Approaching the Divine: Writing Visionary Space in the European Renaissance Lyric

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Contents

Abstract

Vision and the broader question of what human beings can see and what they desire to see emerged as a defining element of the Renaissance poetic imagination. This dissertation argues that poetic vision emerged in the Renaissance lyric from Petrarch to the English "Metaphysicals" as a tool for historical, cosmographic, and theological inquiry. As poets contemplated, experienced, and even fashioned the divine, they did so through a visionary mode of inquiry that was revelatory, prophetic, and irenic. This project helps to expand and revise a critical legacy that has often explored the development of lyric poetry from trecento Italy to Civil War England either through the divisions between Protestant and Catholic habits of interpretation or the shifting conventions and uses of Petrarchan amatory discourse. By turning to what I refer to as visionary writing—poetry and related texts that extend human sight across temporal and ontological boundaries in the investigation of the divine and the historical foundations of human experience—I track a more transcendent, ecumenical, and transnational process of poetic development in the work of these poets.

My first chapter explores the visionary and historical engagements of the shorter lyrics of Petrarch, Joachim du Bellay, and Edmund Spenser. Exploring the inter-textual relationships between Petrarch's *Canzoniere*, du Bellay's *Les Antiquités de Rome* and *Les Regrets*, and Edmund Spenser's Roman poetry ("The Ruines of Time" and his translations of du Bellay), I map out a poetic visionary technique that triangulates the present, the Roman past, and the divine. Though these poets represent different national, linguistic, and religious traditions, their poetics are often able to find common poetic and spiritual ground. My second chapter takes on John Donne and the linguistic consequences of what has been called the "New Philosophy" and

the related "Copernican Revolution." The spiritual and scientific aspects of Donne's writing have inspired a long critical history including the work of William Empson, John Carey, and Barbara Lewalski. I build on this critical tradition by moving beyond the question of Donne's Catholic or Protestant beliefs or the generic background of his poetry's source material. This chapter reads Donne in dialogue with Giordano Bruno's writings, arguing that Donne responds to the shifting cosmos by forging a poetic voice that emphasizes lyric poetry's ability to inhabit and rearrange the cosmologically distant or invisible elements of the universe.

I turn, finally, to the Baroque poetics of Richard Crashaw. Though Crashaw, as interpreted by T.S. Eliot, Mario Praz, and Barbara Lewalski, has been viewed as visually excessive and thoroughly rooted in Continental Catholic art, this chapter shows how Crashaw's Latin verse (the *Epigrammata Sacra*) and his major English lyrics ("The Weeper" and "The Hymn to Saint Teresa") reveal a more structured, sophisticated, and revelatory devotional poetic practice. Building on the work of R.V. Young, I see Crashaw's poetics as being steeped in a nuanced and hybrid collection of spiritual beliefs that cannot be easily sorted into Protestant or Catholic. I offer, working with Deleuze's *The Fold*, a vision of the Baroque that is combinatory, contradictory and yet harmonious, subverting the boundaries between divine and the earthly spaces.

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Introduction

The quest for higher vision, as an intellectual, prophetic, and affective act, was at the heart of the contemplative and spiritual life of late Medieval and early Renaissance Europe. Contemplation itself, though intellectual in nature, was understood by Thomas Aquinas to have "its principle in the affective part." The contemplative can "delight" in contemplation not from a solely intellectual pleasure but from "the affections, namely when one delights in the vision of the beloved, and this delight in the thing further excites love." Love and the visibility of truth become intertwined in the contemplative's highest meditative goals. Aquinas writes: "And this is the ultimate perfection of the contemplative life, that the divine truth is not only seen, but also loved" (700). To face God and the divine is analogous to facing the lover, to reveling in the presence of a distant beloved.

Dante offers this sort of vision in *La Vita Nuova*. The personification of love appears to Dante:

> Allora dico che mi giunse una imaginazione d'Amore; che mi parve vederlo venire da quella parte ove la mia donna stava, e pereami che lietamente mi dicesse nel cor mio: "Pensa di benedicere lo dì che io ti presi, però che tu lo dei fare." E certo me parea avere lo cuore sì lieto, che me non parea che fosse lo mio cuore, per la sua nuova condizione. (XXIV)
>
> [Then (I say) a vision of Love came to me; I thought I saw him coming from where my lady was, and I thought he joyfully said in my heart: "Have a mind to bless the day when I took you captive, because you ought

> to." And indeed I thought my heart was so joyous that I could not believe it was my own heart, it had changed so.][1]

For Dante, poetic inspiration comes from an exterior vision that resonates within the poet himself. The vision of love comes to Dante and yet speaks "nel cor mio" [in my heart]. This is not revolutionary. One finds a similar (if more antagonistic) scene in Ovid's *Amores* where the poet is struck by Love's arrow while being taunted with the words "quod…canas, vates, accipe…opus!" [Take, singer, what will be the matter of your song!] (*Amores* I. 24).

Yet in Dante's vision, there are theological and prophetic undertones to this encounter:

> Queste donne andaro presso di me così l'una appresso l'altra e parve che Amore mi parlasse nel cuore, e dicesse: "Quella prima è nominata Primavera solo per questa venuta d'oggi, chè io mossi lo imponitore del nome a chiamarla così Primavera, cioè prima verra lo die che Beatrice si mosterrà dopo la imaginazione del suo fedele. E se anche vogli considerare lo primo nome suo, tanto è quanto dire—prima verrà—però che lo suo nome Giovanna è da quello Giovanni lo quale precedette la verace luce, diceno: "Ego vox clamantis in deserto: parate viam Domini." (XXIV)
>
> [Those ladies (Primavera and Beatrice) approached me that way, one after the other, and Love seemed to be addressing me in my heart, saying: "That first one is named Primavera solely because of her arrival here today; for I induced the man who so dubbed her to call her Primavera because she will come first—*prima verrà*—on the day Beatrice shows herself after her

[1] All translations from *La Vita Nuova* are by Stanley Appelbaum.

> devotee's fantasies. And if you wish to think about her earlier name as well it, too, signifies 'she will come first,' because that name Giovanna comes from Giovanni—Saint John the Baptist—who preceded the True Light, saying 'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord.'"]

Here the arrival of Beatrice becomes analogous to the arrival of Christ. Dante is not, however, simply reporting what he sees, but is acting out a contemplative act of poetic composition. Dante writes: "Io dico d'Amore come se fosse una cosa per sè, e non solamente sustanzia intelligente, ma sì come fosse sustanzia corporale…" [I speak of Love as if it were a thing in itself, and not merely a mental construct, but as if it were a bodily substance…] (XXV). In contemplating love, he produces love in corporeal form. He imagines a space in his poems where Christian salvation and a classical personified love can co-exist.

Visionary poetry, as seen above, often focuses on the intersection between earthly experience and divine matters, as Petrarch demonstrates in *Canzoniere* 355:

> O tempo, O ciel volubil che fuggendo
> Inganni i ciechi et miseri mortali,
> O dì veloci più che vento et strali!
> Ora *ab experto* vostre frodi intendo.
>
> Ma scuso voi et me stesso riprendo:
> Ché Natura a volar v'aperse l'ali,
> A me diede occhi; et io pur ne miei mali
> Li tenni onde vergogna et dolor prendo. (1-8)

> [O time, O revolving heavens that fleeing deceive us blind and wretched
> mortals, O days more swift than wind or arrows! Now through experience
> I understand your frauds. But I excuse you and I reproach myself, for
> Nature gave you wings to fly with, to me she gave eyes; but I still fixed
> them on what harmed me, whence I am ashamed and sorrowful.][2]

In Petrarch's *Canzoniere*, the poet's vision and ability to see are seen as a force able to answer, as somewhat of an epistemological equivalent, the revolving of the heavens and the passage of time. As time flies, so too does the poet see, but if the poet chooses the subject of his gaze poorly, time can be irreparably lost and the poet can be tricked by the fraud of passing time. The poetic act of seeing, however, is not simply related to the wings of time that fly too quickly but rather becomes enriched with the ability to lift the speaker out of his current state and move towards the heavens in a contemplative act that is at once deeply subjective and prophetic:

> Volo con l'ali de' pensieri al Cielo
> sì spesse volte che quasi un di loro
> esser mi par ch'àn ivi il suo tesoro
> lasciando in terra lo squarciato velo. (*Canzoniere* 362, 1-4)
> [I fly with the wings of thought to Heaven so often that it seems to me I
> am almost one of those who there possess their treasure, leaving on earth
> their rent veils.]

