the examples by which it is ostensibly illustrated, most notably, God's voice in the naming of Peter (and Moses) and its secularization in the postulated voice of the representative of state authority" (110). The divine power of naming and the logocentric metaphysics underlying such an absolute voice constitute the form rather than merely the content of Althusserian interpellation. As such, Althusser's specular model cannot account for failed or resisted interpellation because it is implicitly modeled on the fantasy of a divine rather than the reality of a social authority. By taking God as his model, rather than merely his example, Althusser fails to account for how interpellation works within a non-theological mode even while claiming to explain ideology in its fully materialist dimension. Butler's critique is of particular pertinence to the scenes of interpellation covered in this thesis not because I am concerned with the subversive potential of failed interpellation as such, but rather because it clarifies (by de-mystifying) the metaphysical structure grounding the logic of specularly in such scenes. Butler, that is to say, de-mystifies the economy of divine subjection that the writers in this thesis elaborately re-organize in an effort to sustain. Butler's critique of Althusser's implicit debt to a metaphysics of presence is thus an historical consequence of the decline of the logocentric metaphysics of the Word in the seventeenth century. We might thus see the move from Althusser to Butler – a move, that is, from an implicitly

theological to an explicitly genealogical model of subject formation -- as the contemporary theoretical consequence of the demystification of sacramentalist modes of thinking that takes shape in the early modern period. Even more importantly, what remains unthought in Althusser's model, as in Foucault's, is the pre-subjugated self. Althusser, like Foucault, does not take *jouissance* into account, the primordial mode of presymbolized enjoyment that informs the particular structure the subject will assume. Thus while I employ Althusser's term "interpellation" to help explain the rhetoric of subjection in early modern devotional writing I supplement it throughout the thesis by recourse to psychoanalytically inflected criticisms of Althusser. In short, I aim to show how psychoanalytic revisions of Althusser's theory are not divorced from the politics of early modern devotional rhetoric, but are played out within and are clarified by it.

One of the most important places where psychoanalytic thought and devotional discourse cross is over the issue of atrophied enjoyment, the loss, that is, of the capacity to desire. For most early modern devotional writers the capacity to desire is coincident with the ability to praise. In turn, the ability to praise is indication of a happy soul. As Traherne puts it, "praises are the breathings of interior love, the marks and symptoms of a happy life" (*Centuries* III.82). Traherne is here echoing Augustine who declares that to praise "you [God] is the desire of man, a little piece of your creation. You stir man to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you" (*Confessions*, Chadwick Trans. 3) The loss of the capacity for praise registers the subject's inability to love. Taking the loss of authentic devotional desire as the occasion of their texts, seventeenth-century devotional writers seek to re-

constitute readers by imagining ideally desiring, that is, ideally praising subjects.

Thomas Traherne, the early modern theorist of enjoyment par excellence, describes the sense of horror that results from an incapacity to praise in his *Commentaries of Heaven*.

Traherne characterizes this state as a loss of “felicity” – an atrophying of the soul:

Is not the Greatest Death that ere can be,
A Separation from Felicitie?
And what is Absence, had we but the Sence
To feel its Sad and Direfull Consequence?
If GOD the Glory be of Souls, their Life
And Lov: then Separation is the Knife
That kills a Soul! And we the Pain of Sence
Should feel, but that we're slain [. . .]
He that is Dead alive, when He doth die,
Shall Quickened be to feel his Miserie.
And present be with Him forever more
To whom in Life He Absent was before. (2, 1-8, 13-16)

Life without a desire for and continuity with “felicity” is figured here as a living death, a state of complete entropy. Psychoanalysis calls such a state *aphansis* – the complete demise of desire and selfhood.³⁰ At its most elementary, psychoanalysis is designed to help individuals further their capacity for desire, enjoyment and love. Similarly, early modern devotional writers aim to further their readers’ desire for and enjoyment of God. By loving as it ought to do, Traherne writes, “the Soul acquires its own Perfection, and is united to all its Objects” (*Christian Ethics*, 51). This relation is not only expressed in acts of verbal praise, it is produced through them.

Reacting to what they perceive as a cultural, rather than individual, incapacity to generate praise and devotional affect, Southwell, Donne, Crashaw, and Traherne seek to re-constitute the desire of their readers. They do this by providing fantasies through which one can access his or her desire and live with “felicity.” Such fantasies, however,

are never without ambiguity, an ambiguity that can inadvertently threaten rather than simply sustain various incarnations of Christian ideology. This ambiguity should be clear from the four main examples in the chapters that follow: narrations of divine rape, identification with an idealized mother, identification with the mystical body of Christ, and the postulation of the body as a living hymn. Exploring the function of such fantasies in the constitution of religious identity, this thesis maps the ways in which the primal scenes derived from such fantasies work to sustain a sacramental conception of the self while at the same time recording how such a view has become in the seventeenth century theologically and socially problematic. At stake in the texts that follow is nothing less than *being* itself – the subject's claim to meaning, life, desire, and ultimately God.

Outline:

Rather than moving chronologically, the thesis is divided into two thematically discrete parts of two chapters each. In the first part I examine the production of ideal religious selves within the more or less Counter-Reformational modes of Robert Southwell and Richard Crashaw. In chapter 1, I consider how Southwell internalizes the forms of religious and political exile facing Elizabethan recusants as a means of mitigating such marginalization. In particular, I consider how Southwell takes the discipline of self-denial implicit in Jesuit meditation as the basis for constituting a resistant recusant subject, making the excessive modes of Christ-like submission the

means of political and spiritual resilience. Elaborating on the rhetoric of excess, and the specific ways in which it is gendered in Counter-Reformational poetry, chapter 2 examines how Crashaw hyperbolizes the physical mediation of the spiritual that is central to both Laudian and Catholic sacramentalism. More specifically, I consider how Crashaw manipulates theological controversy in order to provoke varying emotive and intellectual effects in readers of different theological dispositions. I conclude this chapter by arguing that Crashaw's etiologal vision in "Hymn to the Name Above Every Name," his account, that is, of creation, constitutes his most significant articulation of the kind of religious subject implicit in what Maureen Sabine calls Crashaw's "feminine engendered faith." In particular, I argue that Crashaw's articulation of this ideal "feminine" subject resists, rather than repeats, the Oedipal framework that has often been used to read Crashaw's rhetoric of the self.

Sustaining my focus on the logic of interpellation in devotional writing, part two considers the place of the "sacramental body" in the way that John Donne and Thomas Traherne imagine the precipitation of the spiritually realized Self. In chapter 3, I consider how disruptions in the validity of the analogical body, the idea that the human form mirrors cosmological structures, is registered in Donne's *Devotions Upon Emergence Occasion* as a crisis in the sacramental or hieratic signifying power of language. Focusing on how the text records a crisis in embodiment as a crisis within language itself, I demonstrate how Donne re-imagines the unity of the subject through a sacramental version of abjection, the symbolic defining of the body's borders as a means for establishing the psychic coherence of the ideal Christian subject. I thus consider the

Devotions as an intervention into the crisis of the early modern subject, a crisis instituted by the way that the emergence of anatomical discourse disrupts the analogical coherence of the sacramental body. The fourth and final chapter examines how Traherne, writing at a later point in the history of the sacramental body than Donne, imagines the relationship between the body and the hieratic power of language. Like Donne, Traherne works both within and against the emerging discourses of empirical, rationalist, and proto-scientific thinking in the period. But unlike Donne, Traherne takes the body as a site not of terror, but as an occasion for imagining the inexhaustible nature of the ideal religious self's desire for God. In the process, Traherne re-writes the tradition of poetic anatomy, focusing on the body not only as an object available for dissection but as an event revealing God's presence in time. In this respect, Traherne's conception of the body offers what I shall argue is a kind of sacramental phenomenology, one in which the body is not merely an object but is a sacred medium of experience.

While my literary-historical focus is quite broad -- moving from Elizabethan Catholicism to Caroline theological debates, back to Jacobean conceptions of language and the body and finally to Restoration theosophy -- my rhetorical and thematic focus is relatively narrow, exploring specifically the way that seventeenth-century devotional writers imagine the precipitating moments of ideal subjects. In this respect, I examine how devotional writing aims to do something to the world by doing something to the "little world" that is the self. My aim here is to break a certain deadlock that I see in the way Renaissance religious writing is studied. The fact that the forms of cultural work performed in and by devotional writing has not been thought through is symptomatic of

a certain critical hesitance to interpret devotion as itself an ideological process, a process that is designed not simply to fashion subjects, which is perhaps too benign a phrase for what is at stake here, but to provide mechanisms of subjection that symbolically mitigate the lived-experience of de-sacramentalization and in certain cases religious persecution. By obscuring the ideological and even psychological aspects of devotional writing, much early modern criticism repeats rather than explains the socio-ideological significance of theological frames of reference, failing to achieve the sort of critical distance necessary to explaining rather than describing an historical moment. I would thus invert Patrick Collinson's assertion that religious history is "too important to be left to the secularists" (550) and suggest that it is precisely the lack of social and psychoanalytic perspectives that have prevented a more rigorous understanding of the forms of cultural work performed by meditative and devotional traditions in English literary history. This dissertation aims to make this point at each and every turn.

Notes

¹ The fifteenth-century Neoplatonist Nicholas Cusanus articulates this analogical perspective when he asserts that: "Since the universe restricted is in each actually existing individual, then evidently God, Who is in the universe, is in every individual and every individual actually existing is, like the universe, immediately in God" (84). The seventeenth-century Bible scholar/philosopher Robert Ferguson provides a slightly more tempered version of Cusanus' view when, in 1675, he insists that God's metaphorical mode of expression "doth Inform us how the Material World, and the Invisible do correspond together in Analogies and proportions, with respect to Nature and properties of the things contained in the one and other" (*Interest* 317).

² I use the term metaphysical here in the philosophical sense of the science of first principles, the a-priori assumptions regarding, in the case of pre-modern cosmology, the particular structures underlying the relationship between time and eternity, particular and universal. The most important structure informing the articulation of the self as an image of God is, to quote Kenneth Burke, “found in metaphysical doctrines proclaiming the identity of ‘microcosm’ and ‘macrocosm’ (*A Grammar of Motives*, 503).

³ I follow Bishop Joseph Hall in defining devotion very broadly. For Hall it includes meditation, mystical practice, and participation in the sacraments (“The Devout Soul,” 469). Even more broadly yet, Hall suggests that once the soul comes to devotional perfection all of its actions are actions of praise. The very being of such a subject, Hall contends, constitutes an “habitual and virtual” act of devotion. This idea is particularly pertinent to the work of Thomas Traherne.

⁴ Traherne’s notion of the self as an image of the Trinity is modeled on Augustine’s *Confessions* XIII, 12.

⁵ See also Fish’s *Surprised by Sin*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass., 1997) li-lxv.

⁶ Christopher Ricks, developing William Empson’s work, refers to this figure as “the self-inwoven simile.” This particular kind of conceit occurs when the divisions within an external object or event are registered as internally felt difference. See “Its own resemblance” in *Approaches to Marvell: The York Tercentenary Lectures*, ed. C.A. Patrides (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978) 108-135. The “self-inwoven simile” is one of the figures that Marshall Grossman implicitly addresses when he describes how “the organizing tropes of ‘Upon Appleton House’ constitute a seventeenth-century effort to represent an inward division of the self as a discontinuity in the relationship of individual action to providential design, of choice to destiny” (*Story* 202). See also Jonathan Sawday’s “‘Mysteriously Divided’: Civil War, madness and the divided self” in *Literature and the English Civil War* eds. Thomas Healy and Jonathan Sawday (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990) 127-146.

⁷ Debora Shuger notes that the shift from the premodern to the modern universe consists in a more strict codifying of boundaries: “Generally speaking, the sacramental/analogical character of premodern thought tends to deny rigid boundaries; nothing is simply itself, but things are signs of other things and one thing may be inside another, as Christ is *in* the heart, or turn into something else, as the substance of the eucharistic bread turns into the body of Christ” (*Habits* 11). Modernity is characterized by the solidifying of conceptual as well as national borders.

⁸ The notion that English Protestantism is characterized by private prayer and Catholicism by outward liturgical practice is wholly misleading. Catholicism, particularly in its Counter-Reformational forms, supplemented public ritual with private prayer long

before a Protestant tradition of private prayer had emerged as such. Conversely, the Anglican church, even in its pre-Laudian Calvinist forms, emphasized “common,” that is, ritualized prayer. For a recent reading of English Protestant culture and public prayer that puts the lie to this outdated opposition see Ramie Targoff’s *Common Prayer: The Language of Public Devotion in early modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). For a discussion of the implications that private devotion has on gender and sexuality see Richard Rambuss’ *Closet Devotions* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998.)

⁹ Shuger offers seven general propositions regarding the shift from premodern to modern universes the first three of which, though broad in nature, are particularly relevant to this study: “1. The private recesses of the individual anima replace the medieval church as the primary point of contact between God and persons. 2. This internalization of presence secularizes the sociopolitical, emptying it of ultimate meaning and thus enabling a ‘realistic’ appraisal of such things as institutional behavior, hierarchy, power, coercion, and so forth. 3. This split between the sociopolitical and the divine is simultaneously inscribed and erased. That is, secularization and cosmology coexist within the dominant culture, the latter reinventing the divinity of the king and the supernatural ground of the social order” (*Habits* 12). For a discussion of how Eucharistic devotion materialized this “supernatural ground” in the late middle ages see Sarah Beckwith’s *Christ’s Body: Identity, Culture and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (London: Routledge, 1993).

¹⁰ The Martz/Lewalski debate still continues to inform treatments of seventeenth-century devotional writing as witnessed by R.V. Young’s *Doctrine and Devotion in 17th-Century Poetry* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000).

¹¹ While Anthony Low’s *Love’s Architecture: Devotional Modes in Seventeenth-Century English Poetry* (New York: New York UP, 1978) and John Wall’s *Transformations of the Word: Spenser, Herbert, Vaughan* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988) go some distance in situating the meditative strategies of Herbert and Vaughan within the context of religious conflict, they do not take up the questions of interpellation and subjectivity posed here. They largely ignore, that is, the “politics of being” played out in early modern devotional writing.

¹² It is for this reason that I feel Fish’s phrase “the politics of being” is at least as, if not more, applicable to Catholics and Anglicans than radical protestants such as Milton.

¹³ More technically, the term “symbolic action” refers to the process by which literary form dialectically (or pseudo-dialectically) inscribes and responds to a determinate historical and ideological situation. My understanding of this term is thus informed by Frederic Jameson’s re-thinking of Kenneth Burke’s work in the context of ideological analysis: “the analysis of the linguistic, narrative, or purely formal ways in which ideology expresses itself through and inscribes itself in the literary text” (“Symbolic

Inference" 71). Ideological analysis in this context refers not simply to the process of demonstrating how a text re-inscribes a prior set of social co-ordinates, but how its formal elements, at one and the same time, respond to such contexts. Symbolic action is thus a way of "doing something to the world" (74).

¹⁴ Needless to say, the term "God" grounds a set of specific institutional, doctrinal, and theosophical assumptions regarding authority. In this sense God functions as what Lacan calls the Other, the absolute subject presumed to know the meaning of one's being. As Greenblatt's observation regarding the More/Tyndale debate suggests, however, the early modern period is the point at which the fictionality of the Other becomes a significant question. The devotional texts in this thesis reflect and resist the sense of incoherence regarding God's role within an analogical cosmos. For a discussion of the relevance of the Lacanian notion of the Other to pre-modern thought see Linda Gregerson, *The Reformation of the Subject: Spenser, Milton, and the English Epic* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995) 158-9.

¹⁵ My focus on the specular structure of early modern devotional writing complements Linda Gregerson's *The Reformation of the Subject* insofar as she examines how both Spenser's and Milton's epics "thematize and stage themselves as a series of specular recognition scenes" (6) while I focus on how devotional writers working in more explicitly sacramental modes imagine forms of subjectivity through a poetics of reflection and internalization. Other works that cover some of the same ground but from different perspectives are Josephine Miles, *Poetry and Change: Donne, Milton, Wordsworth, and the Equilibrium of the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press); Patrick Grant, *Images and Ideas in Literature of the English Renaissance*, (London: Macmillan Press, 1979); and, of course, Michel Foucault, *Les mots et les Choses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966).

¹⁶ This difference in translation leads to differing conceptions of repentance in Protestantism and Catholicism. Most importantly, the Vulgate's "*poenitentia*" carries with it a physical connotation of "pain, grief and distress" that is lacking in the English "penance." This difference results, in part, in the Catholic focus on the body as a site of penitential renewal, a focus which is absent from most Protestant traditions (*Dictionary of Biblical*, 660).

¹⁷ Frye imagines the very non-Lacanian scenario of an absolute resolution of social and psychical conflict in Lacanian terms in his brief essay, "Lacan and the Full Word": "The conflict [within the self and society] is resolved, in the New Testament, by a 'second coming' of the Word, or Apocalypse, in which both the imaginary and the real disappear and only the symbolic is left" (189). Frye's utopian vision of a resolution within the individual soul and the universal body-politic is a twentieth-century version of the seventeenth-century ideology examined in this thesis. Frye postulates the utopian

dimensions at work in literary thinking more fully in the *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (New Jersey: Princeton 1957) 115-130.

¹⁸ The unconscious, for Lacan, is said to have the structure of a language. This is much the same as saying that psychic mechanisms are rhetorical in structure. Philip Armstrong makes this point when he observes that “condensation and displacement are comparable with metaphor and metonymy; projection, introjection, identification and decomposition [the dividing of attributes of one object into several] have everything in common with various kinds of personification; denial and repression function in a way similar to irony or paradox” (45).

¹⁹ See the Epilogue to this thesis for more discussion on this point. See also “On the Baroque” in Seminar XX where Lacan explicitly aligns his thought and style with the Baroque. Lacan’s Jesuit training is particularly evident here. Lacan’s indebtedness to the Christian tradition is also apparent in *Freud’s Papers on Technique* when he situates his theory of speech in relation to Augustine’s *De Magistro*. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book I: Freud’s Papers on Technique 1953-54* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1988). For a discussion of Lacan in relation to Ignatius see Louis Beirnaert, *Aux Frontières de L’Acte Analytique: La Bible, Saint Ignace, Freud et Lacan* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1987). For a psychoanalytic approach to the Baroque see Mitchell Greenberg, *Baroque Bodies: Psychoanalysis and the culture of French Absolutism* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2001).

²⁰ For further discussion of this term see Bruce Fink’s discussion of it in Lacan’s *On Feminine Sexuality* p. 22.

²¹ It is worth noting here that my thesis is intended as an extended challenge to Debora Shuger’s assertion that what pre-modern texts present as ideal subjectivities is, by necessity, reclassified in modernist discourses as primitive or pathological (193). Shuger appears to presume that psychoanalytic thinking ceased with Freud’s 1930 *Civilization and its Discontents*. Although she rightly asserts that Renaissance devotional texts were not designed to curb or contain desire but rather they aimed at furthering a reader’s eros towards God, even to the point of physical and emotional excess, she overlooks how post-Freudian thinkers, most notably Lacan, who is not mentioned in her study, do not pathologize such an endeavor but see it as a complex means for negotiating the traumatic nature of existence itself. As I have pointed out, Lacan sees in the excesses of mystic experience, not pathologies at work, but the most genuinely ethical form of being.

²² I use the feminine pronoun not only because the soul is traditionally female but because the first two writers in this thesis consciously gender their ideal subjects as feminine.

²³ Foucault discusses ascetic practices most explicitly in “Technologies of the Self,” in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, eds. Luther H. Martin, Huck

Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988) 16-49. See also, *Religion and Culture: Michel Foucault*, ed. Jeremy R. Carrette (New York: Routledge, 1999) and *Foucault and Religion: Spiritual Corporality and Political Spirituality* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

²⁴ It is precisely this ontological notion that allows psychoanalysis to speak to the non-historical kernel of historicization itself. For an argument regarding the anachronistic nature of psychoanalytic readings of the Renaissance see "Psychoanalysis and Renaissance Culture" in *Literary Theory / Renaissance Texts*, ed. Patricia Parker and David Quint (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1986) 210-24. For extended rebuttals of Greenblatt's view see Elizabeth J. Bellamy's *Translations of Power: Narcissism and the Unconscious in Epic History* (Ithaca, N.Y. Cornell UP, 1992) and Marshall Grossman's *Story of All Things* 14-16. For psychoanalytic critiques of historicism see Lacan, *On Feminine Sexuality: The Limits of Love and Knowledge, 1972-73* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company 1998). Slavov Žižek, *Metastates of Enjoyment* 29. *Plague of Fantasies* (London: Verso, 1997) and Joan Copjec, *Read My Desire: Lacan against the Historicists* (London: MIT Press, 1995).

²⁵ See Marshall Grossman's "Augustine's Christian Ego" in *Story of All Things* for an extended analysis of the rhetorical forms through which the iconic subject escapes mediation by time.

²⁶ The idea that literature and psychoanalysis "implicate" each other, that neither is epistemologically prior to the other, is given one of its more cogent expressions in Shoshana Felman's "To Open the Question" in *Literature and Psychoanalysis: The Question of Reading Otherwise, Yale French Studies* 55.56 (1977): 5-10.

²⁷ The mirror stage develops the Freudian notion that the ego is a bodily ego, not only in the sense that it is a surface entity, but that it is itself "the projection of a surface." See *The Ego and the Id*.

²⁸ Wither's caption reads: "A *Heart*, which bore the figure of an *Eye* / Wide open to the *Sunne*; by some, was used, When in an *Emblem*, they would signifie, A *Minde* which on *Celestial Matters* mus'd" (43).

²⁹ On a different note, the other obvious cultural site in which psychotherapeutic work was carried out was in the consulting rooms of hermetic astrologers like Simon Forman and Richard Rapier. See Michael Macdonald's *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety, and Healing in Seventeenth-century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981). See also chapters 7-9 in Keith Thomas's *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Penguin, 1971).

³⁰ Lacan broadens Ernest Jones's definition of aphanasis. For Jones it refers to the loss of sexual libido due to a fear that is more primal than even castration anxiety (Laplanche and Pontalis 40). For Lacan, however, it denotes the total dissolution or disappearance of the subject's social substance. See *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book I, Freud's Papers on Technique 1953-54*, ed. J.A. Miller, Trans. John Forrester (New York: W.W. Norton, 1988) 222. The concept of aphanasis has important implications for literary history to the extent that it designates the "fading" of the self that occurs at instances of desublimation. The four poets studied in this thesis diagnose what they perceive as a culturally shared form of aphanasis. The primary symptom of this fading of the subject in the context of my argument is the failure to adequately express desire through conventional forms of praise, a failure that is registered as the loss of desire itself.

Southwell's Plaint: Subjection and the Representation of the Recusant Soul

There is no greater enticement unto love than to prevent the lover.
St. Augustine

Following the wave of anti-recusant proclamations that Queen Elizabeth issued in 1571, 1581, and 1585 in order to consolidate the 1559 "Act of Uniformity" which required Church attendance and the 1563 "Act for the Assurance of the Queen's Majesty's Royal Power" that made refusing the Oath of Supremacy a treasonable offence, English Catholics found themselves in an awkward catch-twenty-two position where fidelity to Rome necessarily entailed an act of political treason (Rose 11).¹ At the same time that Elizabeth narrowed the social space in which recusants could move, the Papacy sharpened the definition of what it meant to be a Roman Catholic in England after 1580 by no longer permitting allegiance to Elizabeth's political authority (Questier, 4-5). Edmund Bunny's 1585 reply to the prominent Catholic spokesperson Robert Persons reflects the divided nature of the recusant subject in the aftermath of these events:

no man [. . .] can be of that profession [Roman Catholicism], unlesse hee bee under that governement too. Could their Church, and court [of Rome] be sundered; could their religion and regiment be parted [. . .] then indeed I think that (with many) much might be done; but when as these go so close together, than no man can professe the one, but that he must be under the other, that goeth [. . .] somewhat hard with many, that otherwise would fine no scruple at all (B1, Lansd. MS 109, fo. 48, cited in Questier 5).

Bunny's comments disclose how the changes in the Churches' positions after 1580 both clarified and intensified religio-political conflict in England, placing English Catholics in

a highly fraught position where national and religious allegiances were at cross purposes with one another.

This situation not only meant that Catholic services became underground affairs, it also led to an internalization of the old faith, to a deepening, that is, of the meditative, private aspects of religious experience. This internalization of Catholic faith is particularly evident in the work of the Jesuit priest and poet Robert Southwell. According to Southwell, Elizabethan recusants could sustain their Catholicism not only by participating in clandestine services, but also by engaging in an ongoing internalization of submission to divine, rather than Protestant, authority. This seemingly paradoxical position that one becomes free from political oppression by enacting one's renunciation to divine authority constitutes the basic form of the ritualized fantasies that Southwell employs for symbolically mitigating the lived experience of social and religious exile that Elizabethan Catholics faced. The symbolic mitigation of social oppression in Southwell's works is particularly discernible in his tendency to return to the "interpellative scene," the penitential moment at which the self recognizes itself as a reflection of God. This process is not simply a means of encouraging fidelity to Rome, but is a complex strategy for negotiating the lived experience of religious and political marginalization. Southwell's strategy involves enacting socio-religious conflict as an inwardly experienced drama of submission and resistance. Moreover, it works to produce an ideal recusant subject, one whose excessive submission to God unsettles the very possibility of submission to Protestant authority. The ideal subject that Southwell imagines is characterized by a form of subjection to God in which desire is unbounded and ecstatic states are derived through

an absorbing identification with Christ. This particular subjective position is characterized by an over-identification with authority, an exaggerated or excessive attachment to the law that institutes one as a subject. Within the context of Elizabethan England this position will prove politically dangerous to Protestant authorities, presenting as it does a subject willing to enthusiastically assume, internalize, and symbolically transform physical torture and political exile into external signs of an inwardly achieved grace. While this subjective economy is politically subversive, it is also symptomatic of the socially constrained position of the Elizabethan Catholic. Indeed, the tendency, in Southwell's work, to return to the originary moment when the self recognizes its subjection to God registers the very crisis that it, at one and the same time, seeks to resolve, reflecting, as it does, both the intensity of Southwell's faith and his sense of the Catholic community's fragility.

Before outlining the direction this chapter will take I first want to provide a general overview of the specific structure of the ideal recusant subject as Southwell sees it and to briefly consider the mechanisms and contexts involved in bringing it into being. The most explicit and perhaps most exemplary articulation of the interpellative scene that grounds Southwell's ideal subject occurs in his account of the struggles he underwent in becoming a member of the Jesuit Order:

Through thy loving sweetness Christ, thou hast grasped to thyself my heart, and I must needs offer myself up a slave to thee. For thou hast vanquished me, o Lord Jesus, thou has vanquished me in a twofold fight. For when first I was assailed by thy holy inspirations, I resisted, as if the choosing me for one of thy Society brought more pleasure to thee than gain to myself. Thou sawest o Lord my infirmity, and with new engines shattering the ramparts of my heart, as I could flee nowhere to recover, being compelled, after

a long struggle I gave myself up, and submitted myself to thy powerful hand. (H. More 174, qtd in Janelle 13)²

If Janelle is accurate in his assertion that this passage was written “while Southwell was still seeking admission into the Society,” sometime in 1576-7 (13) then it is clear that Southwell had already begun to understand, at least in practice, the Pascalian principle that the ritualized performance of submissiveness produces the effect of internal conviction. Such passages, that is to say, are indicative of the highly formulaic nature of Jesuit meditation, the way religious meditation is explicitly designed to subjectify individuals according to pre-established ideals. In this passage, the speaker recognizes himself as a subject or vassal of Christ, once Christ’s “pleasure” supercedes and thus determines one’s own pleasure; once the subject is made, as it were, in the image of the Other’s desire. In this respect, Southwell’s professed sense of paralysis in the face of Christ’s power – the feeling that he “could flee nowhere” – demonstrates the notion, theorized in Althusser’s essay on interpellation, that the only choice available in the process of subjection is to freely assume the position that is always-already prepared for one (*Lenin* 187). By presenting the moment of subjection in the form of a forced choice Southwell’s scene effectively discloses the three key features that Slavov Žižek argues are central to how fantasy operates in the process of interpellation; each of which clarifies the central elements in Southwell’s fashioning of an ideal recusant subject.

First, the underlying fantasy of divine rape that structures this scene discloses “the tension in the notion of fantasy between its beatific and disturbing dimensions” (Žižek, “Fantasy” 100). Conceived as the medium of interpellation, fantasy is both a process of

wish-fulfillment that secures the coherence of the subject and, at the same time, it is a violent process threatening to undo the very coherence that it inaugurates. This oscillation between the terrifying and blissful nature of submitting to God, a tension that underlies such poems as Donne's "Batter my Heart," is a familiar theme in both Ignatian and Calvinist discourses. This tension is made unusually obvious through Southwell's expression of Christ's "loving sweetness" (*tu amabili*) in violent terms like "*vinco*," (vanquish), "*aggredior*" (assail) "*quatio*" (shatter, shake). What is particularly important about this opposition between the terrifying and blissful nature of subjection in the case of Southwell's writing is that it becomes a central element in the way he distinguishes between political and "divine" submission – between, respectively, exterior and interior forms of power. The experience of being spiritually "broken" or "vanquished" is something only God can inflict on a soul. In Southwell's work and the Jesuit tradition upon which he draws such divine subjection is represented as occurring within an interiority that is, as we saw Augustine put it, more inward than one's most inward part. It is thus the heart that Christ grasps in an act of inspiration – literally an inbreathing or breathing together of God within the soul. Political subjection, on the other hand, is represented as an exteriority that oppresses the self from outside. While this oppression from outside unsettles the inward coherence of the subject, it works to reveal the divine authority that makes its claim upon the heart. Through this distinction between the exteriority of political power and the interiority of Christly power, recusants are able to discern if their suffering is a function of legitimate or illegitimate authority. Following the logic of this distinction Southwell represents Christ's presence within the soul as

resulting in a “twofold fight” (*duplici praelio*): twofold because first the subject resists the process of being “shattered” or broken and then subsequently submits to the holy violence that he formerly opposed. The second part of the fight is thus configured as an act of holy rather than destructive violence – a violence that is as traumatic as it is homoeopathic, as unifying as it is shattering. Indeed, throughout Southwell’s work extreme physical suffering, accompanied by some sense of imprisonment or containment by an inwardly registered power functions as a key mode of interpellation for the Elizabethan recusant; it demarcates the precipitating moment when one becomes subject to the divine will. This aspect of Southwell’s fashioning of the ideal recusant subject extends not only from the restrictions placed upon Catholic subjects in England, but also from the Ignatian vow that “I might be made, as far as could be done, like to Christ crucified for me, and aspire to his love with my whole striving” (Southwell, cited in Janelle 12).

Second, the didactic detailing of the different moments in the relation between the speaker and Christ reveals “the fact that fantasy does not simply realize a desire in a hallucinatory way, but rather constitutes our desire, provides its co-ordinates – ie., literally ‘teaches us how to desire’” (Žižek, “Fantasy” 100). The fantasy of divine rape that Southwell deploys in order to represent the coming-into-being of the recusant subject does not simply make manifest a pre-articulated desire, but rather it works to produce a specific kind of desire, one that is interminable to the extent that it is not really one’s own but is God’s. This notion that the subject’s desire is not its own discloses the third and last feature regarding the role of fantasy in the production of an ideal subject. The

renunciation of Southwell's original resistance to God effectively demonstrates "the fact that the desire staged in a fantasy is ultimately not the (fantasizing) subject's own desire but the desire of his/her Other: fantasy is an answer to the question, 'What am I for the Other? What does the Other want from me'" ("Fantasy" 100). This psychoanalytic view of the subject constitutes a recasting of the vision of the soul we referred to in the introduction when we said it has the structure of an answer seeking its question. The ritualized fantasies predicated in Southwell's work enact this quest in a way that is consistent with the general Christian principle that God becomes accessible to man through the sublime suffering he experienced on the cross. More importantly for our purposes, though, the scenarios Southwell imagines are peculiar to the experience of Elizabethan Catholicism in the specificity of their devotional and rhetorical organization.

The presence of these three Žižekian features in Southwell's vision of interpellation is a function of the disciplinary regime of Jesuit or Ignatian meditation which is designed to reconfigure one's comportment towards God so completely that one offers "all one's power of desiring and one's liberty, so that the Divine Majesty may make use of one's person and of all that one has according to His most holy will" (*Ignatius* 284).³ The highly paradoxical nature of this subjective position is articulated most fully in the Ignatian theory of action which runs as follows:

Here is the first rule of action: assume that the success of your efforts depends entirely upon you and not at all upon God; but nevertheless, approach your endeavors as though their fulfillment were entirely dependent upon God, and not at all upon yourself.⁴

Ignatius's view of action appears self-contradictory only if one assumes that what is at stake in it is a matter of belief in the sense of holding to a set of doctrinal assertions. The maxim, however, is not concerned with knowledge in the sense of *savoir*, but rather it refers to a way of being, what Southwell would call a "style" in the strong sense of a mode of inhabiting the world. Ignatius's axiom outlines a comportment that one assumes towards one's actions and ultimately to God. In short, it encourages one to assume full responsibility for one's actions in the world, to subjectify oneself as the sum of one's efforts, but to recognize, at one and the same time, that God himself is the source of one's success, that the ends of one's worldly efforts are a function of an eternal, inescapable, and ultimately unknowable Otherness. This position is thus a mode of fundamentalism that is existentially aware of itself as fundamentalist. Unlike fundamentalism proper, Ignatius' axiom requires Jesuits to bear in mind that faith is not intuitive knowledge. Jesuit ideology has built into its structure an existential leap: it assumes that one's actions are a function of faith, but that one does not wait for God to reassure one of one's faith or actions: "Le cheminement proposé par la pensée ignatienne introduit à cette vérité que mon agir est d'autant plus assuré que je crois en Dieu comme en celui dont je n'attends rien pour assurer mon efficacité, et qu'en même temps ma foi est d'autant plus elle-même que j'agis en croyant à ce que je fais (Beirnaert 226). While the principle of action expressed in Ignatius' axiom underlies how Southwell represents the Catholic subject and the efforts the Elizabethan Catholic must make in order to overcome its divided loyalties, it is equally important to recognize, if we wish to read Southwell well, that Southwell's work is deeply indebted to the way that Ignatius articulates the *conversar* or "believing

subject” in structural terms. For Ignatius, the *conversar* is a participant in an ongoing dialogue with God or his ecclesiastical representatives, a dialogue that aims towards a transformation in the subjective character of the *conversar*. This transformation is effected through a change in the nature of the *conversar*'s speech, how he addresses, praises, and predicates God. In this respect, it is not simply post-Tridentine doctrine that is at stake in Southwell's poetic mission, but even more fundamentally it is the very *being* of the Elizabethan Catholic subject that is at issue, particularly as that being is constituted in and through the ritualized expression of its desire.⁵

Southwell makes explicit that the capacity to desire *properly* is at stake in his work in the Epistle Dedicatory to *Magdalene's Funeral Tears* (1591) when he proclaims that his text is designed to re-calibrate and subsequently re-direct the reader's subjective “affections” from earthly to divine objects:

passion, and especially this of love, is in these days the chief commander of men's actions, and the idol to which both tongues and pens do sacrifice their ill-bestowed labours; so there is nothing now more needful to be treated, than how to direct these humours into their due courses, and to draw this flood of affections into the right channel. (A4)

In the context of Ignatian meditation this process of re-directing the unruly passions of the mind from a worldly to a religious object enables one to engage in a holy colloquy that is dialogic rather than solipsistic, a matter of becoming Christ-like by loving God, rather than remaining narcissistically enamoured of non-spiritualized beauty.⁶ Southwell often translates this meditative economy into his literary works, dramatizing it for poetic and devotional purposes. For instance, in *Magdalene's Funeral Tears* the meditative forms of identification that structure the Christocentric model of Ignatius's exercises

coincide with an ocular based conception of erotic love in which the lover “coveteth not only to be united, but, if it were possible, to be wholly transformed out of itself into the thing it loveth” (B67).⁷ These processes of Christ-like subjection, sublimation, and identification are at the heart of Southwell’s representation of the Christian soul in general, and more importantly for our purposes, they are the key elements in his depiction of the ideal Elizabethan Catholic subject.

Although Southwell is always cognizant of a Protestant readership, so much so that his work became highly popular in Protestant circles during the seventeenth century, his primary audience is the Elizabethan Catholic community for which he prepared his own martyrdom from the point of entering the Jesuit Order in 1580, and which he fulfilled in 1595. He explicitly addresses this audience in his *Epistle of Comfort*: “To the Reverend Priests, and to the Honourable, Worshipful, and Other Lay Sort, Restrained in Durance For the Catholic Faith.” As John and Lorraine Roberts have recently reminded us, Southwell turned to poetry as a particularly inspiring means of maintaining the integrity of the English Catholic community by relating matters of Catholic faith and doctrine, particularly those resolved by the Council of Trent (64).⁸ Taking into account, then, that Southwell’s literary efforts are part of a larger “apostolate of letters” which is designed to embolden the faith of English Catholics living under an increasingly oppressive Protestant rule, this chapter examines how the rhetorical structure of Southwell’s texts inscribe and symbolically mitigate the sense of exile and self-division that he and his fellow missionaries describe as characteristic of recusant experience. I examine, in other words, how the “symbolic action” of Southwell’s literary texts dramatizes in order to

transform the sense of exile and psycho-spiritual paralysis experienced by Elizabethan Catholics divided between national and religious loyalties.

The body of the chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, I examine how in Southwell's work religio-political exile is registered as a form of self-alienation. Given this internalization of political conflict, religious meditation, devotional lyric, and pastoral epistle all play significant roles in constituting oneself as a subject within and against hostile social circumstances. This takes me into a close reading of *Mary Magdalene's Funeral Tears* in which I argue essentially two things. First, I show how the characterization of Mary's drama as a movement from a fragmented state of existential paralysis to spiritual union rehearses and imaginatively resolves the sorts of existential double-binds that Southwell uses to figure the state of the Catholic soul. I thus suggest that Southwell's psychologically nuanced portrayal of Magdalene's mourning drama exemplifies how his texts rhetorically encode socio-religious conflict as an inwardly experienced drama of submission and resistance. Second, I situate the text's ambivalence towards Mary's excessive passion in relation to the matriarchal basis of Elizabethan Catholicism, arguing that the homiletic structure within which Mary's drama is framed fails to contain the ambiguities generated by the text itself. To put this more precisely, the tensions generated by the oppositions between (masculine) temperance and (feminine) excess repeat, rather than resolve, the socio-ideological antagonisms that the marshalling of such oppositions are, at one and the same time, designed to symbolically resolve. The text's formal antagonisms are thus significant to the extent that they symptomatically

repeat the sorts of moral and ideological quandaries which arise from the divided loyalties that Elizabethan Catholics had to negotiate.

Building on themes discussed in the first section, part two explores how Southwell's representation of the ideal devotional subject in his lyrics is also, at one and the same time, a meditation on representation itself. Considering the extent to which Southwell, like Jesuits of his age, understands style not as the outward, accidental form of truth, but as the incarnate and indispensable mode in which truth is formed,⁹ part two examines the relationship between Southwell's Christocentric religious vision and the plain style or *sermo simplex*. Of particular concern is how this relationship determines his representation of the Catholic subject as a subject of exile. The third and final section draws the themes of the first two sections together through a close reading of the elegiac lyric "A vale of tears." As with my reading of *Magdalene's Funeral Tears*, I focus on how the rhetorical structure of "A vale of tears" formally enacts the speaker's penitential movement from separation and loss to a fulfilling, but no less unsettling, sense of devotional identity that is established through the *plaintful* articulation of desire for and of God. This plaintful articulation of desire for God constitutes the speaker's assumption of a state of contrition-- sorrow for sins voluntarily assumed with the intention of confessing and doing satisfaction or penance.¹⁰ I thus argue that "A vale of tears" is a central poem in Southwell's canon to the extent that it makes explicit the fact that his vision of the penitent soul and by extension the Catholic subject derives its structure and a large part of its literary power from the figure of the "plaint." More precisely, the elegiac plaint structures the way that the Southwellian subject excessively embraces the

state of subjection to God – even when – or, more precisely, especially when -- that subjection involves exile and torture. In this respect, the meta-literary meditations on the figure of the “plaint” in a “Vale of tears” constitute Southwell’s most self-conscious reflection on the power of fascination that is elicited by the themes of subjection, submission and sublimation throughout his work. What each of these texts reveals, then, is that the ideal religious subject assumes, through penitential submission, a union with God that is as traumatic and unsettling as it is fulfilling. Even though Southwell’s religious vision is designed as an intervention into the plight of Elizabethan Catholics, it offers little in the way of pacification, focusing instead on the way that the subject can overcome internal divisions through an undivided submission to God.

I. Subjection and Inward Division

The interiorization of religio-political conflict that Southwell’s poetry and prose works enact is summarized in his defense of Catholic missionaries in *An Humble Supplication to her Majesty* when he complains that “our Condition be soe desolate, that we can neither be freed from outward misery, but by becoming inwardly more miserable” (1). Much more than a plea for sympathy, this sentiment expresses a calculated, if counter-intuitive, strategy that Southwell deploys throughout his work. This process of subjectivizing political alienation is an early instance of the tendency in seventeenth-century English Catholicism – described by historian John Bossy – to react inwardly in

the face of public pressure to take the oath of allegiance and thereby disavow one's ties to Rome. As Bossy puts it, "an inner experience could only be met by another inner experience, a religion of action by a religion of contemplation" (56). Bossy sees this spiritualization of political conflict as the best light in which to view "one of the most striking developments in the history of English Catholicism at the beginning of the seventeenth century – the revival of the Benedictine order" (56). While the history of Christian mysticism is shaped by the tensions between the active and the contemplative life, the striking predominance of the latter within Catholic and other marginalized factions in early modern England is clearly informed by political contingencies and the lived-experience of religious exile. In other words, mysticism is not an apolitical modality, but is itself one of the concrete, material modes through which many early modern individuals establish themselves as subjects, particularly those who stand at the margins of power and authority.

As historian John Bossy has pointed out, few texts better exemplify this coincidence between policy and penitence than Thomas Fitzherbert's 1610 work *A Treatise Concerning Policy and Religion* (56). The treatise is at once an apology of a Catholic commonwealth and a popularization of Ignatian meditative techniques. Organized around the analogical notion that the ordered commonwealth is mirrored by the well ordered soul, it claims to offer the foundations for both. In this respect, the coincidence of an extremely detailed account of contemplation and an equally prolix explanation of the Catholic commonwealth is anything but fortuitous. Fitzherbert – himself a Catholic Priest and defender of the missionary project – establishes this connection early in the treatise,

opening with an ornate description of the interior soul as a “beautiful palace” that is designed to inspire the reader to make him or herself into the image of an elaborately decorated Church. The Catholic subject is thus asked to internalize into him or herself the architectural furnishings that were once the sign of Catholic power, but which now denote Protestant heresy:

may it please thee sometimes to retire thy self into this contemplative chapel, and there with due, and serious meditation to contemplate not so much the form of the building, [. . .] as the matter, and furniture thereof, borrowed from the holy Scriptures, and most contemplative fathers, I doubt not but thou shalt receive such spiritual benefit, and contentment thereby, that thou wilt say, as S. Peter said upon the mount. *Bonum est nos hic esse*¹¹, or *with the royal prophet*. *Quam dilecta tabernacula tua domine virtutum, concupiscit est deficit anima mea in atria Domini.*¹² And for as much as in the building of a Palace, special care is to be had to make fair, and beautiful to the eye, and to grace it with variety of pictures, images, and portraits of divers sorts. (A4)

At once an allegory concerned with the production of the perfect commonwealth and the perfect Catholic soul, this passage reclaims Catholic authority by, as psychoanalysis would have it, introjecting its symbols into the self, making the once material signs of Roman power the symbolic forms with which one furnishes the landscape of the soul.¹³ The process of imaginatively reclaiming the liturgical adornments of the Catholic faith is thus an act of mourning, a way of maintaining oneself as the very temple in which one can no longer take the sacraments. The official language of the Church thus appears at the very moment when Fitzherbert asks that his readers become the Peter to their own soul -- the rock upon which the commonwealth will stand. The use of the Vulgate is highly significant in this context, indicating one of the very material ways in which the reader can articulate a distinctly Catholic triumph over the self as a way to reform the

commonwealth. Moreover, in order to sustain the holiness of this inwardly realized temple one must expel those sinful forces that threaten its apostolic integrity: “thou shalt also find in this my religious palace matters of that quality, I mean the absurd, beastly, and impious opinions, and lives of Pagans, Mohammedans, Jews, Machiavellians, and Hereticks” (A5). Contemplation is figured here as the work of exorcising such inwardly corrupting forces. It is thus a process of introjection and expulsion, identification and abjection: the very same processes that psychoanalysis insists inform the production of individual identity.¹⁴ Not surprisingly then, the contemplative life is figured as an integral part of the counter-reforming efforts of seventeenth-century English Catholicism: a victory over the sins within is nothing less than a divinely sanctioned political act – a process through which Catholic identity is formed and the work of salvation is carried out. Here, as so often is the case in early modern devotional writing, the individual and social, the private and the public, are reversible sides of the same analogical structure.

What changes between Southwell’s Elizabethan petition and Fitzherbert’s Jacobean treatise is the value placed upon the act of internalizing religio-political conflict. For Southwell, the inward life of the soul is a disturbing – if covertly subversive – space, a desolate site of penitence and lack; while for Fitzherbert the contemplative soul is a more richly adorned site, perhaps because the reunion of the English Church with Rome appeared a better possibility under James than Elizabeth.¹⁵ Southwell’s more self-alienated but no less mournful vision of the Catholic soul is further expressed in *An Epistle of Comfort* when he figures the Catholic subject as a pilgrim wandering, like the prodigal son, in a foreign land without sustenance. The allegorical nature of the passage

lies in its pointed two-fold meaning. On the one hand it represents the general state of the fallen soul and on the other, the state of the Catholic soul, who, living as a stranger in its own country, can only eat the husk rather than the life-giving blood of the sacramental host:

Who is there that, considering himself as wandering stranger in this far and foreign country, and a drudge in the miry farm of this world, enforced to feed the swine (his earthly appetites and senses) and driven to so extreme exigencies as not to be suffered *to fill his belly of the husks that the swine did eat* [. . .] We are here in a barren, pathless, and waterless soil, in an obscure land, covered with the fog and shadow of death. We are here in a place of exile, in a hospital of Lazars, in a channel of ordure, in a dungeon of misery, in a sepulchre of dead carcasses, finally, in a vale of tears. (50-51)

Underlying such passages is an implicit reminder to potential Catholic nominalists that canon law forbids *communicatio in sacris* with heretics, pagans, and schismatics. As Elliot Rose points out, the most pressing moral question facing Elizabethan Catholics is whether and/or to what extent they should comply with the Act of Uniformity (73). Such passages encourage nothing less than a totally uncompromising recusancy.

While Southwell's representation of the Catholic condition is more pessimistic than Fitzherbert's, its fundamental rhetorical structure is the same. In each of their texts rhetoric produces an inward divisiveness that it at one and the same time aims to resolve. As such, the rhetorical economy of these works is similar to Roland Barthes's description of Ignatius's *Spiritual Exercises*. Barthes demonstrates how the *Exercises* have the self-defeating structure of an "obsessional neurosis" – of which melancholy is a subset -- insofar as they use the partitioning operations of language to get beyond the divisions instituted by language itself. Analyzing how the infinitely open structure of Ignatius's

“accountancy of sins engenders its own errors,” Barthes argues that it “might be said that Ignatius (and the Church with him) sets up a psychotherapy for the exercitant, but constantly refuses to resolve the transference relationship that it implies” (70-1).

According to Barthes, then, the penitential work of Ignatian meditation merely produces the desire for more penance, rather than providing any genuine state of catharsis or transference change in the comportment of the self towards God. Similarly, Southwell’s and Fitzherbert’s texts engender the inward divisions that they, at one and the same time, defend against. We would be wise, though, to resist Barthes’s pathologization of Ignatian rhetoric to the extent that Southwell’s self-consuming representation of the paralytic state of the English Recusant Soul does in fact aim towards a conversion or “turning” of the subject. It is only by fully assuming one’s inner divisions that one is able to open the penitential space that allows for an undivided expression of love for God. For Southwell, the integrity of the soul relies upon a full assumption of the antagonisms that constitute it; only then can the antagonisms be dissolved and identification with Christ fulfilled. In other words, Barthes misleadingly asserts that the religious goal is, like the psychoanalytic one, a state of psychological stability rather than Christly identification. Southwell, more or less in line with Ignatian practice, strives towards a state of traumatically ecstatic identification with Christ. One draws closest to God by suffering with him. Despite appearances, the masochistic and “obsessive” impulses in Southwell’s work are always presented as a violent remedy, a painful but no less homeopathic means of resolving existential paralysis and inwardly felt divisions by becoming Christ-like.

For Southwell and other Catholics writing during the Elizabethan mission, this inner divisiveness usually takes the form of a chiasmus, a crossing of the temporal and the eternal. While this structure is, in one form or another, the basic shape of Christian identity generally, it has, as Ronald Corthell argues, particular force in regard to the divided loyalties experienced by Elizabethan Catholics. Divided between national and religious allegiances, English Catholic writers produce a mode of self-presentation that, on the one hand, “results in an estranged or divided subject,” and on the other, a subject “informed by what might be called an imaginary subject unified by its total identification with power” (272). In the case of Edward Campion’s *Challenge*, for instance, the Catholic subject is formed, according to Corthell, “by virtue of its competing models of a transcendent subject, on the one hand, and a historically produced subject, on the other – a subject characterized by its identification with power and an alienated subject constituted by subjection [to Elizabeth]” (279). The sense of self-division that Corthell sees in Campion’s text is visible from the title of Campion’s account of the Catholic mission: “*A story of domestical difficulties which the Catholic cause and promoters thereof hath had in defending the same, not only against the violence and persecution of the heretics but also by sundry other impediments among themselves, of faction, emulation, sedition and division, since the change of religion in England.*”¹⁶ Such texts allude to the way that internal social fraction is registered and experienced as an internal fraction within the self.

As we have already suggested, one of the main strategies Southwell deploys in order to negotiate this position is to enact the Althusserian principle that the subject’s freedom is

made available in the act of “freely accepting his subjection.” This act of not simply assuming but eagerly taking on a state of subjection is given its most explicit articulation in Southwell’s defense of martyrdom in the *Epistle of Comfort*. In this text, Southwell dramatically rehearses and imaginatively resolves the sense of alienation and division characteristic of recusant experience by imagining the quartered bodies of martyrs reuniting into the unity of a single army. Adapting the principle of “turning one’s cheek” as a method of political resistance, Southwell encourages the Protestant regime to further subject Catholics to torture and punishment, not because he is a sado-masochist but because it is the only effective point of resistance he can take up. More precisely, he rhetorically projects the state of paralysis experienced by Catholics onto the Protestant regime itself, symbolically castrating its power so that the Catholic martyr becomes a vegetative God giving new life to its community:

When you persecute us, you do but sow the seeds that will spring with a more plentiful harvest. You think it is the seminary priest that enlargeth the Catholic faith, whereas indeed you yourselves make the chief seminary, in which Catholics do grow. [. . .] Our prisons preach, our punishments convert, our dead quarters and bones confound your heresy. You have laboured to suppress us this thirty years; and yet from our ashes spring others and our dead bones, as Ezechiel prophesied, are come to be *a huge army*. (228-9)

Following established traditions of Christian martyrdom, physical mutilation and religious persecution become the very proof of Catholic authority and thus the very weapons of grace. Identifying the physical subjection of Catholics as the sign of their grace, Southwell appropriates, for Catholic ends, the investments of power that Protestant authority places onto the body of the condemned. In other words, he subjectivizes torture, fully assuming political subjection in order to transform it into submissiveness before a

divine rather than merely political authority: "Our scattered parts cast in dunghills [God] will restore to such purity of perfection that shall be more capable of his glorious ornaments than they were before [. . .] Your [martyred] veins are conduits out of which he meaneth to derive the streams that shall water his Church. [. . .] New slips are ever grafted when the old bough is cut off; and the virtue of the root that the bough releaseth, the slip enjoyeth" (229, 111). Such sentiments are not restricted to prose works like the *Epistle or An Humble Supplication* but are also encoded throughout Southwell's verse.

Southwell uses the same "consoling" metaphor in "Time goes by turnes" in order to inspire a cult of martyrdom as he does in the *Epistle*: "The lopped tree in time may grow againe, / Most naked plantes renew both fruit and flower: / The soriest wight may find release of paine" (1-3). "Decease release" presents an even more explicit metamorphosis as the macerated corpse becomes the source of subsequent nourishment and unity: "The perisht kernell springeth with encrease / The lopped tree doth best and soonest grow" (3-5). Similarly, the final stanza of "The flight into Egypt" encodes a typology between the murdered infants of Jerusalem and English Catholic Martyrs. The ambiguity of the word "age" in the following apostrophe suggests not only the youth of the infants, but the "age" of English Catholic exile:

O blessed babes, first flowers of christian spring,
 Who though untimely cropt faire garlands frame,
 With open throats and silent mouthes you sing
 His praise whom age permits you not to name,
 Your tunes are teares, your instruments are swords,
 Your dirty death, and blood in lieu of wordes. (13-18)

By implicitly appropriating the signifying function of mutilated Catholic bodies in this poem, and explicitly in the *Epistle*, Southwell performs a powerful and even treasonous symbolic act. By converting Catholic persecution and torture into sacramental signs of God's support of English Catholicism, Southwell undermines what Foucault has described as the purpose of public torture and execution. According to Foucault, the spectacle of public torture in the age of Absolutism relies on a logic of excess in which the body of the condemned becomes the site where "a whole economy of power is invested" (*Discipline* 35). The display of power exercised over the body of the criminal is designed to "mark the victim [. . .] to brand the victim with infamy; even if its function is to 'purge' the crime, torture does not reconcile; it traces around or, rather, on the very body of the condemned man signs that must not be effaced" (34). Southwell understands, just as well as Foucault, that the condemned body is a site of signification. He thus makes of the condemned body an emblem of divine rather than merely political subjection. Through a metaphorical transposition from one liturgy of power to another, the very experience of exile and division, even of physical mutilation, becomes the source of Catholic confidence and the sign of recusant authority. Rather than suing for the release of Catholics, Southwell makes the scene of their subjection the theatre of providence. What is at stake in such symbolic acts is thus competing economies of subjection: subjection to the immanent force of divine mandate, or the externally imposed proclamations of a hostile political regime. Needless to say, religious "consolation" in this context is not stupidly pacifying, but is quite traumatic; one must assume a position that negates one's escape from actual punishment.

The exclamatory power of “Flight into Egypt” is, in part, a function of how apostrophe speaks, as Jonathon Culler explains, to the “uncalculable force of an event” (152). In apostrophic modes, temporality as a sequence of events ceases in favor of an overflowing of passion towards one single action; proverbially it is a “monument to immediacy” (151). The bleeding throats of Southwell’s “blessed babes” are thus immortalized here as an ongoing act of praise. As such, the poem is at once a celebration of the event and its hypostasized re-enactment. In the world that is generally created by apostrophe “the objects of the universe [are] potentially responsive forces: forces which can be asked to act or refrain from acting” (Culler 139). In Southwell’s poem, apostrophe names a biblical event that is reanimated in the lives of Elizabethan Catholics, linking present bodies with past providence. Moreover, by addressing Herod’s victims, Southwell’s apostrophe enacts a highly politicized mode of sublimation: the turning of blood into words. Such signifying practices allow Catholic subjects an imaginative release from the precarious and even paralytic positions which they inhabited.

Southwell describes this sense of paralysis in the *Supplication* complaining that English Catholics are only able to assume the position of “unnatural subjects”:

If we live at home as Catholiques, professing our owne, and refusing to profess a Contrary religion, we can neither keep our places in the University, nor follow our studies in the Innes of Court, but we are imprisoned for Recusancy [. . .] yet if we leave all, and seeke free use of our Conscience [. . .] we are straight reckoned for *unnatural Subjects*. (3)

One of Southwell’s most allusive lyrical representations of the Catholic subject’s paralytic state is “The Prodigall childs soule wracke.” Combining Christian parable with Augustine’s imagery of the fallen world as a “sea,” Homeric imagery of Sirens’ songs,

and Dantean themes of despair, Southwell figures Protestant oppression and heresy in the language of classical literature, combining historical and anagogic levels of meaning.¹⁷

In the opening stanza, syntactical ambiguity suggests that the fall from grace which has occurred refers to both the prodigal speaker and the “maine of cares” on which he has been “disanchored.” Psycho-spiritual states are thus mirrored by geographical locales; or to be more exact the heresies of English Protestantism are registered as inwardly experienced paralysis:

DISANKERD from a blisfull shore,
And lancht into the maine of cares,
Grown rich in vice, in vertue poore,
From freedom faln in fatal snares

I found my selfe on every side
Enwrapped in the waves of wo,
And tossed with a toilesome tide,
Could to no port fore refuge go.

The wrastling winds with raging blasts
Still hold me in a cruell chace.
They broke my anchors, sailes, and masts,
Permitting no reposing place. (1-12)

Figuring the destruction of monasteries and the gutting of Catholic Churches through Homeric metaphor and representing the sense of paralysis and exile characteristic of the English Catholic situation through Scriptural allegory, Southwell expresses the paradox of assuming subjection as the means for spiritual victory.¹⁸ Indeed, the experience of subjection to Protestant authority is transgressed and symbolically dislocated by a deepening of inward subjection to God. In this respect, the speaker learns to give himself

to death just as Southwell had learned in preparation for the Order to subject himself to Christ:

I felt my inward bleeding sores,
My festred wounds began to smart,
Stept far within deaths fatall doores,
The pangs thereof were nere my hart.