[2] All translations from the *Canzoniere* are by Robert Durling unless otherwise noted.

Petrarch's poetry attempts through poetic vision and contemplation to enter into a dialogue with God and the sacred and to inhabit, even prematurely, holy and eternal spaces through the poetic imagination.

The visionary legacy of Renaissance poetry is far from a new topic, but has recently, in the work of Teodolinda Barolini, been asserted as a spiritual and prophetic form of divine revelation. Barolini encourages critics to face the possibility that Dante truly believed that his vision in the *Commedia* was not the result of poetic imagination but of real prophetic insight:

> We need to accept that Dante could have believed in his visionary and prophetic vocation, that he was acutely aware of the tension between his uncompromising visionary claims, on the one hand, and his extravagant poetic gifts, on the other, and that he considered the latter insufficient arguments against the existence of the former. In other words, Dante agreed with Augustine that the contradiction between visionary vocation and poetic talent is apparent, not real, and considered himself a case in point. (*Dante and the Origins of Italian Literary Culture* 128)

Poetic talent as a gateway towards spiritual revelation was not only at the foundation of Dante's own *stilnovist* poetic vision, but would come to shape the ideas of English theorists of poetry as well. Sir Philip Sidney, in *The Defence of Poesy* (c. 1581), describes the role of the *vates* in Roman society as a privileged seer:

> Among the Romans poet was called *vates*, which is as much as a diviner, foreseer, or prophet, as by his conjoined words *vaticinium* and *vaticinari* is manifest: so heavenly a title did that excellent people bestow upon this

> heart-ravishing knowledge. And so far were they carried into the admiration thereof, that they thought in the chanceable hitting upon any such verses great foretokens of their following fortunes were placed. (112-117)

The poet, according to Sidney, was historically a valuable source of divine revelation and prophetic knowledge that emanate from the divine qualities of his poetic gifts. To read the development of Renaissance lyric poetry as a development of a particular visionary and prophetic mode that works through both secular and devotional poetic genres allows the Renaissance critic to reassess the spiritual, philosophical, and political resonance of the Renaissance lyric.

Yet vision and speculation can too often be downgraded in the celebration of the Renaissance as the beginning of the Scientific Revolution and a more general turn from the analogic imagination towards empirical observation. Martin Jay notes that: "the early modern separation of the visual from the textual completed this differentiation, which was crucial in the preparation of the scientific worldview. It also made possible the liberation of art from the sacred tasks to which it had previously been bound" (44-45). Jay identifies in the Renaissance a social and political vision that is finally freed from any sacred duties. "If vision was relieved of its sacred function and allowed to pursue its own developmental path," he writes, "the lessons that had been learned about its persuasive capabilities were never lost. In fact, they were immediately reapplied for political and social purposes" (45). This secularizing history undervalues the persistence of visionary and speculative techniques in the history of Renaissance science and

philosophy.[3] For the literary historian, it can reduce works to historical artifacts and read very real spiritual discourses as merely representative of secular social or political phenomena.

This dissertation will argue for the importance of speculative vision to the literary, philosophical, and spiritual projects at the heart of some of the lyric poetry of Petrarch, Spenser, Du Bellay, Donne, and Crashaw. I will track how divinity, infinity, and the temporality of earthly existence are explored through the translocative experiences these poets attempt to create. As these poets contemplate Roman ruins, the cosmos, or their death and salvation, they consistently attempt to turn abstract concepts of space, time, and divinity into tangible and habitable poetic visions. I will attempt to argue that Petrarch, Du Bellay, Spenser, Donne, and Crashaw offer lyric poetry that does not simply pray or contemplate but that, in the Dantean model above, stages its contemplations in corporeal form, translating intangible objects of inquiry into material poetic encounters. One of the major intangible objects for which these poets search is what I sometimes label as "the divine" or "the sacred." I mean for this to encompass the search for God, salvation, and theological understanding. The quest for higher vision I track in these poems is not always solely a quest for God. These poets seek the divine and sacred markings of God's lessons and mercy in the created world, in the remnants of the past, in the heavens and cosmos above them, and in their own bodies.

Chapter One explores the visionary and historical engagements of the shorter lyrics of Petrarch, Joachim du Bellay, and Edmund Spenser. Considering the inter-textual relationships between Petrarch's *Canzoniere*, du Bellay's *Les Antiquitez de Rome* and *Les Regrets*, and Edmund Spenser's Roman poetry ("The Ruines of Time" and his translations of du Bellay), I

[3] For more on the persistence of speculation and imagination in scientific thought, see Blumenberg 549-596.

map out a poetic visionary technique that triangulates the present, the Roman past, and the divine. When Petrarch addresses the city of Rome in *Canzoniere* 68, he produces a layered geographic and epistemological system of meaning that collapses the present and the past. This chapter highlights how, even when historical distance is presented, it becomes an opportunity for the poetic voice to meditate upon God, salvation, and infinity, ultimately making the layered history of the Roman ruins a sourcebook for reading the language of time, mortality, death, and salvation. The "divins esprits" or divine spirits that du Bellay finds rising out of the Roman ruins or the appearance of the spirit Verlame out of the now unrecognizable fallen city of Verolamium in Spenser's "Ruines of Time" continue this tradition of finding visionary access points to the divine and the infinite through poetic meditation on the finite, but spiritually rich, material markers of the Roman past. Though these poets represent different national, linguistic, and religious traditions, their poetics are often able to find common philological, poetic, and spiritual ground.

Chapter Two takes on John Donne and the linguistic consequences of what has been called the "New Philosophy" and the related "Copernican Revolution." The spiritual and scientific aspects of Donne's writing have inspired a long critical history, including the work of William Empson, Thomas Docherty, and Angus Fletcher. I build on this critical tradition by moving beyond the question of Donne's Catholic or Protestant beliefs or the generic background of his poetry's source material. To place Donne's lyrics within the context of one of the most controversial scientific thinkers of his age, this chapter reads Donne in dialogue with Giordano Bruno's writings. It argues that Donne responds to the shifting cosmos by forging a poetic voice that emphasizes lyric poetry's ability to inhabit and rearrange the cosmologically distant or invisible elements of the universe. Offering readings of Donne's shorter lyrics and two major

longer works (*Metempsychosis* and *The Anniversaries*), I show how the "monarch of wit" asserts his role as the master of his own vision, offering a phenomenological and linguistic method of accessing the cosmos. The firmament and the Brunonian infinite universe emerge in Donne's writing as a site for poetic exploration; the poet seeks out bold and transcendent poetic spaces above the divisive and uncertain theological and political spheres of Renaissance Europe.

Chapter Three explores the Baroque poetics of Richard Crashaw. Though Crashaw, as interpreted by T.S. Eliot, Mario Praz, Barbara Lewalski, and R.V. Young, has been viewed as visually excessive and thoroughly rooted in Continental Catholic art, this chapter shows how Crashaw's Latin verse and some of his major English lyrics reveal a more logical, sophisticated, and revelatory devotional poetic practice. Building on the work of R.V. Young, I see Crashaw's poetics as being steeped in a nuanced and hybrid collection of spiritual beliefs that cannot be easily sorted into Protestant or Catholic. I offer, working with Deleuze's *The Fold*, a vision of the Baroque that is combinatory, contradictory and yet harmonious, subverting the boundaries between the divine and the earthly. Placing Deleuze's eccentric theoretical insights in dialogue with the historical work of Wöllflin, Panofsky, Wittkomer, Careri, Harbison, and others, I attempt to reveal how a capacious and contradictory phenomenon like the Baroque demands a critical praxis that is both theoretically experimental and historically grounded. Turning these insights towards Crashaw, I reveal a poet who, in dialogue with the Laudian movement, the quasi-monastic community at Little Gidding, and the exiled community at Queen Henrietta Maria's court in Paris, was at the same time engaged in a devotional and visionary poetics that consistently rejected sectarian dichotomy in favor of an ecumenical divinity revealed exclusively in the poetic imagination.

Chapter One: Infinite Ruins in Petrarch, Du Bellay, and Spenser

I. Introduction: Approaching and Envisioning the Infinite and the Eternal.

Contemplating the place and role of the eternal in the universe was at the heart of the philosophy of the cosmos both in antiquity and the Renaissance. To understand the design of the world, the thinker had to reach outward into the abstract cosmos and the even the seat of the divine. Classical antiquity understood the contemplation of the eternal as one of the most productive exercises in which a thinker could engage himself. Plato writes in the *Timaeus* that "to discover the Maker and Father of this Universe" we should turn to the Cosmos that was created with the eternal in mind. "Now if so be that this Cosmos is beautiful and its Constructor good, it is plain that he fixed his gaze on the Eternal," Plato writes before underscoring the point further: "It is clear to everyone that his gaze was on the Eternal [as he created the Cosmos]; for the Cosmos is the fairest of all that has come into existence, and He the best of all causes" (51-53). Even Aristotle, who unlike Plato did not believe that the eternal was itself an essence apart from an object, believes, in turning to the subject of the infinite, that "it is incumbent on the person who specializes in physics to discuss the infinite and to inquire whether there *is* such a thing or not, and, if there is, *what* it is" (257).[1] Plotinus, the Neoplatonic philosopher who helped revive Platonic conceptions of space, made eternity the center of his discussions. "Eternity," he writes, "is of the order of the supremely great…it may fitly be described as God made manifest,

[1] Aristotle emphatically denies that the infinite exists outside of an object: "Now it is impossible that the infinite should be a thing which is itself infinite, separable from sensible objects" (260).

as God declaring what He is, as existence without jolt or change, and therefore as also the firmly living" (218). Defining eternity as "a life limitless in the full sense of being all the life there is and a life which, knowing nothing of past or future to shatter its completeness, possesses itself intact forever" (219), Plotinus sees eternity as a trans-temporal life that encompasses all other life.

Similarly, infinity, its relation to the divine, and its application to the creation of space in art would become important to Renaissance art-making, especially lyric poetry. Writing in the fifteenth century, Ficino would be one to revive the importance of the infinite as a defining characteristic of God and the divine. Under the heading of "Deus intellegit infinita" ["God understands infinite things"], Ficino disagrees with Aristotle in insisting that "God's power, since it is infinite, extends to things without number" and "the infinite God does not confine Himself when He looks on His infinite self in an infinite manner. Rather, He confirms His own infinity" (159, 161). An appreciation of the divine power of the infinite, with its Platonic and Neo-Platonic roots, would become an important aspect of the Christian Renaissance project of representing space and time. Even before Ficino, Dante's *Commedia*, revising the medieval mystical tradition along *stilnovist* lines, had shown how poetry could confront the eternal and the divine through the poetic imagination's plotting of visionary space.

In tracking what I refer to here as the spatial vision that emerges in these poetic works, I mean to refer to the poems' specific interactions with theories about earthly, cosmic, and divine space and time. When Henri Lefebvre warns that "the problem is that any search for space in literary texts will find it everywhere and in every guise…"(15), he presents a valuable critique. In my argument, space is not simply the "setting" of a poem. Space is an ongoing philosophical concern in these poets' works in which they interrogate what space is, how it is constructed, and

how it can offer divine revelation. When I refer to "the space of the Roman ruins" or "the space of Petrarch's imagined vision," I refer to symbolically rich places produced in these poems that become inhabited by historical and divine prophetic visions. These visions attempt to confound the temporal logic that would, outside of the poetic encounter in the real world, separate the viewer/inhabitant of space from the divine or historical revelations and encounters they seek.[2] What I will argue is at the center of the poetic visions of Petrarch, du Bellay, and Spenser is the creation of what Lefebvre refers to as "representational spaces," spaces that "need obey no rules of consistency or cohesiveness. Redolent with imaginary and symbolic elements, they have their source in history—in the history of a people as well as in the history of each individual belonging to that history" (41). While representations of space may "have a practical impact," "the only products of representational spaces are symbolic works" (42).

Rome, the earth, and heaven inspire symbolic representational spaces in these poets' works. Their goal is not simply to represent what they find, but to forge in the poems a version of these spaces that can cross historical and spiritual boundaries, allowing the past and present, the worldly and the divine to fold together into a space created solely within the symbolic world of the poem itself. By combining elements of the symbolic and the imaginary, with their full Lacanian resonance of tension between linguistic traditions and the primordial quality of the image, these poets open up a space of lyric subjectivity that reflects the logic of history and

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[2] This is the key difference between what Lefebvre refers to as representations of space and representational spaces. Lefebvre notes, "Representations of space are certainly abstract, but they also play a part in social and political practice: established relations between objects and people in represented space are subordinate to a logic which will sooner or later break them up because of their lack of consistency" (41).

cartography while ultimately offering spaces that transcend it. These poems reject spatial and historical verisimilitude, preferring the spiritual and symbolic resonance of a subconscious image or surrealist dream. These spaces become, in the Neo-Platonic tradition, places in which the past, God, and eternity can be envisioned and contemplated. "Let us, then, make a mental picture of our universe," Plotinus urges, "…Bring this vision actually before your sight" (419). The act of envisioning space emerges as an act of prayer and of revelation: "call on God, maker of the sphere whose image you now hold, and pray Him to enter. And may He come bringing His own Universe with all the gods that dwell in it—He who is the one God and all the gods, where each is all, blending into a unity, distinct in powers but all one God in virtue of that one divine power of many facets" (420). Imagined universal spaces invite actual universal spaces.

Representational spaces, through their symbolic qualities, can invoke the divine while trying to represent it. The invocational quality of Petrarch, du Bellay, and Spenser's shorter poems, their spiritual hunger, and their internal vision of a distant and yet deeply relevant past demand this sort of spatial reading. This chapter will explore the way this envisioning and producing of representational spaces emerged in the work of certain lyric poets in Italy, France, and England as they confront the Roman past, the ruins of the present day, and the eternal seat of the divine. As Francis Petrarch, Joachim du Bellay, and Edmund Spenser considered the Roman past they did so not with what could simply be called an *archaeological* view (Teskey 6). Spenser's conception of infinity and its relation to the creation of space in poetry lead to a consideration of the past that seeks not only "a [repository] of secret wisdom" but also the "governing principle" of human experience (6). [3] Rather, Spenser and his two predecessors

[3] Teskey distinguishes between Spenser and Milton by arguing that while Spenser is interested in "the accumulated remains of the past—of what he calls *moniments*," Milton "is a thinker of the

engaged the ruins and legacy of Rome as both a historical monument to a past civilization and an ongoing spiritual source of revelation that, like Plotinus's vision of the eternal discussed above, "possesses itself intact forever." For these poets, to envision Rome was to come into contact with mutability and, by contrast, the possibility of eternal salvation. Starting with Petrarch's *Canzoniere*, I will offer a reading of this famous lyric sequence's visionary and spatial practice, arguing that the poems turn our attention to the possibility of eternal life and salvation through a consistent oscillation between past, present, and eternity. Turning then to Joachim Du Bellay's Roman poetry (*Les Regrets, Les Antiquitez de Rome*, *Songe*, and *Poemata*), I will argue that Du Bellay forges a spatial and transnational Petrarchism out of the model he found in the *Canzoniere*, bringing the Roman past into the French and Italian present in order to, ultimately, forge a series of visions that bring earthly time into sharp contrast with eternal divine time. Finally, turning to Spenser's own Roman poetry in the *Complaints*, I will reveal how Spenser's interactions with Petrarchism in this anti-worldly volume serve as a culmination of the visionary poetics found in both Petrarch and Du Bellay's examples and imagine the possibility of a British poetics that can create visionary lyric poetry on the Roman past.