I cried truce, I craved peace
A league with death I would conclude,
But vaine it was to sue release,
Subdue I must or be subdude. (29-36)

The speaker thus takes Southwell's advice in *An Humble Supplication* literally: "our Condition be soe desolate, that we can neither be freed from outward misery, but by becoming inwardly more miserable" (1). As such, the production of recusant inwardness provides the theatre in which external modes of political subjection and contradiction are symbolically and devotionally enacted and transformed. In this respect, the speaker's willing assumption of a subjection unto "death," an assumption, that is, of externally imposed, if inwardly experienced, conditions, not only records Southwell's preparation for his own martyrdom, nor does it simply express a general expression of penitential "holy dying," but it also registers the distinct way in which Southwell produces a mode of internally felt subjection as a means for political resistance. This ambiguity is registered in the verb "subdue" which not only has the self-reflexive sense of "acquiesce" but also denotes the sense of "subjugate." Southwell thus rhetorically enacts the theological position that Christ's death defeats death itself. In other words, acquiescing to divine subjection is the paradoxical means by which political oppressors are subjugated and an ever fracturing Catholic identity is imaginatively re-secured.

By poeticizing an enthusiastic assumption of subjection, Southwell presents a variation of Žižek's notion that ideological power is displaced by an over-identification with the processes of subjection instituted by it. Suffice it to point out that Žižek situates his dialectical theory of resistance in relation to Christ's imperative: "If someone slaps your right cheek, turn to him also your left cheek." The point here, as I discussed in the introduction, "is not stupid masochism, humble acceptance of one's humiliation, but simply to *interrupt the circular logic of re-establishing balance*" (*Fragile* 125). By rhetorically enacting this hyperbolic assumption of subjection, Southwell engenders a distinctly Catholic mode of inwardness, producing an elegiac interiority that provides the symbolic space in which recusant readers – although not to the necessary exclusion of Protestants – could identify their own predicament and in which they could live out an experience of *metanoia*: a penitential re-birth in and through Christ. In this respect, the production of inwardness in Southwell's work serves the purpose of political resistance while also allowing marginalized subjects to encounter the traumatic but nonetheless homeopathic power of the logos as *Christus medicus*. Of all Southwell's works, none represents this process more compellingly, if more ambivalently, than *Mary Magdalene's Funeral Tears* (1591).

Magdalene's Tears

After the Council of Trent, Mary Magdalene had become the symbol of the Church Triumphant, a figure of the true Catholic Faith (*Mary Magdalene* 252). Moreover, by the

time of the Counter-Reformation she had not only taken on the role of the *apostola apostolorum*, the apostle to the apostles, but she had also become the *beata dilectrix Christi*, the blessed lover of Christ. The Roman Catholic liturgy enshrined Magdalene's role as the blessed lover of Christ by identifying her eroticized love for Christ with the spiritual love expressed between the Church and God in the *Song of Songs*.¹⁹ Given that her excessive love for God became identified with the power of the Church Triumphant, it is not altogether surprising that *Mary Magdalene's Funeral Tears* (1591) is exemplary of how Southwell dramatizes the spiritual conflicts of scriptural characters in the terms that parallel his description of the recusant subject's condition. Indeed, Magdalene's excessive love for Christ, her professed willingness to die in his place, and most importantly her suffering the same sort of existential dead-locks described in *An Humble Supplication* and elsewhere, make her an ideal figure for devotional emulation by Elizabethan Catholics. Not surprisingly, then, Southwell's depiction of Magdalene is first and foremost concerned with how her state of abandonment situates her as an "unnatural subject," a grieving and rejected woman whose process of mourning Jesus' death constitutes the advent of her own role within the order of Salvation. Mary's mourning of Christ, in other words, constitutes the process by which she is re-engendered as a subject in the face of utter psychological annihilation due to exile from God. In this respect, Magdalene's *Funeral Tears* not only depicts a penitent type worthy of emulation, it also narrates the process by which Mary moves from a state of psycho-spiritual dislocation and fragmentation to a state of undivided love for Christ, a process that offers a symbolic resolution to the inwardly experienced antagonisms that Southwell sees as characteristic

of the recusant subject. Magdalene's narrative, like Fitzherbert's treatise, is a meditation on the ethics of mourning. Southwell, that is to say, psychologizes early Christian and medieval versions of Magdalene's narrative. He transforms the allegorical story of Mary's forsaking of the "mysteries of intercourse" for the "mystery of union with the divine" that predominated in pre-Reformation versions of Magdalene into a psychological transformation that is registered as a matter of personal mourning rather than in the generalized terms of allegorical abstractions.²⁰ It is now a narrative about the psychic life of power rather than an allegory of spiritual love. Indeed, to the extent that *Magdalene's Tears* is allegorical it is so socially rather than anagogically. Magdalene, that is to say, is a figure of the ideal recusant subject, specifically a female subject.

Situating Magdalene's crisis in the same catch twenty-two position that Southwell used in order to represent the state of the Elizabethan Catholic subject, the narrator of *Funeral Tears* begins by saying that Magdalene, standing before Christ's empty tomb, is caught between "burning and bathing," "love and grief"; her "poor eyes being troubled at once with two contrary offices, both to be clear in sight the better to seeke him, and yet cloudy with tears for missing the sight of him" (B2). If this faintly echoes Southwell's *Supplication* then the passage describing how Mary's production of inward grief provides the only solace to which she has access directly recalls it: "drawing into her minde all pensive conceites, she museth and pineth in a consuming languor, taking comfort in nothing but in being comfortlesse" (B15). Elizabethan readers familiar with the *Supplication*, published in the same year as *Funeral Tears*, would likely have noticed how Mary's casuistical response to the angels' assertion that she should stop weeping

because she is really weeping for herself rather than for Christ is framed, like the *Supplication*, within a discourse of conscience. Indeed, Mary locates her own freedom in terms of an inwardly registered subjection to Christ, particularly insofar as such subjection is embodied in tears – a somatic index of her spiritual attachment to Jesus: “to barre me from weeping, is to abridge me of liberty, and restraint of liberty is a penalty, and every penalty supposeth some offence: but an offence it is not to weep for my self, for he would never command it, if it were not lawful to doe it. The fault therefore must be, in being one with him” (B14). If we re-call here the Ignatian premise that one’s liberty is realized by submission to God, we can recognize the extent to which Mary has become a rhetorically astute spokeswoman for the Catholic plight. Just as Southwell made the persecution of recusants in the *Epistle* a sign of Catholic grace, so Mary makes what the Angels interpret as narcissistic self-absorption a sign of intimacy with Christ. Mary’s interpretation is more accurate than even she herself realizes for her assertion that she is one with Christ is proleptic of her apostolic role in Salvation history.

Later in the work, Mary makes another remark that alludes to the contemporary state of Elizabethan Catholicism. This time, however, the statement situates the text within the religio-political conflicts of Elizabethan England more explicitly as Mary wrongfully attributes Christ’s absence to her own over-preciseness in following the law: “through too much preciseness in keeping the lawe, I have lost the lawmaker, and by being too scrupulous in observing his ceremonies, I am proved irreligious in loosing himselfe, sith I should rather have remained with the trueth then forsaken it, to solemnize the figure” (B19). While we as readers recognize that Mary’s unnecessary berating of herself is

symptomatic of her melancholia,²¹ she nonetheless accurately describes Christ's absence in the Eucharist as it pertains to Protestant England, implying an attack on "precisinians" or those Reforming forces who maintain an overly rigid adherence to the letter of Scriptural law.

Taken separately, each of these passages indicates the extent to which the work is as much an intervention into Elizabethan politics as it is a purely devotional treatise. When taken together, however, they indicate how Mary's plaintful expressions of grief articulate the state of abandonment that Luce Irigaray refers to as *déréliction*, an ontological state of desertion and rejection where one is "left without hope, without help, without refuge" (Whitford 78). For Irigaray, this state of female dereliction demarcates the condition of being precluded from emerging as a subject; it thus demarcates a state of radical alienation. It is precisely this state of total dereliction that Mary expresses in her highly Ovidian suicide complaint, a state, that as we have suggested, is the paralytic condition of the Elizabethan subject as Southwell imagines it²²:

I am left free to choose whether I will stay without help, or go without hope; that is, in effect, with what torment I will end my life. And yet even this were too happy a choice for so unhappy a creature. If I might be chooser of my own death, O how quickly should choice be made, and how willingly would I run to that execution! I would be nailed to the same cross with the same nails, and in the same place; my head with his thorns, my body with his whips. Finally, I would taste all his torments, and tread all his embrued and bloody steps. (B16)

Magdalene seeks to become Christ, to isomorphically sign his physical presence with her body, just as Fitzherbert encourages devotees to remember the physical presence of the Catholic Church. It is in this literal and violent attachment to Christ's body that Magdalene is melancholic, having "chosen the company of the dead" for reasons that are

clearly admirable but which are nonetheless an effect of her inability to assume her role as apostle to the apostles and to thereby begin post-resurrection salvation history (B2). Given Magdalene's inability to assume her designated role, Irigaray's notion of dereliction as the state of abandonment which demarcates the failure to become a subject is of particular relevance. Indeed, to the extent that Mary is alienated from Christ, she remains radically separate from her own self. Southwell's lyric on Magdalene makes this point even more explicitly: "Sith my life from life is parted / Death come take thy portion" (1-2). Mary's claim to spiritual substance, her claim that is to being itself, lies in her memory of Christ, in her capacity to incorporate him into herself, to make, as psychoanalysts Abraham and Torok would have it, a *tomb* within the self within which to "lodge" the lost-object as a relic. Thus worse than death is the thought that Christ's memory should die with her:

if any thing did make her willing to live, it was only the unwillingness that his image should die with her, whose likeness love had limmed in her heart, and treasured up in her sweetest memories; and had she not feared to break the Table, and to break open the closet to which she had entrusted this last relick of her lost happiness, the violence of grief would have melted her heart into inward bleeding tears, and blotted her remembrance with a fatal oblivion. (B6)

While Magdalene's encrypting of Christ into herself as a relic is symptomatic of her initial incapacity to mourn, we are told that she does become able to "break open the closet" and thereby share her grief through verbalization. This transition from an encryption of "this last relick of her lost happiness" to her opening of the "closet" corresponds precisely to the distinction between incorporation – the symptomatic encrypting of the lost-object into the unconscious of the ego -- and introjection – the

metaphoric and metonymic symbolization of the lost-object -- that Abraham and Torok describe as essential to the process of grieving. By enacting this transition from melancholic incorporation to mournful introjection, Magdalene offers an image of how to mourn, which is, as will become increasingly clear, analogous to becoming an ideal recusant subject.²³

Mary's despairing articulation of falling into a "fatal oblivion" inspired nineteenth-century editors to soften the suicidal intensity of this passage, excising "bleeding" and changing "fatal" to "faithful." From a psychoanalytic standpoint this negation of self through the traumatic loss of memory normally consists in a defensive state called *aphanasis*-- the complete loss of social substance, a state of "fatal oblivion" that Lacan associates with tragic characters such as Oedipus. Yet, psychoanalytic notions of ego-defenses presume a human rather than divine object and thus the ethical or existential status of Mary's "fatal oblivion" is more complex than in conventional instances of *aphanasis*. Mary's lost-object is not merely any object, but is itself *the* source of being itself. As such, Mary's is a unique instance in the history of melancholia. It is unique because Magdalene runs the risk of completely losing her self not because of a narcissistic posture against loss in the conventional psychoanalytic sense, but as an effect of her overwhelming and heroic fidelity towards the memory of Christ who *is*, from a theological rather than a narcissistic standpoint, more herself than herself. How does one grieve the Object of all objects? Magdalene herself asserts that if she fails to grieve she will implode in upon herself, her body becoming an inarticulate monument to repressed despair. The capacity to access and dilate upon inwardly felt grief -- the ability to shatter

the “closet” and the “Table”²⁴ -- is thus a matter not only of devotional fervor but of sheer psychological survival. Following on this, it is her hyperbolic capacity for expressing sorrow that prevents the onset of aphanasis, a capacity that Southwell returns to repeatedly in the course of his work. Thus while Mary is melancholic in the sense that she remains attached to Christ’s literal body, rather than embracing his spiritual function as the Word, she nonetheless demonstrates an admirable capacity for expressing that loss. The infinite nature of her grief, in other words, is a function of the unique object to which she is attached. Magdalene remains an “unnatural subject” only insofar as she insists upon maintaining her physical attachment to Christ’s corpse, which she must detach herself from. It will be Christ himself who makes Mary aware of the transition that she must make from a literal, melancholic attachment to his body to a spiritual, mournful embrace of his role as the Logos. In this transition, we see an allegory of the recusant subject negotiating the absence of Christ’s body in the State Church.

Developing the familiar Counter-Reformation topos of the *Noli me tangere* (touch me not) derived from the recognition scene in John 20:17 where Mary meets Christ in the Garden after the crucifixion, Southwell depicts this transition through a scenario in which Christ is positioned as a mother suckling Mary as his child. In Southwell’s text, Magdalene’s recognition of Christ demarcates the point at which she must finally assume her position in Salvation history, “lodging” the Name into her heart rather than throwing herself upon Jesus’ literal body:

It is now necessary to wean thee from the comfort of my external presence, that thou mayest learn to lodge in me the secrets of my heart, and teach thy thoughts to supply the offices of the outward senses: for in this visible shape I am

not long to be seen here. [. . .] Mary departed from him like a hungry infant forced from a full breast, or a thirsty hart chased from a sweet fountain [. . .] Alas! said she, and cannot others be happy, without my unhappiness? or cannot their advantage be gained but through my loss? (B63)

Like the Elizabethan recusant who is unable to eat of Christ's actual body in the Eucharist, Magdalene is unable to sustain a sense of her own identity without immediate access to Christ's flesh. More importantly, Christ's motherly imperative to Mary clarifies, if not rebukes, the angels' earlier assertion that Mary's grave disposition was a function of her narcissism rather than a genuine expression of love for Christ. We might observe here that the Angels' symptomatic interpretation of Mary's grief parallels Southwell's own advice in *Triumphs Over Death* when he warns that some "entertain their sorrow with solitary musings, and feed their sighs and tears; [. . .] nursing heaviness with a melancholy humour, as though they had vowed themselves to sadness. [. . .] Much sorrow for the dead is the child of self-love. If we shed our tears for the death of others as a mean to our contentment, we show but our own wound – perfect lovers of ourselves" (*Triumphs* 92). Mary, as we mentioned, refuses this proto-Freudian reading, fashioning herself as an anti-type of Judith, a savior of her people, but a savior who uses tears rather than swords as her weapons. Indeed, Mary reacts to the Angels as though they were agents of the Crown convincing her to abandon her love of Christ and to adopt a nominalist attitude towards her faith. Refusing the angels, Mary defends her sorrow by reflecting upon the limits inherent to elegiac expression itself: "it is not my weeping that causeth my loss, since a world of eyes and a sea of tears could not worthily bewail the loss of such a master" (B23). Developing on the motif of inexpressibility that had long

been a feature of religious epideictic, Magdalene describes her sorrow in the form of the plaint, making her tears the only appropriate expression of humbled love and loss.

A reader is inclined to side with Mary in her debate with the angels to the extent that her rebuttal is consistent with Southwell's own conception of what constitutes narcissistic as opposed to religious desire. The narrator expresses Mary's infinite capacity for desire when he observes that: "her thirst of thy [Christ's] presence was so exceeding, and the sea of thy joys so well able to afford her a full draught, that though every part in her should take in a whole tide of thy delights, she would think them too few to quiet her desires" (B26). This account of Mary's infinite desire coincides with Southwell's critique of narcissistically motivated desire in "Of the Blessed Sacrament." Given her focus upon a divine object Mary is able to arouse an infinite amount of longing, something which narcissistically motivated individuals cannot: "Selfelove here cannot crave more then it fyndes, / Ambition to noe higher worth aspire, / The eagrest famyn of most hungry myndes / May fill, yea farre exceede their owne desire" ("Sacrament" 25-28). Spiritual fullness is thus experienced as an exquisitely felt absence. The figure that best accommodates this economy of desire and enjoyment is, as we shall see in greater detail, the plaint. Following on this plaintful economy of desire and loss one knows that one's longing is religious, rather than worldly, when it cannot be satiated, when its condition of possibility is utter lack. In this respect, Southwell's depiction of Magdalene articulates how ideal spiritual submissiveness occurs once complete satiation gives way again to total lack and the exquisite dolor of absence becomes its own impossible state of fullness.

²⁵ This point of excess, where the experience of absence is registered as a form of

presence, and where pain bleeds into pleasure, demarcates the nature of a genuinely religious desire for Southwell. Moreover, it constitutes, as we saw in the introduction, a mode of *jouissance* that Lacan insists is the sole domain of feminine subjectivity. This mode of desiring is an effect of a process of subjection where the narcissistic defenses that constitute the ego do not completely determine the trajectory of desire, but allow for an excessive identification with the other as other, opening a space for an ecstatically overwhelming pleasure that is not a function of narcissistic projection but of a cut or wound through which the real emerges. Magdalene reaches this liminal domain precisely at the point when she becomes “ravished” with Christ’s *voice*; once, that is, she has been subjected by Christ’s calling of her name. The narrator’s account of this scene makes it clear that Magdalene undergoes an experience of *metanoia*, a re-birth or re-subjection whose force is expressed in almost entirely somatic terms. The literary models behind this scene are less scriptural than Ovidian. Mary constitutes, that is, a Christianization of Ovidian figures of female speechlessness like Philomela and Lucrece while the authority of Christ’s voice is modeled on the Orphic power to change things with words. This fantasy of Orphic presence, as Lynn Enterline has shown in detail, is never unambivalent and is often undermined in unexpected ways by the female figures upon which it is often thrust. While distinct from its Ovidian models, the relation between Mary and Christ and more importantly Mary and the narrator is not without similar politically and rhetorically stressed ambiguities:

when she heard thee call her in thy wonted manner, and with thy usual voice, her only name issuing from thy mouth, wrought so strange an alternation in her, as if she had been wholly new made, when she was only named. For whereas before the

violence of her grief had so benumbed her, that her body seemed but the hearse of her dead heart, and her heart the coffin of an unliving soul, and her whole presence but a representation of a double funeral of thine and of her own: now with this one word her senses are restored, her mind lightened, her heart quickened, and her soul revived. (B58)

This passage resolves Mary's earlier fear that she would succumb to a state of "fatal oblivion" as she undergoes a complete process of re-birth through Christ, a process that is as somatic as it is psychological, as physical as it is spiritual. Her earlier state of psychological fragmentation is resolved here as she is unified through what she calls her "undivided love" of Jesus. Thus while she begins in a state of death-like oblivion where she encrypts Christ into herself as a relic, she ends in a state of ecstatic union with Christ as Word. Southwell describes this transition in *Triumphs Over Death* when he remarks how "that which [Mary] imagined the uttermost of her evils, proved, in conclusion, the very bliss of her wishes" (105). The paradox of her situation is the same paradox that Southwell articulates with respect to Catholic recusants in the *Epistle*. What needs to change is not the outward appearance of the subject's tragic situation, but the subject's internal relation to it.

This internal transition in her comportment towards Christ's death is made clear in her response to his "ravishing voice." Magdalene's response to Christ's voice is an eroticized experience of subjection in which her silence demarcates not a mystical beatitude that remains somehow beyond the order of the Word, but rather her muteness signifies her *complete* identification with Christ, the crucified, and in this sense lacking, God:

ravished with his voice, and impatient with delays, [she] taketh his talk out of his

mouth, and to his first and yet only word, answered but one other calling him *Rabboni* [. . . And then] sudden joy rousing all other passions, she could no more proceed in her own [. . .] Love would have spoken, but fear enforced silence; Hope frameth the words, but doubt melteth the passage: and when her inward conceits strived to come out, her voice trembled, her tongue faltered, her breath failed. In fine tears issued in lieu of words, and deep sighs instead of long sentences; the eye supplying the mouths default, and the heart pressing out the unsyllabled breath at once, which the conflict of her disagreeing passions would not suffer to be sorted into the several sounds of intelligible speeches. (B59)

Magdalene's silence is the silence of an excessive and thus holy attachment to Christ. It is the sound of having been "put on the path of ex-istence." As such, she exemplifies the Pauline principle, recently re-thought in the light of Lacanian psychoanalysis by Žižek, that only those who fully assume their lack are capable of such excessive love and of a dialogic rather than solipsistic form of *jouissance*. Indeed, for Lacan, *jouissance* can only take two basic forms: "On the one hand we have the closed, ultimately solipsistic, circuit of drives which find their satisfaction in idiotic masturbatory (autoerotic) activity [. . .]. On the other hand, there are subjects for whom access to *jouissance* is much more closely linked to the domain of the Other's discourse, to how they not so much talk, as are talked about" (*Fragile* 144). Magdalene's ravishment at hearing her name called by Christ demarcates the moment when she moves from desire to *jouissance*, from an abundance of speech to an excess beyond and before speech. Mary presents, that is, a version of the feminine position in which the subject commits to the principle that "I am nothing, but a Nothing humbly aware of itself, a Nothing paradoxically made rich through the very awareness of its lack" (146-7). In this respect, Mary exemplifies Žižek's position that "only a lacking, vulnerable being is capable of love: the ultimate mystery of love is therefore that incompleteness is in a way *higher than completion*" (*Fragile* 146-7). This,

it would seem, is the very lesson of Southwell's Magdalene. Indeed, it is precisely this feminine position in which the subject identifies with its own lack through an identification with the crucified Christ that Southwell cultivates throughout his work; for it is by assuming such a position that one personifies the excesses of Christly subjectivity. Magdalene, in other words, is Christ-like precisely in the way that she enacts the "logic of excess" underlying Christ's parabolic strategies in the Gospels. It is precisely this excessive, Christly position that is spiritually ideal at the same time as it is, within the context of Elizabethan England, politically transgressive. The position entails a breaking of the "tablets" in the sense of a social code, a breaking that occurs through an inwardly registered assumption of lack that re-attaches one to God, thereby granting an intimacy and an "enjoyment" that would otherwise remain inaccessible.

Mary's precipitation of her excessive subject position occurs through the interpellating power of Christ's voice which appears in the recapitulating power of Mary's name. Her name, that is, becomes an iconic signifier of her entire history; it is intended to encapsulate all of her contradictions under the penitential synecdoche "Mary," thereby nullifying the antagonisms within her own history and thus within her own self. It is thus here that the narrator begins to contain Mary within a homiletic framework designed to fill up the meaning of her Ovidian silence with Christian morality:²⁶

Mary she was called, as well in her bad as in her reformed state; and both her good and evil was all of Mary's working. And as Mary imports no less what she was, than what she is; so is this one word, by his virtue that speaketh it, a repetition of all her miseries, an epitome of his mercies, and a memorial of all her better fortunes: and therefore it laid so general a discovery of herself before her

eyes, that it awakened her most forgotten sorrows, and summoned together the whole multitude of her joys. (71)

Having articulated how Mary's transition from literal to spiritual attachment to Christ enables her to express an undivided love for Christ through her assumption of lack, the text then challenges the reader to follow Magdalene. In particular, it is the eloquence of her silence that compels the reader to identify with her as she fulfills her role as the anti-type of Judith. Just as it was the enrapturing nature of Christ's voice that compelled her, so are we compelled by the subjugating force of her tears: "Mary – thy tears will prevail : they are too mighty orators to let any suit fail [. . .] have they so persuasive a silence, and so conquering a complaint, that *by yielding they overcome, and by entreating they command*" (69 my emphasis). The reader is thus positioned in relation to Mary as Mary is to Christ. In this way, the text is explicitly designed to engender a feminine devotional subject, one who is characterized by an enthusiastic state of subjection, an infinite capacity for love and a plaintful sense of lack that exceeds the limits of speech: "O Christian soul! take Mary for thy mirror; follow her affection, that like effects may follow thy own" (81). Mary's drama thus concludes by shifting the specular relation between Christ and herself to herself and the reader. By doing so, the work offers a positive answer to the narrator's earlier question if Mary's passion could "alter sex, change nature, and exceed all Art" (39).

Southwell's depiction of a female saint whose devotional strength produces a series of "defigurations" of conventional gender roles is occasioned, at the same time it is complicated, by the unusually predominant role that women played in the Elizabethan

Catholic community. As Megan Matchinske observes, “recusant mothers and wives gained considerable religious and familial leverage” in the Elizabethan period, “redefining the limits of both ecclesial and patriarchal control in conducting Catholic service, supervising priestly behavior, and acting as spiritual stand-ins for outwardly conforming husbands and sons” (55). Similarly, John Bossy argues that English Catholicism was based to a large extent on the power of aristocratic women, a power that was often wielded despite the resistance of their aristocratic husbands (*English Catholic 153*). Underlying the work is the question that many communities in Counter-Reformational Europe asked, namely “how far can a woman’s resistance of authority extend when it is in the name of the Catholic church?”²⁷ *Magdalene’s Funeral Tears*, which is dedicated to Dorothy Arundel -- daughter of Sir John Arundell of Lanherne (unrelated to the Howards) -- offers symbolic support for Catholic women taking up authoritative roles within the recusant community, while at the same time it seeks to curb the dangers implicit within female empowerment.²⁸ On the one hand, Mary presents an ideal vision of Catholic faith insofar as she craves “no other solace of Jesus but Jesus himself” (B69),²⁹ and yet on the other the reader is constantly asked to qualify Mary’s transgressions in relation to her imperfect understanding of providential design, especially so during the text’s homiletic ending. Balancing the precarious nature of the domestic and conjugal contexts within which his text would have been received, Southwell’s work engenders a number of ideological ambiguities insofar as it both celebrates and reprimands Mary’s excesses.

The text is as internally fraught as Mary herself (and presumably some of the Catholic marriages to which Bossy refers) insofar as it both licenses and censors Magdalene's excessive passions, uneasily balancing the ideally devotional vision of feminine excess with a masculinized discourse of reason, temperance, and "common sense." These tensions are summarized in the narrator's homiletic opening in the *Epistle Dedicatorie*. This introductory letter attempts to frame the way in which Mary's passion is to be properly interpreted, beginning with a meditation on the appropriate use of the passions: "passions being sequels of our nature, and allotted unto us as the handmaidens of reason: there can be no doubt, but that as their author is good, and their end godly: so their use tempered in the mean, implieth no offence" (A4).³⁰ From this perspective, "passions let loose without limits are imperfections, nothing being good that wanteth measure" (A6). Dilating upon this Platonic homily on the golden mean, Southwell asserts that his text is designed so that the "reader may learn to love without improof of puritie, and teach his thoughts either to temper passion in the mean, or to give the bridle³¹ only where the excess cannot be faulty" (A10). This passage discloses the extent to which the text is structured according to two distinct devotional economies, one premised on a masculinized language of temperance and the other on a feminized language of excess. Aware as he is of the aporias to which such a contradiction may give rise, Southwell deploys a homiletic framework in order to contain the de-figuring power that the latter can inflict upon the former. Yet, this proves more difficult in rhetorical practice than in moral theory. For while the homiletic structure is designed to show how the reader should respond to Mary, it can only do so by repressing, rather than resolving, the various

complications which inhere in deciding whether an object of excessive passion is religious or narcissistic. The work is nothing but a series of digressive complications arising from the various debates that Magdalene has with the angels and the narrator, such as when Magdalene powerfully asserts that "I came not to see angels, but him that made both me and angels, and to whom I owe more than both to men and angels; and to thee I appeal, O most loving Lord! whether my heart doth not truly defray the tribute of an undivided love" (27). The debates which arise from Magdalene's resisting of the angels is occasioned by Southwell's need to negotiate exactly how far the political and domestic recalcitrance of Catholic women can go and still remain justified, an issue with very real consequences for husbands, wives, and daughters in the Elizabethan Catholic community. The difficulty that Southwell has in containing the reader's response to Mary's excesses -- a difficulty which he anticipates when he asserts in the letter to the reader that "Many Carpes are expected when curious eyes come a fishing" -- is a function of how Magdalene is an ideal devotional figure not despite her incapacity to detach herself from Christ, but precisely because of it. Magdalene's recalcitrance and her physical intimacy with Jesus is the very basis of her mediating role in salvation history, but in order for such recalcitrance to be holy rather than self-serving it must be qualified in a number of ideological if not entirely logical ways. The homiletic ending serves this qualifying function. Its very presence discloses the extent to which Mary's "feminine" excesses can be dangerous, allowing one to slip into an endless and perversely pleasurable mode of self-flagellation and mourning as when the narrator addresses Mary saying: "thou deceivest thy self in thy own desires, and it well appeareth, that excess of

grief, hath bred in thee a defect of due providence” (B20).³² The narrator’s attempt at framing the story within a homiletic structure is designed to curb the power of fascination elicited by Mary’s excessive passion for Christ, particularly his body, and to contain the very image of feminine devotion which it, at one and the same time, licenses. While we as readers are asked to draw a line between temperance and excess, between narcissistic melancholia and mature mourning, the process of doing so is far less clear than the narrator would have us believe. Were it not the homiletic structure would be superfluous in the first place.

In order to better grasp the rhetorical fragility of the homiletic ending consider how the narrator’s remark regarding submissiveness asks us to overlook Mary’s assertiveness – the very thing that not only we as modern readers but even the Catholic Breviary find attractive: “A submissive soul the soonest wins his return; and the deeper it sinks in self abasement, the higher it climbeth to his highest favors” (83). Such homiletic sentiments do not even begin to account for how Mary compels a reader towards emulation, nor do they explain Mary’s Judith-like confidence in rebuking both the narrator and the angels, a confidence which is an essential rather than contingent part of her Saintliness.³³ Even more, this homiletic structure represses the way that the very issue of Mary’s “submission” remains unstable throughout the work due to the shifting perspectives and contexts through which we view it: hers, the narrator’s, the angels, Christ’s and finally the reader’s own. At one moment the narrator summarizes Mary’s Saintliness in terms of her undivided and fearless love of Christ in the face of apparent opposition, while at another moment he sees it as a function of her submissiveness. While these two positions

are narratively (that is ideologically) reconciled to the extent that Magdalene has an imperfect perspective on providence, (the oppositions are always only apparent) the ambiguities that her passions inspire at an affective, and worse yet historical, level are not so easily harmonized.

If the lessons regarding temperance and excess are problematic within the text itself, they become even more convoluted when they are translated, following the text's own instructions, out of the scriptural world of Christ's resurrection and into the Elizabethan world of Catholic oppression. How, we must ask, does the text's repression of religious excess in favor of devotional temperance apply to the moral and religious questions facing Catholic women: questions of to whom one should submit, whom one should resist, and when such submission should be done with a fervent and religious myopia. By shifting away from excess to temperance, from plaintful elegy to homiletic authority, the text resists the very questions it asks its readers to pose. At its anti-climactic end, it bows under the pressure of an aporia that is structured into its own moral economy, a bowing that takes the form of a rhetorical attempt to conceal its structuring contradictions. And yet, as the text's preface implies, these are precisely the questions that Dorothy Arundel, a member of a powerful Catholic family, was likely asking herself in 1591, thrust as she was into the heart of the recusant community.³⁴ Thus while the narrative provides a symbolic resolution to the inwardly experienced sense of divisiveness that characterizes the recusant subject by offering an account of how Mary moves from a fragmented state of radical self-division to an experience of unity with Christ, it also symptomatically rehearses the very antagonisms and aporias facing the recusant subject divided between

national, religious, domestic, filial, and nuptial responsibilities. This symptomatic rehearsal occurs because the text rhetorically enacts the aporia that is implicit to an economy of devotion – that is to say an economy of being -- which depends upon an excess that it must contain in order to sustain its own coherence. In short, it celebrates Mary’s capacity for a complete and total submission to Christ, while also distancing the reader from such submission through moralizing qualifications that fail to account for Mary’s power of fascination as a female Saint. It thus asks its female readers to identify with Mary, but not too literally, lest they become autonomous rather than Catholic subjects. While Southwell encourages literal identification with Christ within the context of Protestant oppression of recusants, as in “The Prodigall childs soule wracke,” he discourages it when the context is restricted to the relations of the recusant community itself. At the end of the text the reader is effectively asked to recall Magdalene’s warning about being “too precise in keeping the law.” The reader should be like Magdalene, but not too much so. Whatever else *Magdalene’s Funeral Tears* does, it discloses the extent to which the empowerment of women is a complex and divisive issue for the Elizabethan Catholic community, one that touches on the very heart of what it means to be a recusant subject.

II. Exile and the Plain Style

When Magdalene submits to Christ through the ravishing power of his voice, speech fails her, but in place of speech her tears are empowered as signs of grace. Reflecting

upon the semiotics of her body, she concludes that her tears are signs of a lost union with Christ. Instances such as this indicate the extent to which Southwell takes the question of expressive form or “style” as a serious religious and devotional question. Indeed, the question of the Christian subject is itself a question of “style”; and as such his work is often a meta-commentary on the relationships between representation and devotional-subjectivity. Throughout his work the question of style coincides with the *topos* of exile and pilgrimage. For instance in the *Epistle*, Southwell figures the state of exile in linguistic terms, comparing Protestant England to Babel. Passages like the following suggest that the theme of exile in Southwell’s work, as in Augustine’s, refers not only to the ontological state of the soul, but also to the modes of representation through which such a state is figured. Unredeemed language, that is, is itself a place of exile, a region of unlikeness that leads one away from Christ’s *style*:

For as to the wayfaring pilgrim wandering in the dark and misty night, every light though never so little is comfortable: and to the stranger that traveleth in a land of divers language, any that can (though it be but brokenly) speak his country tongue, doth not a little rejoyce him: So peradventure in this foggy night of heresie, and the confusion of tongues which it hath here in our Island procured, this dim light which I shall set forth before you, and these my Catholic, though broken speeches, which I shall use unto you, will not be altogether unpleasant (3-4).

In this passage, as in many of Southwell’s lyrics, the theme of exile is articulated as an abstract existential state, a specific allegorical comment on the position of English Catholics, as well as a figure for the possibilities of error inherent in language.³⁵

Southwell gives one of his most subtle treatments of these themes in “At Home in Heaven” which begins with a *dilatatio* on I Corinthians 13:12 in which an address to the “FAIRE soule” functions as a discourse directed to God via his image in the soul.

Through the structure of self-address Southwell here again registers the absence of Christ as an experience of self-alienation:

FAIRE soule, how long shall veyles thy graces shroud?
 How long shall this exile with-hold thy right?
 When will thy sunne disperse this mortall cloud,
 And give thy gloryes scope to blaze their light?
 O that a Starre more fit for Angels eyes,
 Should pyne in earth, not shine above the skyes.

As with much of Southwell's work, complex puns encode an historical as well as an anagogic level of reference. The play of meanings between the words "scope" and "blaze" for instance, move between an anagogic concern with the final revelation of the soul as an image of God, and an historical concern with the speaker's own desire to effectively write the state of his soul within hostile circumstances. Scope, in this context, suggests not only "the sphere or area over which an activity is effective" (OED), nor does its connotations of sight simply develop the motif of holy light/sight/perception, but it also implies a more concrete, and more historical sense of having "the room for exercise, possessing the liberty to act" (OED). The anagogic dimension of "scope" thus corresponds with "blaze" in the apocalyptic sense of "to proclaim (as with a trumpet)," while its literal/historical dimension pertains to "blaze" in the rhetorical sense of "to describe heraldically -- to blazon, or descry" (OED). This literary and historical mode of reference is developed in the following line through the pun on "pyne" which denotatively means "lament" or "pine" while connotatively suggesting "housed-in" or "boxed" like a body in a coffin. Southwell thus expresses a conventional sense of spiritual claustrophobia in regard to the state of his soul at the same time he registers a

more idiosyncratic sense of being poetically immured.³⁶ More importantly, this inability to act symbolically – an inability, that is, to sublimate – is, as we saw with Magdalene, itself a kind of death, a castration fear that is more Orphic than Oedipal in nature. Moreover, given the self-reflexive address of the first line, the ability to “blaze” Christ’s presence in the soul coincides with the unification of inward division as experienced in and through language. In this respect, the rhetorical structure of Southwell’s poem bears out Thomas Aquinas’s assertion that “we need to praise God with our lips, not indeed for His sake, but for our own sake, since by praising Him our devotion is aroused towards Him” (*Summa* 2:2 q.91 art. 1 qtd in Fineman 6). For Southwell the inward divisions of the self are united through the divine object to which they are aimed.

Southwell’s meta-commentary on the difficulties of representing the state of the soul is further elaborated in relation to the theme of Christ’s incarnation in stanza three of the poem. Describing the incarnation as a process by which God chained himself “in the lynckes of tender love,” Southwell says “this made him under mortall load to creepe : / And in our flesh his god head to enwrap. / This made him sojourne with us in exile: / And not disdayne our tytles in his style” (15-18). By taking on the form of man, Christ takes on a human “style.” Southwell associates this style, here and elsewhere, with what, after Ennodius and Augustine, became known as “*sermo simplex*” or “plain style,” as opposed to “*sermo artifex*,” or eloquent style (Curtius 149). Because Christ took on the humble and humiliating “pilgrim weede” (23) of earthly flesh, Christian poets are obliged to write in an equivalent style, a “*sermo humilis*”³⁷:

Give not assent to muddy minded skill,

That deems the feature of a pleasing face
 To be the sweetest baite to lure the will:
 Not valewing right the worth of Ghostly grace.

(31-36)

(Vale)wing” the wrong object means to see through “vales” and thus to write according to a “muddy minded skill” whereas a Christly mode of perception is accompanied by clarity and simplicity.³⁸

Elsewhere, Southwell explicitly associates the plain-style with the experience of exile, defining his existential condition as the “path of plaint.” Such sentiments express Southwell’s psycho-spiritual preparations for martyrdom at the same time they figure the general state of the Christian soul separated from God:

My walke the path of plaint,
 My prospect into hell;
 Where Judas and his cursed crue,
 In endlesse paines doe dwell.

And though I seeme to use
 The faining Poets stile,
 To figure forth my careful plight,
 My fall, and my exile:

Yet is my greefe not fain’d,
 Wherein I starve and pine,
 Who feeleth most, shall think it least,
 If his compare with mine. (“A Phantasie” 141-152)

Insofar as specific rhetorical forms and particular lexical choices provide the structure of existential/spiritual states, the poet is compelled to become highly conscious of those forms which best embody Christly subjection.

For instance, in “Looke Home” Southwell employs the verb “enwrap” to authorize the plain-style as an *imitatio Christi*. By employing this verb as the basis of the *sermo*

simplex Southwell deploys a complex etymology that links the incarnation with the lowly-style of the Christian poet, which, in turn, is linked to the state of English Catholics. The etymology of the Latin root *simplex*, as Peter Auksi explains,

involves an implicit metaphor: *sem-* means 'one,' and the second element, *-plex*, derives from *plicare*, 'to fold,' as in clothing or bedsheets, for example. The cognate verb *plectere* (past participle, *plexus*) means 'to weave, plait entwine', and as a verbal adjective, 'braided, pleated.' (3)

By speaking of the incarnation as an "enwrapping" -- within a poem that is explicitly concerned with the appropriate modes of representing Christ and his image within the "faire soul" -- Southwell provides an etymological basis for the Augustinian idea that the plain style is a rhetorical analog to the incarnation itself. The etymological associations between the incarnation and the *sermo humilis* continue in the following stanza where Southwell recalls the reader to the relationship between *humilis* (humility) and *humus* (soil), the latter of which, as Auerbach has pointed in relation to Augustine, indicates physical and social lowliness (*Literary* 40-41). In this case, the Latinate associations with the word "soil" also imply an historical level of reference, referring not only to the fallen world in general but to England, this "poor Country" in particular: "This brought him [Christ] from the ranckes of heaven'ly quires, / Into this vale of tears, and cursed soyle [. . .] / This made him wander in our Pilgrim weede, / And taste our tormentes, to relieve our neede" (19-20, 23-24). Southwell thus authorizes the composition of devotional poetry on the grounds that the act of writing verse is an *imitatio Christi*. Moreover, he suggests that the lived-experience of religious exile is best figured through the penitential authenticity provided by the plain-style.³⁹

This vision of poetry as an *imitatio Christi* consists of more than an expression of pious themes through a *sermo simplex*; it bears with it a visually based poetics premised on a Neoplatonic theory of language as mimesis, a vision, which in the practice of similitude, often tends towards Cratylism. In Augustine's thought, similitude is, as Margaret W. Ferguson puts it, "an ethical imperative, *imitatio Christii*, and the cornerstone of a mimetic theory of language" (846).⁴⁰ The same holds for Southwell as is clear from his poem "Looke Home," which summarizes the ideal vision of the contemplative soul as it is constituted within a mimetic vision of language:

RETYRED thoughts enjoy their owne delights,
 As beawtie doth in selfe beholding eye:
 Mans mind a myrrour is of heavenly sights,
 A breefe wherein all marvailles summed lye.
 Of fayrest formes, and sweetest shapes the store,
 Most gracefull all, yet thought may grace them more. (1-6)

While this vision of the "iconic ego" as a mirror of God's divinity is an unoriginal re-statement of Neoplatonic clichés that can be found in a number of Elizabethan translations of medieval treatises on the soul as a "mirror" -- including Elizabeth's own *The Mirror of the Sinful Soul* and the anonymous *The Mirror of Simple Souls* -- it is distinctly Southwellian in one crucial point.⁴¹ The soul is figured here as a "breefe" or "writing by official or legal authority; a royal letter or mandate; a writ; a summons; a letter of the Pope to an individual or religious community (*OED*). The metaphor of the soul as a "brief" thus suggests that the poet has an apostolic obligation to follow the proclamation of the soul, rather than the series of Royal proclamations issuing from a debased and un-Catholic authority. This metaphor of the soul as a divine mandate recalls

passages in *An Humble Supplication* in which Southwell distinguishes between

“imaginary” and divine Bulls:

Let it be read in letters of experience whether Catholiques be of soe shallow braine, or of soe weake understanding, that they couldbe caried away with these imaginary Bulls, promising heaven or threatening hell [. . .] it is enough to know that noe Bull can otherwise promise heaven or threaten hell, but for keeping or breaking gods Commandments. (28)

Following the Augustinian idea of “interior illumination” the only true “proclamation” in this poem is God’s word as imprinted on the “Faire Soul.” In “Looke Home,” then, Southwell establishes the relationship between the self and God by figuring the soul as a text containing a divine imperative which demands a response in its own image.

Southwell’s recourse to the Augustinian idea of interior illumination is thus occasioned by and indeed is a response to the lived-experience of religious exile. As such, Southwell produces a somewhat unlikely form of Catholic interiority, an economy of inwardly experienced subjection to God, that derives its structure through an opposition to the political and externally imposed subjection to the Queen. Not surprisingly then, the poet must look into himself, rather than outwards, in order to capture the image of God. He does so in stanza two by adopting a rhetoric of accumulation, deploying *iteratio* as a means for imitating the productive and dilatory effects of the *logos*, the one Word that is, at the same time, all words: [God’s] “skilfull might gave many sparkes of blisse, / And to disceren this blisse a native light. / To frame Gods image as his worthes requirede: / His might, his skill, his word, and will conspirde” (18-19). The source behind this “breathing-together” of “skill, word, and will” is the creative breath or *spire* that infused divine insight into the “native light” of the illuminated soul. The final stanza of “Looke Home”

further the production of such Catholic inwardness by having the speaker identify the interiority of the soul's "brief" with the external force of divine proclamation.

"Looke Home" concludes with a chiasmatic coupling through which Southwell "enwraps" himself with the "performing word" of God. The poet is thus made in the "self-beholding" image of the *logos* as articulated in the opening to the Gospel of John⁴²:

All that he had his image should present
 All that it should present he could afford:
 To that he could afford his will was bent
 His will was followed with performing word.
 Let this suffice, by this conceive the rest,
 He should, he could, he would, he did the best. (19-25)

The analogous series of concentric circles that began the poem are now crossed, one with the other, as the poet identifies with the Word as *kerygma* or divine proclamation.

Theocentric abstractions thus give way to linguistic isomorphism as the crossing of words is now imagined as bodying forth the crossing of human and divine. In other words, the two chiasmuses formed by the crossing of "should present/could afford/and his will was" seek to rhetorically inscribe, rather than thematically assert, the centrality of the incarnation to this vision of divine immanence, thereby drawing the Soul and God, words and Word closer together.⁴³ The "self-beholding" structure of the speaker's iconic ego is thus imagined as having been locked-into-place, as it were, by the mystery of the incarnate Word, producing a form of immediate self-presence that Derrida refers to as auto-affection or *s'entendre parler*. In this respect, Southwell imitates the way that the kerygmatic or proclamatory dimension of Scriptural authority appears, as Northrop Frye

asserts, when “it seems to be language that uses man rather than man that uses language” (*Words* 116).

Even here, though, in Southwell’s most explicitly logocentric and least Ignatian poem, he emphasizes the disjuncture, rather than the continuity, between the fullness of the divine Word and the experience of human lack and subjection that leads to an imitation of it. Southwell draws attention to the gap between the imperfections of the poet’s words and the ideal performative utterance of the divine Word in the very gesture of asserting their continuity. Through the repetition of conditional clauses and the metrically/syntactically clumsy use of *iteratio* in the final line, the speaker implies a humbled tone of rhetorical uncertainty, generating a self-consuming or more properly apophatic structure that is consistent with Southwell’s various comments on the plain-style. Moreover, the vision of self-presence articulated in the poet’s efforts “To frame Gods image” is not merely qualified with lines like: “Let this suffice, by this conceive the rest,” but is, as it were, split from within, unveiling an abyss between God’s self-present Word and the discontinuous experience of self that is characteristic of Southwell’s inwardly tortured speakers more generally. To put this more precisely, the accumulative logic of *iteratio* sums up the unifying force of the *logos* while, at the same time, inscribing the poet’s incapacity to gather all things together under one “might/word/skill.” Southwell thus presents a variation of the “disseminative-recapitulative” form popularized in Italian and Neo-Latin verse -- and emulated in Elizabethan sonnets -- in which a series of four or five words are recited in the first half of a poem or stanza and then recapitulated in the latter half. In this poem, Southwell

emphasizes dissemination over recapitulation as a means for expressing a humbled uncertainty about his rhetorical powers.⁴⁴ Theme and form are thus most deeply at odds precisely when they appear most coincident. The chiasmatic forms of stanza four unsettle, at the very same time that they secure, the analogical structure through which the speaker's soul is said to mirror God's Word. The shift from a confident deliberation of Neoplatonic analogies to the unimpressive use of *iteratio* in the final stanza thus discloses an *aporia* between human words and divine logos. By employing this mode of apophansis, the speaker undermines the metaphysical confidence provided by Neoplatonic analogies that he simultaneously reasserts; his ostensibly naive rhetoric thus takes away what the theocentric theme gives.⁴⁵ The deferral of a single term which would secure the play of analogies suggests that this iconic ego is displaced from itself in the manner that Derrida describes when he speaks of how "what is reflected is split *in itself* and not only as an addition to itself of its image. The reflection, the image, the double, splits what it doubles. The origin of the speculation becomes a difference. What can look at itself is not one; and the law of the addition of the origin to its representation, of the thing to its image, is that one plus one makes at least three" (*Of Grammatology* 36).

While "Looke Home" thematically presents a Neoplatonic vision of the speaker as a self-present "eye," its rhetorical discontinuities disclose the extent to which such auto-affection is displaced from within, as it were, by a split-subject. In this respect, "Looke Home" is exemplary of how Southwell's vision of the self is informed by a dialectical tension between the self-beholding presence of the "iconic ego" and the subject of lack as constituted through a poetics of the plaint. Southwell thematically expresses this

dialectical inversion of the “iconic ego” in “St. Peter’s Complaint” when Peter’s soul is figured as the “monument of fear, the map of shame / The mirroure of mishap, the staine of place” (27-8). This inversion of the iconic-ego is a solipsistic and self-alienated map of discord and guilt, a reflection of one’s particular sinfulness rather than a specular emanation of the universal Word. The spiritual drama of the Southwellian subject is thus the drama of seeking to unify the self through love of and for God. In perfect Ignatian fashion, Southwell often defends against the experience of exile from God by yielding to it, comparing one’s own failures *against* divine perfection as the paradoxical means of drawing closer to God.⁴⁶ It is in this expression of desire that the Southwellian subject is precipitated and it is in the very gesture of articulating one’s lack that one becomes Christ-like. Southwell fully realizes this Petrarchan economy of desire, lack, and subjection in lyric form in “A vale of tears” which was published in 1595, the same year as his execution.

III. A Vale of Tears

A. Lytton Sells reasonably contends that “A vale of tears” was occasioned by Southwell’s crossing of the Alps in 1586, specifically the unusually traitorous St. Gothard’s Pass (330). While Southwell’s actual crossing of the Alps may have provided the impetus for the poem, the Jesuit’s representation of the landscape is highly mediated by Old Testament accounts of the power of nature to destroy, as H.M. Richmond notes, “the proper balance of the human mind to the point of creating acute neurosis” (39).⁴⁷

While Southwell's poem is informed by representations of spiritually discombobulating landscapes in the Book of Wisdom, its figuring of the Alpine landscape is also mediated by Petrarch's account of his ascent of Mont Ventoux. In a letter to his confessor Dionisius da Borgo San Sepulchro, Petrarch comments on how he read the following admonition from Augustine's *Confessions* before leaving the mountain peak: "men go about and admire lofty mountains, and broad stars, and forget their own selves while doing so" (qtd. in Richmond 39). Petrarch then answers Augustine's rebuke by remarking that "I was *amazed* and angry with myself for marvelling but now at earthly things, when I ought to have learnt long ago that nothing save the soul was marvellous" (Richmond 39 my emphasis). Southwell echoes Augustine and Petrarch in his *Short Rules of A Good life*, when he directs himself away from "all disordered love of all creatures, and especially myself" in order to love "nothing but in God and for God" (29). "A vale of tears" records precisely this process of moving from a disordered state of spiritual vacuity to a focused, penitential articulation of love in and for God.

While trying to express undivided love for God in both accusative and genitive cases amidst a psychologically overwhelming, even traumatic, landscape, "A vale of tears" engages a number of the most primary conventions of elegiac poetry, specifically its tendency to portray the elegist's reluctant submission to language itself. As such, "A vale of tears" is consistent with Peter M. Sacks's assertion that the work which is generally performed by an elegy is best understood in the psychoanalytic context of "the work of mourning" (2). Like mourning itself, elegies often perform a dynamic process of negotiating loss through the potentially recuperative, but necessarily ambivalent, powers

of language. In this respect, elegies generally represent a movement from loss to consolation, engaging with, and reflecting upon, the ambivalent deflections of desire that are necessary to the relinquishment of a lost object and the acceptance of not only a substitute but the very process and exercise of (symbolic) substitution itself. In other words, elegies are an exceptionally effective place for examining the dynamics involved not only in mourning as the mitigation of empirical loss, but of mourning as the process by which one becomes a subject through one's assumption of alienation within language. This assumption of one's alienation within signification (or what Lacan calls symbolic castration) relies upon an imaginary relation to a vision of wholeness or unity: what we have called in the context of Southwell's work "the iconic ego." As we saw in the introduction, the pre-historical origins of this imaginary unity are usually derived from an infant's own mirror image or the coordinated body of the mother, an image which the infant aspires to emulate. Lacan describes this momentary vision of self-consistency, a vision which comes into focus retroactively, when he says that the "only homogenous function of consciousness is the imaginary capture of the ego by its mirror reflection and the function of misrecognition which remains attached to it" (*Écrits* 32). When a subject becomes psychologically threatened, this *Gestalt* often fragments as the subject's experience of disintegration or "fearful oblivion" coincides with fantasies of bodily maceration and fragmentation. Southwell's "A vale of Tears" records and mitigates the experience of psychic fragmentation that is symptomatic of symbolic castration. Moreover, it registers and seeks to alleviate the sense of fragmentation and inner division that characterized the experience of Elizabethan Catholics who were alienated from the

liturgical life that grounded the integrity of both self and community for centuries.

Southwell's poem is carefully structured so as to reflect the general experience of the fallen soul as well as the particular experience of the Elizabethan Catholic subject threatened with self-division and social exile.

The reading that follows thus focuses on how Southwell's poem engages the recuperative powers of elegiac language through its precise rhetorical organization, its movement from a rhetoric of division, emptiness, and loss to a consolatory language of union, identity, and wholeness. This latter language of identity comes at the price of recognizing that the lack and discordance of the external landscape is a reflection of the speaker's non-penitent condition. The landscape, in other words, is, to re-quote the title of Elizabeth's spiritual treatise, *A Mirror of the Sinful Soul*. As such, a sense of inward consistency or psychic integrity is only possible by first assuming one's fundamental lack in relation to God's absolute perfection. As Kristeva puts it in relation to the Eucharist, this process involves admitting "that I am divided and lapsing with respect to my ideal, Christ, whose introjection [. . .] sanctifies me while reminding me of my incompleteness" (*Powers* 118-9). This identificatory process is made possible, of course, by God's first having assumed human lack. This lack within the divine person is encapsulated in Christ's last words in the Gospel of Mark: "O Father, why hast thou forsaken me" (15:34). The notion that a deeper understanding of one's separation from God paradoxically allows for a more intimate relation with him underlies the Ignatian technique of comparing one's shortcomings with God's perfection.⁴⁸ "A vale of tears" dramatizes this process of coming to spiritual identity through the assumption of lack by

presenting a penitential drama in which the speaker moves from being "amazed" at the horror of nature without recognizing the horrors of his own sinful self. The poem thus represents the speaker's coming into a state of contrition: the denial of self through a fully sublimed love of God as the ideal subject, the immanent (introjected) Other.

Drawing, in part, on Ignatius's emphasis on the senses in the meditative process -- particularly the meditation on hell in which the practitioner imagines hell using all five senses in order to envision its " length, breadth, and depth" (*Ignatius 29*)⁴⁹ -- Southwell begins his description of the Alpine landscape through another re-casting of I Corinthians 13:12:

A VALE there is enwrap with dreadfull shades,
Which thicke of mourning pines shrouds from the sunne,
Where hanging cliffs yeld short and dumpish glades,
And snowie floud with broken streames doth runne. (1-4)

The opening lines of the poem initiate the unsettling movement from high to low, from bright to dark, from vast space to encroaching sky; all of which create a disturbing effect of the landscape as a place of ubiquitous and incomprehensible loss, creating the effect, in turn, that the speaker is undergoing an experience of spiritual "neurosis," a fragmenting of perception and self-awareness.

This continues in stanzas two and three as the speaker moves from an emphasis on sight to sound, re-creating, as Louis Martz first noticed, the "composition of place" as practiced in the Ignatian method. It is first a place "Where *eie-roume* is from rockes to cloudie sky" (5) and then a site "Where ears of other sound can have no choice / But various blustering of the stubburne winde" (9-10). The landscape is thus broken into part-

objects, each of which is registered by one rather than all the senses. This fragmenting of perception discloses the alienating and objectifying nature of the landscape, emphasizing, as it does, the sense of claustrophobia beginning to set in as no sounds other than “stubburne winde” can be heard. The structure of this passage, with its emphasis on the landscape’s lack of coherence and the speaker’s lack of choice in relation to it, recalls the numerous passages we have seen thus far where Southwell dramatizes the paralytic nature of a forced choice.

The incoherence of the landscape expressed in the first three stanzas discloses the extent to which Southwell’s poem re-works the myth of the region of unlikeness or *regio dissimilitudinis* that appears first in Plato’s *Statesman* and is then Christianized by Plotinus, Augustine, William of St. Thierry and Dante among others (Ferguson 846). In Plato, the myth of the region of unlikeness is designed to explain how the cosmos, though divine in origin, has a bodily form which prevents it from attaining unchangeable perfection. According to this myth, “to be the same, steadfast and abiding, is the prerogative of the divinest things only” (269d qtd. Ferguson 845). A touchstone for religious exile literature, the region of unlikeness myth comes to inform representations of language as well as nature. For Augustine and Southwell after him, the region of unlikeness reflects the exile imposed on the human soul by human language itself. This notion that the bodily dimension of creation might result in an infinite and demonic reproduction of soulless nature -- an endless erring from God that is mirrored in language’s incapacity to capture notions of eternity and divinity -- is especially visible in

stanza four of the poem and informs the use of ambiguity throughout the lyric as a whole.

Stanza four develops the “divers noise” heard in the previous stanza as

waters wrastle with encountring stones,
That break their streames, and turne them into foame,
The hollow clouds full fraught with thundring groans,
With hideous thumps discharge their pregnant wombe. (13-16)

Faintly re-calling the imagery in the Scylla and Charybidis episode in the *Odyssey*, this stanza makes of creation a demonic mother raining her “discharge” upon the earth thereby threatening the “pilgrim wights” who wander its surface. The landscape’s fearful reproduction of “noise,” and the paralytic state it induces disclose the absence of the “Son” who imposes form on this “maternal” formlessness. Thus like the Sirens’ Song whose spectral timbres lure men to their death, the “fearful music” that emanates from the clouds’ “hideous thumps” appears lifeless and without “grace” -- seeming to pointlessly reproduce the meaninglessness of the landscape upon which the rain falls:

And in the horror of this fearfull quier,
Consists the musicke of this dolefull place:
All pleasant birds their tunes from thence retire,
Where none but heavy notes have any grace. (17-20)

These two stanzas are exemplary moments in the early modern history of the elegy to the extent that they make unusually explicit the way that the work of mourning undertaken in elegies often recapitulates processes involved in the subject’s having becoming a subject of language. Indeed, the “maternalization” of this region of unlikeness and its fragmentation into part-objects suggest that what is being ritually performed here is not simply the crossing of an Alpine landscape, but – as in the passage from Southwell’s spiritual diary – what is at stake is the primordial drama of assuming

the Name. In this case, the speaker's assumption into an elegiac mode of language repeats the process of signifying the Real of the fragmented (maternal) body, the *corps morcelle*, which is displaced onto the landscape itself. Such regressive fantasies generally coincide with the aggressive disintegration of the individual, resulting in the "fearful oblivion" that threatened *Magdalene* and that Southwell suggests threatens the Catholic subject in the *Supplication*. Indeed, the underlying fantasy of this sequence -- a fantasy that Lacan and others have argued appears with particular force in the early modern period, as in the *disjecta membra* represented in Hieronymus Bosch's work -- is that of a regressive return to the pre-symbolized body whose un-symbolizable status threatens the subject with psychic disintegration. By returning to this *horror vacui* in order to mitigate its fragmenting effects, the poem demonstrates how, as Sacks puts it, the elegists' reward generally "resembles or augments that of the child [acceding to language, for] both often involve inherited legacies and consoling identifications with symbolic, even immortal, figures of power" (8).