By following this chain of imitation and influence, this chapter will argue for the existence of an anti-worldly Petrarchism fascinated with the interaction of earthly space, vision, and the divine and eternal space of the Christian afterlife. This Petrarchism would come to be used to negotiate more transcendental goals than courtly love, political favor, or even the

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arche, of the origin and governing 'principle'" (6). Though I agree with Teskey that Spenser "thinks through the temporal layers of the accumulated remains of the past," I disagree with his distinction that this is unlike Milton, who sees the remains of the past "as evidence pointing back to an origin, which he situates in the Garden of Eden, the home of the truth about man" (6).

imperial ambitions of a nation. Rather, in presenting a view of time that embraces past and present in one eternal moment, Petrarchan lyric is able to create lyric spaces that resonate with prophetic potential more than specific articles of faith or dogma. By focusing on the metaphysical nature of time, space, death, and eternity and representing these themes through prophetic poetry that triangulates the past, present, and the infinite future in the afterlife, these poems create spaces which are neither fully Protestant nor Catholic and which dwarf these labels by representing the immensity of space and time.

II. Petrarch's Vision and the Space of the Lyric

That Petrarch was a poet deeply fascinated, if not obsessed, with the classical past will surprise no one. Perhaps most notably Thomas Greene in *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* has argued that Petrarch is not only fascinated by the history of the classical past, but that he also helped invent the very nature of history itself. Though Petrarch has become known primarily as a love poet, he is, no less than Dante, a poet interested in vision. Waking vision brings a unique intensity to key moments in the *Canzoniere*. These visions often triangulate the earth, heaven, and the physical and memorial remnants of the past. If we consider even two of the more famous sonnets in Petrarch's collection, sonnets 1 and 68, we can see the spatial scope of the *Canzoniere*. Petrarch begins his collection:

> Voi ch'ascoltate in rime sparse il suono
> di quei sospiri ond'io nudriva 'l core
> in sul mio primo giovenile errore,
> quand'era in parte altr'uom da quel ch' i' sono. (*Canz*. 1.1-4)

> [You who hear in scattered rhyme the sound of those sighs with which I nourished my heart during my first youthful error, when I was in part another man from what I am now.]

The opening of this poem, and of the entire sequence, reaches out to a present world in the grips of an ongoing event. Those whom Petrarch addresses still hear Petrarch's sighs and the very current youthful error they represent. Richard Strier emphasizes the significance of "in parte" in showing the reader that he is observing a partial and in-process transformation (*The Unrepentant Renaissance* 64). These lines spread out to the present, well beyond the borders of the poet's own subjectivity. The next lines reveal Petrarch's reaching out to an imagined understanding other:

> Del vario stile in ch' io piango et ragiono
> fra le vane speranze e 'l van dolore,
> ove sia chi per prova intenda amore
> spero trovar pietà, non che perdono. (1.5-8)
> [For the varied style in which I weep and speak between vain hopes and vain sorrow, where there is anyone who understands love through experience I hope to find pity, not only pardon.]

The temporal strategies employed by this first poem connect the ongoing lyric presence of Petrarch's collection to the still-relevant failing of the past, his reputation in the present, and his hopes for the future. He is a subject in process and a voice in time and space. The first poem remains concerned not with his intense love for Laura (Laura and Petrarch's own love remain at a remarkable distance until the second sonnet of the *Canzoniere*) but with the effect of time on his sense of self, reputation, and talent.

Time emerges even more clearly as a major force in this first sonnet as the sestet meditates on the true state of the earthly condition: pain, shame, repentance, and anti-worldliness:

> Ma ben veggio or sì come al popol tutto
> favola fui gran tempo, onde sovente
> di me medesmo meco mi vergogno
> et del mio vaneggiar vergogna è 'l frutto,
> e 'l pentersi, e 'l conoscer chiaramente
> che quanto piace al mondo è breve sogno. (1.9-14)
> [But now I see well how for a long time I was the talk of the crowd, for which often I am ashamed of myself within; and of my raving, shame is the fruit, and repentance, and the clear knowledge that whatever pleases in the world is a brief dream.]

This closing sestet reveals the temporal and spatial ambitions of the poem and the *Canzoniere* as a whole. These lines take a personal history, an intimate reckoning of the poet's life, and project it outward to become an expansive meditation on vanity. Though he emphasizes the personal nature of "mio vaneggiar," he reveals his repentance to be a gateway to true anti-worldly revelation. He discovers that meditating on the distance between the past and the present, between his own voice and that of the world as a whole, reveals the brevity of joy and even the insignificance of human ambition under the weight of time.

Teodolinda Barolini has noted that Petrarch, in a way novel to the history of European lyric, "makes time the protagonist of his book of poetry" ("The Self in the Labyrinth of Time" 43). Rather than solely a document of unrequited love, the *Canzoniere* emerge as a description

of love over time, with an aging Laura.[4] Time, as it emerges in Petrarch's work, is understood through vision. The time of worldly pleasure is a "breve sogno," a brief dream that gives in eventually to grander visions of death, repentance, and their enactment in the passage of time. Any encounter with space, therefore, immediately has temporal and spiritual consequences that Petrarch's poetic vision brings to the forefront. In *Canzoniere* 68, where Petrarch encounters the ruins of Rome, this triangulation between space, time, and the divinity beyond earthly space and time drives the energy of the poem:

> L'aspetto sacro de la terra vostra[5]
> mi fa del mal passato tragger guai
> gridando: "Sta' su, misero, che fai?"
> Et la via de salir al ciel mi mostra. (68.1-4)
> [The sacred sight of your land makes me bewail my evil past, crying "Get up, miserable one! what are you doing?" And shows me the way to go out to heaven.][6]

As Petrarch comes to see the Ruins of Rome his encounter is immediately spiritual. The sight of the most prideful city of the European world remaining only in ruins becomes a site of repentance, but also of anti-worldly escape. The verb "salir"—translated by Durling as "to mount"—could also be said to more closely mean "to go out" or "to emerge." This distinction,

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[4] For more on the importance of Laura's aging see Barolini 49.

[5] Robert Durling glosses "la terra vostra" as Rome. He argues that "the poem was probably written during Petrarch's visit in 1341" (*Canzoniere* 68n).

[6] This translation is my own.

though small, emphasizes the breaking out from one world to another. The space of the Roman ruins brings Petrarch's thoughts to the temporal reality of their destruction that in turn produces a spiritual opportunity for conversion that is itself understood primarily through spatial means.

This is typical of Petrarch's visionary encounters with antiquity, especially in the *Secretum* where his encounter with Saint Augustine and the personification of Truth begins by answering the question: how can anyone be unhappy against his own will? The *Secretum* employs a similar topos in regards to classical ruins. Augustine admonishes Petrarch: "Let the sight of an ancient building make you think, 'Where are the people whose hands built this?' When you see a newer building, think, 'Where will those who built this soon be?'" (145). Petrarch's poem presents a Rome whose ruined state is so inextricably linked to spiritual reformation and anti-worldly concerns that it is the very first thing a traveler notices when seeing it. There is certainly ambivalence in Petrarch's sonnet to Rome, but it is a far more personal ambivalence that does not question Rome's anti-worldly symbolism:

> Ma con questo pensier un altro giostra
> et dice a me: "Perché fuggendo vai?
> Se ti rimembra, il tempo passa omai
> di tornar a veder la donna nostra." (68. 5-8)
> [But with this thought another jousts and says to me "Why are you fleeing? If you remember, the time is coming now to turn to see your lady."]

The powerful urge the poet had felt "salir al ciel" wrestles with the urge to stay and pursue Laura. Petrarch hangs between two visions, two thoughts. The first pushes him into a visionary connection with Rome, the lessons and wisdom of the past, and a transformative going out from

the world towards the divine, and the second towards the complicated Laura who represents not only his own amatory desires but also his poetic worldly ambition.[7]

Petrarch wrestles with his use of antiquity, wanting to use his celebrated philological knowledge and literary talents to reform his spiritual life while resisting temptations to use it for worldly gain. Yet, a desire to go out from the world—whether through transcendent spiritual practice or through the death of a lovesick poet—becomes a visionary obsession for Petrarch and one that would come to transform the way a particular tradition of sixteenth-century readers and imitators of Petrarch would come to see their own antiquarian inquiries, spiritual struggles, and attempts at poetic fame. Though Petrarch would be celebrated as a love poet and his amatory verses would inspire sequences from Garcilaso de la Vega's *Sonetos* to Pierre de Ronsard's *Sonnets pour Hélène* and Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella*, *Canzoniere* 323*,* a visionary *canzone* with anti-worldly themes, would travel through the real and imagined battlefields of Western Europe in the mouths and pens of Clément Marot, Joachim du Bellay, Jan Van der Noot, and Edmund Spenser who would find the poems to be a source of spiritual and historical, rather than amatory, vision.

Highlighting the fact that this poem is a vision, Petrarch begins the *canzone* "Standomi un giorno solo a la fenestra / onde cose vedea tante et sì nove / ch'era sol di mirar quasi già stanco" (323.1-3) [Being one day alone at the window, where I saw so many and such strange things that from the mere seeing I was already almost tired]. That word "stanco"—appearing in many places in the *Canzoniere* including one of the poems following Laura's death—resonates with world-weariness, having connotations of both exhaustion and jadedness. To be *stanco* in Petrarch's world is to be tired of being in the world and, sometimes, of even being alive. As

[7] For a classic meditation on Petrarch's ambition see Freccero 38-40.

before, Petrarch remains fascinated with ruination and with the ways in which observing the destruction of elements of terrestrial life comes to offer a way of transcending the world, viewing it with a detached *contemptus mundi*. Image after image in the *Canzoniere* 323 resonates with this imagery. The first is of a wild animal, made into a deer by later iconography, hunted and destroyed by two dogs[8]:

> Una fera m'apparve da man destra
> con fronte umana da far arder Giove,
> cacciata de duo veltri, un nero, un bianco,
> che l'un et l'altro fianco
> de la fera gentil mordean sì forte
> che 'n poco tempo la menaro al passo
> ove chiusa in un sasso
> vinse molta bellezza acerba morte,
> et mi fe' sospirar sua dura sorte. (323.4-12)
>
> [A wild creature appeared to me on the right hand, with a human face such as to enamor Jove, pursued by two hounds, one black, one white, who at both sides of the noble creature were tearing so fiercely that in a short time they brought it to the pass where, closed in a stone, much beauty was vanquished by untimely death and made me sigh for its harsh fate.]

[8] For an instance of this iconography, consider the illustrations accompanying the French translation of these visions by Clément Marot.

This image of a wild animal being brought down by two dogs is the first of a series of six visions. After seeing the deer fall, Petrarch sees a ship brought down after striking a rock during a tempest, a laurel tree suddenly destroyed by lightening, a fountain eaten up by a chasm, a phoenix killing itself out of sadness for the mutability and destruction present in the world, and, finally, a lady "umile in sé, ma 'ncontra amor superba" [humble in herself, but proud against love] (64) who is killed by a small snake. The visions' unifying thread is beauty spoiled by the sudden and pitiless cruelty of the world, leading Petrarch to cry out "ahi nulla altro che pianto al mondo dura" [ah, nothing but weeping endures in the world] (72).

The spatial contours of these visions are easy to overlook, but were essential to Petrarch's sixteenth-century readers. This poem, like many others dealing with the world's inconstancy, juxtaposes past glories with present ruin in order to mark out a pathway towards the eternal and the divine. The temporal reality of death and loss is played out in spatial terms in visions dramatized before the poet's window, emphasizing the visual depth of what the poet sees. Petrarch's relationship to the visual art of his period is striking and has recently been re-articulated in Charles Dempsey's *The Early Renaissance and Vernacular Culture*. In offering a revised history of the rise of Renaissance art in Italy, Dempsey provides an interpretation of the Renaissance painter's use of classical forms that goes somewhat against those offered by Panofsky in his canonical study of Renaissance art.[9] Rather than seeing artists striving to perfectly reanimate the incontrovertible beauty of classical form, Dempsey argues that Renaissance arts sought to revivify classical forms in the nature of their own vernacular. Praising the work of Henry Thode over Jacob Burckhardt, Dempsey notes that "Thode rightly emphasized

[9] Dempsey is here mainly referring to Panofksy's work in *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art*.

the central role played by St. Francis in the creation of a new vernacular-based culture," a culture "…nurtured by the powerful vernacular preaching of the new mendicant orders." Thode, in Dempsey's estimation, "saw the visual arts' depictions of natural phenomena as new forms of visual vernacular, conceived in parallel to preaching, poetry, and music in vernacular idioms." (27-28). What Dempsey argues for, then, is a Renaissance aesthetic interested in processing classical idiom into vernacular, contemporary idioms. This would explain why, even in the neo-Latin literature of the Renaissance, works like Petrarch's *Secretum* seek so strongly to bring the antique past, and some elements of transcendent truth within it, into real, spatialized and verbalized contact with the present day.

Revivifying the antique past in the present day, however, was combined with the goal of bringing true images of the divine world down to Earth as well. Dempsey highlights a sonnet from the *Canzoniere* that deals with a painting made of Laura by Simone Martini. Petrarch writes:

> Ma certo il mio Simon fu in Paradiso
> onde questa gentil donna si parte;
> ivi la vide, et la ritrasse in carte
> per far fede qua giù del suo bel viso. (77. 5-8)
> [But certainly my Simon was in Paradise, whence comes this noble Lady;
> there he saw her and portrayed her on paper, to attest down here to her
> lovely face.]

Dempsey uses this poem to highlight the deep connection between vernacular poetry and Renaissance picture making. Petrarch believes, according to Dempsey, that Simone "even before painting Laura…had beheld the heavenly prototype of her perfect beauty and *cortesia* in

paradise, and had already painted her in the *Maestà*." By arguing that Simone had access to Laura before the fact of even seeing her, through the consideration of his divine subject (the Madonna in his grand painting the *Maestà*), Petrarch is signaling the visionary power of the artist's mind to access the realm of the divine and bring it down to earth.

It is important to note, however, that Petrarch's spatial imagination does not present a clear ladder upward, nor is the goal of his poetry to mirror the transcendent beauties of the universe in worldly form. Rather the poems perform a constant traveling *between* heaven and earth, between the present and the past. What the reader receives in reading the *Canzoniere* is a spiritual and spatial journey, not an ideal image. Consider the first stanza of *Canzoniere* 333:

> Ite, rime dolenti, al duro sasso
> che 'l mio caro tesoro in terra asconde,
> ivi chiamate chi dal Ciel risponde
> ben ch 'l mortal sia in loco oscuro et basso. (333.1-4)
>
> [Go, sad rhymes, to the hard stone that hides in earth my dear treasure,
> there call for her who answers from Heaven although her mortal part is in
> a place dark and low.]

Once again, Petrarch turns to a triangulation between the past as buried in the ground (the ruined past of buried bones and fallen buildings), the present moment of his poetry and the infinite divine beyond (where Laura's voice still exists). In the perspective experiments of Renaissance painting, past and present similarly are collated, with the ruins revivified as they became cast in

modern bodies and settings.[10] Yet, each Renaissance painting that engages in recreating visual perspective signals to infinity as Panofsky notes:

> Infinity is implied—or, rather, visually symbolized—by the fact that any set of objectively parallel lines, regardless of the location and direction, converges towards one single 'vanishing point' which thus represents, quite literally, a point where parallels meet, that is to say, a point located in infinity; what is loosely referred to as "*the* vanishing point" of a picture is privileged only in so far as it directly faces the eye and thus forms the focus of only such parallels as are objectively perpendicular to the picture plane, and Alberti himelf explicitly states that the convergence of these 'orthogonals' indicates the succession and alteration of quantities 'quasi persino *in infinito*.' (126)

When any two parallel lines are drawn into an image, in order to give the image verisimilitude, the parallel lines must appear to converge in the distance. This gives most Renaissance pictures—even those of *trecento* painting—an infinite space. Similarly, Petrarch's poems, which attempt to place the past and the present on the verisimilitudinous stage of poetic vision, referring to each other while at the same time marking the temporal distances they try to bridge (for instance, in Petrarch's poem to Rome above), must always appear to converge in the infinite background extending to the sky. In certain applications, poets could use this to contrast, and even ultimately combine and fold, the mutable earthly space in the foreground with the infinite background space of the heavens.

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[10] The Maestà, as Dempsey argues, gives evidence of this, in its depiction of the Virgin Mary dressed in modern clothes and with her blonde hair showing as if she were the subject of courtly lyric (62).