It is in this most primordial and most elegiac of contexts that we should read the way in which the poem dramatizes how the speaker comes to recognize "art" within "nature's" unperfected chaos. The speaker introduces the common assumption in early modern poetic discourse that art supplements nature in stanza six:

Resort there is of none but pilgrim wights,
That passe with trembling foot and panting heart,
With terror cast in cold and shivering frights,
They judge the place to terror framde by art:

Yet natures worke it is of arte untoucht
So strait indeed, so vast unto the eie,

With such disordered order strangely coucht,
 And so with pleasing horror low and hie. (21-28)

The ambivalence registered here suggests that the speaker has only the most nascent understanding of the potential spiritual significance of this scene. This is evident not only in the rather obvious ambivalence recorded in the phrase "pleasing horror low and hie," but it is also apparent in the poem's diction. Indeed, an ambiguity begins to emerge here through the term "resort" that is crucial to the speaker's translation of the landscape from a site of division and meaninglessness to union and discernible form. On one hand these lines thematize the incomprehensibility of "Nature's work" by emphasizing the sense that it is "of arte untoucht," while at the same time the term "resort" insinuates not only a "concourse or assemblage of people" (*OED*) but also "an opportunity for repair, retreat, or access to a place" (*OED*). This is the first point in the poem, in other words, where the speaker begins to advance towards a recognition of the "place" as a scene of repair, of communion, of meaning, rather than a site of sheer terror. To this extent, the speaker has implicitly begun to transform what is "of art untoucht" into devotionally meaningful terms. The poem develops by making this process of transformation increasingly explicit throughout. Indeed, the latent insinuation here that the place is spiritually purposive rather than symbolically vacuous becomes central in the following three stanzas.

In the following three stanzas the coincidence of interior spiritual states and exterior physical motions is inscribed in the formal movements from alterity to identity and from opposition to union, rather than as an explicitly thematized recognition. The oppositional elements of the landscape are tightly condensed into individual words set against one

another, creating an uncomfortable sense of physical/spiritual dislocation: "natures worke it is of arte untoucht [. . .] / With such disordered order strangely coucht, / And so with pleasing horror low and hie / [. . .] Where nothing seemed wrong, yet nothing right" (27-28, 32). This dense juxtapositioning reaches its most condensed expression in the first line of stanza nine as the word "mated" inscribes the dual senses of confusion and peace, loneliness and communion, fear and mutuality. Directly at the center of the poem, the speaker tells us that the landscape is "A place for mated minds, an onely bower / Where every thing doth sooth a dumpish mood" (34). The term mated signifies both the sense of being "distraught," as in "the bitter smart that strained my mated mind" (*OED*), and a sense of likeness, as in a "sweet union held of mated will" (*OED*). This sense of likeness or similarity refers to the speaker's relationship with the "Pilgrim Wights" of stanza six, while implicitly referring to the identity of the speaker and the landscape itself. Thus the various forms of opposition articulated up to this point are momentarily united in this term that carries multiple but not opposing meanings. The horrifying, alien landscape is now a "bower" providing a brief moment of comfort. The unification of subject and object, of the speaker's inner world and the external physical world, is not registered in terms of content as such, but rather through the productive ambiguity of the phrase "mated". Indeed, it is here, at the center of the poem that Southwell's reader, one spiritual pilgrim among many, is invited into the meditational process the text presents. The place for "mated minds" is no longer a specific place: it is now a shared existential/spiritual condition, a state of being where one seeks to reconcile feelings of dislocation from God. The term "mated", then, makes more explicit what remained implicit in the word "resort."

It is at this central moment in the poem, what we might call the typological juncture, that the speaker offers the reader the opportunity to imaginatively re-align the oppositions formulated thus far. The formal and spatial motions of the poem, its movements from opposition to unity, from geographic particularity to spiritual generality, invite the reader to re-interpret a similarity as an identity, thus furthering the symbolic sense of self-unity the speaker seeks to attain. Indeed, the chaos and "horror of this fearful quier," the constant jarring motion from sky to earth, heat to cold, reaches a still point in the poem's middle as the reader is invited to imaginatively unite speaker and listener, external and internal. This unification is then registered in the images as the "Earth lies forlorne, the cloudie skie doth lower, / The wind here weepes, here sighes, here cries aloude" (32-5). The previous cacophony is briefly translated into a harmonious, if still deeply mournful and even claustrophobia inducing, choir of sound and sight.

Even at the point of momentary resolution, however, a clear ambiguity remains that reflects the speaker's imperfect sense of spiritual purpose. This is evident to the extent that "soothe" signifies not only "comfort" but also "show" or "declare" (OED). This latter meaning can be further extended such that the word signifies "to maintain or put forward a lie as being true," as in the opening of Southwell's *An Humble Supplication* when he suggests that the Queen's Magistrates must "soothe things so directly disproved by common sense" (2). On one hand then, the lines express a sense of momentary ease, a sense of spiritual solidarity amongst the various "Pilgrim Wights" sharing the "bower"; yet on the other, they further signify the way that the landscape cannot help but to "betray" a sense of loss that remains disconnected from the consciousness of the speaker.

The sense of comfort attained here is momentary and imperfect, an imperfection inscribed within the ambiguity of the diction itself. To this extent, the speaker's language and the reality of the external landscape still remain imperfectly matched at this point. The connection, in other words, between the interior state of the speaker and the outward world of the landscape has yet to be deliberately thematized, recognized that is, as a meaningful identity.

After this still point, the imagistic and rhetorical oppositions are explicitly taken up again as the meditative process begins anew by referring back to the imagery of the poem's opening stanza: "The pines thicke set, hie growne, and ever greene, / Still cloath the place with sad and mourning vaile" (41-2). The resolution achieved through the figure of the "mated minds" proves to be momentary, but nonetheless crucial to the reader's deepening consciousness that the speaker is struggling towards a meaningful vision of the self in relation to the previously terrifying landscape. The meditative focus deepens as the reader is invited to identify with the speaker and the community of "mated minds" to which he belongs. This identification is coincident with the increasingly penitential recognition of how the landscape is echoing or mirroring the reader's own sinfulness. Consequently, the landscape now becomes a fit place for self-analysis and the redeeming power of sorrowful repentance: "All pangs and heavie passions here may find / A thousand motives suitly to their griefes, / To feed the sorrowes of their troubled minde, / And chase away dame pleasures vaine reliefes" (53-56). We have now begun to emerge into a deliberately thematic recognition of the appropriateness of the landscape for religious meditation; the landscape is, effectively, no longer entirely "of arte untoucht."

Not surprisingly then, the landscape is now said to "conspire" with the speaker and his fellow pilgrims:

To plaining thoughts this vaile a rest may bee,
 To which from worldly joyes they may retire.
 Where sorrow springs from water, stone and tree,
 Where everie thing with mourners doth conspire. (57-60)

The Latinate sense of conspire as "to breathe together" plays off the Hebrew origins of "plaint" which derive from the term "naham" meaning literally, "difficulty in breathing." Moreover, these lines resolve the earlier ambiguity in line 33 ("sooth a dumpish mood") by making explicit the sense that the speaker now derives comfort or "rest," rather than discomfort and terror, from the reflection of his sorrow in the "conspiring" world around him. The sense of "conspire," however, still implies that the landscape stands in an objective relation to the speaker, that its mirroring effect is more coincidental than providential. This changes in the following three stanzas as a series of auditory images are reconciled and the speaker places the landscape within a familiar biblical and eschatological context.

The passive constructions of stanza 15 shift into a mode of deliberate meditation constructed through a series of imperative forms in the following stanzas:

Set here my soule maine streames of teares afloate
 Here all thy sinfull foiles alone recount,
 Of solemne tunes make thou the dolefulst note,
 that to thy ditties dolor may amount. (61-64).

The "heavy notes," "fearfull quier," "marble grones" and "roaring beates" of earlier stanzas are now deliberately translated into signs of inward griefs, of "solemn tunes," that are not only discernible but spiritually efficacious. The following stanza is alone in

situating the landscape within a recognizably biblical context, thus marking the most explicit point in the transition from the *horror vacui* of the earlier stanzas to the symbolically constituted world of the speaker's newly contrite soul: "When *Eccho* doth repeat thy plainful cries / *Thinke* that the verie stones thy sinnes bewray, / And now accuse thee with their sad replies, / As heaven and earth shall in the latter day" (65-68, my emphasis). The allusion to Luke 19:40⁵⁰ establishes the speaker's sense of self within a meaningful symbolic frame that explicitly extends into a view of eschatological history with the reference to the "latter day." The spiritual development of the speaker then, is consistent with the development of the formal dimensions of the poem and the increasing thematization of the self's relation to the landscape: the initial resolution (lines 33-35) occurs primarily in terms of a rhetorical still point, inscribing within it, nonetheless, a sense of unease about the relation between self and world, whereas the latter resolution functions thematically, as an explicit moment of reconciliation between the inward self and its outward expression. The reader, then, to the extent that s/he identifies with the speaker, moves from a state of unease regarding the discontinuity and ambiguity between self and landscape, to a position of identity between interior and exterior worlds.

This process of securing a sense of identity and spiritual purpose by a recognition of the external state as an inward and symbolic reality is secured in the following stanza through a visual image that complements the auditory patterns concluded in stanzas 15 and 16. The imagistic dimension of this resolution is completed through the figure of the "Limbeck" which purifies the heart while providing a formal resolution --- a means of re-translating division and cacophony into unity and harmony:

Let former faults be fuell of the fire,
 For griebe in Limbecke of thy heart to still
 Thy pensive thoughts, and dumps of thy desire,
 And vapoure tears up to thy eies at will. (69-72)

The complex pun on the word "still," indicating a distillation of sins and sorrows," a sense of "stillness or peace," as well as "to inscribe," resolves the wanderings of desire at both imagistic and rhetorical levels, while also indicating the poet's renewed capacity for expression. Likewise, the figure "dumps," signifying both a musical composition characterized by its sad minor tone (Brownlow 123) and the cavernous quality of the Alpine landscape, suggests the resolution of the visual and aural registers of desire initiated in stanzas two and three. By resolving the imagistic and rhetorical oppositions in the poem through the mirroring of landscape and speaker the poem enacts the purifying or distilling process formally as well as thematically. This process of purification occurs through the poem's movements from a consciousness of sin to the awareness of contrition, from noise to stillness, from physical and psychological division to imaginative unity. The function of ambiguity is no longer to insinuate division or opposition, but rather similarity and identity as the speaker's assumption of his penitential status demarcates him as a subject of the Name.

The final stanza of the poem marks the moment at which the speaker becomes fully conscious of the fact that the divisions of the landscape are effects of his own sinful consciousness. He now sees the Alpine landscape in penitential and confessional terms: "Let teares to tunes, and *paines to plaints* be prest, / And let this be the burdon of thy song, / Come deepe remorse, possess my sinfull brest / Delights adue, I harbourd you too

long" (73-76 my emphasis). Tears, as Robert Bellarmine notes in relation to St. Peter in 1610, are in themselves signifiers of confession and thus signs of contrition (*Disputations* 1206). The speaker thus dramatizes the importance of confession as a sacrament, an essential part of the work of salvation. Moreover, by internalizing the incoherence of the landscape into himself, the speaker gains symbolic leverage in the very gesture of relinquishing spiritual authority. By making the incoherence of "nature" a function of his own sinful state, a state of spiritual rather than physical exile, the poet symbolically acts upon the world, making it over into his contrite image.

More importantly, this passage thematizes Southwell's application of Petrarchan motifs for religious purposes, changing as he does the object of the "plaint" from the courtly lady to God. The Petrarchan figure of the "plaint," exploited by English sonneteers like Sir Thomas Wyatt, expresses, as Kenneth Graham argues, the speaker's desire for the courtly lady while implying an awareness of the speaker's unworthiness to gain her love and desire (40-41). As a figure of the lover's "moan" or "sigh" the plaint tends to sign the inexpressibility of the lover's affection, as in Wyatt's plaining "without tongue" (Graham 42). In this sense, the emotional sincerity and the accompanying inexpressiveness of the lover's "plaint" might be opposed to the more self-consciously rhetorical and confident expression of a speaker's "complaint" (40-47). The figure of the plaint, indicating a sense of humbled "uncertainty" and "inexpressibility," is clearly ideal for the religious poet seeking union, through a deepened consciousness of sin, with the most inexpressible of objects, God. Indeed, Southwell emphasizes the sense of uncertainty around the figure of the plaint as an expression of "pensive thoughts" derived

from “former faults” (69,71). To this extent, the emphasis on “plaint” expresses the way that Southwell's speaker seeks to deepen his consciousness of separation from God in order to inspire his own worthiness for union.

Through this deepening consciousness of sin expressed as “plaining thoughts,” Southwell's poem opens up the impossibly painful point of separation from the Father dramatized in the crucifixion. Kristeva describes this moment of division when she argues that the:

break, brief as might have been, in the bond linking Christ to his Father and to life introduces into the mythical representation of the Subject a fundamental and psychically necessary discontinuity. Such a caesura, which some have called a 'hiatus', provides an image, at the same time as a narrative, for many separations that build up the psychic life of individuals [. . .] it brought to consciousness the essential dramas that are internal to the becoming of each and every subject. It thus endows itself with a tremendous cathartic power. (*Black* 132)

By adapting the principles of the Petrarchan plaint, Southwell presents a devotional variant of how the structure of sublimation in the courtly lyric tradition consists in the way that “the Object of desire itself coincides with the force that prevents its attainment-- in a way, the object 'is' its own withdrawal, its own retraction” (Žižek, *Metastases* 96). Southwell thus adapts the self-defeating structure of Petrarchan desire for inciting his reader to a penitential longing for God. As such, the conclusion to “A vale of tears” not only exemplifies Debora Shuger's thesis that narratives of Christ's sacrifice provide the grammatical and lexical structure through which early modern devotional identity is constituted (*Renaissance Bible* 9,189), but it also demonstrates how the assumption of the Name occurs in Southwell's work through an identification with the gap, the lack, or

emptiness that is the (impossible) Object of one's desire. In this respect, the Southwellian subject may be said to have the structure of the plaint.

The emphasis throughout Southwell's work on the sublime nature of suffering, torture, loss, and "plaintful" emptiness is not reducible to the Catholic institutionalization of masochism, but rather it demonstrates the extent to which the persecution of the Elizabethan Catholic community occasions a deepened articulation of the principle at the heart of Christian *agape*, that it is God's own humiliation which enables one to draw closer to his otherwise sublime Otherness. Žižek articulates this paradox in his recent work *On Belief* in the following way: "*When I, a human being, experience myself as cut off from God, at that very moment of the utmost abjection, I am absolutely close to God, since I find myself in the position of the abandoned Christ*" (146). Few religious groups have a better grasp of this paradox than the Jesuits; fewer yet than the English Jesuits who served and died for the Elizabethan mission. Armed with the paradoxes of incarnationist theology, Southwell made of disempowerment a strangely empowering and socially disruptive stance. Of subjection he made a sublime, if at times ambivalent, inward art, one whose literary and biographical record would captivate at least two generations of Anglican readers and which would eventually form part of the Catholic canon.⁵¹

Notes

¹ The proclamation of 1571 – which was a response to the Pope's excommunication of Elizabeth – outlawed, among other things, the "bringing in and putting in execution of

Bulls and other instruments from the see of Rome,' and declared anyone a traitor who after July 1, 1571 'makes use of any bull, writing, or instrument of absolution or reconciliation with the Roman see, who absolves or reconciles another, who receives absolution or reconciliation' and made aiders and abettors of such traitors liable to penalties of praemunire, [. . .] and failure to denounce anyone who offered such absolution or reconciliation, a misprision or concealment of treason" (White, *Tudor* 203). The proclamations of 1581 and 85 more or less intensified these articles, putting particular emphasis on Catholic missionary activity as treasonable and thus punishable by torture and execution.

² "Tu amicabile tua dulcedine rapuisti ad te cor meum, et necesse est ut ego me tibi tradum seruum. Vicisti enim me, vicisti me Domine *Jesu* duplici praelio. Nam cum primū me sanctis tuis inspirationibus aggressus es, ego restiti, quasi tuam in Societatem me cooptari plus voluptatis allaturum tibi esset quam mihi lucri. Vidisti Domine infirmitatem meam et nouis machinis quatiens munitionem cordis mei, cum nullum reperirem effugium, necessitate compulsus post multam luctam tradidi me, et manui tuae potenti me submisi." I have slightly amended Janelle's translation.

³ The metaphor of divine rape that structures Southwell's vision of interpellation indicates, among a host of other things, the extent to which Southwell, unlike his Calvinist opponents, takes the body as well as the mind as the site of his penitential drama as is made clear in his letter to John Decker: "From that time our fervour in prayer began to increase; private chastisements of the flesh to afford delight; the inspiring use of the hairshirt and discipline to please exceedingly" (Letter to John Decker 1580, *Humble Supplication* 8). For a discussion of how paternal rape is a structural effect of Patriarchy see Mary Jacobus, "Freud's Mnemonic: Women, Screen Memories, and Feminist Nostalgia" *Michigan Quarterly Review* 26 (1987): 117-139.

⁴ This is a translation of the Latin version which appears in Louis Beirnaert's *Aux frontières de l'acte analytique: La Bible, Saint Ignace, Freud et Lacan*. (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987). 221. Beirnaert, himself a Jesuit and a Lacanian, is citing a traditionally received maxim of the Jesuits. My reading of the maxim relies on the way that Beirnaert uses Lacan's parsing of subjective positions in order to elucidate the meaning of Ignatius' axiom. See p. 219-227. See also Žižek's reading of the maxim in relation to the "authentically philosophical" dispositions shared by Hegel and Nietzsche in *On Belief*. 125.

⁵ For a fuller account of the linguistic structure of Ignatian meditation see Chapter five "The Circumstances of the Mystic Utterance" in Michel de Certeau's *The Mystic Fable*. See also the chapter on Loyola in Roland Barthe's *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, Trans., Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976).

⁶ The basic pattern of Jesuit meditation is three-fold, consisting of the “composition of place” done according to the work of memory, “analysis” done through the work of understanding, and colloquy which is accomplished through the affections and will. See Louis Martz *Poetry of Meditation: A Study in English Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1954, Rpt. 1969). For Augustine, memory is the most important faculty. This is not surprising given that Augustine and those that came after him understood memory to mean not only – indeed not even primarily – one’s own personal memory, but rather the memory of the typological, scriptural history from which one derives one’s life and being. The importance attributed to memory in Christian thought becomes apparent in the readings that follow.

⁷ For a study of the ocular and phantasmatic basis of Renaissance conceptions of love see Ioan. P Couliano’s *Eros and Magic in the Renaissance*, Trans. M. Cook (Chicago: Chicago Press, 1987). Freud, of course, re-configures this form of love in his 1917 essay, “On Narcissism” in which he suggests that one mode of object choice is premised on a desire to become the object.

⁸ Nancy Brown has shown that the sacrament of penance is of particular importance for Southwell and for the Catholic Mission generally in “The Structure of Southwell’s ‘Saint Peter’s Complaint’ *MLR* 51 (1966) 3-11.

⁹ See Beirnaert, 221. See also Gaston Fessard, s.j., *la Dialectique des Exercises de saint Ignace de Loyola* (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1956) p. 313.

¹⁰ As Nancy Brown argues, the English Church’s ambiguous position on the sacrament of penance was such that Southwell’s emphasis on penitence and the need for reconciliation or satisfaction would not have been fundamentally alien to an Anglican audience. She points out that “the 1559 Prayer Book prescribed individual confession of sins before a priest only in cases where private confession had not brought a quiet conscience, and in the single instance where it was retained in the “Order for the Visitation of the Sick” (“Complaint” 4-5). While the sacrament of penance no longer played a part in the daily life of the English Church, “grant of repentance” is affirmed in Article 16 of the 39 Articles declared by the Convocation in 1562 (Brown 4).

¹¹ “It is good for us to be here” Matthew 17:4.

¹² “How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord” Vulgate, Psalm 83:1.

¹³ In “Mourning and Melancholia” Freud distinguishes between two main modes of negotiating the loss of a beloved person or abstraction such as “one’s country” or one’s “liberty.” On the one hand, melancholia occurs when the subject unconsciously identifies

with the lost object, forming a literal and thus violent attachment to it. This form of “failed mourning” is characterized by what Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok call “incorporation” – the encrypting of the lost object into a secret, unconscious part of the ego. As we shall see, Southwell’s Magdalene is at risk of doing this when she seeks to become the un-resurrected body of Christ, rather than fashioning herself into an image of his spiritual perfection. On the other hand, mourning occurs when the subject is able to access the lost object through symbolic, rather than pathologically literal, magical means. For Abraham and Torok, this process is characterized the mechanism of “introjection” --- the fashioning of the self as a symbolic being in and through the mediations of the object. The analogical modes of thinking which Fitzherbert is working within occasion the introjection of the absent Catholic Church as a means for remembering, and in this case, possibly resurrecting, it.

¹⁴ For a discussion of social modes of abjection see Peter Stallybrass and Allan White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986).

¹⁵ James’s refusal of Puritan petitions for further reforms at the Hampton Court Conference was interpreted by some Puritans as a sign of the Church’s decline into a possible re-union with the Papacy (Cressy and Ferrell 123). Also, the settling of the Archpriest controversy which divided the Catholic mission during the 1590’s provided at least the semblance that the Catholic mission had recovered from its internal divisions (Bossy, *English Catholic* 35-48). For a discussion of Catholicism in Stuart England see J.C.H. Aveling *The Handle and the Axe: The Catholic recusants in England from Reformation to Emancipation* (London: Blond and Briggs, 1976) 122-141.

¹⁶ John Bossy has further explored the divisions between Jesuit and Secular priests to which Campion refers in his title. He discloses, for instance, how some “of the [secular] priests were tempted to neglect the mission while they tried to secure the sanction of the government for some minimal form of order which would provide status and recognition. The consequence was division and dispute, conducted with a degree of violence and irrationality which suggests that the problem of status concealed difficulties of a psychological order. The conditions of the mission, the threat of torture and execution, could place a priest under intolerable strain” (“Character” 52). These are some of the more extreme examples of what Corthell means when he speaks of the contradictions that Catholics had to negotiate in order to form a subject-position within the Elizabethan picture.

¹⁷ The analogical level of interpretation provides a perspective on the soul’s final journey towards God. It is thus eschatological in nature. On a related point F.W. Brownlow discusses how John Trussell, the editor of the 1595 edition of Southwell’s consolatory prose work *Triumphs Over Death*, argues for a four-fold reading of it. The emphasis on four levels suggests that Trussell adapts the four-fold practice of medieval exegesis:

literal; allegorical; tropological; and anagogic. Trussell first asks “us to read it as a piece addressed to the Earl of Arundel concerning his sister’s death” (55). This corresponds with the literal level of medieval exegesis. Second, “he wants us to enjoy the text as evidence of the quality of the mind and work of [its author].” This corresponds with the allegorical dimension of the medieval model insofar as the text is taken as a sign of its author’s inspired blessedness. Third, “we are to read it in the context of the deaths of both author and recipient, and fourth, in the context of our own life and impending death” (56). The third level is an extension of the allegorical mode while the fourth coincides with the tropological level insofar as it asks the reader to apply the text to his or her own life. While Trussell’s reading practice cannot be taken as representative of Southwell’s precise intentions, it nonetheless demonstrates that Southwell’s writing is generally based around allegorical modes of thinking. The anagogic level which Trussell leaves out of his model is of particular importance for Southwell’s poetry.

¹⁸ If one were to write a psychological biography of Southwell one would inevitably have to deal with the sense of guilt Southwell experienced due to his paternal grandfather’s role in the Henrican suppression of Catholics and the appropriation of Church lands as well as his own father’s apostasy. Southwell’s public berating of his father in *Epistle to His Father* is indeed a unique document in Elizabethan literature with considerable psycho-biographical import, revealing the extent to which Southwell felt the need to publicly display the righting of his own family past even at the expense of his father’s pride. It even appeared to have worked as his father is said to have converted before his death (Devlin 203).

¹⁹ See July 22nd in the Roman Catholic Breviary. For historical accounts of the Magdalene figure see Susan Haskin’s *Mary Magdalene: Myth and Metaphor* (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1993) and Marjorie M. Malvern *Venus in Sackcloth: The Magdalene’s Origins and Metamorphoses* (London: Southern Illinois UP, 1975).

²⁰ See *Venus in Sackcloth* p. 17 and 114 for discussions of early Christian and Medieval representations of Mary in allegorical terms.

²¹ Mary reveals the classic melancholic symptoms as both Freud and Burton outline them. She displays profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, inhibition of all activity, tendency towards violent self-reproaches and self-revilings (Freud, *Mourning* 252). She also displays “biting cares, perturbations, passions, sorrows, fears, suspicions, discontents, contentions, discords, wars, treacheries, enmities” (Burton, 728).

²² Elizabeth D. Harvey suggests that the Ovidian complaint mode constitutes a poetic articulation of Irigaray’s notion of dereliction p. 141. *Ventriloquized Voices: Feminist Theory and English Renaissance Texts* (London: Routledge, 1992).

²³ For further discussion of the distinction between melancholic incorporation and mournful introjection see Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) 107-139.

²⁴ The narrator's reference to Magdalene's "closet" and "Table" cue the reader into recognizing that her hyperbolic love of Christ is a function of her capacity for publicly displaying what is otherwise interior. The term "closet" had become synonymous with what is "private" and "inward" in the Elizabethan period while the term "Table" indicates in this context: "a tablet bearing or intended for an inscription or device: as the stone tablets on which the ten commandments were inscribed (*OED*). The narrator thus parallels Mary to Christ in her ability to "break the Table" or law. For discussions of early modern interiority in relation to the term "closet" see Alan Stewart's "The Early Modern Closet Discovered," *Representations* 50 (1995) 75-100. See also Anne Ferry's *The Inward Language: Sonnets of Wyatt, Sidney, Shakespeare, Donne* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

²⁵ I do not see this "spiritual fullness" in Debora Shuger's terms of how the creation of the personal soul emerges through frustrated eros. I am not, that is to say, diagnosing the emergence of the personal soul but rather I am showing how the production of interiority constitutes a specific response to religious exile in the period. See Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible: Scholarship, Sacrifice and Subjectivity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) 189.

²⁶ See Marshall Grossman's reading of Augustine's *Confessions* in *The Story of All Things* for a precise analysis of the formal operations that determine this synecdochically based form of spiritual (auto)biography.

²⁷ The flip side of this question is the one that Protestant authorities in England asked: how far a woman who broke the law was responsible for her own actions? For a discussion of this question in the context of recusant women see Marie B. Rowlands' "Recusant Women 1560-1640" in *Women in English Society 1500-1800*, ed. Mary Prior (London: Methuen, 1985) 149-180.

²⁸ According to Christopher Devlin, Lady Anne Dacre, Southwell's long-time Patron, converted to Catholicism despite her fears that her husband Philip Howard, a relatively powerful figure in Elizabethan politics, would not be sympathetic to her religious views. Philip, however, not only converted as well but died in the Tower for treason (132).

²⁹ According to the seventeenth-century Jesuit Historian Henry More, Southwell consoled the Lady Anne regarding the imprisonment of her husband by asking her to "not only bear her bereavement, but also to accept it for the love of her sublimer spouse, Christ Himself" (237).

³⁰ Southwell's Ignatian view of the passions is developed in Thomas Wright's 1601 treatise, *The Passions of the Mind*.

³¹ "To abandon the control of a horse." Southwell is continuing the Platonic allegory of the passions here. One of the primary functions of a Priest is, as George Herbert writes in *The Country Parson*, to help parishioners discern "when the affections of the soul in desiring and procuring increase of means" be a sin of covetousness or in conformity with God's will (60). Southwell's text exemplifies how difficult, indeed even impossible, such distinctions are to make.

³² The narrator's rebuke of Mary here echoes Ignatius warning against wild enthusiasm in the *Spiritual Meditations*.

³³ The post-Tridentine Roman Liturgy develops on the Gospel of John in celebrating Magdalene's fearlessness: "Impassioned to the Cross she clings: Nor fears beside the tomb to stay" (*Breviary* 700).

³⁴ Pierre Janelle points out that the social position of John Arundell's family "was of the highest" in the Western counties (59). He also points out that Dorothy would later die as a Benedictine Nun at Brussels (59).

³⁵ Allegory, as Fineman observes, "seems regularly to surface in critical or polemical atmospheres, when for political or metaphysical reasons there is something that cannot be said" (28). "The Structure of Allegorical Desire," *Allegory and Representation: Papers from the English Institute 1979-80* ed. Stephen J. Greenblatt (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1981).

³⁶ This state of symbolic constraint is occasioned, at least in part, by the physically constraining lifestyle of Jesuit priests in Elizabethan London, a life largely lived in small secluded rooms in Gentry households. For instance, Henry More remarks, with characteristic hyperbole, that "nowhere in England was life more restricted than in the great houses of the Catholic gentry. [. . .] a priest was kept out of sight, and cut off from the general bustle of the house as much as could be. Remote from everyday life, only one or two of the servants might know of his existence" (235).

³⁷ For the authoritative discussion of "sermo humilis" in Augustine's thought see Erich Auerbach, *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1958, Rpt. 1993). "Sermo Humilis" 25-67.

³⁸ See also Southwell's verse Epistle "To the Reader."

³⁹ Southwell, of course, also wrote in the eloquent style that was very much in vogue in the 1580's. Brian Oxley has shown, for instance, how Southwell justified the "embroidered style" by portraying God as a "mannerist craftsman" an *omnibus ornans/Deliciis*. Southwell works within this mode in his Neo-Latin poems, *Mary Magdalene's Funeral Tears*, lyrics such as "Christ's Bloody Sweat" and the longer "Saint Peters Complaint." Oxley judiciously concludes that the embroidered style and plain style co-exist in tension and generate between them the passionate and intellectual wit characteristic of seventeenth-century verse (207). One might summarize Southwell's justification of these styles as follows then: the embroidered style is an imitation of God as *logos*, the creating and unifying force behind all things, whereas the plain style is an imitation of Christ as the incarnate God who emptied himself of the divine substance in order to take on human form.

⁴⁰ The notion of "imitation" as it applies to Christ becomes bound up with Platonism in the work of the early Fathers, indicating "the process by which the poet or actor assimilates himself to the person whom he is portraying and thereby extinguishes his own personality for the time being" (Pelikan, *Catholic* 145). One of the important scriptural contexts here is Colossians 2:14. For a discussion of this Pauline text in the context of divine imitation see the conclusion to this thesis.

⁴¹ Pierre Janelle first discussed Southwell's Platonism, particularly as it is informed by Plotinus, in *Robert Southwell the Writer: A Study in Religious Inspiration* (New York: Paul P. Appell, 1935) 268-69. Joseph B. Collins also discusses it in *Christian Mysticism in the Elizabethan Age With its Background in Mystical Methodology* (New York: Octagon Books, 1940, Rpt. 1971). Joseph Scallon's critique of these attributions of a Platonic influence on Southwell relies on a naive notion of philosophical consistency in a field where there is little of it. See Scallon, Joseph D. *The Poetry of Robert Southwell. S.J.* (Salzburg: Institut fur Englische Sprache und Literatur, 1975) 135.

⁴² "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and was God. The same was in the beginning with God" (John 1:1-2).

⁴³ For a discussion of the incarnation in Southwell's poetry see Robert Carballo "The Incarnation as Paradox and Conceit in Robert Southwell's Poetry," *American Benedictine Review* 43:3 (1992): 223-32.

⁴⁴ Southwell extends *iteratio* into the more elaborate syntax of the disseminative-recapitulative form in lyrics such as "Christ's Bloody Sweat." Moreover, the rhetorical structure of this poem is, as Oxley argues, quite compelling. And thus the awkward use of *iteratio* in "Looke Home" is, at least to my ears, quite purposeful. As J. Fucilla explains the basic form of the disseminative-recapitulative pattern may be expressed as

A1 A2 A3 An

A1 A2 A3 An

See Brian Oxley's "The Relation Between Robert Southwell's Neo-Latin and English Poetry" *Recusant History* 17.3 (1985) 201-7. For a discussion of *carmen correlatiuum* or disseminative-recapitulative form see J.G. Fucilla "A Rhetorical Pattern in Renaissance and Baroque Poetry" *Studies in the Renaissance* 3 (1956): 23-48. The disjunction rather than the continuity between words and Word effected through Southwell's logic of *iteratio* discloses a process of dissemination that is given its most elaborate theoretical articulation in Derrida's notion of supplementarity. According to Derrida the self-presencing of logocentric language bears with it or rather is possessed by an economy of difference and deferral. See *Speech and Phenomena And Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, Trans. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1973). Of even more relevance to Southwell's articulation of the subject as a subject of lack, however, is Joel Fineman's argument that Lacan's notion of lack thematizes and ultimately contains *différance* and its effects. See "The Structure of Allegorical Desire" *Allegory and Representation: Papers from the English Institute*, 1979-80, ed. Stephen J. Greenblatt (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1981). See Chapter 3 of this thesis for a discussion of supplementarity in relation to Crashaw's "Hymn to the Name."

⁴⁵ Southwell often shifts from a confident to a more despairing tone. Brian Oxley notices this in relation to Southwell's 1580 Neo-Latin poem "In Festum Pentecostes" which begins in epic triumphalism and then falls suddenly into a Christian plaint (202). The plaint mode reads: "solus miser incola terrae / Angustam patitur sortem duroque laborum / Pondere depressus querulo petit ore juxantem" [Alone and pitiful, the earth denizen / suffers a narrow lot; and lowered under a ponderous burden of strife, pleads with plaintive voice for an aide]" (my translation). We see here an early expression of Southwell's vision of existential claustrophobia and the plaintive nature of the Christian voice in supplication.

⁴⁶ The Ignatian practice I refer to here occurs in the "Second Exercise: A meditation on Sins" and reads as follows: "I consider who God is, against whom I have sinned, going through His attributes and contrasting them with their opposites in myself: His wisdom with my ignorance, His almighty power with my weakness, His justice with my injustice, His goodness with my malice (297).

⁴⁷ My situating of Southwell's poem in the context of Renaissance landscape poetry is influenced in large part by H.M. Richmond's fine study, *Renaissance Landscapes: English Lyrics in a European Tradition* (Paris: Mouton, 1973).

⁴⁸ See Ignatius's Second Exercise on Sin.

⁴⁹ Louis Martz was, of course, the first to recognize the importance of Ignatian meditation on Southwell's verse. His understanding of the relation between ascetic and aesthetic

discourses tends to be somewhat simplistic however. Ignatian techniques do not explain Southwell's poetry, either structurally or thematically; they merely provide some of the rhetorical and imaginative resources on which Southwell draws. For a critique of Martz's work see Rosemond Tuve's "Sacred Parody of Love Poetry, and Herbert," *SRen* 8 (1963): 249-90. Lewalski and Scallon have also criticized Martz's thesis.

⁵⁰ Luke 19: 40 "And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."

⁵¹ Alison Shell recently noted that *Saint Peters Complaint* went through thirteen mainstream editions between 1595 and 1640, and two printed by clandestine Catholic presses (60).

**The Gendering of God and the Advent of the Subject
in the Poetry of Richard Crashaw**

A greater reverence no doubt is due to the Body than
to the Word of Our Lord.

*Archbishop Laud*¹

I am most addicted to the symbols
synods, and confessions of the Church
of England, or rather the Catholic Church

*John Cosin*²

No poet of radical Protestant background gave expression to the sacramental world view that characterized the more Catholic-minded elements of the English Church under Archbishop Laud (1633-40) with greater ardor than Richard Crashaw. Writing at a point in reformation history when liturgical practices were the focus of bitter controversy and debates over the nature of Christ's presence during the Eucharist formed an axis point between Arminian and Calvinist camps, Crashaw embraced a ceremonially centered *via affirmativa* with enough outward pomp--not to mention Mariolatry--to inspire criminal charges in 1644.³ Charges of "Religious innovation" were leveled at Crashaw and his close friend -- and fellow "high Churchman"-- Joseph Beaumont by Parliamentary agents working for the committee established in 1640 to consider "Abuses in matters of Religion and Civil Government" (Pritchard 578). In Crashaw's case, these charges focused on his having delivered a sermon on the Annunciation in which he was said to have "turned himselfe to the picture of the Virgin Mary and to have used these words *Hanc adoramus, colamus hanc*" (qtd. in Pritchard 578).⁴ Crashaw's expulsion from Peterhouse College in Cambridge discloses the extent to which he had first hand experience of the hostility that Protestant reformers often showed towards Marian devotion, particularly towards the idea that Mary functions as a co-redeemer.

Protestant reformers often showed towards Marian devotion, particularly towards the idea that Mary functions as a co-redeemer.

Given the focus of the allegations against Crashaw it is not surprising that the anti-Catholic rhetoric employed in the charges betray a common misogynist association of the Catholic Church with an ill-willed mother/harlot who *suckles* her children with Popish doctrines, an association that is based on the Geneva Bible's glosses of Revelations 17 in which the Papacy is figured as a demonic harlot or "whore of babylon." Following criticisms of the "effeminate" adornments in Peterhouse, the parliamentary forces complain that Laudian students in their second year are appointed to read the third part of Aquinas's "*Summes*" "that betimes they may *suck* in the doctrine of the Papists" (578 my emphasis). This latent identification of Papists as poisoning mothers spreading the blasphemy of "real presence" or worse yet "transubstantiation" is largely symptomatic of what Arthur Marotti and Frances E. Dolan describe as the Protestant tendency to equate the Catholic reliance on the physical mediation of the spiritual with women's carnality. More specifically yet, it extends from the broader characterization of the Catholic Church with the whore of Babylon. As Dolan puts it,

if Catholicism is the 'Whore of Babylon,' larger than life, monstrous, foreign, grotesquely feminine yet not human, she is also wife and mother in England, sheltering inside English homes, lying even in the king's own bed [. . .] In associating Catholicism with traditionally feminine attributes as well as with female agents, anti-Catholic polemic responds, on the one hand, to the perceived importance of women in Catholic theology, iconography, and post-Reformation English practice. (8-9)

The "feminization" of anti-Catholic rhetoric is part and parcel of how radical Protestants, as Achsah Guibbory argues, identified ceremonies with the body: "Sensuous images and

bodily ceremonies are ‘snares and allurements to sinne,’ a ‘provocation to [. . .] spirituall whoredome” (24). Moreover, this anti-Laudian, anti-Catholic rhetoric is correlative with the more general masculinization of religion, the Protestant tendency, that is, to attack both the cult of the Virgin and the “effeminate” use of Church and priestly ornamentation.⁵ The masculinist attitudes behind these critiques did not alter, but appeared to have hardened, Crashaw’s “feminine engendered faith.” Rather than conforming, Crashaw left for the continent and converted, likely sometime in 1644, to Catholicism.⁶ Just as Southwell turned to visions of devotionally ideal women in order to affect a change in the poetic and religious life of Elizabethan England, so Crashaw reacted against the masculinizing forces of English Protestantism. He did so by fully embracing an “effeminate” sacramental vision, one which not only celebrated devotionally strong women, as Maureen Sabine and others have argued, but which also, and more importantly, “feminized God” in both his human and divine forms, giving God predominantly maternal rather than paternal characteristics.

While Southwell deploys the logic of excess and its accompanying process of *disorientation* as a means for strengthening the Elizabethan Catholic cult of martyrdom, producing a recusant subject willing to suffer torture and exile for spiritual ascendancy, Crashaw deploys it in order to rhetorically enact the sacramental continuity between the self and God, thereby producing a subject ideally attuned to ceremonial worship. Examining how Crashaw imagines the advent of such a Christian subject, this chapter focuses on the relationship between Crashaw’s sacramental rhetoric, its attempt to sustain a Eucharistic vision of ontological participation with the divine, and the process by which

the self realizes itself as an image of God, particularly insofar as the spiritual excesses involved in this process result in the production of a “feminine subject” that is at odds with Calvinist ideology. The Crashavian subject is perhaps best defined by the way it comes to personify “feminine” principles of mercy, sacrifice, and excessive devotional affect, thereby enacting some of the most controversial debates within the English church of his day. My presentation of these themes is divided into two parts. The first part considers how Crashaw’s religious epigrams, particularly “Blessed be thy Paps,” participate in early modern theological controversy over Eucharistic presence as a means for procuring a heightened affective response from a reader. I examine, in other words, how the text functions eucharistically, focusing on how it is structured along specific theological lines which determine the way it semantically operates. More precisely, I demonstrate how the process of interpreting Crashaw’s epigrams demand that the reader experience theological conflict as an internal drama between opposing liturgical views. The resolution of this drama occurs through a dissolution of the semantic dissonance that the epigram presents. Considering the implications of this strategy, I argue that Crashaw’s sacramental rhetoric bears with it a number of historically contingent structural risks that make his poetry vulnerable to the very separation of material and spiritual orders which it sought to unite.

Developing on how Crashaw’s epigrams function as scenes of sacramental renewal or sites of spiritual interpellation, part two examines how the etiological vision in “Hymn to the Name Above Every Name” constitutes the most far reaching example of Crashaw’s commitment that “faith is more than grammatically of the feminine gender” (*Mulier*

Canaanitis). Similar to the epigrams, the poem's gendering of God is of particular importance in understanding how Crashaw articulates the advent of the ideal devotional subject through a relation to the mother that is -- despite numerous psychoanalytic interpretations of Crashaw's poetry -- non-Oedipal in structure. I will conclude my reading by suggesting that Oedipal accounts of Crashaw's poetry are misreadings not because they are anachronistic as such, but because they do not account for how identification with the mother constitutes a positive condition of possibility for the advent of the ideal devotional subject in Crashaw's work. By making identification with the mother a positive condition of becoming an ideal Christian subject, Crashaw presents an ideological vision which, if not rigorously anti-patriarchal, nonetheless unsettles the phallogocentrism of Anglican and Reformist theology.

Given Crashaw's implicit and explicit reliance on the traditional association of the "feminine" with the "physical" it should be clear that his work is not straightforwardly anti-patriarchal, nor is it without its internal antagonisms. The ideological tensions within Crashaw's work become particularly visible when we consider how "Hymn to the Name" both reproduces and critiques the mimetic principles of sameness or similitude which ground epideictic idealism, a visually based mode of representation that aims, as we have mentioned, towards the production of a subject that is characterized by its capacity to see itself seeing. While Crashaw's paean to the Name is deeply logocentric in its rhetorical and metaphysical emphasis on the absolute identity of the Name, the poem nonetheless displaces the phallogocentric authority that conventionally coincides with a "metaphysics of presence," an association captured in Derrida's neologism "phallogocentrism."⁷ In this

respect, Crashaw's poem both repeats and resists the gender values that are correlative with the traditional ideological protocols of Neo-Platonism, its tendency, as Joel Fineman has demonstrated, to identify the (visual) presence of the Word with the inseminating/reproductive power of the phallic Son/Sun. Contrary to these protocols, Crashaw's representation of the Logos in "Hymn to the Name" is feminine, rather than phallic, in nature. His representation of the feminine character of God's conceptual power draws not only on scriptural resources such as Genesis 1:27 in which God is imaged as both male and female, or Deuteronomy 32:18 in which God is said to have birthed creation, but it also adapts the Latin and neo-Latin practice of making Venus the agent and source of creation. This female centered etiological vision has profound implications for how the poem represents the order of salvation, and by extension, it is also crucial for the way it figures the interpellation of the Christian soul in relation to the maternal function of the divine. Taking Crashaw's language of accommodation seriously, then, we can begin to see the extent to which feminist and post-structuralist critiques of logocentrism can now occasion a reading of how Crashaw's "feminine engendered faith" displaces the phallogocentrism of early modern Protestantism and its ongoing legacy in English literary history. Such critiques, that is to say, can foreground the way in which Crashaw's work unsettles – at the same time that it participates in -- the naturalized relations between *logos* and *phallos*. For whatever else "Hymn to the Name" accomplishes, it re-introduces the feminine principles of the divine which are (unsuccessfully) disavowed by Christian/Hebraic etiology.⁸

The ideologically unsettling implications of Crashaw's rhetoric not only upset Protestants, but some of his fellow Catholics too. As Alison Shell recently pointed out, Edward Thimelby – who, like Crashaw, was in the retinue of Cardinal Giovanni Battista Pallotta – criticized Crashaw in a mocking verse satire for annulling the power of devotional poetry through the misuse of sacred parody (Shell 99). For Thimelby, the language of religious poetry had become hopelessly entangled with sexual innuendo: “A rapture, alter, sacrifice, a vowe, / a relique, extacye, words baudy now” (99).⁹ These early modern attitudes, particularly those coming from Protestant ranks, prefigure modern criticisms that Crashaw's poetic voice is rhetorically uninteresting (or in some sense alien) because of its obvious lack of inward devotional turmoil. Richard Strier's attempt to locate an anxiety ridden Donne-like *persona* in Crashaw's “Epistle to the Countess of Denbigh” in order to recuperate Crashaw's reputation among modern critics is perhaps the most obvious instance. Although Strier is right when he insists that there is little sense of personality in poems like “Hymn to the Name,” the effort to look elsewhere in Crashaw's work for a modern, non-iconic self is to repeat -- in the symptomatic sense of the word -- the very things at stake in Crashaw's poetry. It is crucial to keep in mind when examining Crashaw's work that our modern preference for the anxiety ridden voice of Donne is itself an effect of our belatedness vis-à-vis an ontology (of self) that is the very thing at issue in the devotional verse of Laudian and Counter-Reformational writers. Crashaw's poetry, like his devout religious life, constitutes a literary-devotional effort to sustain a sacramental view of the self, of language, and of the world at a point in English literary and Reformation history when epideictic voices were increasingly becoming self-

conscious ironic *personae* and where the *ex opere operato* presence of Christ's body in the Eucharist had been denied in England and throughout Protestant Europe – a denial which sundered the most central connection in the great chain linking divine and mundane orders.

From the standpoint of literary history, then, it is more important to attend to the details of Crashaw's struggle to sustain a transparent and impersonal voice – a “liturgical I” – than it is to search his poetry for instances of the Shakespearean subject who has “that within which passes [outward] show.” For what is at stake in Crashaw's poetry, particularly in his sacramental use of hyperbole, is, as Heather Asals has demonstrated, nothing less than the predication of Being itself, the infinite, univocal ground from which meaning, creation, and the substances that hold both together flow. Asals has shown that the characteristically Catholic habit of thinking metonymically—of worshiping images, for example, based on the premise of a contiguous, or *per alium*, relationship between image and God – is demonstrated “in the grammar and metaphysic of [Crashaw's] conflation of creatures-beings-images with one another” (43). Asals shows that the predication of Being by effect does not occur with the “haziness usually attributed to him but with a consciously adopted theology which includes the denominative importance of [. . .] metonymy” (44). In this respect, Crashavian hyperbole seeks to illuminate the center and circumference of the anagogically perceived analogical universe. As such, the crucial poetic issue for Crashaw – an issue which has life and death implications for a sacramental view of the self, and by extension the self's relation to the institution of the Laudian and/or Catholic Church – is the Eucharistic “sealing” of words with Word, of

names and Name, of particular with universal. Everything depends upon this isomorphic dimension of redeemed language. It is the divine juncture, the liminal moment at which a poem becomes an *exemplum* of what Crashaw calls in "The Flaming Heart" "the full kingdom of that final kiss" between one's soul and God. Without rhetorically effecting the embrace of finite and infinite, a poem risks becoming what Crashaw calls "an hyperbolized nothing" ("Death's Lecture" 11).¹⁰ Were this poetic and sacramental tethering to fail, a poem would unwittingly perform an un-fleshing of the Word, thereby furthering the disassociation of human experience and divine providence that grounded the anti-sacramentalist forces within and without the English Church during Crashaw's lifetime. In this respect, Crashaw's poetic strategies do not generally involve a contradiction or fundamental negation of language, as is the case in the Augustinian inspired tradition examined by Stanley Fish, but rather they consist of a sacramental *addition* or *replenishment* of ordinary verbal and cognitive modes.¹¹

Crashaw's uses of hyperbole exaggerate the principles behind the conflation of sacred rhetoric and sacramental theology that is characteristic of not only Tridentine rhetoricians like Luis de Granada, but many Anglican thinkers such as Hooker, Perkins and Donne. To take but one example from this list, even the highly Protestant William Perkins describes sacred rhetoric in terms of a sacramental rapprochement between word and thing when he argues that:

there is a certaine agreement and proportion of the externall things with the internall, and of the actions of one with the actions of the other: whereby it commeth to pass, that the signs, as it were certaine visible words incurring into the external senses, do by a certaine proportionable resemblance draw a Christian minde to the consideration of the things signified. This mutual and as I may say, sacramental relation' between external and internal things 'is the cause of so many

figurative speeches and Metonymies which are used' in the Bible. (*Golden Chaine, Workes*, I, 72, Cited in Lewalski 80)

Crashaw's sacred rhetoric intensifies this isomorphic relation between word and thing as it aims, in a manner more self-consciously sacramental than either Donne or Perkins, at redeeming rather than annulling language, enacting the contiguous relationships between words and Word, rather than denying them in favor of a thoroughly non-linguistic means of illumination. In this way, Crashaw's poetry is broadly consistent with the tradition that Debora Shuger describes following Augustine's *De doctrina christiana* as the Christian grand style. The grand style refuses "to divorce words from things" and becomes by the early seventeenth-century a means of expressing passionate ardor towards God in figures that are "analogical representations of transcendence" (*Sacred* 249).¹²

Crashaw also shares with the grand style the basic epistemological assumption that affection or passion is not an element of the sensitive appetite as in Aristotle and Aquinas, but rather it is a function of the will. William Fenner, in his 1650 work *A Treatise of the Affections*, "cites St. Paul in Thessalonians I 2:8 as an authority for situating "the affections in the heart or the will" rather than in the "unreasonable sensitive part" (4). Crashaw's poetry, like Southwell's, is consistent with Fenner's assertion that: "If the will or the Affections be fixed on their proper object, there is no danger in the excesse; God cannot be loved or feared overmuch" (4). This epistemological assumption provides the conceptual bedrock for Crashaw's elaborate uses of hyperbole, justifying affective excess as a sign of devotional potency rather than spiritual degeneracy.

I. The Eucharist in an Epigram.

Blessed *is* the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.
 Yea rather, blessed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it.
 Luke, 11:27-28

The early modern conflation of sacred rhetoric and Eucharistic theology, which is visible, according to Shuger, in both Tridentine and Protestant manuals on rhetoric, goes some way in explaining the intellectual contexts that inform why the prefaces to the first three versions of *Steps to the Temple* describe Crashaw's poetry in sacramental terms. The 1646 preface strongly states its case that Crashaw's poetry is continuous with its divine origins, going so far as to claim, against the main Jesuit authority on scholastic philosophy, that his art attains to "the Language of Angels" (650). Similarly, the preface suggests that Crashaw's poetry is structured on the presupposition that sacred rhetoric can effect a more immediate sense of presence and participation with God than even Francisco Suarez (1548-1617), the chief theologian among the Jesuits, would acknowledge as humanly possible.¹³ Thus the 1646 preface describes Crashaw's poetry in precisely the same sacramental terms that Crashaw himself articulates in the prefatory material of the 1634 *Epigrammata Sacra*. In this earlier collection Crashaw describes the sacramental space of Christian ritual as a sacred threshold, ("*sacro in limine*") a liminal space where "God returns [. . .] and comes with glory to meet [. . .] his worshipper" (634). For Crashaw the ritual space is the locus of a meeting between earth and heaven as "the altars nod approval from on high; [and] with outstretched wings applaud you [the

worshipper].” The 1646 volume describes Crashaw’s verse in similarly sacramental terms, explaining how it presents the “very Outgoings of the soule [. . .] for happy souls to climbe heaven by” (651). The ideal reader of Crashaw’s verse is thus understood in the same terms as a “prospective communicant” in Laudian Eucharist. Such a reader fulfills the poet’s work by allowing it to “bound back to heaven gates whence it came” (650). Crashaw’s ideal reader is thus carried to God in a manner that closely resembles how Crashaw describes the communicant in Laudian ritual meeting God at the decorated altar: “God himself, God, / returns this day to you, at this altar made beautiful through your efforts” (Nempe hanc ipse Deus, Deus, / Hanc ara, per te pulchra, diem tibi/ Tuam refundit”) (634-5. 29-31, translation modified). In *Epigrammata Sacra* Crashaw even asks his patron and instructor at Pembroke to stand with his newly emerged public persona “on the threshold, not only for guidance but also for his theme” (332). The implication here is that the “threshold” refers not only to Crashaw’s transition from private to public poet, but that the text’s themes situate the reader in a liminal space analogous to that of the sacraments. It is with this in mind that Crashaw offers his book as an appropriate gift for his instructor’s “having adorned the sacred rites among” himself and his Cambridge colleagues (332). In this respect, Crashaw articulates the act of reading as analogous, if ultimately supplementary, to the taking of the sacraments.

The sacramental basis of Crashaw’s poetic vision is consistent with other High Church poets and theologians of the 1630’s and 40’s. Given the efforts of these poets to sustain a *Cratylitic* or isomorphic sense of continuity between word and thing we can view Crashaw’s poetry as a series of literary-historical events in the history of

seventeenth-century sacramentalism. In each of these literary-events Crashaw attempts to sustain a poetic form that is consistent with an analogical, eucharistically centered view of the self and cosmos. Sustaining this form is problematic, however, to the extent that Crashaw is writing at a moment in English history when the literary and ideological structures holding the analogically based Christian firmament together were in the process of shifting towards a non-sacramental, non-analogical, Calvinist and increasingly rationalist centered view of the world and the self. One of the most popular strategies in the period involves “spiritualizing the physical,” perceiving the noumenal, divine reality behind material creation. The Laudian apologist John Cosin, for instance, describes this devotional process in relation to the Eucharist when he says it “was the ancient Fathers care, as it is ours still, to instruct the people not to look barely on the outward Elements, but in them to eye with their minds the Body and Bloud of Christ, and with their *hearts lift up* to feed on that heavenly meat” (*Popish* 3, Cited in Healy 139). Cosin is here repeating a long standing tradition, articulated by Irenaeus, that “the Eucharist consists of two realities, earthly and heavenly” (Irenaeus, cited in Pelikan 197-8).¹⁴ This opposition places an enormous responsibility on prospective communicants. In order to conform to Eucharistic ideology they must disavow the apparently physical nature of the holy supper and meditate on its spiritual, “heavenly” significance. Crashaw’s notorious epigram “Blessed be thy Paps” enacts this central theological principle by tempting readers towards an interpretation focused on the physicality rather than spirituality of the Eucharistic event:

Suppose he had been Tabled at thy Teates,
Thy hunger feeles not what he eates:

Hee'l have his Teat e're long (a bloody one)
The mother then must suck the Son. (14)

Much focus has been placed on the epigram's imagistic content with less appreciation of the fact that it is the *process* of sacramental perception that is of primary concern for understanding the epigram on its own terms. Maureen Sabine's claim, and other claims like it,¹⁵ that the poem is imagistically unremarkable not only ignores how a theological mystery operates in the first place, it obscures how the epigram re-works its original scriptural context in order to demonstrate the nature of sacramental perception. While it is true that juxtaposition of maternal and Eucharistic imagery had been done on scriptural authority by St. Bernard, St. Catherine of Siena, Margery Kempe, and Julian of Norwich, as well as a host of Counter-Reformational writers (Mintz 8), the power of such imagery emerges from and lies in its counter-intuitive nature: sons simply do not breast feed their mothers. This is as true of the twelfth century as it is of the twenty-first; and it is precisely the unlikeliness of the imagery that makes it relevant to the expression of a theological mystery. Putting imagery aside for the moment, what is genuinely startling about the epigram is that it uses Luke 11:27 as an occasion for emphasizing worship of Christ's body rather than his role as the Word. This is startling precisely because it runs counter to what Christ himself says to the woman of faith in Luke who declares "blessed is the womb that bare thee [. . .] Yea rather, Blessed are they that *hear* the *word* of God and keep it" (my emphasis). While the epigram imitates Christ's curt tone, it substitutes an emphasis on the word for one on the body, thereby altering the very nature of the rebuke in the first place. In this respect, Crashaw substitutes a Laudian, sacramental sentiment regarding bodily worship for Christ's own message, thereby supplementing, if

not outright “abusing” the scriptural text.¹⁶ By doing so, Crashaw offers a poetic analog to John Cosin’s appropriation of the words, “Blessed is the wombe that bare Thee, O Lord, and the pappes that gave Thee suck” in his prayers for Mattins in *A Collection of Private Devotions* (98). In Cosin’s treatise, the words of the faithful woman in Luke appear without Christ’s rebuke of them. Cosin, like Crashaw after him, obscures the scriptural emphasis on the word by emphasizing the paradoxically spiritual nature of bodily worship. The radical Protestant William Prynne attacks Cosin for such “abuses of scripture,” asserting that such Catholic modes of devotion are empty fictions rather than authorized forms of worship (6). In turn, Archbishop Laud attacks Prynne, in his “Speech against Bastwick, Burton and Prynne,” by reasserting the authority of bodily over verbal worship. Crashaw’s poem is another High Church variation of this theme.