Though this technology would be codified by Brunelleschi in the early fifteenth-century, decades after Petrarch's death, the belief that visual reconstruction and perspective could have spiritual and philosophical consequences began in the thirteenth-century and would have been well known by Petrarch at the time he was composing the *Canzoniere*. Indeed, in Petrarch's time, thanks to the work of optical theorists such as Roger Bacon in England and the Silesian scholar Witelo, understanding and reproducing ways of seeing became understood as spiritual acts in themselves. Samuel Edgerton notes, "the Latin word for mirror, *speculum*, [became] almost a synonym for 'divine revelation'" (27). Edgerton continues to describe the link between *perspectiva* and theology in Italy:

> By the end of the thirteenth century Christian theologians everywhere in Western Europe began to believe that the new geometric science of *perspectiva* not only provided the key to how God spreads his divine grace to mankind, but how he conceived the universe itself in his divine mind's eye at Genesis. (Edgerton 29)

Geometric thinking, the basis of triangulation, then, was a major spiritual activity that was being conceived on and off the painter's canvas, making footholds in theology and, as Petrarch's poetry shows, in literary discourse itself.

Petrarch's poems produce visual space in the way God and the heavens, the seat of divinity and the place of Laura's preservation, establish themselves as the dramatic vanishing point of his poetry, forcing Petrarch to consistently wrestle, even in the throes of amorous sadness and joy, with the divine consequences of his love, repentance, and poetic talent. Lefebvre, writing at a great ideological distance from the Christian narrative of repentance that drives Petrarch's work, explains how art can be capable of such a balance:

> What is the fantasy of art? To lead out of what is present, out of what is close, out of representations of space, into what is further into nature, into symbols, into representational spaces…The flouting of established spatial codes and the eruption of a natural and cosmic fertility generate an extraordinary and dizzying 'infinitization' of meaning. Somewhere short of accepted symbolisms, but beyond everyday meanings, a sanctifying power comes into play which is neither that of the state, nor that of the church, nor that of the artist, nor that of theological divinity, but rather that of a naturalness boldly identified with divine transcendence. (231-232)

Lefebvre, speaking mainly of modern art, offers us a way of understanding the political potential of the *spatial practice* of Petrarch's art as it came to travel through Western Europe in the centuries following his death.[11] Petrarch's imitability, his resonance with the poetic minds of the sixteenth century, came in many ways through the way his poems proliferated different meanings and could be used for diverse purposes. Narratives of Petrarch's use by European communities in the sixteenth century have tended to focus on Petrarch mainly as a literary model for vernacular eloquence and poetic seduction.[12] This emphasis is backed up by the coinciding of Petrarchism's

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[11] Lefebvre notes that "The *object* of knowledge is, precisely, the fragmented and uncertain connection between elaborated representations of space on the one hand and representational spaces...on the other; and this 'object' implies (and explains) a *subject*--that subject in whom lived, perceived, and conceived (known) come together within a spatial practice" (230).

[12] Leonard Forster, for instance, argues "the impact of Petrarch's Italian poetry on the literatures of Western Europe coincides with attempts in these various literatures to find a new poetic diction" (61). Gordon Braden highlights the seduction and licentiousness that became part of the

fashionability with the expanding of Renaissance vernacular projects in France, England, Spain, and elsewhere. Yet, the pathways of Petrarchan imitation and transmission were also the pathways between European nations. Petrarchism was not simply an intellectual movement in Europe, but a literary system carried by hand across nations: a system increasingly invested in the concept of Europe as a space where national and theological competition sought to reshape the boundaries between European nations and communities. While Dante would offer his ultimate prophetic vision in a lengthy narrative poem, Petrarch offers, in what he refers to as scattered lyrics or *rime sparse*, shorter lyrical prophetic utterances that would offer a model to later generations on how divine and prophetic spaces could be created in shorter poems outside of the constraint of longer, grand narratives. Petrarch and the imitators and translators of his *Canzoniere* 323 reveal how a singular or brief series of visions can enrich lyric poetry with the spiritual and historical potential of longer narrative poetic forms such as epic, romance, or the hybrid genres present in the *Commedia,* Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, or Milton's *Paradise Lost*. As *Canzoniere* 323 traveled from Italy to Clément Marot, Joachim du Bellay, Jan Van der Noot, and Edmund Spenser, a visionary and prophetic network of Petrarchan influence expanded with it through Western Europe.

III. Transnational Petrarchisms: Marot and Du Bellay

Petrarchan legacy in the sixteenth century: "Sixteenth-century Petrarchan poems…tend to become, more obviously and confidently than their originals, seduction poems. That indeed became sonneteering's mainstream reputation; Petrarch's legacy seems to many one of dangerous sexual license…" (109).

Roland Greene, in *Unrequited Conquests,* offers a vision of politically-invested Petrarchism based on European imperial ambitions. He writes "the discourse of love is not simply interpersonal, as one might expect, but political and imperial, and Petrarchism, the convention of writing about unrequited love…is one of the original colonial discourses" (1). Greene's vision of a transnational Petrarchism emphasizes the bold spatial ambition of early modern poetry as he notes that islands and fictions relish "an internal consistency, an absolute differentiation from their surroundings, the possibility of having the existential status of a world, and, on the reader's or visitor's part, the need for a strategy of mediation between mainland and island, world and fiction, here and there" (7). I want to build on Greene's idea of poetic fictions becoming involved in the process of a world making based on the bridging of various points of alterity. My main departure from Greene will be from his emphasis on the colonial rather than intra-European nature of this alterity, as Greene lays it out here:

> The unrealized but nonetheless provocative gesture toward alterity in these poems goes to show why they travel restlessly throughout Europe, across the Atlantic, and beyond. If sixteenth-century lyric poets are in love, we might say, it is in part with the idea of scrambling cultural identifications, speaking out of historical and social voice, making love to an imagined black or Indian other…(15).

Greene's emphasis on the alterity present in Petrarchist discourse is important but the work he does in *Unrequited Conquests* to show how national contexts shaped Petrarchism can limit our understanding of Renaissance European poetry.[13] Critics cannot track the full import of Petrarch's words to sixteenth-century subjects without crossing national boundaries. Greene's

[13] See Greene *Unrequited Conquests* 20-33.

emphasis on imperialism as his guiding metaphor for Petrarchan transmission across boundaries may risk excluding some narratives of how Petrarch was used by communities across Europe.

By emphasizing, in the previous section, the anti-worldly aspect of Petrarch's poetry, I hope to move beyond discourses of desire and unrequited love as well as of the colonial afterlife of Petrarchan discourse in the New World. *Canzoniere* 323, and its spatial interests that triangulate divine infinity, the past in ruins, and the fallen present, would become an important and resonant poem for poets working during the European Reformation. Clément Marot translated this poem in *La Suite de l'Adolescence Clémentine* published in either late 1533 or early 1534. The poem appears under the title "Le chant des visions de Petrarque, translaté de Italien en Françoys par le commendement du Roy," a title which emphasizes the Franco-Italian transnationalism of the work while also crediting King François I with his encouragement of French Petrarchism.[14] The Europe to which Marot offered this collection was just beginning to feel the weight of the Protestant Reformation. In the months that followed the volume's publication, King Henry VIII in England would break with Rome in November of that year and the Affaire des Placards (October 17-18, 1534) took place in which statements against the Mass were posted in Paris and some provincial cities. The most famous anti-Catholic posting of the affair came when one of the anti-Catholic posters was placed on the King's bedroom door at Amboise. Marot could not escape being identified with the movement and so fled first to Bordeaux, then to Navarre, under the rule of Queen Marguerite de Valois, the King's sister

[14] François Rigolot notes in his edition of Marot that "Marot rend ici hommage au rôle déterminant que joua François Ier dans le développement du pétrarquisme en France" [Marot here gives homage to the essential role François I played in the development of Petrarchism in France] (587).

whose "Le miroir de l'ame pécheresse" had just been published that year.[15] Marguerite, though never openly a Protestant, was known for her Protestant sympathies and, after her death, her daughter Jeanne d'Albret promptly converted to Calvinism, perhaps suggesting the household's tolerance for Calvinist ideas. Deciding that Marot, after being officially condemned in Paris by default in 1535, would be better off out of France entirely, Marguerite suggested that Marot seek refuge in Italy under the rule of Renée de France, the Duchess of Ferrara. He took her advice.

Marot's translation of Petrarch, then, came at a time of outward ideological rebellion in Marot's life that would reflect the coming of transnational exchange, reform, repression, and renewal throughout Europe. Though Marot's translation does not make any radical departures from Petrarch's original text, he does offer a modified ending that emphasizes the sort of triangulation at play in the *Canzoniere*. Petrarch's original closes with his saying to his song: "Canzon, tu puoi ben dire: / 'Queste sei visioni al signor mio / àn fatto un dolce di morir desio'" ["Song, you can well say: 'these six visions have made in my lord a sweet desire to die'"] (323.73-75). The emphasis is on the sweetness of leaving the living in order to die and finally be out of reach of the world's inconstancy. Though the implication of this would be for Petrarch to die, be buried, and leave the pain of mortal living, this is all contained implicitly in his sweet desire for death. Marot makes this far more manifest in his version:

> O chanson myenne, en tes conclusions
> Dy hardement: ces six grans visions
> À monseigneur donnent ung doulx desir
> De briefvement soubz la terre gesir. (73-76)

[15] Queen Elizabeth I would translate this poem into English, suggesting the Protestant leanings that could be found within it.

> [O my song, in your conclusions, say boldly: these six great visions give
> my lord a sweet desire to soon be laid under the earth.]

By making Petrarch's ending tercet become a quatrain Marot gives up, at the very last minute, the opportunity to have his poem mirror that of Petrarch's in terms of line-length (Petrarch's poem has 75 lines, that of Marot has 76). François Rigolot argues that the "monseigneur" which Marot offers in place of Petrarch's "al signor mio" is a direct signal to François I and makes the poem a *miroir du prince* (588). What these lines do reveal is a moment in which Marot bursts out of the direct frame of his Petrarchan subject matter to underscore what in the text is the most important for him: the desire, after observing the six visions, to leave the present terrestrial world and join the subterranean community of the dead (and thereby reach transcendence to the infinite and the divine). This triangulating gesture between the earth, the subterranean, and the infinite becomes emphasized in the spatial vocabulary of Marot's translation. Marot's potentially provocative innovation is to change Petrarch's "sweet desire to die" into a "sweet desire to briefly lie under the earth." "Briefvement" here has a sort of double meaning. The more faithful to the Petrarchan context is "shortly"—the "monseigneur" has a desire to be under the earth quickly. Yet "briefvement" can also mean briefly, revealing a temporary stay under the earth. As the poem offers such a temporary experience, bringing the reader through visions of mortality, mutability, and the fickleness of the world into a desire to die and to rest under the earth, it eschews the worldly in favor of the divine.

Marot's translation of *Canzoniere* 323, deracinated and isolated from the rest of the *Canzoniere* in *La Suite de l'Adolescence Clémentine,* serves as a political and philosophical statement of purpose. It argues that these visions, by the very act of their translation, are needed at one of the most tempestuous times in French religious history. As Marot was also involved

with translations of the Psalms into French, he had a taste for translation with spiritual and political resonance and his work on *Canzoniere* 323 was no different. The afterlife of this translation would be significant. The poem, and the French, transnational, antiworldly Petrarchism it offered to European readers, would not only help to shape Joachim du Bellay, a poet who had no great admiration for Marot, but also the Flemish poet Jan Van der Noot and, eventually, Edmund Spenser. Du Bellay would cement Petrarch's idea of a portable Rome—made portable by the rendering into poetry of the Roman ruins' spiritual effects and voices. In *Les Antiquitez de Rome*, one finds echoes of Petrarch's engagement with "l'aspetto sacro" of Rome, but, in line with the intense historical and geographic investigations going on in sixteenth-century western Europe, Du Bellay is able to produce a body of Roman poetry that itself is a model of vernacular Petrarchism in French while also extending Petrarch's transnational vision to offer a poetry that can do the work of theology, archaeology, and geography through the scope of its vision.

Joachim Du Bellay's Roman poetry is obsessed with the distance between his native Anjou and Rome, as well as the difference between the glories of ancient Rome and the dilapidated state of present Rome. Du Bellay's lyric voice travels across spaces to offer a model of the French Petrarchan sonnet that is not focused on love for a woman or even for one's poetic destiny, but on digging deep into archeological and philological terrain. Du Bellay had gone to Rome in the service of Jean Du Bellay, a prominent cardinal and cousin to Joachim Du Bellay's father. His trip, consequent on Jean Du Bellay's recent appointment as *Protecteur des affaires royales en cour de Rome*, reflected France's ambition to take its seat as the next great empire, an era, the French hoped, would renew the imperial presence of France in a way that had not been seen since the days of Charlemagne. For Du Bellay though, his voyage to Rome was a meditative

journey to the literary past of Roman antiquity, an extended imaginative engagement with the distant, though present in ruins, ghosts of Roman literature.[16]

Yet Du Bellay's poetry does not focus greatly on France's imperial future, as aspects of his *Déffence* had. Rather Rome is a symbolic site for repentance, poetic renewal, and an engagement with the cultural foundations of Europe. In his *"*Romae Descriptio", a Latin elegy published alongside his French Roman poetry, Du Bellay lays out a vision of anti-worldliness caught up in the permanence of the Latin language in the face of Rome's destruction:

> Caetera tempus edax longis tegit obruta seclis,
>
> Ipsaque nunc tumulus mortua Roma sui est.
>
> Disce hinc humanis quae sit fiducia rebus:
>
> Hic tanti cursus tam brevis imperii.
>
> Roma ingens periit, vivit Maro doctus ubique,
>
> Et vivunt Latiae fila canora lyrae. (129-134)
>
> [Devouring time buries the rest under long ages, and Rome dead is now her own tomb. Learn from this what faith one can put in human things. So brief is the course of such power. Enormous Rome has perished. Learned Virgil lives everywhere, and the harmonious chords of the Latin lyre live on.][17]

Du Bellay juxtaposes the ongoing presence of Latin lyric with the complete absence of intact Roman culture. Du Bellay's poem ends with a declaration that: "sola virum virtus caeli super

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[16] Eric MacPhail's *The Voyage to Rome in French Renaissance Literature* is my major source for Du Bellay's time in Rome.

[17] These and all translations from Du Bellay's Latin verse are by Helgerson. All translations from French are my own.

ardua tollit, / virtutem caelo solaque Musa beat" (147-148) [only virtue can lift man above the heights of heaven, and only the Muse blesses virtue with heaven's joys]. Though he believes in the poem that there is chance his efforts will outlast the ravages of time ("forte etiam vivent nostri monumenta laboris, / caetera cum domino sunt peritura suo" (145-146) [Perhaps the monuments of our labor will indeed live on, while the rest will perish with its master]), he knows man may only hope for the same through virtue. In one meditative poetic act, the buried past, the present remains, and the eternal legacy of transcendent poetic talent become collated in one vision.

Rome, then, becomes itself a meditative space where Du Bellay contemplates time, space, and eternity. The poet finds himself disappointed with the state of the remnants of Rome that, as Gilbert Gadoffre notes, was not at all well preserved (47).[18] There was simply not much to see except "some columns, some crumbling walls" which "did not suffice to evoke the capital of the ancient world. It required an effort of the mind" (48). The vernacular project with which Petrarch and the painters of his age participated, then, also played a role in Du Bellay's work. In the absence of a Rome worthy of itself, only a filtering through the poetic imagination can make any sense of what should be a momentous location. As Rome was, in Du Bellay's time, "the only city one could call international" (Gadoffre 45), Du Bellay would have been connected to a

[18] Gadoffre notes: "the Roman city that we can see today, after four centuries of excavations, of restorations, is still underground [in Du Bellay's time]. We must completely forget about the city we know to imagine that which was Du Bellay's Rome." The original French is: "La cité romaine que nous pouvons voir aujourd'hui, après quatre siècles de fouilles, d'excavations, de restaurations, est encore sous terre. Il faut l'oublier complètement pour imaginer ce qu'était la Rome de Du Bellay" (47).

transnational community as he wrote in the transnational form of the Petrarchan lyric. Yet his preoccupation in terms of what he lacks is not a beloved lady, but a beloved land and a beloved past, both separated from him by terrain and time. The horizontal terrain that separates him from France and the vertical terrain that buries the true Rome conspire in Du Bellay's work to form a productive, and thoroughly Petrarchan melancholia. As he debates these various distances that came to define his time in Rome, his interest in the spiritual consequences of the passage of time comes to shape his transnational and trans-temporal discourse as well. *Les Antiquitez de Rome*, published alongside *Les Regrets* and the collection of Latin elegies, the *Poemata*, deals with this triangulation of the buried past of Rome, Du Bellay's distant past in France, and the Christian hope for eternal life beyond it all.