In order to grasp how Crashaw’s epigram works we must bear in mind that the reader’s position in relation to the poem is analogous to the prospective communicant at the Laudian Eucharist, the very sacrament that the poem not only thematizes but of which it offers a kind originary account. The reader, that is to say, must perceive not the outward form of the text, not its apparently physical grotesqueness, but the internal sacramental character that is implied in the fact that the feast of mother on son is a sacramental rather than physical one. The poem, that is, demands that the reader interpret it in the same way that John Cosin asks the prospective communicant to receive the Eucharist: “[it is] not to be understood grossly and carnally, but spiritually and sacramentally [. . .] Christ himself is spiritually eaten by the faithful in the sacrament.”¹⁷ The eating and presence being spiritual are not destructive of the truth and substance of

the thing” (9). The relationship between mother and son in the poem represents the pattern or model of Eucharistic union. Moreover, while most editors and critics agree that the epigram is addressed to the faithful woman of Luke 11:27¹⁸, I would submit that the poem’s de-contextualization of scripture, its shift in emphasis from worshipping the word to worshipping the body, broadens its reference to include not only the reader but the Virgin herself. Indeed, the second line, which employs the abstract noun “mother” rather than referring specifically to the woman of Luke 27, inevitably recalls us to the holy relationship between Mary and Christ – a relationship that is characterized, through Catholic apocrypha, by the parallels between the lives of the Savior and the Virgin. In this respect, the illogical structure of the epigram is occasioned not only by its immediate scriptural context, but also by the mysteries involved in how Mary is mother, daughter, and wife of Christ -- a mystery that is deepened in the way that her birth, sorrows, and ascension mirror Christ’s nativity, crucifixion and resurrection. The structure of the epigram invites meditation upon these mysteries, enacting, as it does, the counter-logical nature of a son that is at once father and mother to his own mother.

Condensing these parallels between mother and son, the momentarily disorienting reversal of roles enacts the same sort of reversal that Crashaw explains in the opening to “The Flaming Heart” when he asks that his reader make “a well-plac’t and wise mistake, / You must transpose the picture quite, / And spell it wrong to read it right; / Read HIM for her, and her for him; And call the SAINT the Seraphim” (8-12). By reading the scene “wrong” the reader unveils its sacramental character, thereby perceiving Theresa in her Saintry rather than human dimension. Similarly in “Blessed be thy Paps” the reader is

tempted to perceive a spiritual scene in physical terms. To overcome such a temptation one must see in the epigram's abrupt, even violent, tone a spiritual reality concealed within a grotesque frame. In both the Theresa poem and the epigram the anamorphic transposition turns on gender roles: misperception is the condition of revelation. Theresa supplements her femininity by taking on the "masculine" role of the Seraphim while Christ takes on the role of mother through the drama of the atonement. Whatever else this combining of genders does, it reflects the spiritual maturity of the characters involved in each text, thereby making identification with such characters a complex process of uniting into oneself what is perceived as masculine and feminine traits.¹⁹

My reference to anamorphic art in order to explain these transpositions is not a casual one. Anamorphic painting, according to John D. Lyons, creates images that "are not merely less satisfying but indeed completely without sense unless they are viewed from the most narrowly defined viewpoint" (167). Moreover, "the viewer is not only invited to contemplate the work from a particular point, but punished, if he does not do so, by being confronted with meaningless form" (167). The anamorphic artist thus "reminds the viewer of the active role that the viewer must take in deciphering the image" (167).²⁰ The same goes for Crashaw's poem, only the perspectives are theological rather than visual. What is almost too obvious about the epigram to bear comment is the fact that it not only retains but exaggerates the cannibalistic appearances of the *sacramental act itself* at a point in time and place when debates over the nature of Christ's presence in the Eucharist had split the English Church from within – a division which any interpretation of Crashaw's epigram inevitably enacts. The "wise mistake" that the epigram's speaker

makes, in his reversal of maternal and filial roles, appears at a juncture in time when Lutheran, Zwinglian and most importantly Calvinist attacks on transubstantiation and real presence had rendered the literal element of the Tridentine Eucharist fully *visible* as literal. This rendering of real presence an obscene fiction rather than a miracle of grace led Protestants to deny the spiritual reception of Christ's body *ex opere operato* as anything but a Priestly, and rather distasteful, joke. The Council of Trent's adoption of St. Thomas's use of Aristotelian distinctions between substance and accident for explaining the nature of Christ's presence in the Eucharist (*Summa Theologiae* III.78.1) was wholly unacceptable to Protestants. Calvinists denied the sacrificial and corporate dimensions of the rite, seeing it as an act of remembrance which the individual participant experiences in his or her private reception of it. By 1646 it is virtually impossible to write a Eucharistic poem in England that does not register this change in sacramental theology, most especially one, like Crashaw's, that exaggerates the cannibalistic aspects of the rite. Despite R.V. Young's Thomist reading of "Blessed be thy Paps" the bewilderingly opaque distinction between real presence and transubstantiation is not of central concern for grasping how Crashaw's epigram works. The crucial issue at stake is sacramental versus literal *response* to Christ's presence in the Eucharist.²¹

Like most Laudians in the period, Crashaw shared Augustine's and Richard Hooker's view that the Eucharistic communicant should meditate on the spiritual *efficacy* of Christ's presence, not on the precise nature of its presence. As Hooker puts it, the "real presence of Christ's most blessed body and blood is not [. . .] to be sought for in the sacrament, but in the worthie receiver of the sacrament (*Laws* 5.67.6). Rather than

downplaying or at least qualifying the carnal, sacrificial elements of the Eucharist--as he did in the 1648 "Adore Te" --Crashaw exaggerates the cannibalistic dimensions involved in Eucharistic imagery, celebrating the mother's violent drinking of Christ's blood as she becomes the first of many communicants in Christ's mystical body. By exaggerating the carnal surface of the sacramental act through the verb "suck" -- which, like the earlier term "tabled," implies a voracious hunger -- Crashaw collapses the difference between physical and spiritual "thirst," making the latter appear a function of the former. This collapsing of differences inevitably recalls us to their discontinuity, as expressed in the fact that "thy hunger feels not what he eats." This straining of the paradoxes inherent to incarnational theology effects either a deepened sense of wonder towards the mystery of the Christ's presence or a sense of disgust at an act of cannibalism. If nothing else, the epigram's reception history makes this clear. The reader who re-orientes the sacramental view, recognizing the spiritual nature of the mother's meal makes him or herself into what the 1559 Book of Common Prayer calls a "prospective communicant" -- one who is spiritually prepared to take the holiest of sacraments. On the other hand, one who sees the poem as an obscene take on the Eucharist is exposed as what the Prayer Book calls a communicant of bad faith, or what John Cosin calls a stranger to the Spirit (12). In this way, the real "scandal" of this epigram consists in its excessively defiant response to Calvinist attitudes towards the Eucharist. Its grotesque features cannot be explained away as imagistically "unremarkable" by reference to the epigram's medieval and scriptural sources. Its purposeful grotesquerie resides in the way that Crashaw disorients the reader by initially collapsing the very difference to which it is designed to call attention. This

disorientation or “semantic impertinence” is resolved by interpreting the final image in accordance with Laudian theology. In purposeful defiance of Calvinist doctrine, Crashaw exaggerates the ostensible carnality of a thoroughly sacramental Eucharistic vision. In doing so, the poem incites two fundamentally different responses according to liturgical and theological biases. In this respect, R.V. Young gets things the wrong way round when he suggests that the poem is “truly shocking only for a man [*sic*] with a belief not merely in a vague ‘real presence,’ but in the actuality of Christ’s Body and Blood under the outward forms of the sacrament” (156). In Crashaw’s epigram, as in Southwell’s description of Herod’s victims in “Flight into Egypt,” it is the literal surface imagery that is shocking, not its underlying sacramental reality. As in Southwell’s work, the reader is asked to participate in a process of sublation – a turning of the physical into the spiritual of death into life. The epigram demands the same sort of sacramental attention given to emblems or hieroglyphs. It, as Thomas Heffernan says of Alciati’s emblems, “violates corporeal visual perception” and as such “can only be seen spiritually” (45). The epigram thus plays out a Laudian version of St. Paul’s warning in Romans 14:23, “he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.”

The distinction between the epigram’s first sentence and the second is the difference between two levels of reality, between a natural and a noetic mode. The mother feeds Christ’s physical hunger while Christ feeds the mother’s and the conforming reader’s spiritual hunger. The sacramental, noetic reality is believed to be more real, because ontologically prior to and thus implicit in the natural, literal level. The critical issue at stake in the epigram is whether the logically disorienting turn from the first to second

sentence invites a sacramental re-orientation on the part of the reader -- the recognition that the mother, as the model Eucharistic participant, does not eat, as Cosin would have it, "of the stomach" but of the Spirit (*Popish* 3). While Susannah Mintz sees Crashaw's deploying of Christ's abrupt tone as symptomatic of unconscious ambivalence towards his mother's body, I would suggest that it is a quite calculated attempt at dramatizing the excessive, illogical character of Christ's sacrifice. Just as Christ's sacrificial response to the faithful woman of Luke is "excessive," a function of the "so much more" that is characteristic of the Christian God, so the epigram, in turn, requires an "excessive" response from the reader -- one that sees in Christ's blood the infinite source of renewal. The poem is thus a kind of epigrammatic riddle, a sacred simile whose question is: how are the two parts of the simile contiguous with one another? And how is this logical and semantic impertinence justified? Like many devotional questions, this one can lead into the temptation of focusing on the body as a merely physical entity, rather than seeing it within the context of Eucharistic ideology as the means of fulfilling the spirit.

Crashaw's articulation of sacramentalism became more rhetorically pronounced, even more polemical, following the rise to power of Parliamentary forces which led to his subsequent exile and conversion. This change in rhetorical procedures is evident when we compare "Blessed be thy Paps" to Crashaw's 1634 Latin gloss on the same passage from Luke, "*Beatus venter and ubera*" :

Et quid si biberet Jesus vel ab ubere vestro?
 Quid facit ad vestram, quòd bibit ille, sitim?
 Ubera mox sua and Hic (ò quàm non lactea!) pandet:
 E nato *Mater* tum bibet ipsa suo. (325)

And what if Jesus should drink from your breast?

what does it do for your thirst because he drinks?
 And soon He will lay bare his breast—alas, not a milky one!—
 Then the *mother* will drink from the son. (translation modified)

Although the 1646 poem is more explicit in its diction, choosing “blood,” “teat” and “suck” rather than the less explicit “bibet” (drink/absorb) and “non-lactea” (not milk) both epigrams display the same miraculous wrenching of the spiritual out from the material as literal milk is transfigured into sacramental blood. The differences are matters of rhetorical degree, not of theological kind. In each case, a direct encounter with the carnal paradoxically establishes a sacramental continuity between the order of grace and the order of nature. This continuity between noetic and natural orders is only discernible, however, if one remains attentive to their disjunction. “Blessed be thy Paps” draws our attention to this disjunction by emphasizing how the various addressees of the poem’s “supposition” (the woman of Luke 27, the reader, as well as Mary) do not feel what Jesus eats because their essential desire is spiritual not worldly. While Mintz bases her Oedipal reading of “Blessed be thy Paps” on the mother’s “lack of feeling” she overlooks the fact that this absence of “feeling” is a playful reference to St. Thomas’s notions that the physical senses do not register Christ’s presence in the Eucharist, an idea that reappears in Cosin’s Anglican view that the spirit not the palate responds to Christ’s real presence and in Crashaw’s own “Adore Te.” As Aquinas states, Christ’s body “is not visible to the corporeal eye, nor is it subject to any other sense, nor to the imagination” (III. 76.7). The epigram’s reference to the mother’s lack of carnal feeling distinguishes, for the reader, the two modes of hunger at stake in the poem: spiritual and physical. Crashaw evokes more explicitly this Thomist idea that the senses do not register Christ’s Eucharistic

presence in stanza four of "Adore Te": "Keep close, my soul's inquiring ey! / Nor touch nor tast must look for more / But each sitt still in his own Dore" (173, 6-8). The speaker in this poem attends to God's presence with his spiritual senses just as the mother's lack of carnal feeling in "Blessed be thy Paps" is less indicative of Crashaw's unconscious conflict than it is a reminder that the eucharistic feeding is spiritual rather than corporeal, a matter of faith and not digestion. The epigram assumes these sacramental distinctions regarding how the real presence of Christ's body is experienced while it manipulates, and even provokes, Calvinist resistance to them. Thus despite the grotesque surface, the mother's drinking of Christ's blood is assumed to take place, as in Cosin's treatise, in a wholly spiritual manner.

Desire and the Advent of the Subject: Crashaw Avec Lacan

While I do not think Crashaw's epigrams are susceptible to the sort of symptomatic reading that Mintz and other psychoanalytic critics engage in, the epigram's rhetorical and ideological power is illuminated when read in relation to Lacan's distinction between desire and *jouissance*. Graham Hamill offers a Lacanian reading of how "Blessed be Thy Paps" is designed to alter the existential position from which the reader perceives when he argues that the mother (and the sacramental reader) who agrees with the poem's "supposition" "are repositioned as objects of Christ's desire" and are thus remade as desiring subjects insofar as they are "subjected by Christ's demand" (947). While this theoretical paraphrase makes sense, it misses the fundamental Lacanian point which

needs to be made in relation to this epigram. It overlooks how the epigram enacts the transition from desire to jouissance, for it is precisely in this transition that the advent of the subject emerges within Crashaw's sacrificial economy. Enacting the shift from a logic of equivalence to a logic of excess, from a "natural" to a "spiritual" relation, the epigram seeks to articulate and contain the *excess* of the mother's and the reader's desire. This is of crucial importance because it is by identifying with Christ's embodying of this excess that the excess is contained, given symbolic form, and one is thereby constituted as a Christian subject. The epigram, that is, enacts the shift from a physical relation with Jesus to an excessive position in relation to the jouissance of God as Other – a mode of intense pleasure, that as we said in the introduction, concerns the putting of the subject on the path of ex-sistence. The poem's abruptness unsettles the distinction between self and other, between mother and son, in order to open a transitional space, a psychic threshold, in which metaphoric identification of the self as other constitutes a rupture or violent unsettling of the ego. The seventeenth-century Biblical scholar and philosopher Robert Ferguson describes this unsettling of the ego as "an ablation of every thing extraneous; a dissipation of those fuliginous vapours that both obnubilate the mind, and do *imbuere objectum colore suo*. By the purification of the Heart, the Understanding is clarified [. . .] By the Spirit of Life in the new Birth, *the subject is elevated and adapted to the Object*" (151 my emphasis). Žižek explicates why Lacan turns to St. Paul to describe the process of epistemological rupture that is made possible by metaphoric identification of the "I am that" sort when he says:

although Paul's particular message may no longer be operative for us, the terms in which he formulated the operative mode of Christianity apply to every Truth-

Event. Each Truth-Event leads to a kind of “Resurrection,” that is, by means of fidelity to it and a labor of love on its behalf, one enters another dimension irreducible to a mere *service des biens* (the smooth running of affairs in the domain of Being) – the dimension of Immortality, of Life not encumbered by death. (Psychoanalysis 246)

This bold passage effectively re-articulates Ricoeur’s reading of Paul’s “logic of superabundance” in Lacanian terms. The rupture of the *service des biens* is a more or less Lacanian way of describing the shift from a common sense logic of equivalence to an uncommon logic of Pauline excess. In the case of Eucharistic identification the communicant moves from a state of separation to identification, from a relation-in-difference with an Omnipotent Other to the fluidity of *jouissance* that occurs *between* self and Other, betwixt subject and object.

Kristeva describes this process when she suggests that the Eucharist is the ritual “par excellence of identification with God’s body and a springboard for all other identifications, including that of artistic profusion” (*Maladies* 174). Crashaw’s poem makes the identificatory nature of the Eucharistic space operative within his text by enabling an identification with the holy couple in an embrace that takes place beyond the pleasure principle. Christ feeds the “more than mere hunger” that gnaws at the woman in the first two lines. An identification that occurs beyond the logic of equivalence (an identification which for Freud takes place in relation to an anaclitic or surplus object²²) is, as Kristeva argues, “the movement that causes the advent of the subject, insofar as he unites himself with the other [. . .] through the entire range of the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real” (*Maladies* 178). If Luke 11:27 emphasizes identification with the Word as the basis for one’s *symbolic* substance, then Crashaw’s epigram supplements

this by opening up the *real* of Christ's wounds through the mediating figure of the mother's breast, the imaginary object *par excellence*. To identify with Christ through the mediating/imaginary figure of the mother is to incorporate Christ as both body and word, both real and symbolic; it is to re-engage the advent of oneself as Christian subject through a metaphoric identification that takes place through each of the three Lacanian registers: symbolic, imaginary, and real.²³

The registering of these three modes (all of which refer to a particular dimension of psychic experience) in Crashaw's Eucharistic epigrams becomes clearer when we take into account how in the earlier Latin version of the epigram Christ extends his breast towards the woman of Luke 27 through the verb "pando," a word whose multiple meanings touch on each of the three aspects of metaphoric identification: symbolic, imaginary, and real. "Pandet" shares the same prefix of "panis" or bread while also implying the sense of not only "stretch" but also "disclose" or "explain." It thus inscribes within it the "real" Eucharistic presence of Christ's sacramental body as bread, while implying at the same time a sense of communion that bonds the corporate body of believers into both symbolic and imaginary entities: its symbolic dimension is realized in the actual community of believers who partake in the Eucharist as a sacramental communion with God, while its imaginary dimension is realized in the postulation of a "universal community of believers" united in the spiritual body of Christ. The implicit inscription of a substantive within a verb ("bread" and "disclose") is characteristic of Crashaw's poetic sacramentality, revealing how language itself conceals the continuity between the order of grace and the order of nature. By verbally uniting Christ's sacrificial

gesture with the substantial essence of the eucharistic elements the word “pandēt” inscribes the very continuity between act and essence, gesture and Word, that is concealed within the seemingly grotesque image of mother sucking son. The sacrificial body is at once the threshold upon which the subject becomes a member of both temporal and eternal communities.

The oscillation, in these poems, between a violent attachment to the wounded body of Jesus and the promise of complete spiritual fulfillment can be more fully accounted for in psychoanalytic terms with reference to Richard Boothby’s recent Lacanian account of sacrifice. From a Lacanian viewpoint, Boothby asserts, sacrifice is concerned with the installation of the signifier, a process that is “conditioned by a violation of the body’s imaginary wholeness” (183). In short, sacrifice enacts how the advent of the subject occurs through the imaginary projection of bodily unity, a projection which simultaneously engenders the threat of corporeal fragmentation. As Crashaw’s epigrams make clear, the advent of the subject through sacrifice is characterized by an identification with the victim’s body, in this case his wounds. The basis of this identification, according to Boothby’s account, “is the imaginary equivalence that structures the most primitive contour of the ego in the mirror phase” (183). The body of the victim is broken so that the body of the community may be made whole just as the infant in the mirror stage imaginatively relinquishes its undeveloped body by identifying with a specular image of wholeness. The Eucharist thus repeats at a social level the organization of the ego at an individual one. Christ’s body is violated not only in the breaking of the Eucharistic bread at each instance of the holy rite, as Boothby mentions,

but even more explicitly this violation is visible in representations of the *Arma Christi*. In the *Arma Christi* Christ's body is dismembered into a heart, two feet, and two hands, all of which are represented with a gaping wound whose blood is gathered in a single chalice. Crashaw recalls this imagery in his poem, "On the Wounds of our crucified Lord" when he describes Christ's dismembered body in order to express the principles of the atonement: "This foot hath got a Mouth and lippes, / To pay the sweet summe of thy kisses: / To pay thy Teares, an Eye that weeps / In stead of Teares such Gems as this is" (13-16). Such violations of the sacred body's integrity constitute symbolic repetitions of the fragmentation of the body that enables the emergence of the subject as a speaking being. This process of enacting the body's dismemberment and re-constitution is *sacred* precisely insofar as it symbolically unifies the individual subject and the community as a whole. John Davies of Hereford provides a remarkably explicit example of how Christ's fragmented body provides the individual soul with a renewed sense of unity when he writes in 1609: "And from his side (beside) came welling forth / Both Blood and Water full of Misterie; / Blood to purge sinne, and Water of like worth, / To note new birth in Christian Infancie: / From all whose Bodies parts to parts, and whole, / Blood streamèd forth to clense each Bodies Soule" (*Holy Roode* 21). The dialectic of parts and wholes that structure Eucharistic imagery is powerful precisely because it draws upon the most primordial aspects of the ego's formation.

While this psychoanalytic account of the violated body in terms of imaginary identification with the unified body of the mirror phase accounts for the dynamics of fragmentation and unification in Crashaw's epigrams, a Lacanian view becomes most

powerful when we consider more explicitly how the violence of these epigrams disclose, as Boothby puts it, the way that “the real bursts forth in sacrifice above all in the substance of blood” (186). The power of fascination/repulsion that Crashaw’s epigrams possess is a function of the way that their rhetorical design reveals the traumatic force of the real that sacrifice enacts in order to contain. The real of the body bursts forth in the parenthetical remark: (“a bloody one”). The parentheses rhetorically suggest how this sacrificial presence bursts into the field of perception, unsettling the balance of the lines until the excess it introduces is re-structured into the sacrificial (and thus wholly symbolic) relations between Christ and mother. Similarly, the presence of the real, the unsymbolizable ground of representation, is evoked in the uncanny image of Christ’s foot that has also “a Mouth and lippes.” The real of the fragmented body that is evoked through this unsettling juxtaposition of body parts appears only insofar as it can be re-installed into an economy of symbolic exchange: “The debt is paid in *Ruby*-Teares, / Which thou in Pearles did’st lend” (19-20). The rhetorical power of these images is a function of how they disclose and contain the symbolic, imaginary, and real registers at work within the economy of sacrifice itself. As I have suggested, this re-organization of the epigram’s unsettling of conventional relations between mother and son is experienced as an internalized theological and psychological drama, one in which the reader must resolve the apparent disjunction at one level of reality by appealing to another. This resolving of a semantic impertinence is at once a re-organizing of the topographical relations between the symbolic, imaginary and the real as they configured within an

economy of sacrifice. These poems, no less than the Eucharist itself, is concerned with the process of coming-into-being, of establishing oneself as a person subject to Christ.

Crashaw and the threat of De-Sacramentalization

The presence of the real in Crashaw's epigrams not only account for their power of fascination, but it also helps explain why they unsettle, at the same time they are designed to secure, Laudian orthodoxy. Crashaw's excessive straining of the two aspects of the sacramental vision, the surface, sensuous aspect and the underlying pneumatic, spiritual perspective, runs the risk, as Thimelby's remarks demonstrate, of diffusing the very union of divine and mundane orders that it inscribes. In other words, Crashaw effects a carnal variation of the inadvertent subversion of sacramentalism that Malcolm Ross described in relation to Laudians like Joseph Beaumont. Ross argues that in his attempt to resist "a crude Erastianism" particularly in relation to the Church's historical existence, Beaumont and others unwittingly "spiritualize" things out of existence. Ross claims that "one might almost say that it is the intense Catholicity of these [Laudian] men which, in the peculiar context of the time, finally makes them un-Catholic" (160). Conversely, Crashaw runs the risk of carnalizing the spiritual out of existence. In his defiantly sacramental attempt to show the contiguity between divine presence and human experience in the midst of overwhelming carnality, Crashaw's poem runs the risk of

having the corporeal aspects annul the spiritual reality. Thus, while Laudians like Beaumont Platonize the Church's historical dimension out of existence by exaggerating its spiritual existence, making it "a simple univocal reflection in time of the seamless spirit of Christ," (Ross 160) Crashaw risks carnalizing the spiritual out of existence by illuminating its presence through a deepened inscription of human physicality. In this respect, Crashaw and other Laudians inadvertently reveal the principles of subversion theorized by Žižek (not to mention Southwell) that ideological systems of thought, such as Eucharistic dogma, are best undermined when they are taken with extreme literalness. Crashaw's unusually intense sacramentality makes poems like "Blessed be thy paps" potential instances of a *reductio ad absurdum* of the very sacramental vision he sought to maintain. This sacramental hyperbolism, moreover, is as much a symptom of his historical and national location as it is a matter of personal propensity. The historical pressures bearing upon the sacramental separation of literal and metaphoric orders are fully realized in vulgar Freudian readings of Crashaw which take the literal aspects of Eucharistic imagery as meaningful regardless of sacramental ideology – thereby repeating the very Calvinist position which the poem is designed to repudiate.

Although Crashaw's Eucharistic epigrams enact the process of symbolic castration as it unfolds within an economy of sacrifice, they, and his work overall, resist psychoanalytic readings that emphasize the Oedipal aspects of his literary imagination. Indeed, while numerous critics have offered biographical readings of "Blessed be Thy Paps" in Oedipal terms, most importantly Mintz's Klenian reading of the poem's ambivalent representation of the mother's body,²⁴ none have suggested how this and

other Crashaw poems postulate a relation to the mother that unsettles Oedipal dogma. Readers who insist on seeing Crashaw's articulation of the maternal as psychologically regressive, and there are more of them than Mintz admits,²⁵ inadvertently disclose how psychoanalysis has remained critically incapable of imagining identification with the mother in the process of individuation as anything but pathological. As Juliana Schiersari argues in the context of feminist revisions of psychoanalysis, the "persistence of the maternal image within the child's psyche, not as the sign of morbid degeneracy or as pathological fixation but as a positive kernel in the formation of feminine agency, is an unusual one for psychoanalysis, one that reconceptualizes some of its basic paradigms" (76).²⁶ In Crashaw's work the self becomes a subject not through the intervention of the Father as such, but through a very conscious identification with the maternal principles embodied in the divine. This is not to suggest that there is no ambivalence regarding the mother operating in Crashaw's work, but to recognize that the advent of the subject in Crashaw's texts is less focused on a violent rejection of the mother's body than it is on a non-Oedipal introjection of her symbolic attributes. As we shall see in the reading that follows, "Hymn to the Name" makes the internalization or "lodging" of the mother's *image* a positive condition of becoming a Christian subject. Identification with the mother is neither unconscious nor pathological in Crashaw's work, but is the very means by which the Soul – which is conventionally feminine in Christianity – is realized as an *imago Dei*.²⁷

In order to prepare for how these dynamics unfold in "Hymn to the Name" I wish to briefly demonstrate the theological and psychological processes involved in Crashaw's

representation of the advent of the subject in his rarely read neo-Latin poem on Matthew 2:13-15. While less complex than “Hymn to the Name” in virtually all its aspects, this poem is of particular importance for grasping how Crashaw imagines the advent of the subject insofar as it represents Christ’s literal feeding at Mary’s breast as a baptismal prefiguration of the saving power of his wounds. Here again Crashaw develops the parallel structures between Christ and Mary:

Hos, decuit sinus hic; ubi toto sydere proni
Ecce lavant sese lacteo in oceano.

Atque lavent: tandèmq̄ suo se mane resolvant,
Ipsa dies ex hoc ut bibat ore diem (87-88).

[To these [suns/eyes], this bosom was well suited; where behold, lying all [night long] they bathe themselves in the milky ocean.

And let them bathe: and finally let them be released in the morning
so that day itself may eternally drink from this source].

The intimate association between Mary’s breast and the saving power of Christ’s “mouth” or “face” (os, oris) is not only visible in the movement from breast as source to Christ as source, but is also rhetorically figured in the way that “resolvant” – which has the sense of “unfasten,” “open,” “explain” – typographically expands upon “lavant” (bathe) – thereby linking the saving power of Christ’s wounds with the nurturing power of Mary’s breast. In this economy of being, Mary’s maternal role becomes essential not as something Christ must violently reject, as is the case in Oedipal theory, but as something which he must become, something he must lovingly realize. In Crashaw’s poem, as in the work of psychoanalysts Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, this process of becoming a subject occurs through a dialectic of emptiness and fullness centered

around the “mouth.” As Abraham and Torok explain, “the transition from a mouth filled with the breast to a mouth filled with words occurs by virtue of the intervening experiences of the empty mouth. Learning to fill the emptiness of the mouth with words is the initial model for introjection” (*Mourning or Melancholia* 127-8). The final stanza of Crashaw’s poem anticipates Christ’s transition from the breast to the word by presenting an ideal version of introjection. Introjection, according to Abraham and Torok, is the primary mechanism through which the self is fashioned; it constitutes the means by which the self appropriates its drives, the contours of its body and its potential for maturation through the mediating function of the mother. In this account of ego-formation what is at stake is not the rejection of the desire to sexually possess the mother but the capacity to realize oneself through her recognition and love. Crashaw’s neo-Latin poem, like Abraham and Torok’s theories, implies a process that is better described in terms of transition rather than castration.

Moving even further away from Oedipal accounts of maturation than Abraham and Torok, Crashaw makes the process of introjection a function of maternal love, rather than the intervention of paternal power. The condition of possibility for the advent of the Christian subject, for Crashaw, is thus a function of the son’s relation to the mother. In this respect, Crashaw’s account of the mother/son relation goes even further than Clement of Alexandria’s representation of God as mother. According to Clement,

the Word is everything to the child, both father and mother, teacher and nurse [. . .] The nutriment is the milk of the father [. . .] and the Word alone supplies us children with the milk of love, and only those who suck at this breast are truly happy [. . .] For this reason seeking is called sucking; to those infants who seek the Word, the Father’s loving breasts supply milk. (*Paidegogos*, 1.6. 44, cited in Pagels 302)

With the rich history of Catholic apocrypha to draw on, Crashaw makes Jesus' ability to fulfill his role as Savior a function of his capacity to become like his mother – to lovingly make her symbolic features part of himself. The most far reaching articulation of the relationship between Crashaw's sacramentalism and the way he imagines the advent of the ideal Christian subject in relation to the mother is not the various poems he wrote to female Saints and Patrons, which have so far been the focus of much feminist inspired Crashaw criticism, but the etiologically concerned "Hymn to the Name Above Every Name." What follows then is an examination of the ideologically tense interrelations between the poem's sacramental rhetorical structure, its logocentrism, and its articulation of the feminine attributes of the divine. In particular, I am concerned with how the tense relations between form and theme converge around the poem's gendering of creation and the implications such gendering has for how the poem constitutes its ideal reader as a highly feminine version of the *imago Dei*.

II. Creation and the Gendering of God: Hymn to the Name

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth.

--- Philippians 2:9-11

The more ideal the signifier [. . .] the more it augments the power to repeat presence.

--- J. Derrida

“Hymn to the Name Above Every Name” aims to create the effect that it is, as in the Cabalistic view of the Torah, “nothing but the great Name of God.” Because the name “Jesus” whose Hebrew equivalent – Joshua – contains all the letters of the pronounceable form of the Tetragrammaton,²⁸ Crashaw’s speaker does not literally utter it, but periphrastically bodies it forth. By having the structure of the hymn rhetorically imitate or embody the “unbounded” name, Crashaw avoids signifying the divine monograph as something exterior to and thus different from the words themselves. Emulating David’s magnification of the divine name in Psalm 63, Crashaw, like Southwell in “Looke Home,” aims to create a voice that formally expresses and thus eucharistically embodies the self-presence or auto-affection articulated in the opening chapters to John: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God” (John 1:1-2).

After a forty three line introduction that presents the first of a number of digressions, Crashaw’s speaker acknowledges the difficulties and potential aporias involved in attaining the Vatic or ideally performative power of divine self-presence when he writes: “Shall we dare This, my Soul? we’l doe’t and bring / No Other note for’t, but the Name

we sing" (44-45). Crashaw here thematizes the univocality of his object as it is constituted within an epideictic idealism that, as Shakespeare complained, is to "constancy confin'd" with "One thing expressing, leaves out difference" (Sonnet 105). Crashaw later repeats this negation of difference when he identifies his act of praise with the "pedigree" of orthodox praise, separating his poem and the community of sacramentalists to which it is addressed from the modes of praise associated with the Puritan iconoclasts that are rebuked in the poem's conclusion. The Puritan refusal to kneel at the utterance of the Name reflects a break with the proper apostolic line: "No Perfume / For ever shall presume To passe for Odoriferous, / But such alone whose sacred Pedigree / Can prove it Self some kin (sweet name) to Thee" (178-82).²⁹ In this respect, the hymnodist aims to formulate a song where each element, including of course the singer himself, reflects its relation to its origin, metonymically enacting its participation with Being as the divine source of life-- the center and circumference of the analogical universe. Following this logic, no part should be "Other" but should be a manifestation of that "One Rich Word" that is itself an unmediated emanation of the Logos as presented in the Gospel of John. And yet, like Shakespeare, although for entirely different reasons and to very different ends, Crashaw will insist that "One little World or Two / (Alas) will never doe. We must have store" (24-26). While certainly an expression of devotional desire, this exclamation also voices a meta-literary complaint about the restrictions of epideictic idealism that Crashaw works both within and against throughout the poem. For while his poem ritually negates the difference of the Puritan Other, it voices the controversial feminine elements of the Catholic and Laudian

Churches that interregnum English Reformers theologically diminished and liturgically excised. This meta-literary complaint thus instigates the poem's meditation on the human and sexual terms that best accommodate the transcendental power of the Name.

The metonymic and imagistic excesses that Crashaw deploys in order to celebrate this feminized logos are not a stylistically contingent function of his "baroque" sensibility, but are a poetic answer to the metaphysical priority of the Name. In the opening to the poem, for instance, Crashaw rhetorically reproduces the metonymic dispersal of Christ's presence in time, periphrastically figuring what cannot be literally predicated. Indeed, this extrapolation of many from one demonstrates Crashaw's understanding of what Aquinas, following Pseudo-Dionysius calls, *posterior* predication³⁰ -- the idea that Being ontologically precedes any possible representation of it. Crashaw begins this cosmogonic vision by voicing the paradoxes involved in expressing an infinite and ultimately unrepresentable Oneness:

I Sing the NAME which None can say
 But touch't with An interiour RAY:
 The Name of our New PEACE; our Good:
 Our Blisse: and Supernatural Blood:
 The Name of All our Lives and Loves. (1-5)

According to R.V. Young, Crashaw here "invokes not the signified behind the signifier, but the *signifier itself*, the NAME of Jesus" (163). This, however, repeats rather than explains the poem's metaphysics. The name that Crashaw's speaker periphrastically predicates here is neither a signified nor a signifier in a conventionally Saussurean sense, but rather it is a superlative instance of what Derrida refers to as an "expressive sign," "an existent -- a signifier whose signified (*Bedeutung*) is ideal" (SP 89). According to

Derrida, such expressive signs are “highly valued because [. . .] the more ideal the signifier is, the more it augments the power to repeat presence, the more it keeps, reserves, and capitalizes on its sense” (*SP* 89). This repetition of presence and its accompanying differentiation of presence -- its un-presencing -- is precisely what the opening of Crashaw’s poem performs. As an expressive sign *par excellence* the divine Name is not only a signifier or generator of presence; it is presented as though it were consubstantial with the Infinite Being that, for Neo-Platonists, reduces and resolves all forms of difference. In that sense, Derrida would say, “the name of God [. . .] is the name of indifference itself [. . .] God’s name holds Death in check” (*OG* 71). As a *primum signatum* “the Name” is better understood as a metaphysical function than as a signifier. In this sense, the “Name” works by concealing its purely linguistic nature, operating as though it functions outside of or above language. Derrida describes the function of such “originary words” when he claims that the “word *being*, or at any rate the word designating the sense of being in different languages, is, with some others, an ‘originary word’ (“*Urwort*”), the transcendental word assuring the possibility of being-word to all other words” (37).³¹ Following this logic, the crucial epideictic goal for Crashaw is to convincingly maintain the self-referential integrity of the Name and the speaker who sings it — making singer, hymn, and logos mutually reinforcing images of one another. As the speaker puts it, the poem should become an image of heaven’s “self-involving Sett of Sphears” and yet should present not “One little WORLD” but “store” (31, 24).

Yet the structure of apostrophe as a figure of “diversion” or *aversio* prevents such an iconic presencing of voice. Derrida’s definition of apostrophe could serve as a gloss on the digressive, differentiating nature of Crashaw’s opening:

The word – apostrophizes – speaks of the words addressed to the singular one, a live interpellation (the man of discourse or writing interrupts the continuous development of the sequence, abruptly turns toward someone, that is, something, addresses himself to you), but the word also speaks of the address to be detoured. (*Post Card 4*, cited in Kneale16)

While other critics have emphasized Crashaw’s reliance on the apophatic strategies of the *via negativa*, it is worth emphasizing the extent to which the poem’s beginning makes unusually explicit the “turning” or *aversio* inherent in apostrophe. As J. Douglas Kneale points out, apostrophe represents “something which discourse cannot comfortably assimilate: not voice as such, however, but the passing of voice, its want or lack, even its sudden removal” (12). The “aversion” or “detour” implicit within apostrophe, its emphasis on the movement of voice rather than on the voice itself, makes (im)possible the desire for self-presence that Crashaw’s speaker articulates. It is both the condition and the limit of the speaker’s voice. The poem’s periphrastic effusions, its predicating of the name by turning away from it, thus repeat the way that apostrophe is, as Kneale puts it, “analogous to the Saussurean notion of ‘difference’ – that is, the play or shuttling of terms within a closed language system. Every signifier evokes or recalls every other signifier in the system, so that the linguistic sign is constituted as an effect or function of this periphrasis” (158). As Derrida has argued, the language and metaphysics of “presence” and of “voice” seeks to contain this shuttling of terms, providing an iconic sense of stability at the expense of difference and temporality itself.

Crashaw's speaker employs precisely this vocabulary of presence when he tries to overcome the metaphysical paradoxes involved in singing an unspeakable Name by establishing a continuity between his soul and the divine ray -- making his "Whole SELF" an image of the Logos. The opening sequence thus ritually establishes the continuity between God's living voice and the speaker as a medium or *Vates* of that voice. The speaker is thus "awakened" here just as the reader should become re-awakened during the "application to self" later in the poem:

Awake, My glory. SOUL, (if such thou be,
And That fair WORD at all refer to Thee)
 Awake and sing
 And be All Wing;
Bring hither thy whole SELF; and let me see
What of thy Parent HEAVN yet speakes in thee. (13-18)

Crashaw thematically enacts the correspondence of the speaker as microcosm of the logos by punning on "fair Word" which refers to both his "SOUL" and "God's Word" thereby inscribing the similarity it describes. This pun marks the awakening of the singer's "Whole Self" alongside and together with the Word. As such, the Soul appears here as a reflection of the Word while reflecting back to the Word its own image through praise. The invocation thus repeats the structures of consubstantiability in the opening to the Gospel of John as the speaker's voice is presented as being both with the Name while at the same time the Name itself.

The paradoxes and tensions involved in the theological and rhetorical coincidence between speaker and Word are self-consciously marked by the parenthetical structure which establishes it. By introducing a bracketed phrase between the first and second kerygmatic "awakenings" of the "Whole self," the speaker structurally enacts the very

splitting or discontinuity of voice that he thematically denies: “Awake, My glory. Soul (if such thou be, / And that fair WORD at all refer to Thee) / Awake and sing” (13-15). The self-present status of the Soul’s “fair Word” is typographically divided through this parenthetical aside, introducing (in order to deny) the possibility that “what is added [to the Name] is nothing because it is added to a full presence to which it is exterior” (*Of Grammatology* 167). Crashaw thus employs what Derrida calls, in reference to Heidegger’s crossing out of the word *being*, an act of erasure. While Derrida suggests that Heidegger’s effacing stroke merely represses transcendentality, Crashaw’s parenthesis demarcates the temporal and historical limits through which one has access to the divine. Crashaw’s brackets thus rhetorically register the temporal nature of a liturgical poem; they indicate the extent to which his inspired act of praise is believed to occur outside of time while being nonetheless bracketed by time. In this way, these parenthetical qualifications microcosmically inscribe the structure of the poem as a whole, demarcating the way that the poem is an attempt to articulate an eternal “more” through the limited but ultimately redeemed resources of language. Such formal analogies attempt to capture the extent to which the temporally specific constitution of the Christian Soul is supported by the eternally analogical operations of similitude made possible by the incarnation.

Having identified his Soul with the “Parent HEAVEN” within, the speaker rhetorically performs the *kenosis* or emptying of self that Christ undertook in order for humankind to grow towards God. Crashaw’s rhetorical and thematic contractions thus mirror the diminishing of divinity into human form which, paradoxically, enhances both

humankind and the Son. This rhetorical *kenosis* sets the stage for the actual incarnation scene by enacting the process of disorientation of the self as worldly ego or *soma psychikon* that precedes the moment of *metanoia* or the widening of spiritual vision which is correlative with the re-birth of the self as a *soma pneumatikon* or spiritual body:

O thou art Poore
 Of noble POWRES, I see,
 And full of nothing else but empty Me,
 Narrow, and low, and infinitely lesse
 Then this GREAT mornings mighty Busynes.
 One little WORLD or two
 (Alas) will never doe.
 We must have store.
 Goe, SOUL, out of thy Self, and seek for More. (19-27)

This emptying of self is followed by an accumulative gathering together of creation, a summoning of every “shape and kind of sweetness” as the diminishing movement of the *kenosis* prefaces the *pleromic* expansion of the poem and poet as a “moving image” of God’s abundance. This summons of creation is prefaced with what we might take as the primal scene of the poet’s mystical journey outward towards “More Worlds.” It is here that Crashaw begins employing sexual metaphors to accommodate the poet’s pseudo-divine function of uniting the Soul and God:

Goe, Soul, out of thy Self, and seek for More.
 Goe and request
 Great NATURE for the KEY of her huge Chest
 Of Heavns, the self involving Sett of Sphears
 (Which dull mortality more Feeles then heares)
 Then rouse the nest
 Of nimble Art, and traverse round
 The Aiery Shop of soul-appeasing Sound:
 And beat a summons in the Same
 All-soveraign Name
 To warn each severall kind
 And shape of sweetnes, Be they such

As sigh with supple wind
 Or answer Artfull Touch
 That they convene and come away
 To wait at the love-crowned Doores of
 This illustrious DAY. (27-43)

Crashaw's speaker now performs the separation of the "empty self" and the "Soul" as "Parent" within by embarking on the hymnic assembly that it is so often evoked in treatises on rhetoric and poetry as the poetic act *par excellence*. Indeed, Crashaw's speaker gathers creation together, thereby exemplifying the *Vatic* principles of *eloquentia* that Puttenham discusses when he describes how *Orpheus*, one of the poets of the first ages "assembled the wild beasts to come in herds to harken to his music and by that meanes tame them, implying thereby, how by his discreet and wholesome lessons uttered in harmonie and with melodious instruments, he brought the rude and savage people to a more civill and orderly life" (III 6). Sidney describes this same process in the *Apology* in relation to the Biblical Psalmist (274). Crashaw thus situates his poem within Orphic and Apostolic traditions, both of which are characterized by the ideal performativity of the poetic utterance, the way that the poet's word is at once the thing which it names.

This ideal speech act is captured in the proclamatory or kerygmatic dimension of the poet's power to *summon* creation. The speaker's use of the word "summons" is of particular import here; for it signifies "a peremptory or urgent call or command; a summoning sound, knock, or the like" (*OED*). Used in this sense, the poet's summoning evokes associations with Psalm 50 in which "The God of gods, the Lord hath spoken: and he hath called the earth, From rising of the sun, to the going down thereof" (*Vulgate*). The term summons also has the legal sense of being called before a legal authority on a

specific day. Similarly, it carries the sense of a legal “warning” (*OED*). Echoing the eternal force of God’s kerygmatic utterance in Psalm 50, while still registering the historico-legal sense of a summons that occurs on a specific day, the speaker conjoins the one “illustrious Day” on which the feast of the Name occurs with the eternal feast of paradise. Thus Crashaw’s “illustrious Day” is to his sacramental poem as June 16, 1904 is to Joyce’s *Ulysses*: it is a single day that at one and the same time encompasses all possible days. In this respect, the word summons and the act to which it refers situates the poem within the context of ritual time, what Barthes calls “the deep space” or eternal simultaneity characteristic of mythic conceptions of time (130).

This ritual time and the poet’s power to “summon” nature is premised upon a reiterative process where the speaker conjoins temporal and eternal authority by making himself into an image of the authority that he is addressing, rescuing himself from time by identifying himself with the ideal that he contemplates and addresses. The citational nature of his apostrophe discloses the fundamentally linguistic, that is, non-ideal, nature of the poet’s speech act even while it grounds the desire for ontological participation. Whatever authority the speaker’s identification of himself with the logos can be said to have is, in part, a function of how apostrophe, as Jonathon Culler puts it, “makes its point by troping not on the meaning a word but on the circuit or situation of communication itself” (135). Emphasizing the communicative space between self and God, rather than focusing on the “Name” itself, the speaker enacts, rather than predicates, a sense of accumulation, making his words into an image of the divine fiat. Insofar as apostrophe accents the communicative space between addresser and addressee it may be said to be

fundamentally liturgical or ritualistic in nature. And insofar as such a communicative space enables one to rhetorically tether time and eternity it is a primordial poetic form whose ideological force is structured into its very semiotic function, its turning outside of itself, in this case outside of time, as a way to metaphysically ground the “eternal-moment” of its articulation.³²

The speaker of “Hymn to the Name” creates an abounding sense of divine presence after the summoning of creation by poeticizing Augustine’s exegetical conflation and subsequent subordination of sexual generation to verbal conceptualization in the *Confessions*. Crashaw’s poetic account of the incarnation and triumph of the Name implicitly follows on Augustine’s argument that God subordinates sexual generation to verbal production when, in Genesis 1:22, he introduces the ostensibly superfluous injunction to the creatures of water and air “to bring forth and multiply.” Augustine understands “the reproduction and multiplication of marine creatures to refer to physical signs and manifestations, of which we have need because the flesh which envelops us is like a deep sea.” He thus takes “the reproduction of human kind to refer to the thoughts which our minds conceive, because reason is fertile and productive” (23:24). If the exegesis of Genesis in chapter 23 of the *Confessions* constitutes Augustine’s myth of origins, the absolute beginning of his story of the self, then the incarnation scene in “Hymn to the Name” constitutes the zero degree of Crashaw’s poetic account of how his speaker and his sacramentally attuned reader are “assumed” into the Cosmos the poem constructs.

In Crashaw's originary scene, however, the excluded mother of Hebraic etiology is given a central role in creation. Following Augustine's prioritization of verbal over sexual production, Crashaw's Hymn rhetorically re-creates sexual climax as a means for anticipating the power of divine enunciation. The emergence of the Name — which is typologically creation, Annunciation, Circumcision, baptism, Pentecost, and apocalyptic second coming at one and the same time—occurs following a mystical orgy of choric praise. Indeed, Crashaw presents the emergence of the name through a sacred parody of ejaculatory innuendoes found in Cavalier poems, most importantly Thomas Carew's "A Rapture." Crashaw's parody reads: "Bring All the store Of Sweets you have; And murmur that you have no more Come, nere to part, / Nature and Art! Come; and come strong, To the conspiracy of our Spacious song" (66-71). Through this sexual pun he continues the metaphor introduced earlier when the speaker said to nature: "Nor must you think it much / T'obey my bolder touch ; / I have Authority in Love's name to take you" (51-3). By metaphorically associating panegyric production with sexual procreation, these lines establish the thematic basis for the speaker's later depiction of God's creation and incarnation as a cosmogonic birth. Moreover, while the poet's proclamations appear as images of the Word as *logos spermatikos* -- the inseminating force that, like Uranus in Hesiod's *Theogony*, provides form to formless nature -- the ejaculatory pun here is not, as in Carew's poem the means of a phallogentric joke. More interestingly, the poet, imitating the role of God, orchestrates "Great Nature" into a universal state of ecstasy; "his" function being both lover and midwife: a spiritual husband to Nature but a feminine mediator of a feminized *logos*. Indeed, the Word of God itself is figured as

written into the conceptual structure of the Christian firmament; it demarcates, as Grossman's reading demonstrates, the dialectical moment when image becomes concept. This subordination of sexual to verbal procreativity also appears in the Crashaw passage cited above when the speaker addresses the angels of Annunciation as "Solliciters of Soules or EARES" (79). The latent reference here is to the idea that the Angel Gabriel, through the power of the Holy Ghost, verbally inseminates Mary through the ear.³³ This aural insemination, which is rhetorically enhanced through the synaesthetic pun on "Cymbals of Heaven," makes Mary's "Ear" a powerful means of mediating the soul's relationship with God. The source of her physical reproductive capacities is thus displaced upwards as her ability to procreate is spiritualized through her power to mediate the Soul's holy nuptials with God.

While Crashaw follows Augustine in subordinating sexual procreation to verbal generation, he does not simply repeat the traditional idea that the masculine Father is the source of verbal power while the feminine mother is simply the passive vessel of his Word.³⁴ On the contrary, in Crashaw's cosmogony the paternal origins of Christian etiology are imagistically undermined as the feminine supplement of the paternal order is poetically registered as consubstantial with the Father. Needless to say, this etiological organization will have important implications for how Crashaw imagines the advent of the ideal devotional self later in the poem. In the incarnation scene, though, Crashaw draws on scriptural representations of God as female as well as Neo-Platonic representations of Venus as the force that unifies and generates nature. In this respect, Crashaw's incarnation scene draws attention to the way that Christianity does not, as

Kristeva argues, “succeed in imposing *its* symbolic revolution without relying on the feminine representation of an immortal biology” (*Tales* 251). Foregrounding, rather than repressing, this underlying maternal dimension, Crashaw’s articulation of the feminine nature of the divine does not merely supplement an always-already masculine spirit, but rather the feminine is figured as correlative with the Name:

Lo, where Aloft it comes! It comes, Among
 The Conduct of Adoring SPIRITS, that throng
 Like diligent Bees, And swarm about it.
 O they are wise;
 And know what SWEETES are suck’t from out it.
 It is the Hive,
 By which they thrive,
 Where all their Hoard of Hony lyes.
 Lo where it comes, upon The snowy DOVE’S
 Soft Back; And brings a Bosom big with Loves.
 WELCOME to our dark world, Thou
 Womb of Day!
 Unfold thy fair Conceptions; And display
 The Birth of our Bright Joyes. (150-164)

The retinue of spirits that swarm about this divine womb of day whose bosom is big with loves and who descends on the back of a snowy dove through a series of aspirants that suggest the Eucharistic incarnation of the divine breath not only implies the heterodox view that the Holy Spirit is feminine in nature, but it also involves a Christian adaptation of Latin and neo-Latin representations of the birth of Venus. By figuring the descent of the holy spirit in the billowy language of Lucretius and his fifteenth-century Italian editor Michael Marullus, Crashaw more or less inverts the typology that Gombrich sees underlying Botticelli’s “The Birth of Venus” (Figure 2). In his analysis of the painting’s Neo-Platonic iconography, Gombrich points out that “the general arrangement of the figures is taken over from the traditional group of the Baptism of Christ, the scene

so closely connected with the manifestation of the Holy Ghost” (173). While Botticelli deploys Christian iconography in order to represent Venus as the personification of the creative principle of generation and the divinely self-generating source of Beauty, Crashaw does the reverse, employing Pagan forms for Christian figures. While the iconography is reversed, the Neo-Platonic meaning is more or less the same. Like Botticelli’s painting, Crashaw’s poem represents the manifestation of the creative principle behind creation, the unifying and vivifying force that unites nature and spirit, time and eternity. In this respect, Crashaw embeds the lush Lucretian and Orphic language that he used in his own Neo-Latin version of *Hymnus Veneri* for his representation of the Name.³⁵

Crashaw’s feminization of the creative power of divine breath is anticipated by Michael Marullus’s (1453-1500) *Hymni Naturales*, a highly popular neo-Latin poem in which Venus is made the Father’s agent of creation. In Marullus’s neo-Latin etiology – one which Crashaw would almost certainly have been familiar with -- Venus turns chaos into a bountiful world “where the waters were seen to swarm with unexpected monsters; and with a new face and new flowering, the embellished earth [opened] to her broad countenance” (246). Afterwards Marullus’s Bountiful Venus is taken up by her doves amidst a retinue of Gods. Crashaw draws on the same sort of erotically charged Lucretian language as Marullus in order to render the paternal signifier as a sumptuous heavenly diva who is both mother and father, both inseminator and inseminated.

Figuring the Name in the feminine form of a Venus-Genetrix makes typological sense insofar as she is, as Thomas Taylor pointed out, the “cause of all the harmony and

analogy in the universe, and of the union of form with matter, connecting and comprehending the powers of all the mundane elements” (Orpheus 13). Thus while she is linked with Holy Spirit through her symbolic association with Doves, she is also typologically identified with Wisdom as *sapientia creans*, “the cause of all things,” as well as *sapientia disponans*, the force that unites all creation in one harmonious whole. Crashaw suggests these associations between the Name and Sophia when he speaks of “wise” spirits that swarm about it, and through the imagery of sustenance after thirst which is a central theme in the Book of Wisdom. Moreover, according to Ficino, Venus personifies the ontologically downward movement of supra-intelligible things into mundane matter (Wind 134), thereby providing the Pagan counterpart to Christ’s *kenosis* and incarnation. Ficino’s association of Venus with the re-birth of the Soul is thus premised on the same typological thinking as early Christian representations of Venus rising from a shell out of the sea. This popular iconography signifies, as A.A. Barb has pointed out, the Christian soul or the Church born or re-born in baptism (230).

Crashaw’s emphasis on the feminine nature of God is also evident in the way that he re-works the gendered nature of the honey and hive imagery which derives not only from the liturgical celebration of the name,³⁶ but also from Carew’s “A Rapture.” While Hilton Kelliher rightly suggests that Crashaw’s use of this imagery derives in part from Carew (188), he overlooks the fact that in “A Rapture,” the bee is a metaphorically male symbol who flitters about “deflowering the fresh virgins of the Spring” (344). Crashaw’s divine lover, on the other hand, is a hive that suckles nature while at the same time replenishing it with “balmy showers.” These balmy showers suggest associations with the rain of

flowers which symbolize divine impregnation in Hesiod's *Theogony* just as they evoke a number of Old Testament prefigurations of the Nativity such as Exodus 16:14 when "the manna fell like rain, a free gift from heaven," or Numbers 17:8 when the rod of Aaron flowered of its own accord. This imagery also occurs in Botticelli's "Birth of Venus" in the form of the flora that falls between the Zephyrs and Venus signifying the re-birth of a newly verdant nature. Equally importantly, the hive and womb imagery in Crashaw's poem constitute a baroque envisioning of the Divine monograph in the form of the omphalos-stone or navel of the world that Orphic mythology thought to be the source of life's generation. Indeed this maternal navel is the Greek pre-figuration of Crashaw's "Synod of All-sweets" (196), the point from which life emanates and to which it will return.

Crashaw's vision of the hive-like eruption of the monograph – with its baroque feminization of God -- is powerfully paralleled and thematically clarified in Baciccia's Fresco, *The Triumph of the Name of Jesus* (1679), which adorns the ceiling of the Jesuit Church in Rome (Figure 2). Baciccia's Fresco is not only based on the same passage from Philippians as Crashaw's poem, but it also shares Crashaw's Counter-Reformation optimism regarding the apostolic power of the Church Militant. Indeed, like Crashaw's poem, Baciccia's *Triumph of the Name* occasions an exuberant celebration of the "Church Triumphant" (Engass 43-51). Moreover, just as Crashaw's poem begins with a song sung by the saved and ends by castigating those who challenge genuflection, Baciccia's work shows the redeemed being drawn upward while the damned are cast down into hell (44). More interestingly yet, the Fresco's great arc of the elect assigns a

central role to holy women who appear closest to the incarnate name, with men on the outer wings (45). This emphasis on feminine piety is in keeping with the fact that the Jesuit Church as a whole was dedicated to God, the Name, and the Virgin Mary (Hibbard 32). It thus discloses, just as Crashaw's poem does, how the Counter-Reformation and the Society of Jesus in particular renewed devotional fervor for Mary and other female based aspects of Catholic liturgy. It is thus not surprising to see that the Fresco is framed, both at the bottom and at the top, with a sea shell, a symbol that, as we just mentioned, is associated with Venus and which has long signified the re-birth of the Christian soul and the renewal of the Church. Like Mary's "Ear," the shell represents the feminine nature of spiritual procreativity and the capacity for redemption made possible by it.

While this iconography suggests that Baccicia, like Crashaw, typologically assimilates the power of the Pagan mother to that of the Christian Son, the form of the Fresco itself is even more suggestive of a cosmogonic birth. Indeed, the womb-like flow of light at the heart of the Fresco visually draws out the repressed maternal basis of Christian etiology to which Crashaw's poem verbally calls attention. In this respect, the light emanating from the monograph closely parallels Crashaw's "Womb of Day," whose Eucharistic force draws a retinue of adoring and "wise" spirits. Moreover, most commentators on the Fresco describe how the saved are drawn in by the light, suggesting a direct parallel with Crashaw's representation of the name as a "Hive / By which they thrive" (156-7). Also, the angel peering out towards the viewer from the undulating cloud at the center of the Fresco is most likely the Angel of Annunciation, -- the solicitor of Ears -- whose place

within the darkened cloud balances the rush of light, thereby creating a sense of harmony amidst potential discord.

While both Crashaw's poem and Baciccia's Fresco are organized around the principle of *discordia concors*, order within apparent disorder, they are perhaps most alike in the way that their mystical celebrations of the Name are tempered by an historical focus on how early Christian martyrs ground the Church Militant's authority. This thematic parallel is determined by the association between Christ's Name and the symbolic significance attributed to the circumcision, the point at which his Name becomes identified with the spilling of his blood. As Howard Hibbard explains, "the feast of the Circumcision, which falls appropriately on New Year's Day, [one day prior to the Feast of the Name] is the principal celebration of the Jesuits; and it was on that day that through a little ritual operation the name of Jesus was first associated with His blood" (32). Developing these typological associations, Crashaw's poem demonstrates precise parallels with the iconographic program which Baciccia's *Triumph of the Name* fulfilled. Crashaw's poem, like the program at Il Gesù, develops the associations between Christ's Name and his sacrifice by affirming the Church Militant's unity as an effect of the socially-binding power of Martyrs' blood:

O that it were as it was wont to be!
 When thy old Freinds of Fire, All full of Thee,
 Fought against Frowns with smiles; gave Glorious chase
 To Persecutions; And against the Face
 of DEATH and feircest Dangers, durst with Brave
 And sober pace march on to meet A GRAVE. (197-202)

Once the poem has turned inward towards the reader and the inscription of the divine presence is signed in his/her heart, it turns outward again. This time, though, the issue is

social rather than sacramental bonds. In the process of shifting from sacramental unity in Christ to social unity with the Church Militant the synecdochic structure of the poem—the continuity that is between speaker/reader/ and name-- is undone as the highly iconic, self-present voice of the speaker shifts into a mode that is now conscious of history as the difference between then and now, word and event: “O that it were as it was wont to be!” (197). As Davis points out, this section and the one immediately following (211-15) enact “the movement from death to new life.”

This turning toward the new life is completed in the next section when the speaker treats “the wounds of the martyrs first as the opening-out of fire, then as doors to let Christ in (116-17, lines 215-16). Young agrees, observing that this scene “centers on the Name as *signed* in Jesus’ blood and *witnessed* in the blood of the martyrs” (166). This signing thus encloses the structure of creation at a social/historical level, thereby complementing the individual’s inscription of the name in the “happy heart.” These two inscriptions, first in the single person, then in the martyrs who are symbols of the Church militant’s continuity in time, make all past and all future events visible in relation to them. More specifically, the self is tied to Christ by the reciprocal love between it and he, while it is also bonded to the community of believers by their mutual attachment to Christ. Thus by first identifying with the dyad of Christ/Mother as the object-ideal and then identifying with the Martyrs of apostolic times, Crashaw imaginatively re-instantiates the social bonds that hold the Church Militant together through a mutual love in Christ.³⁷ The supplementary relation between individual object-choice and social identification thereby establishes the integrity of not only the self as devotional ideal, but also the social bonds

between the self and the Church Militant. The conclusion of Crashaw's poem thus becomes ideological in the strongest sense, for it performs the organization of Christ's mystical body in time by moving from individual identification with Christ/Mary to social identification with those who best represent this devotional love. This interpellative process, moreover, implies its own act of exclusion as iconoclastic Calvinists become the negative term or "hyperbolized nothing" that secures the social bonds between sacramentalists.

Crashaw formally registers the integrity of Christ as the metaphysical ground that holds together the social bonds between the self and the other members of the Church Militant by again inscribing a substantive within a verb: "It was the witt of love o'reflowd the Bounds / Of WRATH, and made thee way through All those WOUNDS" (223-4). Christ's ideally iconic-ego is figured in the phrase "way through All those WOUNDS" insofar as it signifies both the act of suffering as well as the means for the salvation of the many. That is, the phrase sacramentally inscribes the logic of superabundance that is incarnated in the person of Christ. In doing so, it anchors the poem's metonymic dispersals, bringing them to a momentary stop. Indeed, Christ's wounds become the point at which the speaker establishes an imaginative bond with a specific community of believers, those who "kneel before the utterance of the name."

Because Davis and Young both read the martyr sequence in solely scriptural and thematic terms-- rather than seeing the ideological work it performs-- they overlook how the movement from death to life comes at the cost of destroying the liturgical time in which the Hymn Proper has been sung. For the self-presence of the lyric voice during the

incarnation scene is now split from within as the poem falls from the meditator's renewal of the nativity scene to the nostalgically and thus narratively constituted voice of "O that it were as it was wont to be." In the very gesture of thematically enacting the movement from life to death, the "immortal song" introduces death into itself by making the reader conscious of the distance between past and present. The structure is no longer ideally self-referential but suddenly becomes an explicit matter of a difference between a present absence and an absent presence. Tropologically speaking, this movement involves the displacement of synecdoche by metonymy at the very moment when the function of synecdoche becomes most crucial. The unity of self and name, and the typological coincidence of past, present, and future dissolve as the very enactment of God's signing his presence in time draws the reader out from the ritual space of this liturgical poem to the temporally constituted form of narrative. Thus by doubling or supplementing the synecdochic structure from the single "happy heart" that mirrors the name to the "many martyrs" who have been signed by the name, the ontology of the poem splits from within, introducing a difference between the "eternal time" in which the poem is being sung and historical time as an exterior mode of sequentiality that is yet to be fulfilled. The interchangeability of inner and outward that Davis speaks of is thus achieved at the cost of renewing the difference between time and eternity. As in Crashaw's epigrams, his hyperbolized sacramentalism runs the risk of undoing the very ideology it works to sustain. To put this simply, sacramental continuity is lost at the formal level so that social unity can be thematically re-asserted. Thus the speaker produces precisely the opposite effect that Roland Barthes describes when he points out that "the presence in historical

narration of explicit speech-act signs tends to de-chronologize the historical thread and to restore a complex parametric non-linear time whose deep space recalls the mythic time of the ancient cosmogonies" (130-1). The final section of "Hymn to the Name" does the opposite, moving from the "deep space" structure of mythic or sacramental time into the chronological deferrals of historical narration. What makes this worth analyzing in close detail is that this process occurs precisely at the moment when the mythic, logocentric basis of the poem is most at stake.

If the introduction of a previously disavowed otherness appears during the martyr sequence through the loss of liturgical time as word and thing are radically disjoined, then it manifests thematically at the end when the speaker distinguishes between sacramental and non-sacramental Christians, between, that is, Catholic minded worshipers and their iconoclastic opponents: "For sure there is no Knee / That knowes not THEE. Or if there be such sons of shame, / Alas what will they doe / When stubborn Rocks shall bow / And Hills hang down their Heavn-saluting Heads / To seek for humble Beds / Of Dust, where in the Bashfull shades of night / Next to their own low NOTHING they may ly" (226-33). The "Wit of Love" has now become the voice Wrath.³⁸ This shift occurs in order to make the point that the liturgical act of bowing at the name performs the same socially-unifying function as the identification with the Martyrs. It unites a pro-sacramental Church Militant together by producing an otherness to which it is set against. It is, as it were, the social/liturgical repetition of Christ's signature in the hearts of men. The final sequence thus makes the Hymn function rhetorically as an instance of paranesis, a combination of praise and persuasion. Although the poem began as a

universal and deathless hymn it ends by re-uniting sacramental worshipers into the body of Christ through an ideologically productive act of exclusion. The act of kneeling at the name thus becomes invested with great social as well as liturgical significance, conjoining Catholics together in the very gesture of separating them out from their Calvinist Others.

Given this wrathful negation of his political enemies, Crashaw's vision of mystical union does not appear as an escape from history as such, but rather it provides the symbolic-spiritual basis of how he imagines the advent of the ideal devotional self; it demarcates, that is, the underlying and eternal support of historical identity. This scene of interpellation or what in meditative terms is referred to as the "application to self" occurs, appropriately enough, right at the point that Crashaw's hyperboles become most hyperbolic. Indeed, at this central moment in the poem the ideal reader becomes the synecdochic embodiment of God's *symphonia discours*, thereby re-containing the proliferation of signifiers into the single meditative heart. Thus if the incarnation scene celebrated Christ's Nativity, this scene celebrates the re-birth of the individual Soul:

A Thousand Hills of Frankincense;
 Mountains of myrrh, and Beds of spices
 And ten Thousand PARADISES
 The soul that tastes thee takes from thence.
 How many unknown WORLDS there are
 Of Comforts, which Thou hast in keeping!
 How many Thousand Mercyes there
 In Pitty's soft lap ly a sleeping!
 Happy he who has the art
 To awake them,
 And to take them
 Home, and lodge them in his HEART. (185-196)

The simultaneity of past, present, and future reaches its pitch here as the celebration of Mercy lying in Pity's lap allegorizes the Nativity as the human form of the love embodied in the Name. This personification of Pauline *agape* in the form of maternal love is now written into the heart of the ideal reader who becomes, like the speaker, an image of the feminized divine Name. By "lodging" the image of divine mercies and comforts into the heart, one re-integrates the Soul as a peculiarly maternal version of the *imago Dei*. This "application to Self" furthers Crashaw's re-envisioning of Augustine's paternal construction of the Christian symbolic by making the love expressed between mother and son an image of divine love.

This scene is of particular importance in understanding how Crashaw, as we discussed above, often imagines the advent of the devotional subject through a symbolic internalization of the love expressed between mother and son. Indeed, if the Holy Ghost represents the bond of love between Father and Son in Augustine's *De Trinitate*, then it embodies the affiliation of Mother and (the Soul as) daughter in Crashaw's "Hymn to the Name." Crashaw's economy of interpellation is thus substantially different than Augustine's, which as Grossman describes "sacrifices the system of differences deriving from sexual difference, the difference, that is, between *men and women*—procreation and kinship—to a system of differences deriving from *man's* relationship to God, a relationship in which all *men* are *brothers* and *sons*, and each man addresses himself to *the Father*" (289). This organization of socio-religious identity is given its secular articulation not only in Freud's psychoanalytic myth of the primal horde, but more importantly in his notion that the ego-ideal is established in an individual's "identification

with the father in his own personal pre-history" (*Ego and Id* 370). For Freud, identification with the primal father constitutes the first act of separating from the undifferentiated state of union with the mother, thus delineating the pre-historical origins of the super-ego.³⁹ While Freud remained somewhat ambiguous in regard to the gendering of the "primal father," remarking in a footnote that the preconditions for the individual's recognition of gender differences are not yet in place when this primal identification occurs, Crashaw clearly feminizes the modes of identification necessary to establishing the devotionally ideal self. The precipitation of the ideal self occurs not through a violent rejection of the mother, but through a recognition of oneself as the image of Mercy that is embodied in the *relation* between Mary and Christ. From this perspective, the mystical union of the Soul and God that occurs during the incarnation scene does not appear as a narcissistic regression based on a denial of castration; but rather it functions, at a structural level, as the eternal image that (anacritically) supports the *symbolic* constitution of the subject as the realization of the ideal relation between Mother and Christ. In other words, if Lacan situates the phallus as the term which signifies one's alienation in language, then Crashaw situates the image of Mercy expressed between mother and child as the point of entry into the Name. In short, Crashaw's poem imagines a form of interpellation which, if not anti-patriarchal, is premised upon an identification with rather than a disavowal of the mother. Thus while Crashaw's poem is committed to a vision of the logocentric power of vatic language, it displaces the connection between phallos and logos that becomes a crucial feature of English Protestant theology and poetics. This displacing of the paternal function in

Christian etiology also unsettles the modern critical tradition of reading Crashaw in Oedipal terms, an approach that obscures as much as it reveals about Crashaw's articulation of the processes involved in the subject's coming-to-be.

To the extent that "Hymn to the Name" unsettles the father-centered vision implicit in both English Protestant theology and orthodox Freudian psychoanalysis, it provides an exemplary place in which to consider how Marian worship and the Christian representation of divinity as feminine discloses the way that such images are fantasies not of an idealized archaic mother so much as they are an idealization of the *relationship* that binds the subject to the mother. According to Kristeva, the subject's psychic integrity requires access to cultural codes which can effectively sublimate this pre-historical relationship with the body of the mother.⁴⁰ Without access to representational economies that enable the sublimation of the affective residue bound up with the subject's primary narcissism the subject risks fragmentation, melancholia, and ultimately aphanasis, the psychosis inducing loss of the psyche's claim to social substance. As Schiesari and others have argued, however, psychoanalysis – including Kristeva's own extraordinary work – often participates in restricting the production of such codes by naturalizing the Oedipal model and by insisting upon it as the only interpretive framework in which to make sense of the subject's relationship with the maternal. One of the assumptions of the Oedipal model is that the idealization of the mother child relation functions as a retroactive mitigation of the real pre-historical bond between Mother and infant, which is (given the effects of the Paternal function) necessarily destructive. Crashaw's work, however, asks us to consider how the retroactive casting of the mother-child relation might provide the

positive content for the subject, rather than performing at best a prophylactic function and at worst a psychotic defense against castration. Indeed, given Crashaw's efforts to create a liturgical and imaginative space for the representation of the idealized relation between mother and child amidst an ecclesiastical climate largely hostile to the maternal elements in more Catholic modes of worship, his work has the potential to become strangely pertinent to the ongoing critique of Oedipus, just as this critique is relevant to his work.⁴¹

Like Southwell before him, Crashaw advances a vision of excessive adoration of God through a series of sophisticated rhetorical structures designed to sustain a sacramental continuity between words and Word. In the process of doing so, however, Crashaw's work formally discloses the historical pressures bearing upon it, producing a poetic vision of the self that participates in the very separation of divine and mundane orders it sought to unite. Moreover, just as Southwell turned to visions of devotionally ideal women in order to affect a change in the poetic and religious life of Elizabethan England, so Crashaw reacted against the masculinizing forces of English Protestantism by fully embracing an "effeminate" sacramental vision premised on the material mediation of the spiritual. By doing so, he unsettled the phallic underpinnings of Neo-Platonic conceptions of creation, God, and the nature of poetic utterance. In the following two chapters we continue our examination of the relationship between the physical and the spiritual, turning our attention to the way that changes in the conception of the body coincide with changes in the function of devotional language.

Notes

¹ Laud's *Works*, VI, Pt. 1 (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1872) 57.

² John Cosin, *A Collection of Private Devotions*, ed. P.G. Stanwood (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967) xxii.

³ See Allan Pritchard's "Puritan Charges Against Crashaw and Beaumont," *TLS*, July 2, 1964, p. 578 for an account of the ceremonial transgressions Parliamentary forces accused Crashaw and Joseph Beaumont of committing. See also, Hilton Kelliher, "Crashaw at Cambridge," *New Perspectives on the Life and Art of Richard Crashaw* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990) 180-214. For an overview of Laud's policies on ceremony see J. Sears McGee's "William Laud and the Outward Face of Religion," in *Leaders of the Reformation*, ed. Richard L. De Molen (London: Susquehanna University Press, 1984) 24-40.

⁴ This is somewhat ironic given that Crashaw's own father objected to Marian worship by saying they "turne the Psalmes from *Dominus* to *Domina*, from God to our Ladie" William Crashaw, *The Sermon Preached at the Crosse, Feb. xiiii*, 1607 (London: 1608). Elsewhere William Crashaw argued that Mary "may be then a vesell of grace but she can be no way a fountaine of grace," *The Jesuit Gospel* (London, 1610) 88. Along with Allan Pritchard's "Puritan Charges Against Crashaw and Beaumont," *TLS*, July 2, 1964, 578 see Eugene Cunnar's "Crashaw's 'Sancta Maria Dolorum': Controversy and Coherence," in *New Perspectives on the Life and Art of Richard Crashaw*, ed. John R. Roberts (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990) 99-126. Cunnar discusses Crashaw's emphasis on Mary's intercessory and co-redemptive roles in salvation – an emphasis which extends beyond conventional Anglican limits.

⁵ For other accounts of anti-Catholicism see Arthur F. Marotti ed. *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999). Paul Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978). See also Ernest Jones's classic account of Protestant misogyny in "A Psycho-Analytic Study of the Holy Ghost Concept" *Essays in Applied Psychoanalysis* (London: Hogarth Press, 1951) 358-373. John Bossy discusses the detrimental effects of the Reformation on upper class women in *The English Catholic Community 1570-1850* (New York: Oxford UP, 1976) 158.

⁶ Although one can hardly underestimate the importance of liturgical life for Catholic-minded Anglicans like Crashaw, R.V. Young's recent assertion that Crashaw's conversion is explicable due to his apparent inability "to recover a sense of Christ's

sacramental presence within the framework of Protestant doctrine” rather than to “personal circumstances” (*Doctrine* 149) is not only unrealistically sentimental, it is contrary to biographical evidence. Crashaw’s Leyden letter reveals a pronounced nostalgia for Peterhouse, making it amply clear that the financially impoverished Crashaw would have preferred to return from the continent had the political climate been more conducive:

I have I assure you no desire to be absolutely and irrespectively rid of my beloved Patrimony in St. Peter. No man then myself holds more high the humble scepter of such a little contentful kingdom. And as safely may I say no man more unprovided of any present course (Martin xxxi).

There is no reason to assume that Crashaw would have left England, let alone converted to Catholicism, if it were not for the political failure of Laud’s faction which led to Crashaw’s expulsion and his subsequent financial woes. His decision to convert was no doubt a largely, if not entirely, pragmatic one, enabling him a position in Rome which he stayed on with despite the fact that much of it disagreed with him. See Larsen, “Some Light on Richard Crashaw’s Final Years in Rome,” *Modern Language Review* 66 (1971): 492-96. Thomas Healy’s account of the Laudian background of Crashaw’s work provides a sober antidote to Young’s excessively Catholicized portrait of Crashaw in *Doctrine and Devotion in 17th-Century Poetry* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000). See Thomas F. Healy, *Richard Crashaw, Medieval and Renaissance Authors*, vol 8. (Leiden: E.J. Brill., 1986).

⁷ For a literary-historical account of how the Neo-Platonic epideictic tradition effaces sexual difference see Joel Fineman’s *Shakespeare’s Perjured Eye: The Invention of Poetic Subjectivity in the Sonnets* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986). For discussions of how western philosophy represses sexual difference see Jacques Derrida *Spurs: Nietzsche’s Styles*, trans. Stefano Agosti (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1978) 36-47. See also *Psyché: Invention de l’autre* (Paris: Galilée) 65-83.

⁸ Julia Kristeva discusses the way that Judeo-Christian etiology represses Pagan forms of matrilinearity in “Stabat Mater,” *Tales of Love*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia UP, 1987) 234-64. See also Elaine Pagels, “What Became of God the Mother? Conflicting Images of God in Early Christianity,” *Signs* (1976): 293-303. And Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983).

⁹ See Ch. 2 of Shell’s *Catholicism, Controversy and the English Literary Imagination, 1558-1660* for a recent account of the Protestantization of English literary history. Unfortunately, Shell does not consider how this process is itself a reaction to the Continental/Catholic version of English literary history promulgated by T.S. Eliot, Louis Martz, and importantly, if more obscurely, Malcolm M. Ross, a version, moreover, that is still being championed by R.V. Young among others.

¹⁰ Guibbory offers the liturgical analog to this poetic issue when she comments that while “attention to ceremonial worship under Charles and Laud reflected the personal values of these two men, it was also [. . .] a culturally broader effort to maintain a vision not just of worship but of human nature and human relations that was challenged by the divisive, dualist assumptions driving Calvin’s and Luther’s writings and the beliefs of thoroughly reformed Protestants in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England” (42).

¹¹ Michael McCanles offers an alternative position to my view of Crashawian hyperbole as he reads three of Crashaw’s Hymns in terms of the self-consuming structures of negative theology. Although his reading reveals local insights into Crashaw’s juxtaposing of auxesis and meiosis (exaggeration and understatement), it does not account for the metonymic economy of Crashaw’s work, nor does it explain the way that Crashaw manipulates the tendency in epideictic idealism to mirror or embody its ideal object. This is not altogether surprising given that the rhetorical economy of the four Christmastide Hymns shows closer relationships to the *via affirmativa* than it does to a strictly apophatic theology. Although Crashaw uses the vocabulary of apophatic theology and even at times deploys its strategies, as we shall see in our reading of “Hymn to the Name,” his work does not reveal a systematic or all-inclusive dependence on apophatic theology’s assertions of a radical disjunction between human language and divine presence. As Ruth Wallerstein pointed out in a very early study of Crashaw (1959), the concept of the negative way is not “fully realized by Crashaw, or fully absorbed into the growth of Crashaw’s own mind; and the statement of the concept does not flower from the vision of the [‘Epiphany Hymn’] as a whole, but seems added to it” (143). Lorraine Roberts concurs with Wallerstein when she insists that Crashaw’s references to Pseudo-Dionysius in the “Epiphany Hymn” may refer to the *via affirmativa*, rather than to the *via negativa* (142-3). There can be no doubt that Crashaw’s spiritual vision has more in common with Francois de Sales and the Laudian apologist John Cosin, with their affirmation of language, than it does with the *via negativa* of Pseudo-Dionysius which is radically suspicious of language. In Pseudo-Dionysius’s mystic vision the systematic negation of language that is part of the *via negativa* follows upon the affirmation of the senses and symbols characteristic of the *via affirmativa* and finally gives way to a non-linguistic mode of illumination or what some scholars call the *via mystica*. Aside from a couple of explicit references, Crashaw’s poetry shows no formal signs of this complex mystical system, but remains closely aligned to the affirmation of symbols and senses characteristic of Tridentine and Anglican devotion and rhetoric. Another likely context for Crashaw’s juxtaposition of meiosis and auxesis is Augustine’s distinction between *humilis* and *sublimis* that characterizes the incarnation.

¹² Joel Fineman speaks to this issue when he remarks that the correspondence between word and thing “is presented as a poetic ideal, especially in the poetry of praise. The point here is not that Dante, Petrarch, Sidney, and Spenser et al., were unaware of the difference between words and things; rather, that the panegyric poetics these poets

employ leads them, by virtue of its rhetorical logic, to invoke Cratylitic themes in support of epideictic idealization" (*Shakespeare's* 312 n.11).

¹³ While Asals points out that Suarez is invoked as an authority on "the language of Angels," she glosses over the fact that the author disagrees with Suarez' premise that men and women do not attain to the language of Angels (*Comm. et Disp. in Summam Theologicam S. Thomae* I, pars. ii, lib. 2 c. 26) (Martin 432). This disagreement is fundamental in appreciating the extreme position that the preface takes on poetry's ability to evoke divine presence.

¹⁴ Patrick Grant situates Crashaw's technique of spiritualizing the physical in relation to Capuchin Spirituality, particularly the work of Benet de Canfield. In my reading I emphasize the Laudian and anamorphic dimensions of Crashaw's literary imagination. See *Images and Ideas* Ch. 4.

¹⁵ See also Thomas F. Healy "Crashaw and the Sense of History" in *New Perspectives on the Life and Art of Richard Crashaw*, ed. John R. Roberts (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990) 49-55.

¹⁶ The full quotation from Laud regarding the priority of bodily worship that I have taken as my epigram reads: "I say the greatest, yea, greater far than the pulpit; for there 'tis *Hoc est corpus meum*, 'This is my body;' but in the pulpit 'tis at most *Hoc est verbum meum*, 'This is my word.' And a greater reverence, no doubt, is due to the body than to the word of our Lord" (57). Laud here privileges sacrament over sermon.

¹⁷ John Cosin took over the vacant Mastership of Peterhouse Cambridge, the same college Crashaw attended, in 1634. For the English Church's official position on the Eucharist see Article XXVIII Of the Lord's Supper in Thirty-Nine Articles Rpt in *Religion and Society in Early Modern England: A Sourcebook* ed. David Cressy and Lori Anne Ferrell (London: Routledge, 1996). See also 5.67.12 of Richard Hooker's *Works* ed. W. (Speed Hill. Cambridge Mass., 1977).

¹⁸ George W. Williams follows R. Goldfarb in noting "what is easy to overlook: that the poem is addressed not to the Virgin but to the faithful woman who speaks to Christ in Luke 11:27 (Williams, 14). Given the predilection of Laudians like Cosin to de-contextualize scripture when arguing for bodily worship I see no reason to assume such a narrow audience for the epigram. It is "easy to overlook" the scriptural context precisely because we are being invited to do so. We are being asked to enter into the devotional scene being depicted. Rather than glossing over Crashaw's de-contextualization of scripture, it is worth taking seriously.

¹⁹ For analyses of how Crashaw articulates spiritual maturity through a combining of gender characteristics see Paul A. Parrish, "'O Sweet Contest': Gender and Value in the Weeper," *New Perspectives on the Life and Art of Richard Crashaw*, ed. John R. Roberts (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990) 127-139 and Marc. F. Bertolasco, "A Jungian Reading of Crashaw's 'The Flaming Heart'" In *Essays on Richard Crashaw*, ed. R. M. Cooper, 224-64. *Salzburg Studies in English Literature, Elizabethan and Renaissance Studies*, no. 83, ed. J. Hogg. Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Salzburg, 1979. The idea that spiritual maturity entails a combination of gendered characteristics is given its visual representation in the frontispiece to Nicholas Caussin's *Eloquentia sacra et humana*. In Caussin's visual allegory eloquence appears, as Wayne Rebhorn observes, "as an idealized goddess of force and persuasiveness who contains both sexes within her" (*Emperor*, 182).

²⁰ For other discussions of anamorphic art see Jurgis Baltrusaitis, *Anamorphic Art*, trans. W.J. Strachan (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1977). E.H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, (London: 1960). See also Rosalie L. Colie's magisterial study *Paradoxia Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox* (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1966). Ch. 10.

²¹ See Crashaw's 1648 "Adore Te" especially stanza 4, for an account of this emphasis on reception rather than on presence: "Sweet, consider then, that I, / Though allow'd nor hand nor eye / To reach at thy lov'd Face; nor can / Tast thee God, or touch thee MAN; Both yet believe and wittnesse thee / My lord, my Faith, my hope increase; (27-32). Although R.V. Young is right that this stanza appears more or less consistent with Thomistic realism, (*Summa Theologiae* III.78.1, Young 157) his Catholicization of the poem overlooks its emphasis on the private, subjective reception of the Eucharist that qualifies what would have been perceived as its corporate, Catholic character. This focus on the way that the Eucharist deepens the speaker's individual response shows a clear Anglican influence and should be more properly read in terms of Augustinian symbolism which focuses on the contemplation of the spiritual efficacy of the "real presence" rather than the specific mode of its transubstantiation as in Thomist realism. This Protestant/Augustinian dimension becomes most clear in the second last stanza when Crashaw walks the fine Anglican line between Catholic transubstantiation and Zwinglian memorialism, sandwiching the "living presence" of Christ between a sense of memorial remembrance and its subjective relevance for the participant, thereby qualifying while certainly not annulling the corporate character of the Catholic sacrament implied in the previous lines. In this way, Crashaw maintains, both theologically and rhetorically, a precarious *via media* reminiscent of the tautly ambiguous position articulated in Donne's *Prebend Sermons*. (See Potter and Simpson, VI.15.300; VII. 12. 320-1). "O dear memoriall of that Death/ Which lives still, and allows us breath!/ Rich, Royall food! Bountyfull BREAD!/ Whose use denyes us to the dead; Whose vitall gust alone can give / The same leave both to eat and live; Live ever Bread of loves, and be / My life, my soul, my surer *selfe to me*." Although Crashaw's celebration of the sacrificial

and corporate character of the rite is wholly in line with Catholic sacramentalism, the Protestant emphasis on the private, subjective reception emphasized at the end, its relevance for the “surer me,” is a carefully calculated Anglican touch on Crashaw’s part. There is nothing here that is inconsistent with John Cosin’s *Popish Doctrines of Transubstantiation*. By placing the focus on Christ’s presence in the Eucharist, Young commits the Catholic error that Laudians continually warned against.

²² See Sigmund Freud, *On Sexuality: Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* Trans. by James Strachey (New York: Penguin, 1977) 144-46.

²³ It was a common tradition of late medieval English devotion to relate to Christ through Mary. Eamon Duffy cites a fifteenth-century version of the “Stabat Mater” to exemplify this tradition, a tradition that informs the way in which the reader of Crashaw’s epigram relates to Christ through the position of the mother. The last stanza of this poem reads: “Fac, ut portem Christi mortem, / Passionis fac consortem, / et plagas recolere” (Grant that I carry within me the death of Christ, make me a partner in his Passion, let me relive his wounds”) (259). It is precisely this incorporation of Christ through identification with his wounds that Crashaw’s epigram enacts.

²⁴ William Empson’s Freudian inspired formalist reading of Crashaw’s epigram remains among its most sophisticated insofar as Empson resists a symptomatic approach, focusing instead on the same metaphorical tensions that Edward Thimelby saw at work in Crashaw’s verse. See *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (London: Penguin, 1995) 253-60.

²⁵ For readings of Crashaw along the lines of classical Freudian psychoanalysis see John Tytell, “Sexual Imagery in the Secular and Sacred Poems of Richard Crashaw” *Literature and Psychology* 21 (1971): 21-27. Richard Geha jr. “Richard Crashaw’ (1613-1650): The Ego’s Soft Fall.” *American Imago* 23 (1966): 158-68. William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1930). For a Jungian perspective see Marc. F. Bertonasco, “A Jungian Reading of Crashaw’s ‘The Flaming Heart.’” In *Essays on Richard Crashaw*, ed. R. M. Cooper, 224-64. Salzburg Studies in English Literature, Elizabethan and Renaissance Studies, no. 83, ed. J. Hogg (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Salzburg, 1979).

²⁶ Schiersari is developing on the feminist thought of Kaja Silverman and Luce Irigaray. See Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984). And Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985). For other important psychoanalytic revisions of the Oedipal theory see Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978). Marianne Hirsch, *The Mother/Daughter Plot: Narrative, Psychoanalysis, and*

Feminism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989). See also Joyce Trebilcott, ed. *Mothering: Essays in Feminist Theory* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Allenheld, 1983).

²⁷ For a study of Christ's role as mother see Caroline Walker Bynum's *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

²⁸ Jesus's fulfillment of the Tetragrammaton is embodied in the Greek acronym ΙΧΘΥΣ (Jesus Christ Son of God Savior). For Crashaw's reliance on Aquinas' and Pseudo-Dionysius' theories of naming the divine see Eugene R. Cunnar, "Crashaw's Hymn 'To the Name Above Every Name': Background and Meaning," In *Essays on Richard Crashaw*, ed. Robert M. Cooper, 102-28. Salzburg Studies in English Literature, Elizabethan and Renaissance Studies, General Ed. James Hogg, no. 83. (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1979). See also R.V Young's *Doctrine and Devotion* for a competing view of "Hymn to the Name." For a discussion of the Tetragrammaton see also Hans Blumenberg, *Work on Myth*, trans. Robert M. Wallace (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985) Ch. 2.

²⁹ For a discussion of the controversy over genuflection see Cunnar, "Crashaw's Hymn 'To the Name Above Every Name': Background and Meaning."

³⁰ See Book Three of Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* "On the Divine Names" (London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1963). See also Cunnar's "Crashaw's Hymn 'To the Name Above Every Name': Background and Meaning."

³¹ Derrida's discussion of being-words closely recalls Aquinas's treatise on naming God: "Some words that signify what has come forth from God to creatures do so in such a way that part of the meaning of the word is the imperfect way in which the creature shares in the divine perfection. Thus it is part of the meaning of 'rock' that it has its being in a merely material way. Such words can be used of God only metaphorically. There are other words, however, that simply mean certain perfections—words, for example, like 'being', 'good', 'living' and so on. These words can be used literally of God" (59).

³² de Certeau brilliantly captures the economy of mystic forms of apostrophe, the shuttling between plentitude and lack implicit in them, when he writes: "like the musician in Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*, who is caught in his harp, his arms outstretched as though dead or passed out, played by the song that sends him into ecstasy, insane from being imprisoned in his instrument, that is, in the body of the voice of the other – the poet, too, is *robbed* by that excess which names but remains unnamable" (97).

³³ For an explanation of this tradition see Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983). For a psychoanalytic

account of this tradition see Ernest Jones's "The Madonna's Conception through the Ear" in *Essays in Applied Psychoanalysis Vol II* (London: Hogarth Press, 1951) 266-357. Crashaw also makes the ear the spiritual orifice par excellence in "Adore Te": "Your ports are all superfluous here, / Save That which lets in faith, the eare" (9-10).

³⁴ This notion of reproduction became central to Christian thought through Aquinas's reworking of Aristotle's *On the Generation of Animals*. See Julia O'Faolain and Lauro Martines, ed., *Not in God's Image* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973).

³⁵ Crashaw wrote one neo-Latin Hymn to the Goddess and translated a Prayer to Venus from Euphormio, both of which only appeared in manuscript form. See Stella P. Revard, "Crashaw and the Diva: The Tradition of the Neo-Latin Hymn to the Goddess," *New Perspectives on the Life and Art of Richard Crashaw* ed. John R. Roberts (Columbia: University of Missouri Press) 80-98.

³⁶ The Hymn to the Name in the Catholic Breviary reads: "That name is like honey in the mouth, like music in the ear, like gladness in the heart" (403).

³⁷ Freud analyzes this structure in *Group Analysis* when he points out how the social bonds of the Catholic Church consist in the reciprocal supplementation of identification and object-choice (168).

³⁸ The issue of genuflection was one of the most controversial liturgical issues within the English Church during and after Laud's time as Archbishop. See Cunnar's "Crashaw's Hymn 'To the Name Above Every Name': Background and Meaning."

³⁹ See also the Postscript to *Group Psychology And the Analysis of the Ego* (1921).

⁴⁰ Along with *Tales of Love* see *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia UP, 1989).

⁴¹ I have avoided situating Crashaw's work against Deleuze's and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* because their argument is, as Slavov Žižek has compellingly demonstrated, the ultimate Oedipal fantasy. Instead, I have maintained that Crashaw's work can be more productively read outside rather than merely against an Oedipal framework. See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983). For a critique of *Anti-Oedipus* see Slavov Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London and New York: Verso, 1999) 280.

**Embodiment and Representation in John Donne's
*Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions.***

The Soul of a Man is incorporate in his Words ---
Donne.

In the first two chapters of this thesis I examined how the rhetorical and devotional excesses of Southwell's and Crashaw's work inform the predication of ideal religious subjectivities at specific moments in the history of de-sacramentalization. Focusing on the role of the Petrarchan plaint in his representation of Catholic desire, I considered the way that Southwell's various speakers paradoxically overcome their experience of political subjection by exorbitantly re-living a mode of divine interpellation, thereby making the signs of Catholic exile the proof of recusant grace. Similarly, in chapter two we considered how Crashaw's imagistic excesses take the physical mediation of the spiritual to its logical breaking point, thereby putting in jeopardy the very incarnational theology that such strategies seek to uphold. This chapter follows a somewhat analogous rhetorical and spiritual route. In it I pose the question of how the speaker of Donne's 1623 spiritual autobiography *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions* re-envision himself as an *imago dei* by mitigating the newly pressing metaphysical problems involved in formally mediating the passage from the material body to the immaterial soul, and even more fundamentally yet, from the letter to the spirit. In this respect, if Southwell's experience of language as a "region of unlikeness" is occasioned by his encounter with the cavernous world of St. Gothard's Pass, then it is the cavities of the body itself that is

the *regio dissimilitudinis* that Donne navigates in his attempt to move from the sinews of his ailing body to the sinews of God's healing word.¹

In 1623 the sublation of body to word could no longer be taken for granted. Just as critiques of transubstantiation unsettled poetic representations of the Eucharist, so too the emergence of anatomical science complicated representations of the body's natural order. Few texts exemplify the changes that early modern discourses of anatomy had on the lived experience of embodiment more dramatically than John Donne's *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*. These changes are registered at their most fundamental level, as Jonathon Sawday explains, with respect to the fact that, despite the continual assertions of poets and anatomists "that the body mirrored the harmonious orchestration of the universe, what they confronted in reality was something else: a structure of such bewildering complexity, such a confusion of function and organic integrity, that the outcome of every such interior voyage hovered on the edge of disaster" (88).² Once the discrete object of empirical analysis, rather than the fleshy cabinet of the soul, the body became the "*locus* of all [philosophical] doubt," the "alien territory" (88) whose labyrinthine forms succinctly expressed the increased sense of metaphysical incoherence that Donne diagnoses in the *Anniversaries*. If the body is (as Donne remarked in a famous re-assertion of Plato's idea in the *Timaeus* that the body and soul are proportioned to the universe) God's "book," then the anatomical adventure of early modern science rendered the transcendental script of the *liber corporis* increasingly illegible within the analogically based paradigm of medieval thought.

The steady proliferation of early modern anatomical discourse is an exemplary instance of how changes in the structures of knowledge impinged on and threatened the validity of the medieval or sacramental cosmos, affecting the perceived validity of a metaphysical system in which the particular is knowable and significant only insofar as it is an emanation of its generalized *eidos*. The predication of self in the *Devotions* registers this theological crisis both formally and thematically. Indeed, the *Devotions* records the sense of spiritual and intellectual bewilderment inspired by the newfound complexities of the body to the extent that Donne more or less demystifies the metaphysical validity of the micro/macro relation as an ontologically convincing form for representing the body. Consequently, Donne dramatizes the enormous intellectual and devotional efforts required for sustaining an isomorphic vision of language, one where the text itself becomes a likeness or *simulacrum* of the body that it seeks to re-unify and where the operations of the Word are revealed through the textual sinews of his words. Donne remains within this sacramental view of language and the self, among other ways, by adapting the metaphysical operations implicit in the micro/macro for psychological purposes. More specifically, he employs the analogical structure inherent in the notion that "The world is a great Volume, and man the Index of that Booke" for the psycho-spiritual purpose of fulfilling the generic goals of the *imitatio christi* theme (*Selected Prose*, 281). As a spiritual autobiography, the *Devotions* enacts the process by which the speaker realizes himself as an image of Christ.³ What is historically distinct about the *Devotions* is that in the process of doing so it records a shift in emphasis from an ontology based in things to one based in words. Thus if the body effectively loses its

power to microcosmically reflect the anthropocentric order of the cosmos, language nonetheless retains, for Donne, its capacity to inscribe -- or as the Neoplatonists would have it "infold" -- God's ongoing presence in time. Indeed, one of the most central, but relatively ignored, features of the *Devotions* is the way that it stages the speaker's failures and (perceived) successes in locating divine presence *within* and through language. Most importantly, the speaker of the *Devotions*, like many early modern thinkers, understands language as analogous to the human body, a body that is increasingly characterized in the period by its incoherence, its un-readability. As we shall see, this analogy is so pervasive and so informative for Jacobean views of both the body and of language that a crisis in the coherence of one is necessarily a crisis in the integrity of the other.⁴ Donne diagnoses this crisis while seeking to work through it; he enacts the displacement of a sacramental conception of language while nonetheless remaining committed to it. What is at stake in the *Devotions* is thus the capacity to experience Christ as an inwardly experienced process of illumination, a process that for Donne occurs in and through the revelatory powers of language. Most importantly, however, this process is complicated by the newly emergent complexity of the body, a complexity that has unsettling epistemological consequences for the articulation of the contiguous, that is sacramental, relationship between words and Word, between the temporal and the eternal dimensions of sacred language.

The literary-historical specificity of the manner in which the *Devotions* predicate devotional identity lies in the way that it registers a disruption in the experience of embodiment as a crisis in the hieratic signifying power of language. Consequently, the

persuasive force of Donne's predication of self in the *Devotions* results from the way that he is able to, on the one hand, diagnose the loss of ontological coherence at the level of *res*, and, on the other, re-situate order within the self as *imago dei* at the level of *verba*. The dialectic of self that is thus played out in the spiritual drama of the *Devotions* takes place between an alienated, solipsistic experience of self that is often represented through the fragmented or dismembered body and a dialogic conception of the self that is realized in and through an absorbing identification with other members of the mystical body of Christ. This latter vision of the self is often imaged through a representation of the resurrected body or *soma pneumatikon*. For Donne, this spiritual-body is characterized by an ideal union of the soul and its corporeal mate, a union that Donne imagines in Station XX of the *Devotions* as a sacred theogamy – a divine marriage between the material and the spiritual. Moreover, it is this image of the ideally unified body, this Gestalt, that is the sign of, as well the means for, a complete spiritual recovery, a re-constitution, that is, of identity itself: “to cure the body [. . .] is a work reserved for the great physician, which he doth never any other way but by gloryfying these bodies in the next world” (147-8). What follows is an analysis of some of the specific literary forms which this dialectic of self assumes at an historical moment when disruptions in the experience of embodiment as an existential condition of life threatened the very pre-conditions for imagining the resurrected body as consisting of “the same integrity of body, and soul, and the same integrity in the Organs of my body, and in the faculties of my soul too” (*Sermons* 3:109-10). I am concerned, that is, with the way that Donne's representation of his illness reflects broad cultural changes in the experience of embodiment, and how these changes

are reflected formally as a crisis with the isomorphic integrity of devotional language itself. For insofar as Donne's *Devotions* seeks to re-articulate the borders between the corporeal and the spiritual as a means for working through the de-sublimation of the body – the incapacity of language to accommodate the lived-experience of illness within an Anglican framework -- it is concerned with re-organizing the terrain upon which identity is constituted in its most primordial forms. I thus conclude this chapter by considering how Donne's *Devotions* not only expresses the terror attendant upon the precipitation of his own death, but also how it articulates and works through the traumas attendant upon the precipitation and potential dissolution of subjectivity itself.⁵

I. The *Devotions* and the Dialectic of Self

As a preliminary example of what is at stake for Donne in the dialectic between the alienated and the re-constituted self, let me take a passage from the well-known apotheosis of the *Devotions*. In this passage, the speaker explains and enacts the process of being interpellated into the spiritual body of Christ by the ringing of a church bell:

If we understand aright the dignity of this bell that tolls for our evening prayer, we would be glad to make it ours by rising early, in that application, that it might be ours as well as his, whose indeed it is. The bell doth toll for him that *thinks* it doth; and though it intermit again, yet from that minute that that occasion wrought upon him, he is united to God. (108 my italics)

This passage exemplifies the controlling tension in the *Devotions* between the metaphysical question of God's inscription of himself in time and the epistemological question of how one perceives, responds to and names that presence. Donne manages this

tension, in this instance, through a calculated balance of clauses that oscillate between subjective perception and transcendental reality, between, in grammatical terms, conditional and present indicative tenses. Notice, for instance, how the last clause of the first sentence, “whose indeed it is,” resolves the conditional tense of the previous line with its objective and thus reassuring viewpoint on the tolling bell as a divinely sanctioned act. Notice, also, how its productive ambiguity, its reference, that is, to both the “our” of the previous line and the “him” to which the bell is said to toll, implicitly prefaces, and thus prepares the reader for, the speaker’s climactic revelation that he is “involved in all mankind.” The explicitly conditional form of the previous line becomes implicit in the following sentence as Donne adapts the language of philosophical subjectivism as a means of inspiring meditative conviction in his reader: “The bell doth toll for him that thinks it doth; and though it intermit again, yet from that minute that that occasion wrought upon him, he is united to God.” Donne here presents a variation of I Corinthians 12:26 (“whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it”). In Donne’s hands, the emphasis is no longer placed on the objective reality of the individual’s analogous relationship with the universal body, but on the individual’s perception, indeed his postulation, of such an analogy. In Donne’s gloss on Paul, in other words, salvation is a matter of the speaker’s capacity for *perceiving* and experiencing the suffering of others as one’s own. The relationship between particular and universal is at once more immediate and more tenuous in Donne than in I Corinthians; it is more immediate because it is, in part, a consequence of one’s own faculties rather than of a wholly external structure; and yet it is more tenuous because the accent is placed on the

human capacity to realize the relation between individual and universal community rather than on a pre-established divine order.

The speaker's realization that one's own salvation is written in the suffering and loss of others is achieved in the following line: "Who casts not up his eye to the sun when it rises? but who takes off his eye from a comet when that breaks out? Who bends not his ear to any bell which upon any occasion rings? but who can remove it from that bell which is passing a piece of himself out of this world? No man is an island, entire of himself [. . .] any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in all mankind" (108-9). Robert Elrod comes close to grasping the conception of self here, but ultimately succumbs to anachronism, when he says that "Donne rises to universality as a means of heightening his sense of individuality: when the Church '*buries a Man*, that action concerns me,'" (29). While Elrod is accurate in his assertion that the focus on the universality of mankind is designed to intensify the speaker's and the reader's consciousness of his or her own self as an emanation of God's presence in time, he imposes a notion of individuality that is alien to the conception of self in the *Devotions*. By failing to adequately define modern self-consciousness, Elrod mistakes the distinct *personality* that emerges from Donne's powerfully idiosyncratic application of Christian stylistics with modern "individuality." Elrod's confusion becomes clear when he criticizes Hemingway for seeing Donne's meditation on the bell as a rejection rather than an example of modern individualism. Elrod, however, repeats, rather than corrects, Hemingway's error by remaining within the same dialectic of individual versus collective that gave rise to Hemingway's misprision in the first place. This modern, secular dialectic

does not inform Donne's meditation. The issue for Donne is not a matter of how the self is defined within and against the collective, as it is in the modern socio-historical notion of the "individual" and its correlative conception of self-consciousness as an autonomous activity that is distinguishable from its social determinations. The issue, rather, is how the self can recognize itself in the operations of God's natural laws and his earthly actions in mankind, in order to avoid losing itself in a solipsistic fantasy characterized by a willful denial of God's creative presence in time and a symptomatically motivated over-estimation of human reason. Donne is thinking theologically, not sociologically as are Hemingway and Ellrodt. The only fully formed notion of individualism available to Donne and his contemporaries lies in a relation to nature in which nature is seen, as Louis Bredvold, explains, "not as a source of universal and rational principles as should check or guide desires, but as the justification of individual desires, as the denial of all universal moral law" (480). The notion of the "individual" in its modern sense, on the other hand, means, if it means anything, "a subject that understands itself as the subject of its *own* knowledge" (Grossman 168 my emphasis). The former mode derives its meaning through a reversal of pre-modern metaphysics, where natural law is turned on its head in order to rationalize a perverse will, while the latter is a matter of a self-reflexive epistemology where there is no necessary recourse to conditions outside oneself. Rather than explaining the text, Ellrodt's insistence that Donne's consciousness "retains its structure and viewpoint even when he asserts the integration of the individual into a community"(29) collapses a distinctly modern dialectic into a distinctly pre-modern meditation. What

Donne is really concerned with is how to imagine a non-solipsistic subject, one that that is grounded in the recognition of oneself in the divine operations of God's Word.

The most explicit articulation of the solipsistic tendencies inherent in the human subject and the destructive implications such tendencies have for perceiving the order of natural law occurs in meditation xxi. In this meditation, the orbit of the earth is mirrored syntactically as Donne momentarily internalizes the "dizzying" motions of the Copernican cosmos in order to figure the speaker's psycho-spiritual involutions:

I am up, and I seem to stand, and I go round, and I am a new argument of the new philosophy, that the earth moves round; why may I not believe that the whole earth moves, in a round motion, though that seem to me to stand, when as I seem to stand to my company, and yet am carried in a giddy and circular motion as I stand? Man hath no centre but misery; there, and only there, he is fixed, and sure to find himself. How little soever he be raised, he moves, and moves in a circle giddily; and as in the heavens there are but a few circles that go about the whole world, but many epicycles, and other lesser circles, but yet circles; so of those men which are raised and put into circles, few of them move from place to place, and pass through many and beneficial places, but fall into little circles, and, within a step or two, are at their end, and not so well as they were in the centre, from which they were raised. Every thing serves to exemplify, to illustrate man's misery. (139-40)

The sense of neurosis created here is a function of how Donne allows the allegorical temper that is appropriate to an aesthetically proportioned Paracelsian universe to run amok in a context where the intelligible truth of things can no longer be assimilated into signifiers.⁶ Instead of coherence, "everything serves to exemplify, to illustrate man's misery." This speaker thus sees misery in the same way as the spiritually ill man of Donne's sermon on Psalm 38 sees sickness. For this unfortunate soul: "every fit of an Ague is an earth-quake that swallows him, every fainting of the knee, is a step to Hell; every lying down at night is a funerall" (II.ii. 85). The difference between these two passages lies in the way that in the former passage the hyperbole of the self's spiritual

crisis explicitly records an impasse in ontological consistency wherein the metaphysical incoherence of the world is recorded as a moral and spiritual inconsistency within the self. The latter passage, on the other hand, simply uses hyperbole as a strategy for heightening the sense of terror that attends an allegorically attuned mind during times of severe illness. The latter passage thus parallels Jeremy Taylor's assertion in *Holy Dying* that "every contingency to every man, and to every creature doth preach our funeral sermon" (21).

By incorporating the perceived disunity of the Copernican universe into the self, emphasizing the gap it introduces between perception and reality, between eye and heart, Donne's speaker is left chasing his tail in a series of involuted cycles that demarcate the emptiness of an inner space that has turned in upon itself rather than outwards towards God. The cosmologically un-coordinated juxtaposition of analogies that take place in the movement between the self's Copernican-style involutions and the "many epicycles that go about the whole [social] world" demystifies the ontologically orienting function of analogy itself. By relying on a profound confusion/collusion between Copernican orbital cycles and Ptolemaic epicycles, the analogical structure of the passage enacts the failure of analogical correspondence. This play of analogies, in other words, reproduces the impossibility of analogy itself, effacing analogy's own claim to represent the actual structure of things. In this respect, Donne renders analogy a pure act of mind, a strictly and even somewhat perversely epistemological, rather than metaphysical, operation. Likewise, the dizzying syntactical structure of the passage inverts the homogenizing principles of an isomorphic view of language by registering the difference, indeed the

differance, rather than the continuity, between signified and signifier. The rhetorical coincidence, that is to say, of form with content draws attention to the difference between the self as such, and the self as outwardly represented in language, in this case body-language. The invisible orbital involutions of the speaker's body thus literalize the failure of language to represent inner life. By giving voice to the silent gap between outward appearance and inward reality, Donne records a shift from signification as presentation to signification as re-presentation, further demystifying the analogical structure begun in meditation iv when he asserted that just as the "whole world hath nothing, to which something in man doth not answer, so hath man many pieces of which the whole world hath no representation" (23). By rhetorically enacting the de-centeredness which it describes, the passage in meditation xxi foregrounds the difference within similarity that is (in)discernible in the movement from representation to represented, from eye as the locus of immediate self-presence to I as the index of a mediated mode of self-reflexive reflection where the self does not see the place from which it sees.⁷ The analogy between form and content thus signifies the difference rather than the likeness between perception and reality, signifier and signified. As such, the self appears coincident with the gap that opens in the inwardly experienced collision between Copernican and Ptolemaic cosmologies. In this respect, the self's meaning(lessness) is a matter of difference rather than analogical likeness. It occupies the space of lack, the vacuous opening that is occasioned by the de-sublimation of the Ptolemaic/Paracelsian universe. The process of ontological de-centering that unfolds here thus demystifies the Neo-Platonic view that while God contains all things because he is their source, man contains all things because

he is their center. While the speaker appears to the naked eye to be standing still and thus to be the center of creation, he is, in fact, turning in upon himself in a series of indiscernible epicycles. The loss of coherence in the cosmos is now registered as a complete loss of coherence within the self: "Man hath no centre but misery." Such passages diagnose the process of de-sacramentalization that the *Devotions* as a whole seek to remedy.

Donne does not remain content in this passage with predicating only the self in terms of what Joel Fineman describes in relation to Shakespeare's sonnets as a limit case of the correspondence of signifier to signified. For while Donne, like Shakespeare, opens a space of "withinness" that is "determined by, and gains its literary force from, the way [he] materially redoubles, with a difference, master images of sameness" (*Perjured* 25), Donne also extends his demystification of iconic self-presence and the poetics of analogy to the social world: "as in the heavens there are but a few circles that go about the whole world, but many epicycles, and other lesser circles, but yet circles; so of those men which are raised and put into circles, few of them move from place to place, and pass through many and beneficial places, but fall into little circles, and, within a step or two, are at their end, and not so well as they were in the centre, from which they were raised." The circle expands to include the social world at the same time that it ontologically contracts, breaking into a multiplicity of disconnected orbits which enclose within their claustrophobic limits the whole nothing of the world.⁸ This passage thus inverts the conventional view of the circle as a figure of infinity and perfection which Thomas Taylor articulates in his 1628 *Meditations Upon the Creatures* when he writes: "As the

circle of the heavens is equally distant from the point and center of the earth: It may minde us that heaven is equally distant to all believers" (26-27).⁹ For Donne the involutions of inner space extend outwards, assimilating the social world into the recesses of its narcissistically motivated orbit as the distance between heaven and self expands with the same exponential force of the distance now believed to exist between the earth and the sun. In this expanse of space the very *locus* of devotion itself is lost.

The opening of *Good Friday, 1613. Riding Westward* succinctly records the de-centering of this devotional space:

Let man's soul be a sphere, and then, in this,
The intelligence that moves, devotion is,
And as the other spheres, by being grown
Subject to foreign motions, lose their own,
And being by others hurried every day,
Scarce in a year their natural form obey:
Pleasure or business, so, our souls admit
For their first mover, and are whirled by it. (1-8)

The devotional work performed throughout the *Devotions* is to not only diagnose the historically mediated loss of this space under the pressure of religious, intellectual, and socio-economic changes, but to re-open it, re-admitting the subject of devotion into the circle of religious orbit without collapsing into the infinite space of the unbounded, distracted, and thus devotionally undisciplined mind. It is precisely this devotional space that Donne longs to re-open when he imagines that his own "bedchamber and [God's] own bedchamber shall be all one room / and the closing of these bodily eyes here, and the opening of the eyes of my soul there, all one act" (88). It is to this process of spiritual recuperation and the poetico-devotional problems attendant with it, particularly as it relates to the sacred reconstitution of the body, that I now turn.

II. Embodied Language

The Spirit is a bone – Hegel

The body makes the mind -- Donne

If meditation xxi registers cosmological changes as an inward division within the self, then meditation ix records anatomical changes as a crisis in language, specifically the power of naming:

I have cut up mine own anatomy, dissected myself, and they are gone to read upon me. O how manifold, and perplexed a thing, nay, how wanton and various a thing is ruin and destruction! [. . .] If there were no ruin but sickness, we see the masters of that art can scarce number, nor name all sicknesses; every thing that disorders a faculty, and the function of that, is a sickness; the names will not serve them which are given from the place affected, the pleurisy is so; nor from the effect which it works, the falling sickness is so; they cannot have names enough, from what it does, nor where it is [. . .] but in some one thing, or else they would lack names; for the wolf, and the canker, and the polypus are so; and that question whether there be more names or things, is as perplexed in sicknesses as in any thing else; except it be easily resolved upon that side, that there are more sicknesses than names. (56-7)¹⁰

There is indeed more in this world than philosophy can imagine. So much so, that physical sickness itself appears as a symptom of an epistemological trauma, an inability to name, number, and give shape to the expanding space, both interior and exterior, characteristic of the Jacobean moment. This inability to determine the names of diseases is occasioned by the Paracelsian idea that there are as many diseases as there are parts of the body. Donne, however, exaggerates this Paracelsian principle by drawing attention to how expansive inner space has become after Vesalian anatomy. By crossing the effects of Vesalian anatomy with Paracelsian concepts Donne leaves his reader in a bewildering

situation where the etiology of illness remains unknown and the experience of illness itself somewhat expressible: there are more sicknesses than names, more bodily functions than anatomical concepts. Just as many of Donne's "Songs and Sonnets" record a crisis in Petrarchan language to sublimate physical into spiritual love, so too this passage registers a de-sublimation of the body. It diagnoses, in other words, how the symbolic overlay of culture fails to account for the real lived-experience of the body, particularly the body as an object of an invasive analysis.

Diagnosing the failure of anatomy and the medical arts to address the most fundamental spiritual needs of the patient, and lamenting the incapacity of human language to accommodate the experience of embodiment, Donne is led to the skeptical conclusion that "no anatomist can say, in dissecting a body, 'Here lay the coal, the fuel, the occasion of all bodily diseases'" for all diseases are, at bottom, an effect of original sin and "we cannot assign the place of original sin, nor the nature of it" (XXII 150). Valerie Traub repeats essentially the same point, but from an opposite angle, when she suggests that despite the early modern "revelation of viscera and the re-articulation of the skeleton, one can never anatomize to the point of ultimate truth; one can never dissect to the ground of being. Despite the anatomist's skillful surfer, physical matter is, in the end, opaque, resistant to revelation" (49). And yet, this is exactly what Donne will do in Station XII in which he challenges the emerging authority of anatomy. Staging a crisis of embodiment as a crisis within language, Donne re-members his corporeal frame by suturing the soul to the body through language. In the process, Donne enacts the movement from an empty, literal, and even uncanny speech of solipsistic sinfulness into

the full, dialogic and metaphorically saturated speech of revelation in which the speaker realizes his true self as belonging to Christ. What is at stake in this passage is thus the phenomenological efficacy of devotional language itself, its capacity for, as Heather Asals puts it, coming “to know Christ through our words” (“Grammar” 125). The ability to perform this work demands that Donne overcome the threat of the “scattered body” through the operations of memory. Through the work of memory Donne will enact a restorative process that is analogous to the way in which Christ cures “by gloryfying” the resurrected body. I refer, of course, to memory in the Augustinian sense: the faculty that situates the self within a typological/scriptural history that, in this case, translates the apparent contingencies of physical illness into the determinations of providence and the mysterious permutations of grace through which providence works.¹¹ By looking to the body in order to see the operations of God Donne engages in what Sawday has defined as a “sacred anatomy” – an attempt to read the body as a divine text.

Insofar as Station XII constitutes a version of “sacred anatomy” it enacts what Donne explains in the following passage from the *Sermons*:

even God’s demolitions are super-edifications, his anatomies, his dissections are so many re-compactings, so many resurrections; God windes us off the skein, that he may weeve us up into the whole peece, and he cuts us out of the whole peece into peeces, that he may make us up into a whole garment. (*Sermons*, IX.217 Cited in Sawday 108)

For the sake of dramatic effect Donne collapses the distinction in this passage between dissection, considered as the taking apart of the body, and anatomy, considered as its reconstitution that underlies William Harvey’s anatomical performances at the Royal College of Physicians in London (Wilson 63).¹² In the context of Donne’s sacred

anatomy, God's dissection is said to do the apocalyptic equivalent of Harvey's theatrical dissections, translating the body/soul relation of medical anatomy into an anagogic register. For Harvey, according to Luke Wilson, anatomy reconstitutes the body "so as to restore its soul as an intentional structure. It is a question of the anatomy in some sense bringing the body (back) into existence; for Harvey, in order to see the body, it must be as a configuration subsisting in intentionality – the body is visible *as* the intentionality it manifests" (81). The dissection thus resuscitates the body in reconstituting it as an intentional structure whose agency is known through and is indeed epistemologically identical with its function: "the account of the body as a whole is the soul -- in other words the body's overall function, a function understood as *entelechy*, actuality inhering in a *telos*" (81)." In this sermon Donne translates the principles underlying Harvey's vision of "anatomy as romance," a vision whose central trope is "the reanimation of the dead," (Wilson 89) into the context of personal salvation and its attendant corporeal resurrection.

Insofar as the Jacobean body is characterized by a failure of mediation, insofar as it is uneasily situated between, on the one hand, the demise of a pre-modern classical body that is characterized by its visibility or spectacularity, and on the other, an empirical grotesque body that resists intelligibility and effective symbolization, it is the locus of a profound phenomenological and devotional crisis.¹³ The failure of Jacobean culture and its various dialects of corporeality to successfully mediate the real of the body -- with its "pleurisies" and "destructions" -- constitutes a religious and representational crisis whose impact is everywhere to be felt in the *Devotions* and throughout Donne's work more

generally. Few places in his work better exemplify this than Station XII of the *Devotions*. But before we address how Donne both diagnoses and seeks to resolve this crisis we must first substantiate our claim that a crisis in the coherence of the body is registered in the early modern period as a crisis in the integrity of language.

The analogy between the body and language derives from antiquity and is relatively ubiquitous in the early modern period. For instance, William Lewis argues in his laudatory preface to Gabriel Harvey's *Ciceronianus*, that "the body of a speech ought [. . .] to be like the human body, with some members longer and others shorter; for if anyone have feet the length of the lower legs or fingers the length of the forearms, people would call the fellow's appearance not merely misshapen but monstrous" (41, cited in Anderson 37). Even Restoration grammarians such as Mark Lewis compare, as Murray Cohen points out, "language to a body – with substantives as the bones, adjectives the flesh, nominatives the cranium, accusatives the torso" (28). According to Cohen, this analogy is motivated by the hope that the relationship between *a* signifier and *a* signified will represent "naturally and completely, 'what God works by nature'" (Lewis 16, Cohen 28). Donne, Lewin, and Harvey thus each share the assumption that the body exemplifies, by literally embodying, a mode of representation that is, strictly speaking, not simply representational, but incarnational, while later grammarians like Lewis retain an isomorphic if not incarnational view of language.¹⁴

Francis Barker speaks to this overlapping of discourses on embodiment and signification when he suggests that the Jacobean body "exercises a unitary *presence* of meaning of which the spectacular body is both the symbol and the instance. That the

[Jacobean] body we see is so frequently presented in fragments, or in the process of its effective dismemberment, no doubt indicates that contradiction is already growing up within this system of presence” (24-25). Barker here situates the shift from signification as presentation to signification as re-presentation within the locus of the body itself. Donne’s *Devotions* rehearses this crossing of the body and language to the extent it enacts a crisis of embodiment as a crisis in devotional language. At its most disturbing moments, the scattered body of the *Devotions* is parasitic and appears to possess a demonic willfulness that is in excess of the agency often ascribed to the anatomized body as it appears in the diagrams of early modern medical texts, such as Vesalius’s 1543 *Fabrica* and Estienne’s 1545 *De dissectione*. Correlatively, the disturbing agency accorded the dismembered body is inscribed through a literalized, inanimate language that signifies a kind of living death, an un-real and wholly static rhetoric, rather than the typological and thus temporally constituted language of sacrament and revelation characteristic of the prayer or holy resolution that concludes each Station.¹⁵

The sense of terror surrounding the body’s tendency towards self-destruction is exemplified in the opening of Station 12 which begins with an immediate and stark reminder of the body’s vulnerability to infection and the fears associated with the incapacity to see the source or even the initial effects of the infection: “What will not kill a man if a vapor will?” (77). Beginning a rhetorical motion that mirrors the physical movement of humors within a Galenic body that has undergone attacks on both Vesalian and Paracelsian fronts, the word vapor courses its way through the station as though the text were itself the body that Donne hopes to heal. This rhetorical re-enacting of the

diseases' motions creates a mimetic effect on a par with the process of Charismatic healing in which, as Csordas describes, "the mimetic image is not mere representation, but has a materiality grounded in bodily experience that is at once constitutive of divine power and evidence of efficacy. That materiality is all the more compelling in that it marshals for performance the existential intertwining of the tactile and the visual" (154). We see how deeply Donne's rhetoric is grounded in the body and the motions of its illness when he observes those motions in the physical environment around him as well as within his own person:

if this infectious vapor were sought for, or travelled to, as Pliny hunted after the vapour of Aetna and dared and challenged Death in the form of a vapour to do his worst, and felt the worst, he died; or if this vapour were met withal in an ambush, and we surprised with it, out a long shut well, or out of a new opened mine, who would lament, who would accuse, when we had nothing to accuse, none to the lament against but fortune, who is less than a vapour? But when ourselves are the well that breathes out this exhalation, the oven that spits out this fiery smoke, the mine that spews out this suffocating and strangling damp, who can ever, after this, aggravate his sorrow by thus circumstance, that it was his neighbour, his familiar friend, his brother, that destroyed him, and destroyed him with a whispering and a calumniating breath, when we ourselves do it to ourselves by the same means, kill ourselves with our own vapours? (77-78)¹⁶

The rhetorical logic of this extraordinary passage follows the same pattern of uncanniness -- a pattern based on an unexpected movement from outside to inside, from exterior to interior, from other to self-as-other -- that Donne exploits in his description of illness in a sermon on verse three of psalm 38: "In every part of the body death can finde a door, or make a breach; Mortall diseases breed in every part. But when every part at once is diseased, death does not *besiege* him, but *inhabit* him" (81). From a rhetorical and phenomenological standpoint, the sense of uncanny terror evoked through this shift from being *besieged* by illness to being *inhabited* by it, operates on the same principle as the

crucial moment in modern horror movies such as the *Babysitter* when the heroine is told by the police that the threatening calls from a pathological stranger have been coming from *inside* the house itself or even better yet in *Aliens* when the heroine dreams that she has been impregnated by the beast that she has been hunting. By moving from an historically distant example, to one's neighbour, then one's brother, and finally one's own self, Donne evokes the disturbing sense that he is, despite himself, the inadvertent perpetrator of his own illness. By doing so, Donne unsettles the reader's conventional notions of not only his/her body's propriety, but the integrity of his/her own will as it is constituted in relation to his/her body. Donne thus re-creates the unspeakable experience of alienation between the self and the body that Augustine saw as the sinful result of vivisection: "Certainly, the whole nature of man is spirit, soul, and body: whoever therefore desires to estrange the body from [the whole of that] nature acts without understanding" (*De anima et ejus origine libri quattuor*) (4.2.3, cited in Harcourt 37). For Donne illness leads to the same state of radical self-alienation as vivisection does for Augustine. As such, Donne's self-anatomization, his tracing of the movement of vapors through his body results in an uncanny state of estrangement between himself and what goes on beneath the surface of his flesh. In the process of coming into an awareness of this self-estrangement, Donne, like Oedipus, becomes himself the object of terror that he has been pursuing.

By piercing beneath the surface of the body and discovering in it a word that kills, Donne enacts, with a crucial difference, some of the same phenomenologically unsettling

modes of representation that Slavov Žižek sees at work in the films of David Lynch.

Lynch, Žižek, argues

perturbs our most elementary phenomenological relationship to the living body, which is based on the radical separation between the surface of the skin and what lies beneath it. Let us recall the uncanniness, even disgust, we experience when we endeavor to imagine what goes on just under the surface of a beautiful naked body- muscles, organs, veins. . . In short, relating to the body implies suspending what goes on beneath the surface. This suspension is an effect of the symbolic order; it can occur only in so far as our bodily reality is structured by language. In the symbolic order, even when we are undressed, we are not really naked, since skin itself functions as the 'dress of the flesh,' This suspension excludes the Real of the life-substance, its palpitation: one of the definitions of the Lacanian Real is that it is the flayed body, the palpitation of the raw, skinless red flesh. How then does Lynch perturb our most elementary phenomenological relationship to the bodily surface? By means of *voice*, of a word that 'kills', breaking through the skin surface to cut directly into raw flesh- in short, by means of a word whose status is that of the *Real*. (*Metastases* 116)

Lynch's representation of the bodily real -- such as in the opening to *Blue Velvet* in which a young man stumbles upon a severed ear crawling with insects -- is designed to suspend the operations of an overly mediated post-modern symbolic as a means for poking, doubting-Thomas like, at the *real* of the body. Donne's representation, on the other hand, records how the historical moment in which he lived was characterized by a certain inefficacy or de-sublimation of the symbolic order. In other words, Donne's writing of the body is culturally symptomatic in the opposite way than is Lynch's: while Lynch seeks to undercut the obscene efficacy of the contemporary moment in order to represent imagination in its pre-ontological dimension,¹⁷ Donne diagnoses the historically mediated failure of the symbolic as a means for suturing the traumatic pre-ontological gaps that haunt his experience of embodiment. To put this simply, Lynch aims at producing an

effect of de-sublimation while Donne diagnoses a culturally constituted moment of de-sublimation in order to counteract it.

This phenomenologically unsettling experience of embodiment is recorded in the opening to meditation xii in terms of how the word “vapor” is repeated in such a way that it loses its function as a living sign and becomes a thing unto itself, an ex-timate *voice*. Through repetition and the constant shifting of historical, psychological and metaphysical perspectives, the word becomes alienated, that is, from the speaker’s own will such that it appears to function of its own agency, coursing through the extended Senecan sentences as though of its own devices, as though it were an actual vapor rather than a sign for one. It is at moments such as this, that Donne registers the disjunction between *res* and *verba* that so many of his contemporaries saw as the most crucial philosophical/theological problem of the day.¹⁸ While the word “vapors” functions as a thing, it does not do so through a sacramental rapprochement of *res* and *verba*, but by a kind of dissolving or effacing of *verba* which gives way to the sheer materiality of *res*. In this respect, the “calumniating” or slandering whispers of this “vapor” appear radically impersonal as though they emanated from a place, like that of original sin, which cannot be precisely located. It thus has the phenomenological status of a disembodied, ex-timate voice. Such disembodiment disrupts the speaker’s own sense of physiological and even ontological integrity: “if I were asked again what is a vapor, I could not tell it, it is so insensible a thing; so near nothing is that that reduces us to nothing” (79).¹⁹ Failing to locate the anatomical origins of this vapor in the same way that anatomists fail to locate the source of original sin, Donne expresses the threat of dissolution and bodily fragmentation.

Through an unpredictable pattern of *accumulatio* the word “vapors,” like the body which it inhabits, appears to “murmur” without any discernible relation to the will of the speaker. In this way, the motions of Donne’s rhetoric enact the strangely phantasmatic and “insensible” materiality that vapors were believed to possess.²⁰ It thus appears disembodied and demonic, rather than, as in later sections, sacramental and typological. The weighty nothingness of the word, that is, accords with the speaker’s hysterical response to his illness:

if these occasions of this self-destruction had any contribution from our own wills, any assistance from our own intentions, nay, from our own errors, we might divide the rebuke, and chide ourselves as much as them. Fevers upon wilful distempers of drink and surfeits, consumptions upon intemperances and licentiousness, madness upon misplacing or overbending our natural faculties, proceed from ourselves, and so as that ourselves are in the plot, and we are not only passive, but active too, to our own destruction. (78)

But yet, Donne exclaims in defense, “what have I done, either to breed or to breathe these vapours? They tell me it is my melancholy; did I infuse, did I drink in melancholy into myself? It is my thoughtfulness; was I not made to think? It is my study; doth not my calling call for that? I have done nothing wilfully, perversely toward it, yet must suffer in it, die by it” (78).

Donne’s defensive reaction against his illness momentarily precludes the possibility that the sickness is a matter of God’s visitation. He thus forecloses on the possibility, prescribed in the “Visitation of the Sick” in the *Book of Common Prayer*, that sickness is “sent unto you, [. . .] to try your patience for the example of others” or “else it be sent unto you to correct and amend in you whatsoever doth offend the eyes of your heavenly Father” (310). By precluding either reading, Donne’s speaker reveals the extent to which

he is hysterical in the precise clinical sense that he “perceives himself as a neutral observer, a victim of unfortunate circumstances- what he cannot accept is the fact that the circumstances whose victim he is can reproduce themselves only through his active participation” (Žižek *Metastases* 178).²¹ As Donne himself insists, in a voice that echoes the dissenting “murmuring” of the Israelites on their way out of Egypt, “I do nothing upon myself, and yet am mine own executioner” (79).

Donne elaborates on the spiritual psychology involved in such a radical form of self-alienation in a passage from a sermon on Psalm 38 that reflects, with unflinching acuity, the sense of uncanny belatedness that results when a seventeenth-century Anglican faces his own death spiritually unprepared.²² In this passage, Donne recreates the feeling of being not merely besieged, but entirely inhabited by an illness that undermines the body to such an extent that the “intire substance” of one’s fleshy Tabernacle, “is corrupted”:

Thou pursuest the works of the flesh, and hast none, for thy flesh is but dust held together by plaisters; Dissolution and putrefaction is gone over thee alive; Thou has over liv’d thine own death, and art become thine own ghost, and thine own hell. (II, 83)²³

Not only the body, but indeed time itself is radically out of joint in this horrifying vision of having missed the moment of one’s own death through spiritual unpreparedness.

Whatever else the self is here, it is temporally and ontologically dislocated, torn from its very being and held prisoner to a past that refuses to become past. This is a form of melancholia which Freud could never possibly have imagined, one where the lost object is the self -- one’s own body -- and where the temporal disjunction of past and present exceeds the borders of death such that there is no longer a present and thus no longer a future, but only the dreadful insistence of an ever-present past. The body that Donne

imagines here, inhabited and possessed by illness as though illness were itself a personality, or a legion of personalities, is on the brink of literal disintegration, held together as it is by “plaisters” that barely prevent complete corporeal dissolution. The syntactic placement of the word “alive” suggests that putrefaction has overcome the auditor’s will with its own will. This extraordinary passage thus exemplifies Elaine Scarry’s observation that Donne’s horror of disease is fully intelligible in regard to its non-consensual, non-contractual nature (95). While Scarry is no doubt partly accurate, the non-consensual nature of sickness is for Donne, as for most devotional writers of the period, almost always ostensible. In meditation xii, for instance, it is a defensive and delusional state that one must pass through in order to prepare for death, while here in the Sermon on Psalm 38 it is the result of already having failed to overcome a state of unpreparedness. The horrifying vision of having over-lived oneself, of having become a ghost to one’s own body is an effect not of physical but spiritual illness.

Donne’s speaker in Station XII slowly comes to realize the spiritual rather than corporeal cause of his illness by extending his understanding of vapors from something that attacks the physical body to something that undermines the integrity of the body politic. Here again, though, an analogical mode of thinking serves to paradoxically demystify the ontological validity of analogical correspondence, as our confidence in the social body’s integrity is threatened by an attack upon the very analogical structures that are supposed to hold the political cosmos together:

That which is fume in us is, in a state rumour; and these vapours in us, which we consider here pestilent and infectious rumours, detracting and dishonourable calunnies, libels. The heart in that body is the King, and the brain his council; and the whole magistracy, that ties all together, is the sinews which proceed from

thence; and the life of all is honour, and just respect, and due reverence; and therefore, when these vapours, these venomous rumours, are directed against these noble parts, the whole body suffers. (79)

While the speaker has begun to recognize that the illness infecting him, like the disease inhabiting the body politic, is due to his own actions, he still perceives the illness as an objective thing, an outside force that is fundamentally alien to himself as a purposeful agent. The meditation thus ends with the speaker telling of how the doctors place a pigeon beneath his feet in order “to draw this vapour from the head and from doing any deadly harm there” (80). It is precisely this objectifying relation to the disease, and the objectifying modes of epideictic discourse that describe such a relation, that change in the course of the expostulation.

The shift in the speaker’s comportment towards his disease from a purely objective standpoint to one where he is more deeply involved in the spiritual drama of his own illness is discernible in the opening ejaculation of the Expostulation in which Donne evokes Christ’s death-cry in Matthew 27: 46 and Mark 15:34 (“My God, my God, why hath thou forsaken me”) within the context of James’s question in 4:14, “what is your life?”:

My God, my God, as thy servant James, when he asks that question, what is your life, provides me my answer. It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, & then vanisheth away, so if he did aske me what is your death, I am provided of my answer, It is a vapor too; And why should it not be all one to mee, whether I live, or die, if life, and death be all one, both a vapor. (80)

The radical form of self-alienation expressed in the meditation is now expressed -- through the reference to Christ’s death-pangs, -- as an alienation from God. As such, the speaker edges towards a meditation premised on the principles of *imitatio Christi* as he

asks how his illness relates not only to his own death, but how it relates to God's death as well. Initially, though, his faith fails him as he sees only the nothingness of both deaths reflected back to him in the word "vapors."

This changes more profoundly though when Donne begins to examine "vapors" as a divinely instituted sign, one that indexes the speaker's own narrative as it is inscribed through the typological structure of the Biblical narrative itself, rather than a symptomatic insistence of a cosmologically registered despair. Indeed, in the following passage the speaker considers how the word vapors, the emblem of his vacuity, nonetheless embodies the covenants made between God and Man. Moving typologically he begins by citing the covenants instituted in Genesis and Leviticus:

Thou hast made vapor so indifferent a thing, as that thy blessings and thy judgements are equally expressed by it, and is made by thee the hieroglyphic of both. Why should not that bee always good by which thou hast declared thy plentifull goodness to us? *A vapour went up from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.* And that by which thou hast imputed a goodness to us, and wherein thou hast accepted our service to thee, sacrifices; for sacrifices were vapours; and in them it is said, that a *thicke cloud of incense went up to thee.* (80)

Donne shifts the tone of the Station considerably here as the signifier vapors becomes a typologically invested hieroglyph that reveals the life-giving powers of the "mist" which appears in the Jahwist account of Genesis immediately preceding God's creation of man in Genesis 2:7. It also signifies the cloud of incense that went up from the censers of ancient Israelites when they beheld the images of abominations committed in Jerusalem in Ezekiel 8:11. Both of these references reveal the equivocal nature of "vapors" as a typological emblem insofar as they both imply a blessing and a judgement: Genesis anticipates the fall while Ezekiel's vision anticipates God's judgement of Israel. By

describing “vapors” as a “hieroglyph,” Donne implies – in accordance with Neoplatonic language theory -- that the word’s hieratic signifying power is “infolded” such that it is a condensed symbolic image, an enigmatic microcosm of a divine design. In this respect, Donne’s unexpected and thus rhetorically efficacious unfolding of “vapors” as a microcosm of God’s ongoing judgement and blessing of mankind is in line with the Neoplatonic axiom that the transcendent is most likely to be located within the most marginal and even monstrous of places.²⁴ What makes this more than a merely conventional redeployment of Neoplatonism, though, is the fact that the sacred anatomy unfolding here -- the re-suturing, that is, of body/soul and words and Word -- is mediated by the cultural proliferation of anatomical images and practices that problematize the very gesture of sacramentally linking time to eternity *via* the body. Donne’s marshalling of Neoplatonism thus serves the culturally occasioned aim of making embodiment symbolically coherent. In other words, the very gesture of diagnosing the body’s de-sublimation occasions an attempt to re-configure the sacramental cosmos as a whole: While the body no longer functions as an index of the cosmos as a unified volume, it nonetheless makes possible a form of hieratic vision in which the operations of the Word become accessible to the sacramentally attuned perceiver.

As I have suggested, the equivocal meaning inscribed into this hieroglyph begins to reveal the nature of God’s mysterious wisdom as it pertains to the state of the speaker’s soul, rather than the actual design of the body/cosmos itself. This abstract and epistemologically focused revelation occurs when the speaker identifies vapor with Christ as the incarnation of the person of Wisdom. At this point in the expostulation, the

speaker's breath is the vapor that God receives and judges, just as Christ is the vapor that the speaker receives. This intercourse between man and God is etymologically justified insofar as vapors bears with it the sense of an "exhalation of spirits" (OED) which reveals -- to the allegorically attuned mind of spiritual autobiography -- the Word as *spiritus* or divine breath. This etymological association between vapors as a bodily exhalation and *spiritus* as a divine emanation is alluded to in the Latin head-note to Station XII:

"*Spirante Columba, / Supposita pedibus, revocantur ad ima vapores.*"²⁵ The encounter of human and divine that occurs through the relations between "*spirante*" and "*vapores*" thus makes vapors the signifier through which man is joined with God, rather than an icon of their separation from one another. Revealing the infolded presence of being in the signifier "vapors" the expostulation becomes discernibly dialogic rather than, as in the meditation, overly self-referential and solipsistic. The issue now becomes a matter of how Christ as logos functions as the *mysterium conjunctionis*, the verbal force that holds God and man together just as he shall hold the body and soul together:

So it is of that wherein thou comest to us, the dew of heaven, and of that wherein we come to thee, both are vapours; and he, in whom we have and are all that we are or have, temporally or spiritually, thy blessed Son, in the person of Wisdom, is called so too; *She is* (that is, he is) *the vapour of the power of God, and the pure influence from the glory of the Almighty.* (80)

Donne here cites the Vulgate translation of Wisdom 7:25: "For she [Wisdom] is a vapour of the power of God, and a certain pure emanation of the glory of the almighty God." By evoking the personified figure of Wisdom as a vapor or emanation of the Word, Donne recalls his reader to the central idea of the Book of Wisdom that "perverse thoughts separate from God" and that "wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a

body subject to sins" (1:3-4). Donne thus now, for the first time in the Station, acknowledges that his illness is a visitation of God. By doing so, he realizes that he is in the midst of God's judgement, thus anticipating the more explicit revelation later in the work that "we are not only passive but active in our own ruin" (153).

Having assumed responsibility for his condition, Donne then seeks to locate God's presence within the signs of the illness itself:

Hast thou, thou, O my God, perfumed vapour with thine own breath, with so many sweet acceptations in thine own word, and shall this vapour receive an ill and infectious sense? It must; for since we have displeased thee with that which is but vapour [. . .] it is just that thou punish us with vapours too. For so thou dost, as the wise man tells us; thou canst punish us by those things wherein we offend thee; as he hath expressed it there, *by beasts newly created, breathing vapours.* (80-1)

Following this reference to Wisdom 11:16-19 with a series of *New Testament* references to the word *Vapors* or a related cognate in Joel, Acts, and Revelations Donne expands the typological reach of the meditation which now includes the whole structure of the Bible *in micro*. Donne thus enacts the movement from a Levitical code of defilement to a Pauline economy of sinfulness. The emphasis, in other words, is no longer a matter of how that which goes into the body defiles a man; the focus rather is on how that which comes out of the body defiles a man (Matthew 15:11). Each typological reference to God's judgement of man demarcates a shift in the speaker's spiritual comportment as he situates himself, through the work of memory, within a scriptural history that provides him an eternal frame of reference that helps disclose the meaning of his sickness as it is imprinted in the hieroglyph "vapors."

These transformations in this hieroglyph suggest that the rhetorical pattern of the Station is designed to re-create the refining transmutation of “Vapors” as they were theorized by Galenic medicine, making the text itself an instance or image of the body that Donne sought to physically heal and spiritually transform. In this way, Donne rhetorically enacts the Paracelsian notion that “Salvation is nothing but transmutation,” a purifying and refining of the soul in the image of the divine Spirit (Thomas Vaughan, cited Crawshaw 325). For alchemists of the period, the process of purification unfolded through *separatio* and *distillatio* “by which the dross was drawn off so that the spirit dispersed in the matter might be drawn into the quintessence” (Crawshaw 344).²⁶

Donne’s refinement of “vapors” as a means to distinguish between an illusory life of the self and a genuine life in the Word is based, in part, on its association with the Hebrew word “Hebel” that appears throughout Ecclesiastes and which re-appears in the book of James as “vanity.” “Hebel,” as Northrop Frye and others have noted, has “a metaphorical kernel of fog, mist, or vapor” (123). Working through these etymological connections, Donne demonstrates the way in which a powerful meditative mind can reveal how a single lexical unit -- whose ostensible reference demarcates the unintelligibility of the body -- is sacramental in its capacity to unite man with God. In short, the descent into the *regio dissimilitudinis* of the body becomes an ascent towards the operations of the Word.

The transformation from the empty and solipsistic speech of the meditation to the full performative speech of revelation where God’s wisdom is imprinted upon the fabric of the body itself is most fully realized in the Prayer of Station XII. The Prayer is structured around a baptismal typology which Donne articulates first in terms of how God – the

divine rhetorician that he is -- impresses his image into the self, and second as the destruction of sins by the force of that image. The pressing of the Pigeon upon the feet and the descent of the Dove upon the self is now internalized, as the exterior force of God becomes fulfilled within the heart such that the inhabitation of disease is nullified at the source of its infection, the speaker's alienation from Christ through sin. In rhetorical terms, the liturgically and typologically based structure of the Prayer reverses the effects of the illness's uncanny possession of the speaker by following the same movement from externally to internally realized forces. Donne, in other words, moves from being *besieged* by the Holy Spirit to being *inhabited* by it:

as thou hast carried this thy creature, the dove, through all thy ways through nature, and made it naturally proper to conduce medicinally to our bodily health, through the law, and made it a sacrifice for sin there, so carry it, and the qualities of it, home to my soul, and imprint there that simplicity [. . .] That so all vapours of all disobedience to thee, being subdued under my feet, I may in the power and triumph of thy Son, tread victoriously upon my grave, and trample upon the lion and dragon that lie under it to devour me. (82)

By typologically inscribing the movement from Genesis to incarnation through to Revelations the Station takes a reader through the Bible *in micro*. It is thus reminiscent of Tyndale's account of Romans in the way that, as Stephen Greenblatt puts it,

There is a kind of historicity and narrativity built into the experience of faith through the act of reading: by following the text in its proper sequence, the reader reenacts in his own spirit the passage from the Old Testament to the New, from the law that kills to God's [. . .] gift of grace. (104)

By the end of the Station "Vapors" has become the "balm" that Donne associates in *Death's Duel* with Christ's Blood, in the "Anniversaries" with the *idea* of woman, and in "Nocturnal Upon St. Lucy's Day" with the death of an unnamed woman. The body's

most abject fluids, its vapors, end up being, through the wonders of sacramental, isomorphic language, the *mysterium conjunctionis* that links the speaker to the Son, and by extension the soul to the body. Through the operations of language Donne thus draws “a quintessence even from nothingness” (“A Nocturnal upon S. Lucy’s day, being the shortest day” 15).

Conclusion: The *Devotions* and the Precipitation of Identity

To the extent that the speaker’s rhetorical and devotional refining of the body’s humoral fluids does not immediately result in a healthy body, but rather a rejuvenated identity, Station XII performs what Kristeva, developing the work of Mary Douglas, calls the process of abjection, the symbolic re-defining of corporeal boundaries that is necessary to the production of a coherent and discrete sense of self. That Donne’s “vapors” take him into the borderlands of abjection is clear from the way that the signifier “vapors” is not, as Kristeva says of the abject, “a definable *object*” (*Powers* 1): (“If I were asked again what is a vapor, I could not tell it, it is so insensible a thing.”) Kristeva’s exposition of the abject serves as an effective psychoanalytic gloss on the rhetorical processes we have seen in Station XII. Abjection involves, according to Kristeva,

an extremely strong feeling which is at once somatic and symbolic, and which is above all a revolt of the person against an external menace from which one wants to keep oneself at a distance, but of which one has the impression that it is not only an external menace but that it may menace us from the inside. So it is a desire for separation, for becoming autonomous, and also the feeling of an impossibility of doing so – whence the element of crisis which the notion of

abjection carries within it. ("Interview" 135-36)

It is not the purely physical dissolution of the body that Donne fears most, but the loss of the symbolic function which the body performs in the constitution of identity. When Donne imagines his corpse, he sees not merely a dead body but a crisis in the power of naming, a crisis, that is, in the sacramental relationship between signifier and signified: "that body hath lost the *name* of a dwelling-house, because none dwells in it, and is making haste to lose the *name* of a body, and dissolve to putrefaction" (116, my emphasis). As Kristeva puts it in her analysis of the semiotics of Biblical abomination, "the corpse is waste, transitional matter, mixture, [. . .] the opposite of the spiritual, of the symbolic, and of divine law" (*Powers* 109). Death for Donne is not the loss of life in a biological sense, but rather it is the radical dislocation of one's place within the symbolic-order of God's Word. At bottom, the image of the fragmented body is disturbing because it is without *meaning*: "how lame a picture, how faint a representation is that, of the precipitation of man's body to dissolution" (*Devotions* 116). The death that Donne anticipates here coincides with what Lacan calls the second-death, the absolute loss, that is, of one's social/symbolic *substance*.²⁷ This loss of one's *being*, which can result from the failure of abjection as the constitutive process of symbolic coherence, is often expressed in psychoanalytic experience as well as in Donne's work through the fragmented body. Donne articulates this Lacanian notion of the second-death with astonishing clarity in *Death's Duel* when he describes "this *posthume* death, *this death* after *death*, nay this death after buriall, *this dissolution* after *dissolution*, this death of *corruption* and *putrification*, of *vermiculation*, and *incineration*, of *dissolution* and

dispersion in and *from* the grave” (19: 238). In the *Devotions* too, Donne confronts the scattered body right at the moment when he anticipates its *Gestalt* like totality: “Now all the parts built up, and knit by a lovely soul, now but a statue of clay, and now these limbs melted off” (116). In passages such as these Donne addresses the terror that attends not only the precipitation of death, but also the precipitation of self-hood and/or its loss, what we have called, following Lacan’s revision of Ernest Jones, aphanasis.

Enacting the process of symbolic dissolution that derives from the anxiety around “this death after death,” Donne re-defines the borders of the symbolic through a powerful representation of the resurrected body, a body whose origins are correlative with the emergence of subjectivity itself. In this respect, the movement from the scattered to the resurrected body demarcates the terrain upon which the subject emerges as a speaking-being. Like Lacan’s mirror stage, Donne’s *Devotions* offer a narrative of the formation of the self as a subject of the Word, only for Donne this process is occasioned by the very thing that makes it problematic: the de-sublimation of the body. Insofar as the *Devotions* record and mitigate this experience of de-sublimation the figure of the mystical body has a culturally specific value, one which works to re-symbolize and re-constitute the lived-experience of embodiment itself. Donne’s re-envisioning of an hermetically based ontology in verbal and more emphatically epistemological terms results in a vision of the self that is derived through a dialogic relation with the other, both divine and human. The image that holds this dialogic vision in place is the mystical body configured as a “library” in which every book “lies open to another.” This image of the mystical body, knitted together through the anatomical/textual operations of the Church and God,

presents a vision of the *fully* individuated self, a vision of the self in which the re-compacted Ego is a member and an image of the mystical body as a whole. In this respect, the metaphysics of correspondence that pertains to the Paracelsian/Ptolemaic universe is now written, at an epistemological level, into the ideally realized self, the ideal ego towards which one strives. In other words, the Paracelsian vision of proportion and harmony between self and the structure of creation that Donne rebukes in meditation iv is now internalized through an anagogically focused realization of self and the mystical body of Christ. Donne thus re-articulates I Corinthians 12:27 (“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular”) in textual/anatomical terms that provide a phenomenologically as much as theologically efficacious image of the body’s integrity:

all mankind is of one author, and is one volume; when one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language; and every chapter must be so translated; God employs several translators; some pieces are translated by age, some by sickness, some by war, some by justice; but God’s hand is in every translation, and his hand shall bind up all our scattered leaves again for that library where every book shall lie open to one another. (108)

This passage is the climactic counterpoint to those moments in the *Devotions* which register the failure of anatomy to name and give meaning to the body. It counterpoints the idea implicit in Station XII that the text itself is a body, that his body itself is a text, and that both are imprinted with the Word. It thus presents a vision of the self that parallels a passage from his 1624 Sermon on Galatians 3:27 in which the fulfillment of the self is imagined in the Pauline terms of the putting on of Christ’s garment, a figure that literally re-defines the corporeal borders of the body. Both of these passages, moreover, express the consummation of the *imitatio christi* thematic that underlies the meditative principles of the *Devotions*. Donne summarizes this process in the *Sermons* when he declares,

from this putting on Christ as a garment, we shall grow up to that perfection, as that we shall *Induere personam*, put on *him*, his person; That is, we shall so appeare before the Father, as that he shall take us for his owne Christ; we shall beare his name and person; and we shall every one be so accepted, as if every one of us were *all Mankind*; yea, as if we were *he* himself (5:158-60, 127-8 Asals/Stanwood).

By imagining the perfected self as being received by God as though the self were not only *Mankind* in general, but indeed, Christ himself, Donne anticipates Simone Weil's view that the spiritual dignity of a Christian consists "in this, that in the state of perfection which is the vocation of each one of us, we no longer live in ourselves, but Christ lives in us; so that through our perfection Christ [. . .] becomes in a sense each one of us, as he is completely in each host" (24). The historically specific efficacy of this vision lies in the way that it permitted a sacramental view of corporeality, while retaining an isomorphic vision of language, at a moment in early modern England when cultural discourse failed to effectively symbolize the lived-experience of embodiment.

Notes

¹ Marshall Grossman explores processes of sublation and de-sublimation in the *Anniversaries*, examining how the *Anniversaries* record "the production of the self constituted specifically as difference, as that which is *not* (and cannot be) represented adequately, and [how it] offers an intellectual historical retrospection of some of the material conditions that underlie its appearance. This self appears precisely in the space opened by the failure of metaphysics that Donne's poems metaphysically identify" (166). Given the focus on *Christus medicus* throughout the *Devotions*, I see a much more a restorative dimension at work in the autobiography than Grossman sees in the *Anniversaries*. My focus on processes of sublation in Donne's treatment of the body is also anticipated by Elaine Scarry who points out that: "throughout the poetry and sermons, Donne is forever tracing and retracing the passage between the material and immaterial worlds: as is shown by poems like 'Aire and Angels,' or the 'The Dream,' he finds many alternative ways of envisioning how one gets from one to the other" (78). For

a discussion of sublation and the body in Donne's work see also John Carey, *John Donne: Life, Mind, and Art* (Oxford UP: New York, 1981) Ch. 5.

² Valeri Traub makes a similar observation when she claims that the "Renaissance imposition of order and proportion --- suggested by the title of Vesalius' *Fabrica* -- not only asserts the harmony of man made in God's image, but attempts to manage the uncomfortable suspicion that the internal structure and workings of the body do not always express a beautiful, or what's worse, fully knowable, design (52). "Gendering mortality in early modern anatomies" in *Feminist Readings of Early Modern Culture: Emerging Subjects*, ed. Valerie Traub, M. Lindsay Kaplan, Dymphna Callaghan (New York: Cambridge University, 1996) 44-92.

³ See Kate Frost's *Holy Delight: Typology, Numerology, and Autobiography in Donne's Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions* (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1990) for a book length reading of the *Devotions* "as responding largely to the generic concerns of early spiritual autobiography" (14). The elaborate numerological designs that Frost sees, virtually everywhere, in the *Devotions* offer substantial evidence that Donne sought to maintain an isomorphic conception of representation even at the same time that he acknowledges the increasing disjunction between words and things. Indeed, when he imagines the resurrected body in the *Sermons* he speaks of it as being "numerologically" structured. See p.19 of this chapter. Moreover, while I agree with Frost, contra numerous Donne commentators, that the *Devotions* do not present a speaker that we can confidently see in terms of "modern self-consciousness," they do, however, show clear signs of the literary-historical pressures bearing upon the impersonal self of early Christian spiritual autobiography. This chapter is concerned with the ways this pressure informs the formal predication of devotional identity in the work.

⁴ David A. Hedrich Hirsch examines the role of atomic theory in relation to Donne's representation of the dismembered and resurrected body concluding, apropos of Derrida, that processes of dissolution and re-integration "threaten to leave Donne stranded in the nothingness of deconstructed *aporia*" (88). While this chapter further examines some of the ways Donne demystifies the analogical cosmos and the isomorphic poetics correlative with it, I am mainly concerned with how Donne's desire to sustain the hieratic signifying power of language leads him to shift the analogical/typological emphasis from things to words (as things), thereby sustaining the hieratic power he, at the same time, demystifies.

⁵ Thomas J. Csordas suggests that the distinction between the body as biological substance and embodiment as an "existential condition of life" is analogous to Roland Barthes's distinction between text as the material object that holds up space on a book shelf and textuality as an "indeterminate methodological field that exists caught up within a discourse and that is experienced as activity and production" (145). This chapter considers how the *Devotions* register and attempt to come to terms with a culturally mediated crisis in embodiment. In this respect, I outline the "therapeutic" function that

the “resurrected” or “glorified” body has in the *Devotions*, rather than focusing, as does Thomas Docherty, on the way that acts of “self-mutilation in Donne” are “seen as being therapeutic spiritually” (212). In my view, Docherty’s thesis is contrary to virtually all of Donne’s religious prose. See Thomas Docherty, *John Donne Undone* (London: Methuen, 1986).

⁶ See Grossman’s reading of the corpse in the Anniversaries for a related point: “The corpse in *An Anatomy of the World* is [. . .] the remains of a universe in which intelligible truth could be embodied in poetic sublimation of things, because the natural world was given to the senses in forms immediately available for appropriation as signifiers” (179). The figure of the corpse in the *Anniversaries* and the *Devotions* embodies, as in Numbers 19:13, the radical negation of meaning, of spirit, and of divine law. Corpses thus tend to register symbolic, rather than biological death for Donne.

⁷ Reinhard H. Friederich makes a similar point in reference to the *Devotions* in general, when he says: “the body at once is the perceiver and the perceived object, and it is man’s ‘nearest’ space but also the one which can never be grasped in its entirety” (21). Reinhard speaks from a purely phenomenological perspective, and thus does not consider the literary and cultural specificity of Donne’s representation of the body as object.

⁸ This double movement recalls the thematics of claustrophobia that haunt Hamlet’s imagination: “O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams” (2.1). See Friederich “Expanding and Contracting Space in Donne’s *Devotions*” *ELH* 45 (1978) 18-32. Surprisingly, Friederich does not analyze this particular passage. For a discussion of Donne’s use of sociopolitical analogies that emphasize discontinuity rather than isomorphic symmetry, as is normally the case in Neoplatonic thought, see Debora Shuger’s *Habits of Thought In The English Renaissance: Religion, Politics, and the Dominant Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) 163.

⁹ Taylor is, of course, merely repeating the standard Renaissance view of God as a “sphere whose circumference is nowhere and whose center is everywhere.” See Cusanus *De docta ignorantia* I, xii, Ficino, *Theologia Platonica* XVIII, iii, *Opera*, 403. See Wind, *Pagan Mysteries of the Renaissance* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1958) 227.

¹⁰ Leonard Barkan provides an effective gloss on this meditation in his discussion of the micro/macro figure in the Renaissance. See *Nature’s Work of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975) 52. See also Michael Macklem’s *The Anatomy of the World: Relations Between Natural and Moral Law from Donne to Pope* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958).

¹¹ See Robert L. Hickey “Donne’s Art of Memory” in *Tennessee Studies in Literature* 3 (1958): for a discussion of the role of memory in Donne’s *Sermons*. Being more or less

in accord with Hickey's reading of Donne's Augustiniansim, the interpretation that follows is totally at odds with David Sullivan's assertion that the *Devotions* are "personal" and thus do not operate on the principle of memory as outlined by Augustine and practiced by Ignatius et al.

¹² For an account of Donne's knowledge of medicine see Don Cameron Allen "John Donne's Knowledge of Renaissance Medicine" *JEGP* 42 (1943): 322-42. Thomas Willard examines the meaning of anatomy in the *Anniversaries* in "Donne's Anatomy Lesson: Vesalian or Paracelsian" *John Donne Journal* 3.1 (1984): 35-61.

¹³ Glenn Harcourt analyzes how this distinction structures Vesalius's representations of the anatomized body in his 1543 *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*. Summarizing the way that Vesalius draws on classical art he suggests that: "on the one hand, as representations of antique sculpture, the visceral figures are redolent with the potential for action and quite forcefully underline the ideological connection between Vesalius and his antique precursors. On the other, the realization of that potential is effectively foreclosed by their fragmentary state" (52). See Bakhtin's *Rabelais and his World*, Trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana Press, 1984) for the essential argument regarding this distinction between the classical and grotesque body. See also Michael C. Schoenfeldt's *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999).

¹⁴ Similarly, Lynn Enterline points out that many Latin terms convey a "corporeal, physical meaning on the one hand and a rhetorical, poetic, graphic, or generally linguistic one on the other" (64). Recall, for instance, "*pes* (physical foot and metrical foot); *membrum* (part of the body and part of a speech or literary work; *imago* (visible form or shape and representation, simile); *lingua* (corporeal tongue and language); *signum* (an identifying mark and the impression or mark in a piece of wax); *simulacrum* (a body's outward appearance and statue or image); and *movere* (to move physically and to move by means of words)" (64). *The Rhetoric of the Body from Ovid to Shakespeare* (Cambridge UP: New York, 2000). Wayne A. Rebhorn discusses the opposition of the classical and grotesque bodies as it functions in Antoine Furetière's work on eloquence, *Nouvelle allégorique ou Histoire des derniers troubles arrivez au royaume d'Eloquence*. See *The Emperor of Men's Minds: Literature and the Renaissance Discourse of Rhetoric* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1995) 197-8.

¹⁵ Joan Webber describes Donne's Senecan prose style as "meditative in a particularly purposive way." According to her, Donne's "flat Senecan periods of the meditations imitate the feeling of negation and despair that the imagery and word choice encourage; [. . .] the turbulent periods of the expostulations break up that sense of deadness, and replace it with a feverish life; and [. . .] finally both give way to the stately Anglican cadence of the Book of Common Prayer, where man is wholly reconciled to God" (513). See "Donne and Bunyan: The Styles of Two Faiths" *Seventeenth Century Prose*, ed.

Stanley E. Fish (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971) 489-532. For an historical overview of the Senecan prose style which the *Devotions* most resemble see *Style, Rhetoric, and Rhythm: Essays by Morris W. Croll*, ed. J. Max Patrick (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1966).

¹⁶ The following reading of Station XII rigorously follows on the view which Sharon Cadman Seelig holds that just as “each of the individual sections [in the *Devotions*] comes full circle, stating a problem and resolving it, so too does the work as a whole, descending into illness and returning from it, but also moving from its opening articulation of the variable condition of man to its concluding, even more resounding, affirmation of that point (108). Seelig, Sharon Cadman “In Sickness and in Health: Donne’s Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions” *John Donne Journal* 8 (1989): 103-13. Likewise, N.J.C. Andreasen notices that each single devotion “follows a pattern of assent on a small scale, just as it is followed on a larger scale through the plot; each can be used in isolation, as an independent devotional exercise” (210). N.J.C., Andreasen “Donne’s Devotions And The Psychology of Assent” *Modern Philology* 62 (1965): 207-16. In an early reading, Clara Lander discusses how the structure of the *Devotions* reflects the pattern of Donne’s disease. She assumes that Donne suffered from typhus. Lander, Clara. “A Dangerous Sickness Which Turned to a Spotted Fever” *SEL* 11 (1971): 89-108. Most importantly, though, I am indebted throughout this section to Sawday’s discussion of the “Uncanny Body” in Ch. 6 of *The Body Emblazoned*. A similar analysis could be done of the two Stations that flank this one at the center of the *Devotions*. Station XI meditates on the signifier “heart” and XII on “spots” or as in the Latin headnote “stigmatē.” See Friderich for a reading of how Donne sees the body and its outlying areas as a farm in Station XXII.

¹⁷ See also “Kant with David Lynch” in Part I of *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (Verso: London, 1999) 51-59.

¹⁸ G.A. Padley, for instance, argues that the elaboration of Bacon’s linguistic philosophy in the later seventeenth century leads to a genuine crisis in the capacity to know if the relations between words meaningfully correspond with the relationships among things. *Grammatical Theory in Western Europe 1500-1700: The Latin Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1976) 141-42, 150-55.

¹⁹ Here again Donne’s capacity for expressing the uncanny through language invites comparison with Lynch’s films. Lynch is famous for employing disembodied voices as a way to enforce a disjunction between sight and sound, voice and body, conscious and unconscious. Take, for example, the rumors that circulated after the release of Lynch’s first film, *Eraserhead*:

“At the time, it was rumored that an ultra-low frequency drone in the film’s soundtrack affected the viewer’s subconscious mind. People said that although inaudible, this noise caused a feeling of unease, even nausea” (Cited in Žižek *Ticklish* 53). As Žižek points

out, this voice has the phenomenological status of the real in the Lacanian sense of being totally disembodied. Likewise, the word “vapors” is characterized by its impersonality; it is everywhere and no where at once.

²⁰ The first definition of vapors in the OED is “matter in the form of a steamy or imperceptible exhalation.”

²¹ The OED also defines vapors as “A morbid condition supposed to be caused by the presence of such exhalations; depression of spirits, hypochondria, hysteria, or other nervous disorders.”

²² See Nancy Lee Beaty’s *The Craft of Dying A Study in the Literary Tradition of the Ars Moriendi in England* (New Haven: Yale 1970) and Sister Mary Catherine O’Connor, *The Art of Dying Well: The Development of the Ars Moriendi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942) for overviews of the devotional literature on dying well. See also Bettie Anne Doeblers, *Rooted Sorrow: Dying in Early Modern England* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1994). For a reading of death in the Sermons see Bettie Anne Doeblers’ *The Quickening Seed: Death in the Sermons of John Donne* (Salzburg: University Salzburg, 1974).

²³ The violence of Donne’s imagery outdoes the sensuality of Ignatian inspired meditations on death such as Gaspar Loarte’s *The Exercise of a Christian Life*, Trans. Stephen Brinkley (Rheims: 1584).

²⁴ See Thomas C. Singer “Hieroglyphs, Real Characters, and the Idea of a Natural Language in English Seventeenth-Century Thought” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 50 (1989): 49-70 for an historical overview of seventeenth-century views on hieroglyphs and a larger bibliography on the topic. Edgar Wind points out that while the Neoplatonic tendency of locating the divine within the marginal may *appear* grotesque to a biblical sensibility, “any reader of Ezekiel or the book of Revelation will know that their accounts are filled with miracles and visions which would sustain the anti-classical faith that, when God appears to His prophets, His powers are displaced through monstrous apparitions” (212).

²⁵ Donne’s etymological practice here is consistent with the way that in the Renaissance, as Frank. L. Borchardt summarizes, “an etymology was itself an allegorization, making further allegory an extension into the *sensus spiritualis*” (420). “Etymology in Tradition and in the Northern Renaissance” *JHI* 29 (1968): 415-29. For a discussion of the Latin head-notes see Mary Arshagouni’s “The Latin ‘stationes’ in John Donne’s *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*” *Modern Philology* 89 (1991): 196-210. For a discussion of etymology in the context of the exegetical tradition see Arnold Williams, *The Common*

Expositor: An Account of the Commentaries of Genesis 1527-1633 (University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 1948) 230-32.

²⁶ For other discussions of the Hermetic elements in Donne's work see Joseph A. Mazzeo's "Notes on John Donne's Alchemical Imagery" in *Renaissance and Seventeenth-Century Studies* (New York: Columbia UP, 1964) 60-89 and James R. Keller "The Science of Salvation: Spiritual Alchemy in Donne's Final Sermon" *Sixteenth-Century Studies* 23:3 (1992): 484-493.

²⁷ See *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London and New York: Verso, 1989) 131-151.

“Organs of thy Praise”: Body, Word, and Self in Thomas Traherne

Meaning is *invisible*, but the invisible is not the contradictory of the visible: the visible itself has an invisible inner framework (*membrure*), and the in-visible is the secret counterpart of the visible, it appears only within it – one cannot see it there and every effort to *see it there* makes it disappear.

Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*

There are invisible ways of conveyance, by which some great thing doth touch our souls, and by which we tend to it. Do you not feel yourself drawn with the expectation and desire of some great thing?

Thomas Traherne, *Centuries of Meditations*

In each of the chapters thus far, I have considered how the process of attempting to sublimate the physical into the spiritual, the political into the anagogic, and the particular into the universal coincides with the advent of an ideal religious subject – one that is subversively self-sacrificing, one that is an iconic image of the ideally loving mother, and one that is a perfectly transparent image of the mystical body of Christ. In each case, this ideal subject is ideal precisely insofar as it offers a symbolic resolution to processes of socio-religious antagonisms and to the processes of de-sacramentalization that occasion them. In this fourth and final chapter, I will consider how Thomas Traherne mitigates both metaphysical and political processes of de-sacramentalization in his effort to sustain a sacramental conception of identity. Continuing our focus on the de-sacramentalizing implications of anatomy, part one examines Traherne’s articulation of the sacramental body, particularly in relation to his adaptation of taxonomic forms from seventeenth-century Baconian science. My focus here is on the way that Traherne’s vision of the body as a sacred hymn -- an embodied psalm, as it were -- informs his conception of the self as

a sacramental relation between body and soul. For Traherne felicity is achieved when “the soul of a man actuates his Body,” when the body is quickened or stirred into activity and its sacramental character is revealed in the sense that is formed into an “act” of God (*CH*, fol. 30r2, cited in Saenz 40). As with Donne, Traherne’s conception of the body informs the rhetorical and devotional structures through which the self is realized.

Developing my focus on the internalization of socio-political conflict, part two examines selections from the Dobell sequence in order to demonstrate that what is at stake in Traherne’s devotional poetry is a re-making of the body-politic through a re-inventing of the ideally contemplative subject. Traherne outlines this pastoral aim when he writes, in “Mankind is sick,”:

If we would to the world’s distemper’d mind
 Impute the rage which there we find,
 We might, even in the midst of all our foes,
 Enjoy and feel a sweet repose.
 Might pity all the griefs we see,
 Anointing every malady
 With precious oil and balm;
 And while ourselves are calm, our art improve
 To rescue them, and show our love. (1-9)

Similar to the passage cited in the introduction from Joseph Hall’s *The Devout Soul*, this passage suggests that the process of individual “repose” is the means of healing social disorder. The key term that is repeated throughout this Burtonian diagnosis of world disorder is “distemper,” meaning a deranged or improper organization (of humors). The pastoral therapy that Traherne proposes for such disorder is an imputing or *reckoning* of the deranged body-politic, a taking account of the world’s “rage.” Examining Traherne’s articulation of this “reckoning” of social and spiritual disorder, part two considers how

Traherne re-writes Henry Vaughan's "Distraction" and "The Retreat" in an effort to imagine a more optimistic outcome for devotional discipline than Vaughan postulates. Writing during the interregnum, Vaughan laments the absence of an Anglican Church as Herbert knew it through an allusive poetics that re-writes Herbert's pattern poem "Easter Wings" in a disordered form. Continuing the literary-historical trajectory that runs from Herbert through Vaughan, Traherne celebrates the return of a national Church insofar as it is established within his own renewed soul. In this respect, Traherne's articulation of self constitutes a working through of some of the antagonisms that haunted Vaughan's often melancholic relation to Herbert and the pre-interregnum Anglican establishment – a working through that is occasioned, in no small part, by the Restoration.

I. The Function of the Body in Traherne's Sacramental Phenomenology

In the final chapter of *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* Jonathan Sawday situates Thomas Traherne's articulation of the body against the "technological regimes" of the Royal Science. In particular, he focuses on how Traherne's rhetoric both reflects and resists changes in linguistic perception taking place during the Restoration. The rise of empirical disciplines that occurred in the last third of the seventeenth century -- disciplines grounded in the philosophies of Bacon, Hobbes, and Descartes -- rested, Sawday contends, on a "reform of the very language of science" (231).¹ Among other things, these reforms undid the metaphorical matrices of analogical correspondence that had long provided the conceptual bedrock for

representing the body, in favor of an empirically focused, metonymically based language of dissection and mechanization. Reacting against the objectification of the body in isolation from the thinking soul, and troubled by the de-sacramentalizing implications of such de-contextualization, Traherne, according to Sawday, asked how “would it be possible to create a new language of the body which, whilst it acknowledged the discoveries within the microcosm, could retain the dimensions of sacred anatomy?² [. . .] To simply deny the force of Cartesian analysis was hopeless. But to *reinvent* the body as its own peculiar, reserved space, was an altogether different possibility” (258). Part of Traherne’s answer was to appropriate the taxonomic methodology of the Royal Science for sacramental ends. Traherne’s catalogs were “to become a stylistic device in their own right, an attempt at suggesting endless complexity which the discourses of reason would never succeed in refining into a system” (262).

While part one of this chapter is occasioned by Sawday’s argument that the very unreadability of Traherne’s cataloging technique – its opaqueness to modern interpretation – is a function of the historical triumph of mechanism, I think it is misleading, if not simply inaccurate, to suggest, as Sawday does, that Traherne sought a “reserved space” for the body. On the contrary, Traherne positions the body within the field of being-in-the-world, making it not an object unto itself, but a medium of experience as such. By situating Traherne’s work against “the culture of anatomy” Sawday overlooks the phenomenological dimensions of Traherne’s articulation of the body and the relationship this experiential account of embodiment has to Traherne’s sacramental vision of the self’s relationship with the world. Although Sawday provides a

compelling analysis of how Traherne resists the systematizing aims of the Royal Science, he does not reflect on how Traherne's reaction to the de-sacramentalizing implications of scientific anatomy anticipates the phenomenological thesis that scientific explanation is a second-order expression. He ignores, that is, how Traherne resists the way that empirical explanation detaches the knowing consciousness from the object known without acknowledging the epistemological incoherence of such a rupture, nor its debilitating existential implications.

By describing Traherne's articulation of the body in phenomenological terms, I am developing a line of thinking that begins with A. Leigh Deneef's reading of Traherne vis-à-vis Heidegger. While Deneef offers a compelling argument that Traherne thinks of being-in-the-world in terms that anticipate Heideggerian phenomenology, he does not address the importance of the body to Traherne's philosophy, nor does he consider how Traherne's view of the body impacts the formal structure of his devotional verse. In an effort to illuminate the function of the body in Traherne's vision of the *felicitous* self, I not only situate his work within and against the taxonomic practices of Baconian science, but I also place it alongside Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological account of embodied being. As we shall see, Traherne conceives of the body not simply as an object open to analysis (indeed, according to Traherne, the body ultimately resists the aims of anatomical analysis) but as a "living hymn," an expressive articulation of desire for God. As such, his account of embodiment offers a sacramental counterpart to Merleau-Ponty's view that the body has the ontological status of a work of art:

A novel, poem, picture, or musical work are individuals, that is, beings in which the expression is indistinguishable from the thing expressed, their meaning,

accessible only through direct contact, being radiated with no change of their temporal or spatial situation. It is in this sense that our body is comparable to a work of art. It is a focal point of living meanings, not the function of certain number of mutually variable terms. (*Phenomenology* 151)

In this account, the body is not an object but “is our general medium for having a world” (*Phenomenology* 146). Similarly, Traherne views the body as a site of ethical obligation, metaphysical speculation, and as the occasion for communion with the world as distinct from, but accessible to, consciousness. Thus what Traherne and Merleau-Ponty fundamentally share is the conviction that if one isolates the body as an objective entity one fundamentally misconceives what (or more precisely how) the body is.³ Moreover, Merleau-Ponty’s account of the chiasmic structure of intersubjectivity, along with his focus on the role of the body vis-à-vis self-other relations, provides a view that illuminates Traherne’s thinking more effectively than Deneef’s Lacanian conception of intersubjectivity as a function of one’s alienation within signification. Thus while I build on Deneef’s Heideggerian reading of Traherne, I offer an alternative to his Lacanian view of Traherne’s concept of “intermutuality.” What is ultimately at stake in Traherne’s account of embodiment, and the view of “intermutuality” that follows from it, is nothing less than the most intimate dimensions of sacramental experience and knowledge at a point in time when the metaphysical framework grounding such sacramentality had begun to shift towards a dualist, and in this respect wholly non-sacramental, view of the body/mind relation. In other words, Traherne’s articulation of the body as a hymn is an attempt to repudiate the secularizing force behind the Cartesian distinction between mind and body while nonetheless acknowledging, as did Donne, the failure of an analogically conceptualized body.

In his early prose work, *Select Meditations*, Traherne outlines the continuous relation he believes exists between the body and the soul – the way that the body is sacramentally conjoined to and quickened by the spirit. He summarizes his conception of this relationship when he suggests that the “little actions of our confined being” – the actions, that is, of our body -- are co-extensive with the internalized presence of Being that “prepossesses our soul”: “[. . .] External affaires, as Animated and flowing from the Soul within, have an Imputed Greatness by the Inward Sphere” and “all the works of joy and Glory are Radically *there*, And thence doth all the Beauty and valu flow which is on the Inside of every operation” (*Select Meditations* 45, my emphasis). In this economy of being, all exteriorized actions, especially those of the body, are imagined as having a sacramental continuity with the indwelling soul’s outward moving presence: “Thoughts are the springs of all our actions here / On earth, tho they themselves do not appear” (“Thoughts III” 7-8). For Traherne, Being can only be approached through the actions of being-in-the-world, through, in other words, the body as medium of experience. Inside and outside, soul and body, become continuous, interwoven as it were, as each reveals the other in an ever renewing process of mutual disclosure. It is precisely this intertwining relation between the inside and the outside, between the visible and the invisible, that Traherne captures when says: “You never enjoy the world aright, till the sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens, and crowned with the stars” (*Centuries* I. 29). Poetic imagery is at the service of serious philosophical speculation. This passage evokes the sense that at the highest levels of perception body and world, thinking and being, thing and thought, become inter-mutually coordinated with one

another. As Traherne puts it in "My Spirit," the fully realized mind "acts not from a centre to / Its object as remote, / But present is, when it doth view, / Being with the being it doth note" ("My Spirit" 18-21). Traherne here thinks of the relation between mind and world in very similar terms as Merleau-Ponty, who speculates that "as I contemplate the blue of the sky, I am not set over against it as an acosmic subject [. . .] I abandon myself to it and plunge into this mystery, it 'thinks itself within me,' I am the sky itself as it is drawn together and unified" (*Phenomenology*, 214). Elsewhere, Traherne describes this intimate conjoining of mind and world when he asserts that "you never enjoy the world aright, till you see all things in it so perfectly yours, that you cannot desire them any other Way" (*Centuries* I. 38). Traherne's notion of desire here and elsewhere assumes that what is desired is other to oneself; or more properly what is desired is more intimate to oneself than oneself: desire is a desire of an Other, a desire in the mode of seeing an other; and rather than defending against this Traherne encourages one to identify fully with this other so that "you cannot desire them any other Way."

By understanding the body as a medium of experience rather than an object of scrutiny, Traherne grants the body an integral role in the constitution of an ideal subject who co-ordinates being and knowing -- uniting past, present, and future into itself through a complex series of "intermutual" relations with other beings. He summarizes his conception of this ideal subject in *Christian Ethics* when he writes:

JANUS with his two Faces, looking backward and forward, seems to be a fit Emblem of the Soul, which is able to look on all Objects in the Eternity past, and in all Objects before, in Eternity to come. Faith and Hope are the two faces of this Soul. By its Faith it beholdeth Things that are past, and by its Hope regardeth Things that are to come. (*Christian Ethics* 117)

This vision of the soul beholding past and future in a simultaneous present⁴ does not entail an effacement of the body, as one might expect given Traherne's Neo-Platonism, but rather it coincides with a sacred, rather than anatomical vision of the body. This body is figured not only as something in excess of representation, but it also operates as one of the central means by which the self realizes a view of itself as "a seeming Intervall between Time and Eternity, the Golden link or Tie of the World, yea the Hymenaeus Marrying the Creator and his Creatures together" (*Centuries* IV, 74). Operating as a copula within the sacramental grammar of his work (a "hymen"), the body functions mystically, filling up, as it were, the loss inflicted through the de-sacramentalization of the "*corpus mysticum*." Facing both the demystification of Eucharistic theology and the increasing pressures of Cartesian dualism, Traherne focuses attention on the human body as the source or ground that, along with the soul, links oneself to God and to the world. It is for this reason that he is interested not only in the body's interiorized depths, which had long been associated with Christian faith,⁵ but he is interested also in the body's outward parts, its "naked" surfaces. As such, Traherne's representation of the body participates in the pursuit that Michel de Certeau claims characterized seventeenth-century mysticism in general. The early modern mystic quest, according to de Certeau, is an obsessive quest after the body. The goal of seventeenth-century mysticism, "was to produce a mystic body. [. . .] an alien body against which the institution of medicine would eventually win out in imposing a scientific body" (85).

Writing both within and against the de-contextualization of nature that made this scientific body analyzable, Traherne's texts present a complex version of the Pauline

principle that faith precedes and is the condition of knowledge. As the Epistle to the Hebrews puts it, “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (11:1). Even more strongly, the author of Hebrews suggests that “through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God” (11:3). Having been influenced by the emergence of Baconian induction and other rationalist and empiricist practices, Traherne’s work moves, sometimes uneasily, between St. Paul’s uncompromising view of the precedence of faith and the Royal Society’s emphasis on the necessary role that experience and experimentation play in consolidating knowledge of the world.⁶ Ultimately though, the knowledge of the body that Traherne is concerned with in such texts as “Thanksgivings for the body” is knowledge mediated by and originating from faith, for as he argues in the *Centuries*,

He that Knows the Secrets of Nature with Albertus Magnus, or the Motions of the Heavens with Galilao or, or the Cosmography of the Moon with Hevalius, or the Body of Man with Galen, or the Nature of Diseases with Hippocreates [. . .] or of whatever else with the greatest Artist; He is nothing. if he Knows them meerly for Talk or idle Speculation, or Transeunt and External Use. But He that Knows them for Value, and Knows them His own: shall Profit infinitely. (III, 41)

Like the Jesus of *Paradise Regained*, who refuses to invest in mundane things so long as such an investment is motivated by pragmatic ends rather than by an apprehension of creation as an extension of God’s will, Traherne emphasizes a sacramental relation between knower and known – one where the perceiver adapts him or herself to the object in its permanent, ontological dimension rather than in its transient or ontic aspects. Yet, Traherne’s critique here is not aimed at those who seek knowledge for worldly profit, but at those who seek it for its own sake, as something distinct from one’s relation with God. Traherne, that is, is ultimately concerned with articulating an enigmatic mode of knowing

in which the subject is involved with and in the object known: “KNOWLEDGE is that which does illuminate the Soul, enkindle Love, excite our Care, inspire the mind with Joy, inform the Will, enlarge the Heart, regulate the Passions, unite all the Powers of the Soul to their Objects” (CE, 39). Consequently, knowledge is only in the service of wisdom, which is to say in the service of Being, when it possesses an existential, rather than simply pragmatic, dimension: “Wisdom is not a meer Speculation of Excellent Things, but a Practical Habit, by Vertue of which we actually atchieve and compleat our Happiness” (CE, 65). Knowledge is only real for Traherne when it improves our comportment towards ourselves, when it affects, that is, the structure of our relation to the world: “Thoughts are the things / That us affect” (“Thoughts III, 7-8, 21-22). This existentially committed mode of apprehension is made possible, indeed is exemplified by, the sacramental relationship between the body and the soul.⁷ The beginning of wisdom for Traherne, in other words, lies in the way one understands and experiences oneself as an embodied being. Traherne addresses this issue in *Select Meditations* when he outlines the various risks made possible by un-bodied or existentially ungrounded thought. For instance, the following passage appears designed, both philosophically and stylistically, to counter the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum*, arguing, as it does, that the (resurrected and mundane) body cannot, unlike thoughts, be removed from the orbit of God’s Being:

To Liv in his kingdom is not by Body to be removed thither, but there to Abide in mind and Spirit. for there my Body Always is. where my Thoughts are, there am I. since therefore my Body is Always in Gods Kingdom, and cannot chuse while it is here upon Earth: it is by my thoughts alone that I can goe out of it, into I Know not what coasts of Emptiness and vanity [. . .] The King Himselfe, His Territories and Laws, they are allways Near me; and so is one of his subjects, and that is I.

Heaven and earth is full of the Majesty of his Glory. which to awake to the understanding, is all within. (50)

Rather than viewing the body as a discrete entity standing apart from the operations of the soul, as anatomists such as William Harvey do, Traherne sees the body as ethically, if not epistemologically, de-limiting the soul's proper sphere of motion. While the idea that the body resurrects with the soul into "God's Kingdom" is an orthodox one, Traherne's emphasis is placed on the existential dimensions made possible by this ideal body-soul relation rather than on the theological issue of whether or not the body ascends with the soul. More specifically, the accent is laid on the act of *dwelling* with, *abiding in*, *being present* to the body whose loss would constitute a dissolution of self. It is the *experience* of this sacramental relation that interests Traherne, its phenomenological character rather than its purely theological status. The being of Being is thus presented here as the coincidence of body and thought: "there my Body Always is. where my Thoughts are, there am I." In this view of things, the body is not, as Merleau-Ponty puts it, "an object for an 'I think,' it is a grouping of lived-through meanings" – a series of potential actions and relations that participate in the disclosure of Being (*Phenomenology* 153).

While Traherne, unlike Merleau-Ponty, does not see thought as epistemologically confined by the body ("The eye's confin'd, the body's pent / [. . .] In narrow room: limbs are of small extent / But thoughts are always free" ("Thoughts I" 61-3)) he does suggest that the body ethically and existentially focuses the proper sphere of thought. For instance, in his poem "Apostasie" from his incomplete encyclopedia *Commentaries of Heaven*, Traherne situates the soul's ability to remain "in love" with God through an

investment in and on the body.⁸ More specifically, and perhaps more strangely, the poem situates the soul's strength in the body as "all eye." In this view of corporeality, the body appears as an analogical reflection not of the harmonious orchestration of the cosmos, but of the soul's faculties of perception. In other words, the Paracelsian body of analogical correspondence shifts here from a set of metaphysical alignments to a series of epistemological and devotional operations. This analogical structure is thus internalized as a means for expressing the continuity between body and soul. In this poem one finds and sustains a relationship with God through an investment upon the body's various organs, orifices, and surfaces:

The Ey is there the Mouth: it is the Ear
 The nostril and the Tongue the very Sphere
 Of strength and Power. All the faculties
 Are in the Ey, all there are full of Eys.
 O give me but a Strong and perfect Sense.
 Of all thy Beauty Lov and Excellence
 And all my Faculties being turned to Eys
 I never will in Heart Tongue Hand apostasize. (*Commentaries* 66, 15-22)

The threat of withdrawing from God due to a lack of faith is countered here by a deepened investment in the body whose organs *reveal* God's presence in time. Just as the body's tendency towards sin makes apostasy a risk, so its divine origins make a renewal of faith a constant possibility. More precisely, Traherne's account of how God's "living presence" is inscribed upon the body enacts the Augustinian thesis that "Thou [God] wert more inward to me, than my most inward part" (*Confessions*, Warner 44). As we suggested in the introduction, this intense, even uncanny, mode of intimacy is figured in Traherne's poem, as it is in George Wither's 1635 emblem book, with a heart that is at once an eye (Figure 1). In this configuration the internalized other, the divine mind, is the

thing which it sees. As Plotinus puts it, the divine seer “will *be* that which he sees, if indeed it is possible any longer to distinguish seer and seen, and not boldly to affirm that the two are one” (II, 141).⁹ In Traherne’s hands, this divine mode of contemplation is given form through an unusually exaggerated violation of the borders between distinct parts of the body. In this poem each part of the body emanates the same internalized presence, thereby drawing God closer to him than his own self. Ultimately though, the body and the faculties it makes possible becomes, at its most fully realized, a pure eye. This eye even appears to negate the need for other physical forms: “I never will in Heart Tongue Hand apostasize.” The act of addressing the Other becomes located in and realized through the faculty of visual apprehension. What is really at stake in this process of addressing the other is the logic of the uncanny, but a logic that resists the pathologization of uncanny experiences within psychoanalytic thought proper. The uncanny, as Lacan points out, “is linked not, as some believe, to all sorts of irruptions from the unconscious, but rather to an imbalance that arises in the fantasy when it decomposes, crossing the limits originally assigned to it, and rejoins the image of the other subject” (“Desire and the Interpretation” 21-2). The process of identifying with the Other subject constitutes, for Traherne, a mystical rather than pathological “imbalance,” a joining of the self to the other. This fantasy of the fragmented body unifying itself as a single, perceiving eye is thus the vehicle for expressing the dissolution and rejoining of the ego to the Other. It is in such scenes that we witness what we might call a Christian uncanny, a non-pathological deployment of a fantasy structure that articulates the decomposition of the ego for non-defensive reasons.

Traherne's vision of the body-as-eye discloses the extent to which his thought operates according to an economy of sight that is derived from a reflexive theory of optics in which, as A. Leigh Deneef explains, "beams from the Sun pass vainly through the air unless and until they meet an object. As the Sun's light illuminates that object – lets it be seen and thus known for what it is – so the object itself illuminates the light that shines upon it – lets it be seen for what it is [. . .] The Sun is thus imagined as a metaphoric Eye" (27). As an Eye, the body, like the Sun, allows one to perceive and be perceived, to love and to be loved, to abide with and among other beings. The body, like the world, *speaks* to the self in such a way as to disclose the self to itself. Traherne thus imagines the body as a process of perception as much as an object to be perceived. It is a mirror in which one sees oneself as an image of God. Given the specular nature of this epistemological economy "not to *be*, and not to *appear*, are the same thing" (CE, 37). Traherne exaggerates the porous, open nature of the sacramental body, thereby shifting its analogical character from a synchronic vision of the cosmos to an epistemologically oriented view of the body's role in spiritual reflection. Despite his disavowal of "curling metaphors" in "The Author to the Critical Peruser," this strange vision of the body as all eye hyperbolizes its sacramental, which is to say its fundamentally metaphorical character, making embodiment an aid, rather than an obstacle, to spiritual love. Moreover it implies an ontologically operative analogy between the faculties of the mind and the structure of the body, a position he also articulates in *Christian Ethics*: "Powers are in the Soul, just as Limbs and Members in the Body, which may be indifferently applied to Vertues and Vices" (26).

The body that Traherne imagines through his work is neither the classical body of idealized form, although it partakes of it, nor is it the fluid, anatomized, grotesque body that circulated through Jacobean culture, although it is mediated by this conception of the body and certainly shares its porous nature. It is, rather, a view of the body as “living hymn,” an animate, incarnate, expression of God’s will and love towards humans. In this sacramental context, the body functions as a kind of gerund, an action that has taken on a substantive form. For instance, in his hexameral work, *Meditations on the Six Days of Creation*, Traherne lists various parts of the body not as objects but as mediums of praise. In this hexameral work, Traherne does not simply praise the body as a form, he suggests that the very *act* of celebration itself is determined by the body. What is disclosed in this passage, in other words, is that the body’s being *is* praise:

I Praise thee, O God, that thou hast so compassed me in on every side, as with Gates and Bars, make my Heart, and all that is within me, to resound thy Praises. My Bones, like the the Beams and Posts of a House, uphold the Structure; in my Ribs like Laths make up my Walls, which are varnish’d over with a curious Skin, and united together [. . .] Cause my Flesh and my Heart to cry unto thee, the living God, and all that is within me to say, God be magnified. Make even my Bones and Sinews, my Senses and Members, cry aloud with singing. (77)

Moving from an image of the body as a prison cell to a temple this passage tethers together various organs and structures until they emerge as elements within a polyphonic chorus – until they disclose themselves as acts of praise rather than a static structure. This vision of the body as both temple and hymn, singer and song, medium and message, constitutes an imaginative extension of the Anglican practice of public worship which, after the Restoration, included genuflection.¹⁰ It not only makes worship a bodily activity, however; it also renders the body the basic medium of praise. This vision of the body as

hymn comes as the climax to a sacred anatomy in which the hands, feet, eyes, and other parts of the body are celebrated for both their form and their function. A similar panegyric unfolds in “Thanksgivings for the Body” where Traherne celebrates the body’s role in opening or more precisely “framing” the world as a series of relational sites in which one *becomes* the acts that one engages in, projecting oneself into the world and the future that appears through it:

The Volubility and Liberty
 Of my Hands and Members.
 Fitted by thee for all Operations; [. . .]
 For all the Mysteries, Engines, Instruments, wherewith the
 World is filled, which we are able to frame and use to thy Glory.
 For all the trades, variety of Operations, Cities, Temples,
 Streets, Bridges, Mariner’s Compass, admirable Picture, Sculpture,
 Writing, Printing, Songs and Music; wherewith the World is
 beautified and adorned.
 Much more for the Regent Life,
 And Power of Perception,
 Which rules within.
 That secret depth of fathomless Consideration
 That receives the information
 Of all our senses [. . .]
 The involved mysteries
 Of our common sense;
 The inaccessible secret
 Of perceptive fancy;
 The repository and treasury
 Of things that are past;
 The presentation of things to come;
 Thy Name be glorified
 For evermore. (112-14, 121-132, 135-43, my italics)

This catalog explicitly thematizes the work such sacred taxonomies perform. It explains how the body “frames” the mysteries of the world in such a way as to disclose, unveil (*alethia*), or make appear the “glory” with which Traherne seeks to *dwell*. Such dwelling or abiding with, for Traherne, consists of an ongoing act of praise between the

self, body, world, and Being. This intertwining relationship between the body, world and Being, a relation that is enacted in the *accumulatio* of the taxonomy, aims to speak to the “fathomless depth of consideration” and “perceptive fancy” -- that primordial and impalpable source of sensations that is the meeting point of mind and world. Traherne’s catalogs do not expose or anatomize each individual part of the body or world, but rather each part works to reveal the sacramental space in which “intermutual” relations may be lived. The taxonomy gives form to something which cannot be represented as such. In this sense, Traherne pursues something very much like Merleau-Ponty when the philosopher suggests that what he wants to do “is restore the world as a meaning of Being absolutely different from the ‘represented,’ that is, as the vertical Being which none of our ‘representations’ exhaust and which all ‘reach,’ the wild Being” (*Visible* 253). The inexhaustible accumulation of Traherne’s taxonomies “reach,” in Merleau-Ponty’s sense, in excess of representation. Thus, unlike the proto-scientific catalogs of Baconian science which situate an object spatially, making it a static, concrete and most importantly a de-contextualized object, Traherne’s catalogs emphasize the verbal as well as the substantive aspects of the body, thereby re-situating the body’s relationship to Being as an ongoing, ever-renewing process.

The difference between Traherne’s cataloging technique and that of Baconian science can be further clarified by considering how Baconian taxonomy presumes the de-contextualization of nature, the decomposition of distinct units from a total order. We see such decomposition as M.M. Slaughter observes, “in the enumerative lists being compiled, in the collections of instances and specimens that underlie, for example, the

Baconian methods of induction as well as the collections of plant, animal and mineral specimens that abound” (42). Taxonomy as a science of order, Slaughter observes,

proceeds in two ways. First of all, it analyzes wholes into units: constituents, parts, elements, variables, etc. The aim or outcome, depending on the success of the analysis, is the establishment of relations of identity and difference between things. Secondly, taxonomy brings things together in groups and arranges the groups in a hierarchal system. Wholes are decomposed in order that they can be recomposed or reconstituted in a system which expresses the totality of their relations. (9)

Traherne’s lists, on the other hand, shift the focus away from the relationship between parts and wholes, from what the objects “mean,” to what the relationship between beholder and beheld might consist of in sacramental terms. As Carl Selkin argues, Traherne’s catalogs ask that one

become like the organ of God as described by Nicholas of Cusa, who contrasts man’s limited vision with God’s unlimited sight by comparing them as readers; the first reads a page linearly, each word in succession, but God sees the entire page at once. (97)

Traherne’s focus is thus on the ethos of the perceiver rather than on the objective nature of the perceived. It implies a projection of consciousness into the world, but one that is ethically and existentially organized by the body and to this extent quite distinct from the form of vision that Nicholas of Cusa imagined.¹¹

As I suggested, Traherne’s mode of perceiving implies an ethical as well as an epistemological relation between knower and known. For instance, further on in his hexameral work Traherne offers up a list that lays out the obligations between oneself and other beings. These obligations are again situated in relation to and as a function of the body:

Men being Angels by their Souls, have Bodies besides, that they may be united as the Angels are, and in another manner make use of the World, and serve each

other, and glorify God. And indeed infinite are the ways wherein our Bodies become useful to us; all Obligations, Relations, Education, Pleasure, History, Trades and Service, Devotion Learning, Language, Bounty, Laws, Counsels, Temples, Altars, Universities and Colleges, Churches, Festivals, Governments, Magnificence, Liberality, & c. uniting us infinite ways together; all which Benefits arise from our Bodies: God being so marvellous in the creating of them, that he hath super-added something to his Image. (74)

The obligation or responsibility between oneself and other beings is presented here along the axis of the body as an ethical site, a sacramental space in which beings encounter each other. Moreover, this sacramental space is situated as a supplement of God, an excess that unites creation with its Creator: “he hath super-added something to his Image.” The body is an excess that makes “intermutuality” possible — a divine gift that allows man and God to draw closer together. This notion of the body as something “super-added” to Being suggests that the precondition for the Body is a negation of Being as spirit. In other words, when Traherne speaks of the body as something “super-added” to God’s image he is addressing the conditions of possibility for the dehiscence of Being, its differentiation into or through beings and bodies. As such, Traherne is extremely close to the idea of his German predecessor Jacob Boehme that “a spirit is raw without a body, for there is no understanding without a body, and also the spirit does not last in itself without a body” (Cited in Walsh, 59).¹²

The paradox of Traherne’s lists is that they do not so much accumulate greater and greater modes of meaning, but rather they all display this dehiscence of Being, its differentiation into things. As Deneef puts it, Traherne’s rhetoric of accumulation says the same thing over and over again and that thing is the “unsaid surplus of language itself” (65). What is important here though is the way that surplus gets articulated as co-

relative with the human body, an image that is “super-added” to Being. Traherne enacts how the body is the source of the “unsaid surplus” of the being of language in “The Person” where he lays a series of identities against one another as a strategy for allowing the body to emerge in its aseity, in its ontological essence:

Ye Sacred Lims,
 A richer Blazon I will lay
 On you, then first I found:
 That like Celestial Kings,
 Ye might with Ornaments of Joy
 Be always Crowned.
 A Deep Vermillion on a Red,
 On that a Scarlet I will lay,
 With Gold Ile Crown your Head,
 Which like the Sun shall Ray.
 With Robes of Glory and Delight
 Ile make you bright.
 Mistake me not, I do not mean to bring
 New robes, but to *display the thing*:
 Nor paint, nor clothe, nor crown, nor add a ray,
 But glorify by taking all away. (1-16, my emphasis)

The act of emblazoning is given an apophatic twist here, as the accumulation of “reds” does not cover but unveils the body’s essence. Situating the blazon form within an apophatic context, Traherne, in effect, subverts the rhetoric of mastery and domination that, as Nancy Vickers and others have demonstrated, characterizes the blazon as a rhetorical form, offering instead a self-consciously ethical relation to the essence of the body.¹³ Moreover, such passages, as Deneef argues, disclose the fact that “it cannot be emphasized too much that Traherne is especially committed to hearing what conceals itself as unsaid in language” (65). Traherne’s mode of listening for the unsaid, for the sacramental disclosing of Being, is often achieved through a mode of estranging what is ostensibly most familiar, namely the body. For Traherne, the emblazoned body reveals

not an object, but an inaccessible “glory”: “Survey the Skin, cut up the Flesh, the Veins / Unfold: the Glory there remains” (28-29). Elsewhere he celebrates man as a “A sphere of Sense, / And a mine of Riches, / Which when bodies are dissected fly away” (“Thanksgivings for the Body” 89-91). Human anatomy, according to Traherne, reveals, despite itself, what Merleau-Ponty sees as the end of phenomenological inquiry: “It is the things themselves, from the depths of their silence, that [philosophy] wishes to bring to expression” (*Visible* 4). And although this invisible “glory” *speaks* to consciousness (it is *there* as Merleau-Ponty would say) any attempt to bring it directly into language “makes it disappear.”

In Traherne’s hands the blazon is less a verbal dissection than it is a process of epistemological distillation. For instance, the “thing” functions in “The Person” in precisely the opposite way it did in the opening of Donne’s Station 12. In Donne’s text the vapor is a thing in the horrifyingly uncanny sense of something alien at the heart of the self, whereas for Traherne it is a sacramental effect whose true character appears through a ritualized and thus sacred mode of framing. In other words, the body’s uncanny nature takes on an entirely different value in Donne than it does in Traherne. For Traherne the body’s “otherness,” its unknown qualities, are evidence of its sacred character, its mysterious beauty, whereas for Donne its impenetrable character is sinister and the sign of an unsettling epistemological crisis. Traherne’s comportment to his body thus avoids what Peter Brooks sees as a characteristic feature of modern representations of the body. According to Brooks, the body plays a central role in the relationship

between desire and “the drive to know” in modern narrative, a drive that he calls, after Lacan, “epistemophilia” (*Body Work* 5-6).

In the final stanza of “The Person,” Traherne poses the challenge of seeing the “truth” of the body – seeing it, that is, as the source of one’s “sacred treasures.” Thus here again it is the comportment towards the body as the basis for sacramental perception that is at stake, a comportment that seeks to make the body an “organ of praise.” Such passages seem to enact a transformation of the body, a radical shift from experiencing the body as an object in isolation from the world, seeing it “alone” as he says in the second stanza, to experiencing it as the site of a divine presencing as in the fourth stanza:

Let Veritie
 Be thy delight: let me Esteem
 True Wealth far more then Toys: [. . .]
 My Tongue, my Eys,
 My cheeks, my Lips, my Ears, my Hands, my Feet,
 Their Harmony is far more Sweet;
 Their beauty true. And these in all my Ways
 Shall Themes becom, and Organs of thy Praise. (49-51, 61-64)

The body is, from its very beginning, written on and by God and the poet’s task is to listen for the voice behind that writing and to repeat back to God in praise the “verity” of his own image. For this voice is concealed not only, as Sawday suggests, in the body’s depths, but also on its surface, on its most “naked” outward part: “The Naked Things / Are most Sublime, [. . .] Mens Hands then Angels Wings / Are truer Wealth even here below” (“The Person” 17-21).

Similarly, in “Thanksgivings for the Body” Traherne performs a verbal anatomy in which the body expands from being the source of personal identity to a site of social and cosmological order:

Thou hast given me a Body,
 Wherein the glory of thy Power shineth,
 Wonderfully composed above the Beasts,
 Within distinguished into useful parts,
 Beautified without with many Ornaments.
 Limbs rarely poised,
 And made for Heaven:
 Arteries filled
 With celestial Spirits:
 Veins, wherein blood floweth,
 Refreshing all my flesh,
 Like Rivers.
 Sinews fraught with the mystery
 Of wonderful Strength, [. . .]
 That thou hast made it,
 A Treasury of Wonders,
 Fit for its several Ages;
 For Dissections,
 For Sculptures in Brass,
 For Draughts in Anatomy,
 For the Contemplation of the Sages. (43-66)

This organization of the body into a cultural as well as a providential process climaxes with a catalog that expresses the association between faith and interiorized corporeality.

The inward parts of the body, that is, become the site in which God invests himself. The divine appears in the “unsearchable offices” of the body, its “hidden operations” and the orifices (offices) in which such operations occur:

 Beneath my Skin;
 Are full of thy Depths,
 Many thousand uses,
 For { Hidden operations,
 Unsearchable offices. (75-78)

The strategy here is not so much a matter of anatomical dissection as it is verbal accumulation, an ascending movement that mirrors the complexity within simplicity that the body exemplifies. Traherne makes this point explicit when he critiques the effects of

anatomy, not from the skeptical point of view of Donne, but from a sacramental position of faithfulness: “O what praises are due unto Thee, / Who hast made me / A living inhabitant / Of the great world. / And the centre of it! / A sphere of sense, / And a mine of riches, / Which when bodies are dissected fly away” (83-90).

As “The Person” and “Thanksgivings for the Body” make clear, Traherne’s focus on the “naked” body as the site upon which one can renew one’s perception of the mystery of Being leads him to adopt a highly unique rhetorical strategy that consists of an apparently tautological juxtaposition of identities. Traherne explains the strategy in “The Author to the Critical Peruser” when he describes his poetic technique as a “baser Heraldry,” a form of the plain style that runs counter to the principles of the *ut pictura poesis* tradition:

No curling Metaphors that gild the Sence,
Nor Pictures here, nor painted Eloquence;
No florid Streams of Superficial Gems,
But real Crowns and Thrones and Diadems!
That Gold on Gold should hiding shining ly
May we be reckon’d baser Heraldry. (11-16)

What exactly is Traherne after here when he suggests that his version of the *sermo simplex* involves situating “Gold on Gold” so as to reveal what in “hiding shining” lies? Certainly, Deneef’s Heideggerian account of how Traherne seeks the “thingness” of the thing is relevant here:

Traherne thinks things in a particularly Heideggerian fashion: things are and appear, things gather and summons, things set forth and set up the specific regions of man’s relatedness. This fact requires some critical adjustment, for what in most other seventeenth-century contexts we would applaud as the detailed imagery of concrete things is, in Traherne, merely the surface substance, the ontic matter concealing the thing’s true phenomenological and ontological being. (74)

Yet, we can be more precise than this by referring to the work of Merleau-Ponty. By situating identities against one another, Traherne attempts to evoke, as Merleau-Ponty does in his later work, the invisible conditions of visibility, the way that Being is disclosed as a “shining forth” (*rayonnement*) within and against an unperceived ground (Madison, 228). The “shining forth” or “advent” of an object’s essence, for Merleau-Ponty, is situated in an indeterminate field that extends before and beyond the object. As the phenomenologist suggests, “the visible has an invisible inner framework” (*Visible* 215). In other words, perception relies on an unseen setting against which an object appears. The ontological and phenomenological essence of a thing “appears” or “shines forth” through the dynamic interplay between the object itself, the “inner framework” of the background against which it is set, and the perceiver. Juxtaposing a thing against itself (Gold on Gold) Traherne draws attention to this relational structure of apprehension. By doing so, he estranges the object, unhinging it, as it were, from its everydayness in order to open up a space for hieratic perception. This estranging of the object, in other words, discloses the background or dispositional field out of which the thing appears, thereby revealing “the only Beauty that doth Shine” (“Thoughts III 57):

Here Ornament on Ornament may still
 Be laid; Beauty on Beauty, Skill on Skill,
 Strength Still on Strength, and Life it self on Life.
 Tis Queen of all things, and its Makers Wife.
 The Best of Thoughts is yet a thing unknown,
 But when tis Perfect it is like his Own:
 Intelligible, Endless, yet a Sphere
 Substantial too: In which all Things appear. (“Thoughts III” 63-70)

As the title of the poem suggests, this situating of identities against one another discloses the structure of thought itself. Such activity, as he puts it, “beautifie[s] even all

his Dwelling place” (32). The most precious thought possible is, as Traherne would have it, yet “unthought” – for such a thought would disclose “pure Being.” In other words, by drawing attention to the structure of perception -- the need, that is, for a framework in which to perceive the being of Being -- Traherne aims to think the unthought, thereby disclosing the endless or inexhaustible nature of the “perfect thought.” In such passages, Traherne approaches Merleau-Ponty’s view that the “transcendence of the thing compels us to say that it is plentitude only being inexhaustible, that is, by not being all actual under the look – but it promises this total actuality, since it *is there*” (*Visible* 191).

Likewise, Traherne’s juxtaposition of identities is an attempt to speak to the *being-there* of the object. This active mode of thought can reveal “the only Being that doth live. / Tis Capable of all Perfection *here*, / Of all his Love and Joy and Glory *there*. / It is the only Beauty that doth *shine* (54-57, my emphasis). Addressing this process of the “shining forth” of being, Traherne aims, as we have suggested, at evoking a mode of perception that “Acts not from a Centre to / Its object as remote, / But present is, when it doth view, / Being with the Being it doth note” (“My Spirit” 18-21). Merleau-Ponty addresses a similar mode of apprehension when he speaks of an “*inspiration and expiration* of Being, action and passion so slightly discernible that it becomes impossible to distinguish between what sees and what is seen” (*Primacy*, 167 my emphasis). In such cases, perception is not of an “object” as such, but of the perceiving agent’s own relation with the “thing” that transforms the perceiving I. It is the inter-related field of perception that Traherne and Merleau-Ponty evoke, not the object in radical isolation from the perceiver’s existence. In an ideal act of perception, knower and known form what

Traherne calls an “intermutual joy,” a participating of beings with and through one another in a way that discloses the Being that grounds such a relation. This is intersubjectivity not as a form of self-alienation, as it is in Lacan’s account of the specular relations between self and Other, but the realization of the self through genuine communication with the Other. While Traherne constantly enacts this process of intermutuality, he explicitly describes it in “Ease” when he imagines that “all may Happy be, Each one most Blest, / Both in Himself and others; all most High, / While all by each, and each by all possesst, / Are intermutual Joys, beneath the Skie” (25-29). The chiasmic structure of this form of intermutuality (“While all by each, and each by all possesst”) more than approximates Merleau-Ponty’s notion of intersubjectivity as a chiasm: “the chiasm is not only a me other exchange (the messages he receives reach me, the messages I receive reach him), it is also an exchange between me and the world, between the phenomenal body and the ‘objective’ body, between the perceiving and the perceived: what begins as a thing ends as a consciousness of the thing” (*Visible* 215).¹⁴ We return here to Traherne’s “unthought thing,” where phenomenon and essence meet. Moreover, we cross paths with the intertwining structure of perceiver and perceived that we have suggested characterizes Traherne’s phenomenology, a chiasmus that is exemplified by and grounded in the continuity between body and soul.¹⁵

Traherne imagines the origins of this mind/body relation in “The Salutation.” The estranging of “things” through tautological juxtaposition, (placing for instance “a deep vermillion on a red” “The Person” 7) recreates the sense of strangeness that he associates with the earliest moments of his consciousness:

A stranger here
 Strange Things doth meet, strange Glories see;
 Strange Treasures lodg'd in this fair World appear;
 Strange all, and New to me.
 But that they mine should be, who nothing was,
 That Strangest is of all, yet brought to pass. (37-42)

For Traherne the first act of consciousness consists of a greeting and then a celebration of the body, a gathering together of its various joints into a single unified thing, a gestalt: "These little Limmes, / These Eyes and Hands which here I find, / These rosie Cheeks wherewith my Life begins, / Where have ye been?" (1-3). This movement from bodily fragments to corporeal integrity informs the unifying structure of consciousness itself as the mind moves outward gathering first itself, then the world and finally the cosmos as a whole:

I that so long
 Was nothing from Eternitie,
 Did little think such Joys as Ear or Tongue,
 To Celebrat or See:
 Such sounds to hear, such Hands to feel, such Feet,
 Beneath the Skies, on such a Ground to meet [. . .]

From Dust I rise,
 And out of Nothing now awake,
 These Brighter Regions which salute mine Eys,
 A Gift from GOD I take.
 The Earth, the Seas, the Light, the Day, the Skies,
 The Sun and Stars are mine; if those I prize. (13-18, 25-30)

In Traherne's account, the awareness of being-in-the-world emerges through an appropriation of the body as an emergent unity: "When silent I, / So many thousand thousand yeers, / Beneath the Dust did in a Chaos lie, / How could I smiles or Tears, / Or Lips or Hands or Eys or Ears perceiv? / Welcome ye treasures which I now receiv" ("The Salutation" 7-12). He returns to this scene in "The Preparative": "My Body being Dead,

my lims unknown; / Before I skild to prize / Those living stars mine Eys, / Before my Tongue or Cheeks were to me shown, / Before I knew my hands were mine, / Or that my sinews did my Members joyn" (1-6). Unlike Milton's Adam, who, upon his creation, gazes first at the upturned sky and then himself "Limb by Limb surveyed" (VIII, 260-70), Traherne "receives" his body in order to ground his sense of self. This process of "receiving" is both passive and active. While it entails an appropriation of the body, this appropriation is conditioned by the body's disclosing itself to him: "before my tongue or cheeks were *to me shown*." The origins of the Trahernian I are thus more similar to Freud's narrative than Milton's.¹⁶ Like Freud's, Traherne's I appears "something like an internal screen onto which the illuminated and projected image of the body's outer surface is directed. It is the site for the gathering together and unification of otherwise disparate and scattered sensations provided by the various sense organs, in all their different spaces and registers" (Grosz 37).¹⁷ In both Freud and Traherne, the self emerges through a narcissistic investment onto the surface of the body. The self in this developmental narrative is not simply an effect of the body, but is a projection or outline of bodily forms. Thus when Traherne estranges the body he is estranging the very origins of the self, re-making identity in its most primordial dimension while re-constructing the conditions of thought itself.

In "Thanksgiving for the Body" Traherne seeks to recreate the sense of holy strangeness that he describes in "The Salutation" through a set of elaborate rhetorical strategies that again address how the body calls for a certain kind of ethical disposition. More precisely, Traherne's elaborate taxonomies in this poem intertwine self and world,

body and soul, visible and invisible as a means for evoking the inter-relatedness of consciousness and world. In this respect, the text enacts Traherne's anti-Cartesian principle, "for there my Body Always is. where my Thoughts are, there am I." Traherne here approaches Jacob Boehme's idea that spirit requires bodily form in order to fully reveal itself to itself: "there must be a contraction [of spirit into body] and a closing in from which the revelation may shine" (Cited in Walsh, 58). The body's central place in Traherne's account of the revelation of Being is established in the longest and perhaps most important catalog in the poem:

Even for our earthly bodies, hast thou created all things.
 Visible.
 All things { Material.
 Sensible.
 Animals,
 Vegetables,
 Minerals,
 Bodies celestial,
 Bodies terrestrial,
 The four Elements,
 Volatile Spirits,
 Trees, Herbs, and Flowers,
 The Influences of Heaven,
 Clouds, Vapors, Wind,
 Dew, Rain, Hail, and Snow,
 Light and Darkness, Night and Day,
 The Seasons of the Year.
 Springs, Rivers, Fountains, Oceans,
 Gold, Silver, and precious Stones.
 Corn, wine, and oyl,
 The Sun, Moon, and Stars,
 Cities, Nations, Kingdoms.
 And the Bodies of Men, the greatest Treasures of all,
 For each other. (242-265)

Traherne's taxonomy does not constitute a dissection of creation but functions as a kind of moving image of it. This is not the Great Chain of Being laid out in taxonomic form,

but rather it is a symbol of an embodied and highly permeable cosmos that is at once an image of an embodied being: microcosm and macrocosm thus do not disappear entirely, but shift from a metaphysical to an epistemological register. More precisely, Traherne's focus on the embodied nature of creation is encapsulated here in the way the catalog begins with an emphasis on the "visible" and ends with a celebration of the "bodies of men." Beginning and ending with the "visible" Traherne enacts the process by which "the invisible" "shines forth" from within the visible world. The taxonomy thus functions as an expanding metaphor, rather than as a set of discrete units separated from the unity of the whole – enacting the motion and inter-relations between parts.

The rhetorical efficacy of the catalog form is most discernible in the way that it encourages not only a God-like perception of everything at once, but more importantly it suggests that there is always more, always an abundance that representation fails to account for but which can nonetheless be felt like the invisible insistence that Traherne speaks of at the beginning of the *Centuries of Meditations* when he asks: "There are Invisible Ways of Conveyance, by which some Great Thing doth touch our Souls, and by which we tend to it. Do you not feel yourself Drawn with the Expectation and Desire of som Great Thing?" (I.2.). The taxonomic structure is designed to inspire desire for God, rather than satiate it. Stanley Stewart speaks to this aspect of Traherne's mode of representation in his discussion of *Christian Ethics* when he argues that Traherne's rhetorical and argumentative structure, particularly as it pertains to his principle of inclusion, is an affront to logical boundaries: "He exceeds the limits [of his own argument] precisely because they are 'limited and bounded'" (68). Writing two years

before the publication of Fish's *Self-Consuming Artifacts*, Stewart articulates something very much like Fish's idea that seventeenth-century texts violate their own rhetorical structure as a means for undermining the limitations that temporality places on representation. With Traherne however, it is not textual self-consumption that is at issue, but something less epistemologically skeptical and more phenomenologically suggestive. For while Stewart argues that "Traherne piles up words and phrases, taking pains to proliferate synonyms as if the mere weight of the word itself—the word intensified and isolated by the junctures produced in series and periodic sentences – were enough to summon forth the sense of the universe in small part" (71), we are also left with the sense that words can evoke or inspire the expectation for "some Great thing," can open a space or clearing for an encounter with Being without representing it as such. In this sense, the meaning of Traherne's catalogs is found in their effect, in their capacity to lead a reader both backwards and forwards to the Thing which inspired them: "I hav found, that Things unknown have a Secret Influence on the Soul: and like the Centre of the Earth unseen, violently Attract it" (*Centuries* I.2.).

The expansive, supplementing movement of a catalog is an index of the very subjectivity that Traherne is at pains to articulate, a subjectivity whose desire for God is as inexhaustible as God himself: "Till I what lies / In Time's beginning find; / Must I till then for ever burn?" ("Insatiableness 8-10). For Traherne the issue is not about resolving this impossible desire, but realizing that it is itself the means by which one has access to the divine. Indeed, for Traherne the effort is to constantly renew one's sense of wonder before Being: "So will he have us be a perpetual Conflux and Activity of thought to

maintain all Things and in our selves to uphold our Treasures: for they are no longer ours then they are within us" (*Select Meditations* 51). The union of thought and being does not result in a cessation of desire "for some great thing," but in an apprehension that the desire itself is a function of being an (embodied) image of God. If phenomenology is an attempt to constantly renew the questioning of being, and if this questioning is, in part, a function of how "the use a man is to make of his body is transcendent in relation to that body as a mere biological entity" (*Phenomenology* 189) then Traherne's religious thought marks one of the first moments in this ongoing critique of Cartesian dualism.

II. The Politics of Form: Traherne, Herbert, and Vaughan

Oppressed I. Striving to save the whole, by parcels die.

Henry Vaughan – "Distraction"

If Traherne's taxonomic articulation of the body registers the pressures bearing upon the metaphysical presuppositions of the sacramental cosmos, then his narrative of the self's emergence into verbal consciousness in the Dobell sequence registers some of the disturbing effects of socio-political fragmentation. "Dumbness," in particular, the eleventh poem in the sequence, constitutes Traherne's most explicit articulation of socio-political conflict as a division within the soul. Similar to Southwell and Donne, Traherne registers ecclesiastical and civil warfare as an internally registered experience of self-division as a means for symbolically mitigating such conflict. Developing the notion of infancy as a blissful state of union with God's creation, a view which Henry Vaughan's "Retreat" articulates, Traherne gives an account of how the self's fall into speech creates

a division or alienation from the self. As such, Traherne complicates Vaughan's picture considerably, offering a theosophical account of how the self's sacramental perception becomes clouded through the intervention of human speech, a process that one must labor against by means of the "inward work."

Traherne imagines the intervention of human speech as an invasion of vapors into a world in which "nothing spoke to me but the fair face / Of Heaven and earth." Once the union of speechless infant and heaven's fair face is interrupted the mind appears to become weakened through a mixture of self and other. Here again the iconicity of the sacramental subject is dislocated through the emergence of a foreign invader. In this case, as in Donne's *Devotions*, the invader appears as a demonic inversion of the Word or *spiritus*: "Before their Souls were into mine conveyd, / Before that Living Vehicle of Wind / Could breath into me their infected Mind, / Before my Thoughts were leavned with theirs, before / There any mixture was" (24-28). The term "leaven" suggests not only a destructive mixing of substances, in this case the plague-like breath of human beings, but it is also an "allusion to certain passages of the gospels (eg. Matt. 13: 33. 16: 6) in which an agent produces profound change by progressive inward operation" (OED). The inward operations of the infection are ultimately countered by the "inward work" of spiritual meditation as articulated in "Silence" that follows "Dumbness." But before the speaker engages in such inward work he recounts the fall into consciousness in terms that explicitly evoke England's civil conflicts:

Thus was I pent within
 A Fort, Impregnable to any Sin:
 Till the Avenues being Open laid,
 Whole legions Enterd, and the Forts Betrayd.

Before which time a Pulpit in my Mind,
 A Temple, and a Teacher I did find,
 With a large Text to comment on [. . .]
 The Heavens were an Orakle, and spake
Divinity: The Earth did undertake
 The office of a Priest; And I being Dum
 (Nothing besides was dum;) All things did com
 With Voices and Instructions; but when I
 Had gaind a Tongue, their Power began to die.
 Mine ears let other Noises in, not theirs;
 A Nois Disturbing all my Songs and Prayers.
 My foes puld down the Temple to the Ground,
 They my Adoring Soul did deeply Wound,
 And casting that into a Swoon, destroyd
 The Oracle, and all I there enjoyd.
 And having once inspird me with a Sence
 Of forrein Vanities, they march out thence
 In Troops that Cover and despoyl my Coasts,
 Being the Invisible, most Hurtful Hosts. (53-60, 63-78)

The military metaphor that runs through this account of the infant's fall into human speech begins with the term "avenues" which means, as Bradford explains, "an invading army's route of access to a fortress or other objective" (323). The very orifice that Traherne chose as the site most worthy of praise in "Thanksgivings" appears here as the means by which the self becomes split from its union with God. The wound that is inflicted on the inward temple and the "noise" that leads to this inward tumult echoes Vaughan's "Retreat." In his account of the emergence of verbal consciousness, Vaughan nostalgically recalls infancy, describing it as the point when "Before I taught my tongue to wound, / My conscience with a sinful sound" (15-16). More importantly, Traherne's poem also situates the theme of infancy within the political context that structures Vaughan's "Distraction."

The words “voices” and “noise” appear throughout “Distraction,” indicating an unmistakable if oblique association with the religious and reforming “enthusiasm” of puritans, “roundheads,” and the disruptive forces of radical Protestantism that Vaughan experienced in interregnum Wales.¹⁸ These political disruptions are registered as an inward division of the self. Such divisions, moreover, are figured formally. The unmusical voices that the speaker bemoans are matched by the sound of the poem’s end-rhymes which are made even more awkward by the inconsistent meter; also the anacoluthic-like structure of many lines (the way sentences conclude with a different grammatical structure than they began with) and the dissonance created through interspersing consonantly clipped and non-clipped long vowels suggest an inward fragmentation that mirrors the political sub-text of the poem:

O knit me, that am crumbled dust! the heap
 Is all dispersed, and cheap;
 Give for a handful, but a thought
 And it is bought;
 Hadst thou
 Made me a star, a pearl, or a rain-bow,
 The beams I then had shot
 My light had lessened not,
 But now
 I find my self the less, the more I grow;
 The world
 Is full of voices; Man is called, and hurled
 By each, he answers all,
 Knows every note, and call,
 Hence, still
 Fresh dotage tempts, or old usurps his will.
 Yet hadst thou clipped my wings, when confined in
 This quickened mass of sin,
 And saved that light, which freely thou
 Didst then bestow,
 I fear
 I should have spurned, and said thou didst forbear;

Or that thy store was less,
 But now since thou didst bless
 So much
 I grieve, my God! that thou hast made me such.
 I grieve?
 O, yes! thou know'st I do; come, and relieve
 And tame, and keep down with thy light
 Dust that would rise, and dim my sight,
 Lest left alone too long
 Amidst the noise, and throng,
 Oppressed I
 Striving to save the whole, by parcels die.

As a pattern-poem based on descending and re-ascending metrical lines "Distraction" functions as a disordered version of Herbert's "Easter Wings" to which it obliquely refers in line 17: "yet hadst thou clipped my wings." The narrowing and widening structure of "Distraction" visually records the disruption in the life of Anglican worshippers, fragmenting, as it does, the ordered pattern of Herbert's verse. Insofar as Vaughan's poem is a broken wing it formally and melancholically records the unified structure of Herbert's poem, a poem that celebrates the sacramental life enabled by the Anglican Church:

Lord, Who createdst man in wealth and store
 Though foolishly he lost the same,
 Decaying more and more,
 Till he became
 Most poore:
 With thee
 O let me rise
 As larks, harmoniously,
 And sing this day thy victories:
 Then shall the fall further the flight in me. (1-10)

Vaughan's poem mourns the loss of the integrity and *form* of the pre-interregnum Anglican liturgy by fragmenting the iconic structure of Herbert's poem. The fragmenting

of poetic form symbolizes the loss of the liturgical basis of pre-interregnum religious life, recording the de-sacramentalization of the church while simultaneously seeking to re-create it within the devotional life of the self.

The fragmented structure of Vaughan's poem results in acute forms of enjambment which create the effect of being "hurled" from line to line, particularly in line three where the triplet meter of "but a thought" falls heavily onto the tetrameter of line four, "And it is bought." The political dimensions of this shattered metrical form, which are already implicit in its recalling of the liturgically pure pre-interregnum years in which Herbert wrote "Easter Wings," emerge into fuller view when Vaughan implies that Puritans are the source of social divisions and spiritual misdirection: "The world / Is full of *voices*; Man is hurled / By each, he answers all, knows every note, and call" (11-12).

The speaker, like Milton's Satan, records his sense of self-division by using words that cut against the intended meaning as in the lines: "Yet, hadst thou clipped my wings, when confined in/ This quickened mass of sin,/ And saved that light, which freely thou/ Didst then bestow/ I fear/ I should have *spurned*,/ and said thou didst forbear" (17-23). The logical and doctrinal incoherence of wishing that one had not been created is inscribed in the contradictory meanings of "spurned" as signifying "to incite or urge" as well as "to reject or despise" (OED). The speaker thus unintentionally denotes the absurdity of his former position as well as the self-divided state from which it stems by implying that he simultaneously "supports" and "rejects" his "non-creation." More precisely, this ambiguity implies that by "encouraging" God in the imagined act of non-creation, he "rejects" God's will as the doctrinally astute reader understands it. The effect

of such ambiguity is to mark a fundamental contradiction in the speaker's mind, thereby disclosing a division between expression and intention. Similarly, Vaughan's use of "forbear" in this line implies a doctrinal inversion of the idea of mercy which suggests the speaker is "distracted" from God and discontinuous with himself. In line 22 mercy is equated with God's non-action, his refraining from bringing the speaker into being. Mercy, however, is a positive feature of God's active self-sacrifice. Thus the speaker's potential blasphemy consists in the way that he inverts the mechanism of mercy from a positive principle of divine action to a benign state of divine slothfulness.

Where Vaughan records internal division through implicit rhetorical devices, Traherne explicitly narrates internal divisiveness, making the discontinuity of the self a particular moment in the process of achieving felicity. Image and symbol thus become concept with Traherne. This shift from the fragmentation of a lyrical form such as Herbert's "Easter Wings" to a poetic narration of the self in the Dobell sequence enables Traherne to accommodate such divisions more fully than Vaughan. We can see a brief index of this insofar as "Dumbness" does not conclude with a defeatist sense of the self's incapacity to recall the "bright shoots of everlastingness" that Vaughan articulates, but suggests that the original impressions marked in the soul can be recovered through "inward work": "*The first impressions are immortal all: / And let mine Enemies [w]hoop, Cry, roar, Call, / Yet these will whisper if I will but hear, / And penetrat the Heart, if not the Ear*" (85-88). The Dobell sequence develops this assumption, tracking the speaker's emergence to the point where, in the final poem, full intermutuality is achieved: "The Bliss of other Men is my Delight: / (When once my Principles are right:) And evry Soul

which mine doth see / A Treasurie" (1-3). While Traherne's narration of how the self moves from a fragmented experience of self-alienation to dialogic communion is articulated more fully and more abstractly than the other poets in the metaphysical tradition, the rhetorical complexities of previous writers are absent. This absence of conceits, complex diction and elaborate lyrical forms is less a reflection of Traherne's lack of poetic power than it is indicative of when Traherne wrote. Working within a view of language that became increasingly suspicious of metaphorical complexity, and writing amidst the rise of the Royal Science, Traherne eschewed the very elements that poets like Donne, Vaughan, and Herbert used to register and resist de-sacramentalization. Instead, Traherne opted to expand upon the narrative possibilities implicit within poetic sequences, elaborating a more properly philosophical conception of the self from birth to felicity.

Notes

¹ For an account of Traherne's rebuttal of Hobbes' *Leviathan* see Stanley Stewart *The Expanded Voice: The Art of Thomas Traherne* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1970) Ch. 3.

² By sacred anatomy, Sawday refers to a mode of corporeal analysis that looked to the body in order to perceive the divine design of the cosmos. See Chapter Five "Sacred Anatomy and the Order of Representation." See also my discussion of Donne's *Devotions* and *Sermons* in the preceding chapter of this thesis.

³ Merleau-Ponty makes this point in the preface to *Phenomenology of Perception*: "I am not the outcome or the meeting-point of numerous causal agencies which determine my bodily or psychological make-up. I cannot conceive myself as nothing but a bit of the world, a mere object of biological, psychological or sociological investigation" (viii).

This essay is an attempt to demonstrate that Traherne not only shares this view but that he thought through some of its phenomenological, ethical, and metaphysical implications.

⁴ For an account of how Traherne's conception of time "reconciles" the scholastic view of eternity as a perfect simultaneity (*Nunc-stans*) and the Hobessian view of eternity as endless duration see Richard Jordan's *The Temple of Eternity: Thomas Traherne's Philosophy of Time* (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1972).

⁵ Christianity, as David Hillman suggests "has always positioned the body's inner realm as the ultimate site of faith" (85). Similarly, Elaine Scarry points out that in both the Old and New Testaments "the interior of the body carries the force of confirmation [of belief]" (137, cited in Hillman 85). See David Hillman, "Visceral Knowledge" in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, ed. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York and London: Routledge, 1997) 81-105. Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985) 137.

⁶ For an examination of Traherne's Dobell sequence in terms of Baconian induction see James J. Balkaier's "Thomas Traherne's Dobell Series and the Baconian Model of Experience" *English Studies* 3 (1989): 233-47. Balkaier contends that "Traherne has adapted the scientific model of the mutually beneficial relationship of Experience and Understanding to give his marvelous cognitions and intimations a comparable objectivity of expression" (247). While I concur that Traherne's work possesses an emphasis on the relationship between experience and understanding, it is misleading to assert that he aims at an "objectivity of expression." On the contrary, his experiential tendencies are in the service of his sacramental epistemology. They move, that is, towards a convergence of the subjective and objective, self and world: "You never enjoy the world aright, till you see all things in it so perfectly yours, that you cannot desire them any other way" (*Centuries* I. 38).

⁷ For an account of Traherne's own political commitments see N. Matar "Prophetic Traherne: 'A Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Nation'" *JEGP* 81.1 (1982): 16-29.

⁸ The entire aim of the commentaries is to show "ALL THINGS [. . .] to be Objects of Happiness" (3). In this respect, Traherne attributes to the encyclopedia form an existential value it is not normally thought to possess. As such, he conceives of how and why one collects knowledge in a way that has not yet been theorized in Traherne studies. Indeed, the *Commentaries* pose a range of generic problems that Traherne scholars have yet to address.

⁹ For a fuller discussion of Traherne in relation to Plotinus and the mystical tradition more broadly see A.L. Clements, *The Mystical Poetry of Thomas Traherne* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1969).

¹⁰ For a recent account of the politics and poetics of public worship see Ramie Targoff's *Common Prayer: The Language of Public Devotion in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

¹¹ Merleau-Ponty calls this projection, an "intentional arc": "The life of consciousness – cognitive life, the life of desire or perceptual life- is subtended by an 'intentional arc' which projects round about us our past, our future, our human setting, our physical, ideological and moral situation. It is this intentional arc which brings about the unity of the senses, of intelligence, of sensibility and motility" (*Phenomenology* 136).

¹² Boehme's work was beginning to circulate in England during Traherne's lifetime. See Nigel Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed: Language and Literature in English Radical Religion, 1640-1660* (New York: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1989). See also B.J. Gibbons, *Gender in Mystical and Occult Thought: Behmenism and its Development in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996). Boehme's influence on Traherne, particularly Traherne's conception of God as possessing a certain lack that creation fills, has yet to be thought through.

¹³ See, for instance, Nancy Vickers "'The blazon of sweet beauty's best': Shakespeare's *Lucrece*" In *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (New York and London: Methuen, 1985) 95-115. For an account of Traherne's indebtedness to the *via negativa* see Rosalie Colie's *Paradoxia Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1966) 145-168.

¹⁴ Helen A. Fielding's defense of Merleau-Ponty's notion of intersubjectivity against Lacan's critique is relevant here. According to Fielding, "Lacan would assert that we can never know what the other is thinking; such thoughts would always be our own projections, and sight lends itself to these misconceptions. For Merleau-Ponty, however, vision helps to confirm for us that we live in the same world" (191). Not only sight, but the sentient nature of our being enables, for Merleau-Ponty, a relation with the other that Lacan precludes: "Because as corporeal beings our bodies are both sensed and sentient, visible and invisible, our perceptions arise from the midst of our relations and not from the periphery as is suggested by the image of Lacan's voyeur. Merleau-Ponty thus adds another dimension to our understanding of intersubjectivity and that is the dimension of our intercorporeal relations" (Fielding 191). As the following argument suggests, Traherne not only shares Merleau-Ponty's sense of the chiasmatic structure of intersubjectivity, but he also places the body at the axis of the self's relation with others.

¹⁵ According to Fred Evans and Leonard Lawler Merleau-Ponty uses the French word that corresponds to the rhetorical employment of "khiasmos" – a use that is connected to the "Greek verb 'chiazein,' which means to mark with a *chi* (X), as in the sign of the cross" (18) This Christian inflection is very much consistent with Merleau-Ponty's project. "Khiasmos" also has an anatomical demarcation referring to the crossing of the

optic nerves. These meanings suggest clear affinities with Traherne's onto-theological *vision*, particularly insofar as his rhetorical strategies extend from his sacramental conception of the body.

¹⁶ Freud, as Merleau-Ponty suggests, is part of the philosophical tradition that runs from Hegel to Heidegger. Moreover, Merleau-Ponty's interest in Gestalt psychology is mediated by Freudian psychoanalysis. For a recent account of the relationship between Freud and Merleau-Ponty see Richard Boothby's *Freud as Philosopher: Metapsychology After Lacan* (New York and London: Routledge, 2001) 54-61.

¹⁷ See Freud's "The Ego and the Id": "the ego is first and foremost a bodily ego; it is not merely a surface entity, but is itself the projection of a surface. [. . .] The ego is ultimately derived from bodily sensations, chiefly from those springing from the surface of the body" ("Ego and Id" 364).

¹⁸ Although historians have shown that some rural communities continued to practice communally based forms of Anglican worship during the Interregnum, Anglicans in Vaughan's home province of Breconshire suffered some of the most severe forms of political and religious oppression in all of Wales (Calhoun 46, Wall 273-341). The defeat of royalist forces led to the Propagation Act of 1644\5 which resulted in the eviction of numerous Breconshire ministers including Vaughan's brother, schoolmaster, and neighbors. Given the Anglican sense of religious exile effected by Parliamentary injunctions which also included the dissolution of the temporal order of the Church --- its "Service, Sabbaths, and sacred institutions"--- it is hardly surprising that both the 1650 and 1655 versions of *Silex* respond in a variety of ways to the plight of Royalist/Anglicans. John N. Wall, for instance, has thoroughly demonstrated that Vaughan's highly allusive *Silex Scintillans* is an attempt to rediscover the meaning of liturgical language in a context where the "defining activities" of the Church are absent (273-341). More recently, Esther Richey has offered a politicized reading of Vaughan's apocalypticism as it pertains to ecclesiastical conflicts. *The Politics of Revelation in the English Renaissance* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998).

Conclusion: Devotion, Rhetoric, and the Politics of Imitation

Each of the chapters in this thesis has sought to illustrate the particular forms of subjection implicit in the rhetorical figures that structure seventeenth-century devotional writing. I examined how the sacralization of the Petrarchan plaint organizes the speaking subject around a desire that is impossible to fulfill insofar as the object of desire is coincident with the moment of its own withdrawal; I considered how hyperbolized uses of apostrophe were marshaled in order to produce a “feminine” subject characterized by an “excessive” attachment to a divine object; I explored the forms of identification and abjection consistent with a synecdochal organization of the Christian subject; and I also considered how the subject of *felicity* emerges from tautology, mystical taxonomy, and the poetic blazon. In each case, these writers, or even more to the point, the tropes themselves, presume the kind of reader that early modern rhetorical manuals call *subjectum Rhetorices* – “the subject of rhetoric.” As Wayne A. Rebhorn points out, the *subjectum Rhetorices* is “both the subject matter for rhetoric and the (political) subject of rhetoric” (44). The rhetorical auditor and by analogy the devotional reader are both the object to be moved (*movere*) and the topos in and through which such moving occurs. In both cases, the *de te fabula* principle is implicit in the way that the discourse is organized: the text is always about you the reader. Broadly speaking, then, the reader of devotional and rhetorical texts is configured as a subject in the most basic sense of “to be thrown under” (*sub* “under”, *iacere* “to throw”). The Jesuit writer Nicholas Caussin makes this

point in his early seventeenth-century work on sacred rhetoric, *De Eloquentia sacra*, by declaring that sacred rhetoric, “having inflamed their deepest senses with a certain celestial ardor, has subjected [*subiecti*] men to itself; it has tamed [*domuit*] kings; having repudiated errors, it has forced under the yoke of Christ [*ad Christi iugum*] cities, provinces, finally the entire world” (Cited in Rebhorn 44). Sacred rhetoricians like Caussin make the politicized nature of sacred eloquence perfectly apparent, even while concealing it through the ideological assumption that the power of compulsion is “celestial”: the Subject to which subjects are subjected is not, as the texts present it, the author but Christ himself.

At the base of this economy of subjection, rhetorical compulsion, like devotional conviction, is configured in the form of divine rape. As Caussin puts it, the eloquence of a gifted orator “flows into the very breasts of the auditors and possesses them in a form of servitude most pleasing to all” (Rebhorn, 148). Just as Southwell described Christ as grasping his heart [*rapuisti ad te cor meum*] thereby rendering Southwell “a slave” to God, so Caussin suggests that “the entire force of persuasion is carried by emotion as by a vehicle and penetrates hearts [*permeat in pectora*]” (Rebhorn, 59). The analogies do not end here. Rhetorical persuasion, for Caussin, results in a state of bondage that parallels Southwell’s assertion that once Christ entered his heart, “he could flee nowhere to recover” [*nullum reperirem effugium*]. According to Caussin, eloquence is “efficacious in seizing and binding [*illigandis*] spirits” (Rebhorn 159). Such analogies suggest that devotional conviction is repeatedly represented in the early modern period through the language of rhetorical persuasion. Moreover, both rhetorical persuasion and devotional

conviction are organized around and understood through the language of sexual violation. Given these analogies, the potentially unsettling nature of rhetorical persuasion as an “irresistible sexual penetration of the auditor” (Rebhorn 158) makes the goal of devotional conviction just as volatile an aim as rhetorical persuasion. The subject of devotion, like the subject of rhetoric, can be both re-made and unmade through language.

The vulnerable position that this sexualized model of subjection puts the reader in did not go unnoticed in the early modern period. Anti-Catholic polemicists, for instance, seized on the sexualized nature of devotional rhetoric in order to portray Roman and Arminian authors as seductive purveyors of Popish “poisons.” Indeed, nowhere is the importance of devotion as a mode of subjection made more visible than in anti-Catholic treatises. In his vituperative attack on John Cosin’s 1627 *A Collection of Private Devotions*, for instance, the Puritan polemicist William Prynne characterizes Cosin and the Catholic authorities with which he is associated as “seducing spirits” who use devotion as a pretext for sinister ends. According to Prynne, the English subject is particularly vulnerable during private devotion, open to suggestion, manipulation and ultimately seduction at the hands of Catholics and Arminians. In Prynne’s mind, the devotee who is susceptible to doctrinal persuasion is analogous to a woman at risk of losing her virtue; consequently, the Catholic author conceals his “adulterous” intentions with verbal charms:

for feare of their plot, and aymes should be detected: [Catholics] do therefore vent the adulterous drugges and poisonous doctrines of the Whore of Rome under the vail, and colour of Devotion: and that in such a clandestine, subdolus [sic] and enchanting manner, that they have even charmed Authority itself; and lulled Argus quite asleepe. (A4)

The oblique reference to Charles I in the figure of Argus implies that even the most powerful men are susceptible to the seductive force of Catholic devotion. The same language of devotion as seduction occurs in the writings of the ex-Catholic John Gee who warns in 1624 that “hastily can they [Catholics] steal away *the hearts of the weaker sort* and secretly do they creep into houses *leading captive simple women loaden with sinnes*” (B2). For Gee the most dangerous aspects of Catholic devotion lie in the affections they arouse, in their capacity to make one drunk with fervor. Of particular concern to both Prynne and Gee is that the process of being seduced by Catholic devotional practices is correlative with emasculation or outright feminization. For instance, Prynne warns that “seducing spirits” clothe “venomous and harsh potions” with the luscious inducements of sweet words and physical adornments. Equally tellingly, Prynne points to the frontispiece of Cosin’s work as evidence that Jesuitical texts inspire an effeminate worshipping of images. After claiming that the impress IHS (“In Hoc Signo”) reveals Cosin’s covertly Catholic sympathies, he criticizes the frontispiece on the grounds that two “devout females one of them holding a cross in her hand” are “supplicating unto” the impress (A6). The use of icons and objects during devotion is often figured as effeminate and evidence of spiritual ignorance. Samuel Torshel, author of the 1645 anti-Catholic treatise *The Womans Glorie*, for instance, complains of “popish Ladies” who “have had the same curiosities about their *Disciplining whips*, as about their *fannes*, their *praying beads* as rich as their *neck-laces* and *bracelets*, and their *Crucifixes* made into *Jewels*. Judge whether this be not rather a *courting* of pleasure, then the *worshipping of God*” (Cited in Dolan, 28). Years earlier, Edmund Spenser insinuated the same attitude in Book I, Canto

3 of *The Faerie Queene* when Una stumbles upon a blind old woman whom the narrator derides because she “day and night did pray / Upon her beades devoutly penitent; Nine hundred *Pater nosters* every day” (I.3.13).

Prynne’s accusations that Catholic devotional manuals encourage the feminization of its readers appears somewhat understandable, if no less misogynistic, given the cult of the Virgin flourishing on the continent in the mid-seventeenth century. Martin Couvreur’s *The Devotion of Bondage*, for instance, translated into English in 1634 by John Wilson, encourages its male reader to profess himself “Captive or Bond-slave” to the Virgin Mary.¹ Couvreur employs a particularly controversial typology to authorize this devotional servitude when he suggests that the passage in Canticles, “The King is bound in his passage,” and the phrase “A Woman shall compasse a man” in Jeremy 3 signify Christ’s spiritual “bondage” to the Virgin (15). According to Couvreur, both phrases foreshadow “the power this holy Virgin had to ravish God from heaven, and draw him downe to earth, being even as it were amorously bound, and tied in this first chaine of servitude” (15-6). In Couvreur’s text, the incarnation is presented as an effect of the Virgin’s immaculateness. Her six virtues form a chain in which not only the devotee, but God himself is bound:

So powerfull, strong, and attractive was this chayn, that it was able to bind (if so it may be sayd) even God himselfe, and draw him downe to us. For no sooner was this divine Chayne finished, and cast up to heaven, but (The *word was made flesh &c.*) God became (as we may say) prisoner to Love, in the wombe of the sacred Virgin, as the Prophet had foretold (*A woman shall compasse a man. Jeremy 3*).
(15)

In this view of the incarnation, the Virgin seduces God with her virtue, making him and all subsequent Christians her “bond-slave.” After declaring that Christ is made Mary’s bond-slave, the speaker imitates the divine pattern: “I heere do give my selfe unto you [Mary] in the quality of a servant, and Bond-slave; and prostrating in all humility from my very hart, doe submit my selfe unto your holy Empire and Command” (55). In this text, then, the reader is to Christ as Christ is to Mary, a structure that, as we saw, is implicit in Crashaw’s sacred epigrams. Throughout his devotional manual, Couvreur adopts the language of subjugation that is characteristic of rhetorical and devotional discourse in order to form a distinctly Counter-Reformational devotional subject, one whose subjection is a function of a spiritually eroticized attachment to Mary. Indeed, the unusual, if not unorthodox, mode of *imitatio Christi* at stake in this manual consists in following Christ’s spiritual slavery to Mary. Given such idiosyncratic versions of devotional imitation it is apparent that while Catholics and Protestants largely agree that the imitation of Christ involves an absolutely faithful reproduction of his likeness there is anything but a consensus as to what exactly that likeness actually is.

Such disagreements result in the fact that for Protestants like Prynne, the idea of becoming a “bond-slave” to the Virgin Mary is correlative with being subjugated by the blasphemous fictions of Rome. Equally unsettling is the fact that such devotional rhetoric plays into the Protestant anxiety surrounding the presumed power that Catholic wives were sometimes believed to wield over their weak-willed husbands – an anxiety given one of its most elaborate expressions in John Knox’s 1558 *The First Blast of the Trumpet, against the monstrous regiment of Women*. The apparently effeminizing force of Catholic

devotion is perceived in these cases as a subversive force haunting the English household and indeed the English soul itself from within. In these worst case scenarios, devotional practices render the devotee vulnerable in precisely the same way that rhetorical eloquence does. As Gregerson observes, “eloquence, argued both its proponents and its critics, is able to subdue the soul of the listener, and in this capacity lies both its danger and its aptness as an instrument of conversion” (261). Analogously, it is the intoxicating power of Catholic devotionals that troubled many English reformers – a power that Cosin himself betrays when he declares that “I am most *addicted* to the symbols, synods, and confessions of the Church of England” (xxii, my emphasis).

One of the sources of this perverse power, according to Prynne, lies in the way that Catholic devotionals often “abuse” scripture. Arguing that Cosin’s treatise is Popish in both matter and form (a “mere subterfuge for re-introducing Catholicism into the country and court – or at the very least to grace and countenance it”) Prynne complains that “absurdities and abuses of scripture” abound in Cosin’s *Private Devotions* (6). As we saw in Chapter Two, one such abuse occurs in the opening of the Benedictine during “The Mattins, or Morn, Praier.” Cosin begins his morning prayer with a passage now familiar to us: “Blessed is the wombe that bare Thee, O Lord, and the pappes that gave thee suck” (98). The words of the woman in Luke appear without scriptural reference and *sans* Christ’s response: “Yea, rather, blessed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it” (Luke 11:28). By de-contextualizing scripture in this way, Cosin presents the phrase as though it were the words of authority itself. Such passages are used to substantiate what Prynne finds abhorrent, that “God is to bee worshipped with the lowly reverence of our

bodies” (18). It is precisely such apparently duplicitous uses of scripture that leads John Gee to ask if Catholic devotional practices are “built on the Rock of Christ? No, but on the sands of humane brains, being invented and obtruded upon the people” (17). For Reformers like Gee and Prynne, devotion is the site in which both God and the “whore of Babylon” perform their work, making or “uncreating” the human soul.

The Homeopathy of Devotional Rhetoric

While devotional discourse is believed to make the practitioner potentially vulnerable to hostile forces in the same way that rhetorical discourse renders an auditor susceptible to the will of another, it is also said to possess the same curative powers attributed to effective and responsible rhetoric. Caussin, for instance, sees in rhetoric a curative for the ails of the body politic just as Hall and Traherne see in devotion a means of overcoming social conflict. In his account of Menenius Agrippa, Caussin, as Rebhorn explains, “shows how the great orator ‘healed discord by means of speaking’. The frame of [his] fable [regarding the origins of oratory] stresses both the power of rhetoric and its value as medicine for the body politic” (224). Just as Agrippa’s political rhetoric tames the unruly forces of the plebeians, so the “inward work” of spiritual devotion subjugates the self through imitation of Christ. On a similar note, Puttenham suggests, as Linda Gregerson has observed, that “by means of his eloquence the poet becomes a physician, and not a Galenic physician either, who cures by contraries, but a Paracelsian physician, who cures homeopathically, ‘making the very grief it selfe (in part) cure of the disease” (239).

Puttenham's vision of the homeopathic powers of rhetoric recalls us to Southwell's Ignatian practice of deepening one's sense of sinfulness as a means to draw one towards penance and confession. It is also consistent with the curative process outlined in Traherne's "Mankind is sick":

If we would to the world's distemper'd mind
 Impute the rage which there we find,
 We might, even in the midst of all our foes,
 Enjoy and feel a sweet repose.
 Might pity all the griefs we see,
 Anointing every malady,
 With precious oil and balm. (1-7)

For Traherne the homeopathic procedure constitutes a prelude to the application of "precious oil and balm," a figure that recounts the anointing of Christ after the crucifixion. This homeopathic procedure also underlies the therapeutic rhetoric in Donne's *Devotions*. Donne summarizes the homeopathic nature of imitating Christ when he asserts that Christians become like Christ when they "admit patiently [God's] Fatherly chastisements in the afflictions and tribulations in this life" (*Sermons* 10:196).

Although he writes in a Calvinist vein distinct from Traherne and anathema to Southwell, George Herbert also shares this homeopathic vision of devotional rhetoric. As he puts it in *The Country Parson*, the role of a Pastor involves the "reducing of Man to the Obedience of God" (55). "Reduce" carries the sense of "to bring back from error." As his poems make clear, this subjugation of individuals to God consists not only in an application of the "grief" that is itself the malady, but more precisely it involves an enactment or dramatization of the curative process.

One poem that exemplifies the homeopathic curative which draws one back from error, while also disclosing the transition from fragmentation to unity that so often structures seventeenth-century devotional poetry, is Herbert's JESU. If Crashaw's epigrams invite the writer to re-read an ostensibly carnal scene as a sacramental event, then Herbert's JESU enacts how spiritual affliction and fragmentation enables one to gain perspective on the form of spiritual unity derived in and through Christ:

JESU is in my heart, his sacred name
 Is deeply carvèd there: but th'other week
 A great affliction broke the little frame,
 Ev'n all to pieces: which I went to seek:
 And first I found the corner, where was J,
 After, where ES, and next where U was graved.
 When I had got these parcels, instantly
 I sat me down to spell them, and perceived
 That to my broken heart he was *I ease you*,
 And to my whole is JESU.

Here, as in so many of the devotional poems we have examined, what is at stake is sacramental modes of perception. In this case, the broken heart of affliction is the occasion for and paradoxically the means of perceiving the "whole" self. This paradoxical relation is first established through the enjambment of line two in which the speaker is figured as frail insofar as he is the "weak other" insinuated by the pause. When the speaker sees himself framed by the perspective of this "weak other" he falls "Ev'n all to pieces." Yet it is precisely from the perspective of such fragmentation that the iconic name JESU appears to him, through a certain kind of spiritual effort(lessness), as a living presence within the self – a presence that not only heals the speaker's sense of inward fragmentation but is revealed as the very process of that healing. The name JESU, in

other words, is discernible precisely as the process of re-uniting the self as its own image. The dialectic between ego and Christ, between parcels and wholes, that is played out here is captured in the pun on “graved” indicating both “written” (engraved) and “entombed” as in a grave. The opposing meanings imply that the heart must become the place in which Christ is engraved through grace rather than buried through sin.

Actualizing this renewal of self coincides with the movement from anxiety to ease that structure so many of Herbert’s poems. This process results in the Lutheran state of “alien righteousness,” the divine imputation of grace, that Richard Strier sees at work in poems like “Assurance” (114). Equally importantly though, the transition from alienation to intimacy, from anxiety to ease, enacts the moment of recognition in which the speaker becomes Christ’s image, when he becomes, that is, the locus in which the divine light of the heart sees its own image as originating in Christ. It is this self-reflective economy of seeing oneself seeing that underlies the process of revelation in “Prayer (I)” in which the act of devotional prayer constitutes not merely petition, thanksgiving, confession, adoration or contrition,² but also, and indeed more primarily, it constitutes the point at which speaker and God meet: “Prayer the Church’s banquet, angels’ age, / God’s breath in man returning to his birth, The soul in paraphrase” (40, 1-2). In line two, the act of prayer is said to be carried out by “God’s breath”; and this breath is the trace of man’s origins in the divine, the *arche* that is both the source and the end of prayer. The specific form that this trace takes in language constitutes the “soul in paraphrase,” a mode of full speech in which Christ may be said to speak in, for and of the self. Prayer is thus a prepositional activity expressing the relation between oneself and

God, a relation that is more intimate than prepositional relations, indeed all linguistic relations, actually permit. Consequently, what is revealed in the act of prayer throughout Herbert's work is a mode of intimacy, a relation of proximity between oneself and Christ, that can only be spoken of indirectly as in the statement: prayer is a "Christian plummet sounding heav'n and earth" ("Prayer" 4). This phrase not only suggests that prayer is a "plunge" whose reverberations disclose earthly and heavenly concerns, but it also implies that prayer is a means of determining the depth of one's sinfulness and affection for Christ, just as a "plummet" is a device used in sounding or determining how deep a body of water is (OED). In this sense, prayer is a means of rectitude and reckoning, a process of determining the truth of one's spiritual state – a state that, in Herbert, is generally configured in terms of an impossibly intimate intimacy, one in which Christ is closer to the self than one's own self.

Attuning oneself to this state of intimacy does not involve the sort of self-renunciation at work in Southwell's poetry, but rather it consists in assuming a kind of creative passivity, what Frye refers to in the context of Ecclesiastes as "detachment without withdrawal" (*Great Code* 123). It is precisely this state of detachment without withdrawal that Herbert articulates in "The Reprisal" where the speaker acknowledges the fruitlessness of struggle: "I have considered it, and find / There is no dealing with thy mighty passion: / For though I die for thee, I am behind" (1-3). Working through the paradoxes of pointless agonizing, the speaker concludes by recognizing that it is not he that struggles against or with Christ but that it is Christ that overcomes his "weaker self": "Yet by confession will I come / Into thy conquest: though I can do nought / Against

thee, in thee I will overcome / The man, who once against thee fought” (13-16). By trying to participate in one’s own salvation one actually impedes the recognition that the “inward work” is, for a Calvinist like Herbert, Christ’s alone. What is at stake in achieving this state of detachment without withdrawal is the actualization of a mode of Christly imitation where it is not the self that is responsible for imitating Christ, but rather it is Christ revealing himself within the heart of the elect individual. In other words, the Calvinist version of *imitatio Christi* at work in Herbert’s *The Temple* is occasioned by the speaker’s realization that it is not the self that realizes the mimetic act of becoming like Christ, but rather it is the divine breath returning to itself through the mediation of the human heart. The verbal arc created in the gesture of this return constitutes the “soul in paraphrase.” Given the periphrastic nature of this self-realization (given, that is, the necessarily mediated form of *paraphrase*) the devotional poet must work homeopathically, drawing the reader’s attention towards the disease as a means for occasioning the assurance of God’s presence within.

From an etymological standpoint, to speak in paraphrase is “to say alongside of” (OED). This mode of speech implies a gap between what is spoken of and what is actually said; and it is precisely this gap that the incarnation as an act of writing, or what the Vulgate calls a *chirographum*, closes. Following Colossians 2:14, early modern devotional poets, both Calvinist and Catholic, understand Christly imitation as a form of writing – a divine *chirographum* that overwrites man’s bond with the Devil. (In Colossians Paul declares that by being crucified Christ blotted “out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way,

nailing it to his cross" (2:14)). Where Calvinist and Arminian/Catholic writers differ is in regard to *how* this gap between man and God is overcome; they differ, that is, over whether Christ overcomes it alone or whether it is overcome through a partnership between Christ and the participant. Donne explains his Reformist but not strictly Calvinist conception of devotional imitation as a form of writing this way:

Beloved, the death of Christ is given to us, as a *Hand-writing*; for, when Christ nailed that *Chirographum*, that first hand-writing, that had passed between the Devill and us, to his Crosse, he did not leave us out of debt, nor absolutely discharged, but he laid another *Chirographum* upon us, another Obligation arising out of his death. His death is delivered to us, as a *writing* [. . .] in the nature of a Copy, to learne by; It is not onely given us to reade, but to write over, and practise. (*Sermons* 10:196; Cited in DiPasquale 34)

In this configuration, the act of imitating Christ consists in re-enacting the *chirographum* that Christ has already laid upon the Christian heart. As Theresa M. DiPasquale has argued, this conception of the *imitatio Christi* occasions Donne's sacramental conception of poetry. In *La Corona*, for instance, the poems form a liturgical cycle which are presented to God not as sacramentally effectual in and of themselves but rather "as a prayer that God himself will make something of" (62). It is God that "crowns" the poem as prayer rather than vice versa. Crashaw's epigrams, on the other hand, place greater emphasis on the reader as receiver of the sacrament; they make the reader responsible for recognizing the efficacy already present in the Eucharistic event.

Crashaw's more deeply sacramental conception of devotional writing, with its emphasis on the reader's realization of the text as sacrament, is not peculiar to the Laudianism of the 1640's but is also evident in the Jacobean poetry of John Davies of Hereford. Davies' 1609 poem *The Holy Roode or Christs Crosse*, for instance, not only

exemplifies the notion of devotional imitation as an act of writing but also makes unusually explicit the politicization of devotion that characterizes much seventeenth-century devotional literature. Indeed, *The Holy Roode*, a poem with Arminian and in all likelihood Catholic sympathies, politicizes the act of devotion in ways that are typical of early modern English devotional poems. First, it implies a typology between Jerusalem and London that makes the scene of the crucifixion an ongoing event in the life of Jacobean England: “Jerusalem, O faire Jerusalem, / Figure of Heav’n, built on celestiall soyle! / Yet wast beheau’nd through blessed Bethelem, / Shall yet her heauv’ns blisse in thee suffer foyle” (7). Here and elsewhere the narrator constructs the scene of the crucifixion as a devotional challenge to both the reader and the nation. Each reader must actuate or sacramentally realize the crucifixion by responding affectively to Christ’s pain, otherwise the atonement is pointless. Christ himself makes this explicit when he addresses the reader declaring, “O deere Pilgrims, pittie you my paine, / And loue, O loue me, lest I die in vaine” (19). Elsewhere, the narrator calls for a deeply affective response to Christ’s suffering, encouraging readers to suffer “with their Object Feelingly” (22). More specific to Davies’ own situation as a failing courtier, the poem suggests that James’ courtly world breeds “indevotion” or lack of spiritual affect for Christ: “O ye great Princes little doe ye know, / What wrong you doe unto your high estate, / T,’insult through pompous pride, on States below, / And thinke all Fooles not frolick’t with like Fate: / Ye are no Gods, and therefore know ye not / Whom ye abuse, and what may be your Lot” (10). Later, he explicitly evokes the context of patronage, momentarily turning this devotional poem into a political complaint: “ah (alas!) alas it is too true, / Too many

Judges of this Iron Age, / (With brazen faces) will crosse *Christ* anew, / For Princes loue, Rewards, and Patronage: / These, these are they, that make the World so ill; / Who make the Lawes speake as their Sou'raignes will" (14). This passage does more than criticize the corruptions at James' court; it identifies the perpetrators of such corruptions with the "hard flinted Jews" who are critiqued through the poem. By doing so the speaker implies that Christ is continually crucified by the "indevotion" of powerful men at court. Thus if Prynne sees Charles I as having been lulled asleep by the seductive powers of Catholic devotion, then Davies sees James I as being too hard-hearted to *feel* the continuation of Christ's crucifixion. In both cases, though, the failure of Kings to participate in true devotion is read as a synecdoche of the nation's sinful state.

The identification of James with the "hard-hearted" Jews plays a crucial role in structuring how Davies' poem articulates the political implications of devotion and "indevotion." From beginning to end, the poem oscillates between two differing responses to the Passion: the emotionless but sadistic response of Pilate and the Jews and the highly affective, empathic response of the narrator and the Virgin Mary. Moving between these two ways of perceiving the crucifixion the poem situates the Passion as an internal struggle within the reader between two forms of joy. On the one hand, there is the empathic pleasure of identification with Christ that Davies hopes his patron, Alice Countess of Derby, will experience: "I wish all Pleasures *flow from Calvery, / (Most holy Mount) into your inward'st parts*" (4); and on the other hand, there is the sadistic joy derived by those who make Christ's pain "their game." This opposition is condensed in stanza 38 when the narrator distinguishes between holy and unholy hymns: "They are as

Fame and Shame, no less uneu'n: / For, *Sanctum, Sanctum*, sing those sacred Quires, / But, *Crucifige, Crucifige*, theirs" (8). By identifying Jacobean courtiers and even James himself as the sinful heirs of those who chant "*Crucifige, Crucifige*", Davies' poem situates the reader against both the ancient Jews believed to be responsible for Christ's death and against the corruptions of the Stuart monarchy. In doing so, it makes the very gesture of affective devotion not only the means of realizing the soul as an image of Christ but also a way of resisting courtly corruption. Here again the politicization of devotion is at the service of mitigating social marginalization, something Davies knew intimately through being Catholic by birth and an unsuccessful courtier by trade. As Davies explains in his 1612 poem, *The Muses Sacrifice*, the conflicts of the courtly world are experienced as a conflict within the soul and as such are curable through devotion: "In these sore *Conflicts* if I should retire / Into myselfe, I finde me fraught within, / With fleshly, - worldly, - devilish-damn'd *desire*, / The three-fold *Bastard* of these Foes, and *Sinne*. / Who will with them conspire to conquer me, / Then in myselfe, I least secure shall be" (22). Here Davies worries that the political conditions in which finds himself have rendered devotion impossible, making prayer a deeply problematic act. Similar to Southwell's work, however, it is Christ that comes to conquer the soul from within. As we saw in the closing figure of Marvell's "Upon Appleton House," and throughout the thesis as a whole, devotional withdrawal is figured as both a problem and a solution, both a symptom and a cure. Moreover, the inward anxiety that occasions devotional withdrawal is articulated as an experience of fragmentation which is overcome through

an undivided attachment to Christ, an attachment, that in this case, occurs through a unification of the three faculties of the soul.

Given that Davies was born to Catholic parents and given that his poem is signed “your devoted Beadsman” there is good reason to believe that the politicization of affective devotion in Davies’ *The Hooly Roode* constitutes a Catholic critique of the prominently Calvinist Jacobean Church. One stanza even appears to lament the murder of religious dissidents: “Many a wofull Mothers sighing Childe / Goes to the Gybbet, by their Judge misdoom’d / because they had not Judgements hands defil’d / With that wherein shee seeks to be intoom’d!” (14).³ In any case, the poem exemplifies the way that the articulation of devotion as a mode of writing authorizes poets to make sacramental claims for their verse; and as such it makes explicit the way that English poets of sacramental sympathies configure their poetry as not only participating in theological debates over Eucharistic presence, but as actually performing a Eucharistic-like function. This is apparent in the sonnet that opens *The Holy Roode* as Davies asks Christ to make “my Paper, *be thy Crosse: My Pen, that Naile, / that Nail’d thine holy Hand: Mine Ynke, thy Blood*” (6). Similarly, Davies describes the crucifixion as a form of writing and then follows this description by asserting that the act of imitating Jesus is a function of recognizing his inscription upon the heart:

The Speare the Pen, his pretious Blood the Inke,
Wherewith he, *Jesus*, to this Deed subscrib’d;
And *Consummatum est*, the Seale did sinke
To our *Quietus est* that were proscrib’d :
Then, by that *Jesus* sign’d so with his Hand,
Seal’d with his Gore, we cleare dischargèd stand.

Ah might it please thy dread Exuperance
 To write th'excript thereof in humble Hearts
 And give them us: Then by Recognizance,
 Wee'l aye be bound to praise Thee, for our parts:
 And if our indeuotion breake our Band,
 Our little All shall rest at Thy command. (13)

By remaining committed to Christ, one's soul "should'st be the Antitype" or "True Patterne of true Vertues Archetype" (13). Christian imitation, for Davies, lies in realizing how the human soul is an image of the living word; and to articulate this image is to recognize oneself in Christ. Thus just as the poem's title page declares that it contains "Christ Crucified described in *Speaking Picture*," so the human soul is a living image of Christ, both of which are realized through sacramental modes of reading: the poem is to the poet as the soul is to Christ.

Given this sacramental conception of the soul as a hieroglyph, it is not surprising that Davies sees the scene of the Passion "spelling" Christ's virtue, just as Herbert sees the name JESU written in the scene of his own affliction:

No step He treads, but to those Streights they tend;
 Crossed with *Christs-Crosse*, or a *Crosse per se*:
 Hee Mutes, and Consonants did adde to th' end:
 His Mothers bitter teares the Liquids be :
 The Jewes the Vowels are, that spell his woe
 That life expels; These make the *Christ-crosse* Row! (15)

The sacramental ideology behind such poems takes us back to Brown's assertion that the "Finger of God hath left an Inscription upon all His works, not graphical or composed of Letters, but of their several forms, constitutions, parts, and operations, which, aptly joined together, do make one word that doth express their natures" (*Religio Medici* 68). Davies' poem positions the reader to interpret not only him or herself but also England's court

from the vantage point of the Passion. The passion becomes, for Davies, a “red glass” through which all events take on their meaning: “For eu’n as through redde Glasse, Things red do seeme, / So, through that Blood, my Workes thou good wilt deeme!” (22). By perceiving worldly events through the lens of the Passion Davies engages in a form of “inward work” that renews his perception of himself and his social and spiritual world: political events are symbolically transformed in and through devotional expression. In this as in the other texts I have examined, the drama played out in the poem is a drama internal to the reader. Davies’ poem unites past and present in order to make the Passion an immediate event that is ongoing insofar as it should determine how a reader perceives every other event. As Southwell’s and Crashaw’s poetry indicates, this strategy of positioning the reader as witness to and participant in a biblical event is characteristic of the sacramental nature of Baroque painting and poetry, its attempt to make the biblical past an immediate present re-lived in each life.⁴

While Davies’ poem politicizes the idea of devotion as a form of writing, it is Traherne who is most self-consciously theoretical about the ethics of divine imitation and the homeopathic nature of devotional healing. In his poem “Silence,” from which I take my title, Traherne imagines a time (before time) in which no such homeopathic treatment is necessary because one is able to imitate God perfectly, without the mediation of sin and postlapsarian language. More precisely, “Silence” offers an originary account of the mimetic or imitative nature of spiritual devotion insofar as it postulates that before the fall the only work Adam had to do,

Was in himself to feel his bliss, to view

His sacred treasures, to admire, rejoice,
 Sing praises with a sweet and heavenly voice,
 See, prize, give thanks within, and love,
 Which is the high and only work, above
 Them all. (22-7)

The fall out of the Garden not only tells Traherne what happened in man's pre-history but it also informs what continually happens in each human soul. Indeed, the exile from Eden provides the template for human psychology, revealing the fall from a state of bliss to one of division and separation. Lamenting Adam's fall, Traherne's speaker continues by drawing parallels between his and Adam's state:

And this at first was mine; these were
 My exercises of the highest sphere.
 To see, approve, take pleasure, and rejoice
 Within, is better than an empty voice:
 No melody in words can equal that;
 The sweetest organ, lute, or harp is flat
 And dull, compar'd thereto. (28-34)

In this initial state of being, existence itself is an uninterrupted act of praise. The very notion of imitation is unnecessary at this point because the self stands in an unmediated relation with the Word: "No other thoughts did intervene, to cloy, / Divert, extinguish, or eclipse my joy" (53-54). No melody in words can equal this state of prayerful silence because words already imply a periphrastic relation with the Word. Having fallen into the world of language, however, praise becomes a matter of mimesis rather than pure being:

And O that still
 I might admire my Father's love and skill!
 This is to honour, worship, and adore,
 This is to love Him: nay it is far more.
 It is to enjoy Him, and to imitate
 The life and glory of His high estate [. . .]
 O happy ignorance of other things,

Which made me present with the King of Kings!
And like Him too! (35-43)

Divine imitation for Traherne is a matter of trying to recover the ideal state of intermutuality that exists between the pre-linguistic soul and God:

The union was so strait between them two,
That all was either's which my soul could view.
His gifts, and my possessions, both our treasures;
He mine, and I the ocean of His pleasures.
He was an ocean of delights from whom
The living springs and golden streams did come:
My bosom was an ocean into which
They all did run. (67-73)

The parallelisms here convey a sense of undivided intimacy between the heart and God, a state of being in which “the world was more in me than I in it” (81). In this state of being, there is no real distinction between “all” and “either,” between giver and receiver, between I and eye; consequently praise is more like breathing than imitating. Whatever else “Silence” accomplishes, it narrates the origins of praise as a consciously mimetic rather than instinctively natural action. In this respect, it offers an explanation as to how the so-called “Grand Debate” among seventeenth-century English Christians regarding set vs extempore devotion arose in the first place, a debate that strikes at the heart of the politics of early modern praise. Indeed, this debate over the efficacy of prescribed as opposed to improvised prayer is not only central to understanding how devotion operates as a means of re-making the self, but it is, like similar debates over the nature of rhetorical imitation in Humanist circles, symptomatic of the loss of an authority that is readily accessible to iteration. It is perhaps the one place within devotional discourse itself where the process of de-sacramentalization becomes most visible.

No one wrestled with the implications of this process more capably than John Milton. In *Paradise Lost*, for instance, Milton offers an etiological account of praise as a form of imitation rather than praise as an unmediated form of expression. In Milton's account of how the politics of praise originate, the issue of extempore vs set prayer is foregrounded more explicitly than in Traherne's "Silence."⁵ In Book V, the unfallen Adam and Eve are capable of an improvised mode of prayerful eloquence:

Lowly they bow'd adoring, and began
 Thir Orisons, each Morning duly paid
 In various style, for neither various style
 Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise
 Thir Maker, in fit strains pronounc't or sung
 Unmeditated, such prompt eloquence
 Flow'd from thir lips, in Prose or numerous Verse,
 More tuneable than needed Lute or Harp
 To add more sweetness, and they thus began. (144-152)

Subsequent to the fall, however, eloquent prayer is only possible through the mediation of Christ. In Book XI, Christ, in dialogue with the Father, explains his new role in making human supplication efficacious to divine ears:

See Father, what first fruits on Earth are sprung
 From thy implanted Grace in Man, these Sighs
 And Prayers, which in this Golden Censer, mixt
 With Incense, I thy Priest before thee bring, [. . .]
 Now therefore bend thine ear
 To supplication, hear his sighs though mute;
 Unskilful with what words to pray, let mee
 Interpret for him, mee his Advocate
 And propitiation, all his works on mee
 Good or not good ingraft, my Merit those
 Shall perfer. (22-25, 30-36)

In the fallen world an act of prayer can only turn from paraphrase to performative, from imitation to action through Christ's intervention. Here again the scriptural context is

Colossians 2:14 as Christ “ingrafts” Adam and Eve’s supplication on himself, making a successful act of prayer a form or type of divine writing.

While thinkers more orthodox than Milton may have placed greater emphasis on the role of the speaker and less on the need for mediation, virtually all thinking Christians participated in asking what makes one act of prayer authentic and another an instance of dissembling. This question not only strikes at the heart of what it means to engage in an act of written devotion, but it also constitutes the one place within devotional discourse where the issue of authority is most visibly at stake. As such, the debate over prescribed and improvised prayer and the politics of imitation implicit within it complicates the process of re-making oneself in and through devotional imitation as a form of subjection. Indeed, it is this debate that makes particularly clear the way that private devotional practices are both a problem and a solution, for it calls into question the politics of devotional form itself.

In an effort to answer the question of authenticity, seventeenth-century devotional writers engaged in a debate that mirrored humanist arguments regarding the nature of eloquent imitation. While humanist writers such as Erasmus criticized the ideal of absolute rhetorical fidelity to classical precedents, Protestant writers such as Milton questioned the authority of prescribed prayers. In both cases it was understood that the issue of imitation is a question of fidelity to a past precedent, but the idea that faith could take the form of a precise copy of past models became increasingly problematic. At stake in this debate is the authority of the past and the competing forms of subjection implicit in varying attitudes towards it. In his work *The Ciceronian*, Erasmus argues against

sacred or absolute imitation – imitation based on the idea of complete fidelity to a model – opting instead for a dialectical form of imitation in which an author tries to surpass its model. For Erasmus, absolute imitation is humiliating for a writer insofar as it is impossible to attain.⁶ Yet Erasmus goes even further than this, suggesting that absolute or Ciceronian imitation is, as Richard Halpern observes, “a kind of obsessional neurosis that transformed Cicero from a stylistic model into an idol or fetish” (Halpern 36). This pathologization of absolute imitation as a sickness, a kind of melancholic attachment to a lost-object, constitutes the emergence of an historically aware form of philology, one that sees the past as irreducibly distinct from the present. Halpern notes that by abandoning the ideal of a normative style “anti-Ciceronianism opens the way for a proliferation of styles, and with it the possible decay of certain kinds of traditional authority” (37). Erasmus’ conception of imitation leads to a pedagogical practice in which students adopt various kinds of rhetorical models, digesting and synthesizing differing styles in order to create not a slavish imitation of past models but a style that is, if not entirely individual, at the very least distinct. It is here that the preconditions for the iterative reproduction of sacramental ideology begin to unravel from within.

One of the things that Halpern does not consider in his discussion of how Erasmian anti-Ciceronianism introduces an unprecedented concept of pedagogical subjection through dialectical rather than sacred imitation is that an analogous process occurs in devotional contexts in the early modern period. Indeed, the debate over set vs extempore prayer plays out many of the same issues regarding authority and subjection that are at stake in rhetorical imitation. Traditionally, the practice of *imitatio Christi* relies on the

complete subordination of oneself to Christ as the model. In this respect, practice of *imitatio Christi*, as Halpern summarizes, “always aimed – asymptotically, it is true – at the idea of perfect imitation, so that the individual subject was ultimately absorbed and canceled by Christ as ideological model” (44). After the Reformation, however, the preconditions for this form of sacred imitation had begun to disappear. It was no longer apparent to many Protestants that the authorized forms for imitating Christ were actually authoritative. Consequently, the very practice of devotion as imitation became both politicized and problematic: politicized because the particular text one used to pray with identified oneself as belonging to this or that group, and problematic because the text upon which one relied, even if it were scriptural, did not assure the efficacy of one’s devotion.

One particularly potent example of the enormous stakes at issue in this crisis over devotional imitation occurs in Milton’s attack on Charles I in *Eikonoclastes*. In section XXV, “Upon His penitentiall Meditations and Vowes at Holmby” Milton criticizes Charles not merely for his policies, but for his self-serving use of Scripture during an act of penance that appears in *Eikon Basilica*. The dissembling nature of Charles’ repentance, according to Milton, is evident from the fact that he does not speak extempore but instead relies upon a passage from I Chronicles 21:17. Charles is thus guilty of what Milton describes in *Of Christian Doctrine* as “hypocritical worship, where the external forms are duly observed, but without any internal or spiritual involvement” (667). For Milton, scripture consistently demonstrates that genuine penance is expressed “in words not borrowed” (*Eikonoclastes* 554). Quoting from such undesirables as Cain and Judas,

Milton insists that even the most reprobate of biblical characters express genuine penance through improvised utterance: "All these took the paines both to confess and to repent in thir own words, and many of them in thir own tears, not in *Davids*" (555). Charles, on the other hand, appears worse to Milton even than Judas himself because he relies on someone else's text: "But transported with the vain ostentation of imitating *Davids* language, not his life, observe how he brings a curse upon himself and his Fathers house (God so disposing it) by his usurp'd and ill imitated prayer" (555). Through an elaborate symptomatic reading, Milton sees in Charles' imitating of David an inadvertent expression of guilt, rather than a heartfelt confession. Charles' incapacity to express himself to God without the intermediary of prescribed authority is interpreted as a function of spiritual depravity. What is at stake in such a reading is not merely Charles' penitential disposition, but the very efficacy of prescribed prayer itself. What we witness in Milton's attack on Charles' penitential practice, in other words, is nothing less than a demystification of the traditional form of sacred imitation as it had been practiced throughout the middle ages.

While Erasmus argued for dialectical imitation within the context of secular rhetoric, Milton argued for improvised forms of prayer within devotional contexts. Once the authority of imitative models both secular and religious had become decentered, it became possible to criticize or praise a penitential or devotional utterance on the grounds of a distance, inaccessible within speech itself, between what is said and what is meant. The notion of improvised penitential discourse gives rise to the idea that a genuine confession is

irreducibly singular just as the idea of dialectical imitation presumes an individual style.⁷ The emergence of dialectical imitation as a theoretically articulated possibility within humanist discourse unsettles traditional forms of devotional expression at the same moment that the emergence of improvised penitential speech undermines the authority of prescribed practices and texts. These changes in concepts of devotional form occasion the high degree of generic and stylistic consciousness visible in early modern devotional writing. Equally importantly, the debates fought over devotional imitation made writers highly aware of how subjection operates as a function of rhetorical and generic forms. Devotional rhetoric, as we have seen, is not merely a mode of expressing praise, it is a vehicle of subjugation; and each vehicle has a particular structure which carries with it distinct political consequences. The particular choices that early modern writers make in deciding which vehicle of subjection is appropriate at any given time is thus determined by the specific theological or political conflict at stake at a particular historical moment. This thesis has attempted to demonstrate the sophisticated nature of these responses and the political and personal stakes inherent in them.

Notes

¹ Bond-slave is a more emphatic version of bondsman. It also implies, "A man in bondage, a slave, serf" (OED).

² These are the basic categories into which prayer is broken in Protestant theology. For a discussion of various forms of prayer and their relation to Herbert's poetry see Terry G. Sherwood, *Herbert's Prayerful Art* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989) 7-32.

³ The plaintive tone of *The Muses Sacrifice* also sounds distinctly Catholic: "If thee I serve, they call me Hypocrite: If do not, then Atheist am I named" (21).

⁴ For a discussion of Crashaw's poetry in the context of the Baroque strategy of positioning the reader or viewer within the frame of a text or painting see Lorraine M. Roberts, "Crashaw's Sacred Voice: 'A Commerce of Contrary Powers'" in *New Perspectives on the Life and Art of Richard Crashaw*, ed. John R Roberts (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990) 66-79.

⁵ For a discussion of this passage in relation to private vs public prayer see Ramie Targoff, *Common Prayer: The Language of Public Devotion in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001) 89-90.

⁶ Thomas M. Greene distinguishes three types of Renaissance imitation: 1) sacramental imitation in which a classical original is copied with religious fidelity 2) eclectic or exploitative imitation in which allusions and figures are mingled without concern over fidelity to the original 3) dialectical imitation in which the later text challenges and conflicts with the former. *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1982).

⁷ Herein is born the space in which the unconscious emerges as a thinkable category of consciousness.

Epilogue. Sacred Imitation and the Ethics of Alterity: Derrida and Žižek

As a discourse of subjection, renaissance devotion is a means of relating to the other; it is an economy through which the self is made and unmade, formed and de-formed in relation to a God that is configured, in a mode of intimacy that escapes all forms of predication, as more oneself than one's self. Whatever else the rhetoric of this devotional intimacy is, it consists of an interiorizing discourse where a place is made for the other within the self; it is, as we have seen explicitly in Southwell and implicitly in each of the other three chapters, a work of mourning. When the self realizes itself in and through the other it engages a complex process of mourning that entails the (impossible) dissolution of all forms of narcissism: The force that devotion carries is essentially an impetus towards non-solipsistic speech. This economy of speech, this rhetoric of mourning, unfolds through the process of introjection: the widening of the self through identification with and imitation of an other. As a form of devotion, of reckoning, such non-narcissistic speech raises questions about the politics of mourning that continue to inform not only Christian theology but also, and I think far more importantly, contemporary debates regarding the limits and conditions that human subjectivity places on recognizing and living with otherness.

Jacques Derrida, for instance, translates the interminable nature of Christian mourning -- the asymptotic nature of sacred imitation -- from a metaphysical to an ethical register when he suggests that the mortal other who is now departed "hears me only inside me, inside us (though we are only ever *ourselves* from that place within us where the other,

the mortal other, resonates) (*Work* 117, italics in original). I know, Derrida writes, “that I am an image for the [deceased] other and am looked at by the other, even and especially by the mortal other. [He] is looking at me, and it is for this, for him, that I am here [. . .] He is my law, the law, and I appear before him, before his word and his gaze” (*Work* 160). Here again the self is configured as an iterative gesture, a repetition of a law, an answer in search of its question. The language, the structure, and the overall economy of this account of mourning is familiar at the very same time it is radically displaced: the mortal other now stands in the place of the absolute other, the divine Law is replaced with a contingent but no less inaccessible alterity. Repeating with a radical difference the basic structure of Judeo-Christian modes of mourning, every other, for Derrida, is *wholly* other. In this negating turn of events, the respect that negative theology gives to God can and thus should be given (even though it is impossible) to anyone, especially those who are no longer present to return our address. From this perspective, apostrophe becomes most important precisely when its inherent impossibility – its inevitable veering from object to speaker – becomes most explicit, when the other that one addresses is present to us only as an inwardly felt absence, an absence that is closer to us than ourselves. Death, for Derrida, and indeed for a certain strain of apophatic Christianity, one that we have heard echoed in Augustine, Southwell, Traherne and Herbert, draws the other closer to us, erasing rather than establishing the distance between self and other. The gesture of withdrawing from our selves, what Herbert calls our “weaker self” and what Derrida sees as the legacy of kenotic modes of speech, occasions the possibility, remote and fragile as it is, that the other will speak to us, inaudible though its voice may be.

In this respect, the question of mourning, like the issue of imitation, (indeed the issue of mourning is itself a question of imitation through introjection/incorporation) is nothing other than a question of fidelity, of faithfulness to the other as other. The forms of devotional imitation that structure early modern religious subjectivities play out the possibilities and impossibilities of fidelity. Derrida articulates the central question that structures concepts of fidelity as expressed not only in early modern devotion with its attendant practices of imitation and mourning but also in contemporary critical, especially psychoanalytic, thought, when he asks:

Is the most distressing, or even the most deadly infidelity that of a *possible mourning* which would interiorize within us the image, idol, or ideal of the other who is dead and lives only in us? Or is it that of the *impossible mourning*, which, leaving the other his alterity, respecting thus his infinite remove, either refuses to take or is incapable of taking the other within oneself, as in the tomb or the vault of some narcissism? (*Memoires* 6, second italics are mine)

While he is often mistakenly thought of as a nihilist who puts little stock in traditional modes of thinking, Derrida's commitment to the latter position, to a position that acknowledges the interminability of mourning, places him within a line of thought and a tradition of faith that is clearly anticipated in the Erasmian/Miltonic tradition of citation and imitation. Derrida's ethic of mourning, in other words, relies on the irreducible singularity of a person just as Erasmus' and Milton's ethic of imitation relies on the radically discrete nature of a past utterance. Describing Derrida's approach to citation in the context of his funeral orations and his theory of mourning more broadly, Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas claim that Derrida uses citation "as a form of textual interiorization, [so] that the words of the dead are being incorporated not merely to become part of the text, to be 'in it', but to act as that point of infinite alterity 'within' the

text, to act as its law" (21). This respect for the infinite alterity of not only the other, but also the other's words (or more precisely the other as one's words) is consistent with Milton's notion of sacred imitation as based upon a recognition of the distance between ourselves and the divine other, a recognition that renders a direct repetition of the other's words, as in the case of Charles I, a moral betrayal rather than a merely aesthetic *faux pas*. Indeed, insofar as Derrida's "rhetoric of mourning" converts, as Brault and Naas put it, "citation from a gesture simply dictated by the genre [of the funeral oration] into another consequence of the metonymic force of mourning" (*Work* 21), he is doing much the same thing that Milton does in *Lycidas*. Milton's poem, like Derrida's funeral orations, constitutes, as B. Rajan and more recently Stanley Fish assert, "a cry out of the heart of experience, a cry which emerges from the wreckage of failed conventions to pose the ultimate question: in a world like this what is one to do?" (Fish, *How Milton* 267). In *Lycidas*, as Fish puts it, Milton assumes "the insufficiency of the [eulogistic] tradition in the very act of rehearsing its tropes" (264), thereby demystifying the way that the tropes of pastoral eulogy render "comfortable what is so obviously distressing" (264). Similarly, Derrida's eulogies enact his theoretical principle that mourning is impossible yet unavoidable; it is interminable and is yet constitutive of responsibility itself: "Derrida invokes throughout [his] essays of mourning the possibility of an interiorization of what can never be interiorized, of what is always before and beyond us as the source of our responsibility. This is the 'unbearable paradox of fidelity'. The look that is 'in us' is not ours, as the images within us might seem to be" (Brault, Naas 11). This dissymmetrical economy of citation and imitation, to say nothing of digression, in both Derrida's funeral

orations and Milton's *Lycidas* expresses the fractured nature of the personal voice. Rather than nostalgically demarcating the loss of a self-possessed subject, this fracture makes possible, opens the space, as it were, within speech for the other as other. With the opening of this space comes the terrible awareness that he "who knew Himself to sing" is no longer present-to-himself but is present only in what can (not) be said of him. To speak directly of such an other is, inevitably and interminably, to let "our frail thoughts dally with false surmise" (153) and yet to not speak of the other would lead to lethal forms of disavowal.

As I have suggested, Derrida repeats, with a crucial and no doubt destabilizing difference, the place of the other as it is configured in the apophatic traditions of Judeo-Christian thought: the transcendental site of the divine becomes the immanent, if always inaccessible, site of the mortal other. By doing so, Derrida sustains what for Žižek is an ultimately fetishistic or defensive view of the possibilities of devotion to the other. For Žižek, the gesture of placing the other in a region "beyond" our reach, the gesture that Derrida engages in his essays and works on mourning, is the obverse form of relating to the other that is operative in racism/colonialism: it is ultimately a prophylactic gesture designed to protect oneself from the trauma of the other's desire/difference. The other remains at an infinite remove and thus the possibility of *metanoia* is endlessly deferred; in this structure there can be no New Birth as such, no wiping the slate clean through a relation/confrontation with the other. The gesture thus has, Žižek contends, the structure of a fetish; it defends against the trauma of the other as real. Situating the other in an inaccessible place, be it transcendent or immanent, ontological or historical, serves to

cover over the lack that leads one to pursue the other in the first place. Rather than pursuing/respecting the other's difference in an economy based on the endlessly deferred promise of the other's presence, as deconstruction asks of us, Žižek postulates a mode of being in which we acknowledge that what we are pursuing in our pursuit of the other is desire itself. What does this mean? It means that an ethical relation does not begin with a relation to the other as wholly other, as it does for Derrida, but rather it begins by identifying oneself as the lack, the void, the emptiness that one seeks to fill through or in the other. The basic insight of both Lacanian psychoanalysis and Christianity, as Žižek reads them, is that one breaks out of the solipsistic loop of desire by identifying with the wound or lack that motivates our relation to the other in the first place: "getting rid of the wound, healing it," Žižek writes, "is ultimately the same as fully and directly identifying with it (*On Belief* 104). Herein lies, for Žižek, the lesson of the incarnation: The Sublime beyond of the transcendent becomes accessible in the all too human world of mundane details. The Sublime is made available not despite the contingencies of embodiment and mortality, but in and through them, because of them. Just as Christ is made man and is celebrated in the form of bread and wine so the properly ethical subject encounters the other not in a realm of the sublime beyond, but in the mundane details of the everyday. Miracles apparently do happen.

While I have no intention of evaluating these arguments here, what I do wish to do is to conclude by pointing out that the difference between Derrida and Žižek – the difference, that is, between deconstruction and Lacanian psychoanalysis -- can be configured as the difference between two versions of renaissance imitation and the

politics implicit in them. Derrida offers an ethics of otherness based on the irreducible difference of the other, an other that sustains the place once held only by God. He thus imagines a rhetoric of mourning that is designed to allow the other to be heard as other in the silences of what is (not) said. In this respect, Derrida approaches the issue negatively, asking “how do we not speak to/of the other,” a notion that, as we have seen, is very much a consequence of the demystification of the conditions for sacramental or literal imitation. Žižek, however, insists that the space for otherness appears only when we recognize in ourselves (rather than displacing it onto an other) the void around which desire circulates. In this respect, Žižek’s ethics return to the forms of sacred imitation that we saw in Southwell’s Ignatian inspired work. This becomes clear when Žižek explains his understanding of the authentic Christian attitude: “Christ does NOT do our work for us, he does not pay our debt [. . .] we redeem ourselves through the ‘leap into faith,’ i.e., by way of choosing to ‘live in Christ’ – in *imitatio Christi*, we REPEAT Christ’s gesture of freely assuming the excess of Life, instead of projecting/displacing it onto some figure of the Other” (*On Belief* 105). This ethic constitutes a self-conscious revisiting of Ignatius’ theory of action cited in Chapter One insofar as it postulates a politics of Truth through a leap of faith from the pragmatic to the ethical, from the particular to the universal: “assume that the success of your efforts depends entirely upon you and not at all upon God; but nevertheless, approach your endeavors as though their fulfillment were entirely dependent upon God, and not at all upon yourself” (Beirnaert, 221). If Derrida’s politics of mourning constitutes a repetition with a difference of the Hebraic-Protestant ethic of otherness, then Žižek’s version constitutes a repetition with a difference of the

militant Counter-Reformational modes expressed most clearly in Ignatius's ideology.

Žižek, that is to say, seeks the Roman's faith without the text, sustaining the form but not the message of a revolutionary Christian attitude. Derrida, on the other hand, eschews such militancy, seeking faith in the radically particular, irreducible singularity of the other. Surprising as it may seem, the ethics of otherness played out between these two thinkers is a continuation, indeed a shockingly direct one, of the antagonisms that structure the politics of post-Reformation devotion. In the politics of seventeenth-century devotion lie the seeds of deconstructive and psychoanalytic ethics.

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List of Illustrations:

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2. Sandro Botticelli. *The Birth of Venus* (c 1480).
3. Baciccio (Gauli). *The Triumph of the Name of Jesus*, Rome, Il Gesù (1674-79).

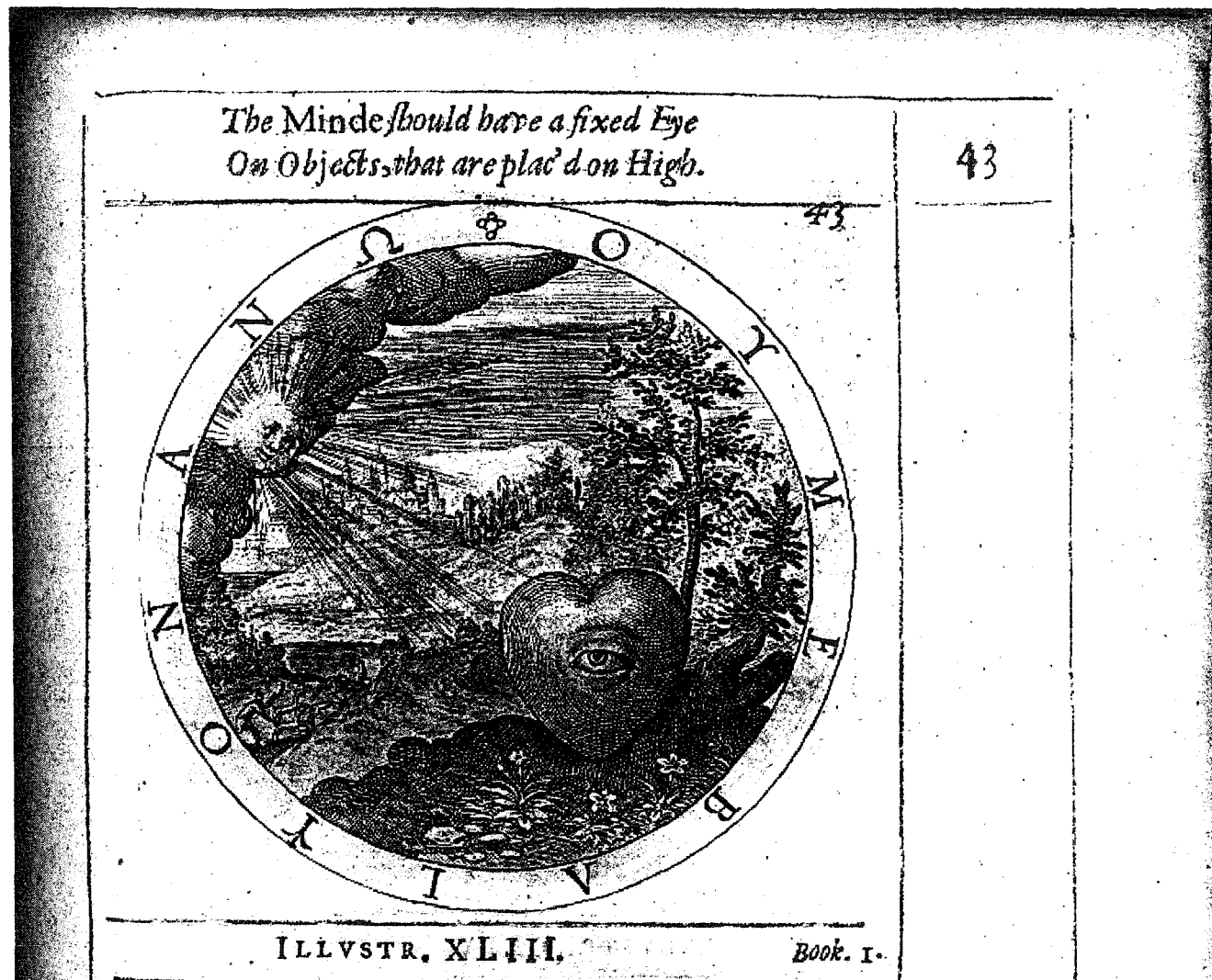


Figure 1. George Wither, *Collection of Emblems* (1635).
Image courtesy of Penn State English Emblem Book Project
(www.emblem.libraries.psu.edu/home.htm).



Figure 2. Sandro Botticelli, *The Birth of Venus* (c 1480). Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy. Image Courtesy of Windows to the Universe. (www.windows.ucar.edu.com)



Figure 3: Baciccia, *The Triumph of the Name* (1674-79)
Rome, Il Gesù.

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