The *Antiquitez* deal with the re-imagining of spaces and the remarkable reach into the dead and the historical past that his poems continually perform. As Thomas Greene notes, Du Bellay's work owes this to the humanist culture of his day, one possessing "this instinct to reach out into chaos, oblivion, mystery, the alien, the subterranean, the dead, even the demonic, to reach out and in the act of reaching already to be revising and restoring" (235). Du Bellay depended on his poetic imagination to fill out the Roman landscape. Though the ruins are real, their accessibility, as Gadoffre noted, was not yet realized in a Renaissance Roman culture that had little respect for conservation and built and demolished freely on the sacred antique ground. Confronted with this disappointing landscape, Du Bellay works to reconstruct the culture of the space itself, providing a sort of ethnography of the Roman ruins—which are themselves largely not visible to the eye, though they can be accessed through imaginative poetic construction and reading. The fifth sonnet of the *Antiquitez* reveals how little there may be to learn with the untrained eye in Rome:

Qui voudra voir tout ce qu'ont peu nature,
L'art, et le ciel, Rome, te vienne voir:
J'entens s'il peult ta grandeur concevoir
Par ce qui n'est que ta morte peinture.
Rome n'est plus, et si l'architecture
Quelque umbre encor de Rome fait revoir,
C'est comme un corps par magique sçavoir
Tiré de nuict hors de sa sepulture. (1-8)
[Who wants to see all that nature, art, and heaven have, Rome, should come see you. I understand if he can conceive of your grandeur only by your dead portrait. Rome is no more and if architecture reveals still some shadow of Rome, it's like a corpse by magical knowledge pulled at night from its sepulchre.]

Du Bellay imagines the trained mind as able to descend vertically through the layers of earth heaped up by time. Du Bellay is offering an archaeology of the mind: a poetic method for processing layered spaces.

Hassan Melehy sees Du Bellay's consideration of the Roman ruins as a "contribution to the inauguration of modernity." He notes that "the translation or transfer that takes place in imitation involves a multilingual dialogue with the past that at once affirms the impossibility of resurrecting it and allows it to persist in the different creations to which its elements will contribute in the present." (28) Melehy believes that in the absence of the ruins themselves, a modern poetics of literary transfer continually re-enacted the Roman past. Melehy argues that Du

Bellay's work is interested in bringing the Roman ruins into the vernacular present.[19] He also emphasizes the transnational importance of Rome as a city where all European cultures were brought together and argues quite compellingly that Du Bellay sees time as a sort of river that "is indeed a flow, one in which each configuration may refer to an antecedent one in producing its own meaning, but may not reproduce or depend on it in order to be firmly fixed" (44). [20]

Where I depart slightly from Melehy's reading of Du Bellay's Roman poetry is in its insistence that Du Bellay's treatment of Rome remains a nationalistic French project and a modernizing project.[21] Though Du Bellay remains fascinated by the distance between France and

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[19] Melehy argues "rather than reproducing or copying the original, imitation repeats it, repeats it as a simulacrum so as to insist on the difference between itself and what is being imitated, to affirm itself as in and part of the context of the present, to inform and form the present" (29). I am building on Melehy's assertions to argue that this constant presentism results in a collective anti-worldly movement in Western Europe.

[20] For a description of Rome as a cosmopolitan city see Melehy 41. Melehy continues to argue that "In this succession of different configurations of Rome that the poem discovers, the ruins or antiquities of Rome don't function as the historic Rome or even as a clear representation of that city from which the poet may derive inspiration..." (44).

[21] Melehy writes: "The interpretation of the ruins of Rome is of value to Du Bellay because it enables the notion of poetry as actually productive of a simulacrum, so that an image of glory for France may be created by the same token that such an image of Rome has been. That Rome's uniqueness consists in its having been able to produce an image of this sort makes it possible for such production to be repeated as a simulacrum" (47). Melehy continues: "Du Bellay must be regarded as a thoroughly modern poet: his work seeks a continuity with a venerated past in order

Italy, and the distance between the past and his own age, the distance, rather than the innovative potential of the present, becomes for Du Bellay the animating force of his sequence. George Tucker, in his study of Du Bellay, emphasizes the importance of traversing distances for Du Bellay when he notes "the impression of spatial and temporal progression through a geographic, spiritual, and literary odyssey, largely undistorted by later rewriting, is the very hallmark of Du Bellay's poetic *persona*" (15). Tucker's assertion that Du Bellay in Rome entered into a kind of Ovidian exile is useful. Like Ovid, Du Bellay was forced to carve out a poetics far away from his homeland and, like Ovid, Du Bellay was able to enrich the literature of his nation while having a vexed and distant relationship with it.

Though Du Bellay was not exactly an exile and we have no record of him being cast out for "carmen et error" [a poem and an error] in the Ovidian model, the spatial dynamics of the *Antiquitez* do show Du Bellay as obsessed with liminality. Du Bellay's poetic voice is one always caught between ages, between landscapes, and between the mutable and the eternal. In the "Au Roy" dedication at the beginning of the *Antiquitez*, Du Bellay offers a sort of *ars poetica* of his Roman poetry:

> Ne vous pouvant donner ces ouvrages antiques
> Pour votre Sainct-Germain, ou pour Fontainebleau,
> Je les vous donne, Sire, en ce petit tableau
> Peint, le mieux que j'ay peu, de couleurs poëtiques. (1-4)

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to effect a break with it, such that movement in time toward the future is recognized and engaged" (50).

> [Unable to give you these ancient works for Saint-Germain or
> Fontainebleau, I give them to you, Sire, in this little painting, painted the
> best that I could in poetic colors.]

Here the link between lyric and picture making, which we saw briefly treated above in the *Canzoniere*, becomes apparent in Du Bellay's work as well. Poetry becomes an adequate visual substitute for an inaccessible and unmoving space and becomes a moveable space operating in a similar fashion to a painted image. The imperial vision in the *Antiquitez* is one caught up in the challenge of representing and studying space in art. By producing a body of work that renders the Roman legacy portable, Du Bellay's poems see the ruins as a meditation on the spiritual practice of meditating on space, as becomes clear in Sonnet 26 of the sequence:

> Qui voudroit figurer la Romaine grandeur
> En ses dimensions, il ne luy faudroit querre
> A la ligne, et au plomb, au compas, à l'equerre
> Sa longueur et largeur, hautesse et profondeur. (1-4)
> [Who would like to represent the grandeur of Rome in its own dimensions,
> it would not be necessary for him to use the line, the lead, or the compass,
> to square its length and width, height and depth.]

The true measure of Rome cannot be made with traditional methods of measurement. Surveying tools will not work. Yet Du Bellay, in rejecting the tools of surveying, still declares the sort of figuring done by surveying to be his main goal. There is a cartographic and pictorial drive to his work that wants to process the ruins through representation, but, because of the spiritual import of the land and its burial under piles of dust, a new form of surveying will have to be invented to

encompass Rome's immense cultural importance. Du Bellay's solution is to engage in the sort of triangulated perspective we saw in Petrarch, one that is created in moving between his position as observer, in digging down into the ruins, and in expanding outwards towards distant places:

> Il luy faudroit cerner d'une egale rondeur
> Tout ce que l'Ocean de ses longs bras enserre,
> Soit où l'Astre annuel eschauffe plus la terre,
> Soit où souffle Aquilon sa plus grande froideur.
> Rome fut tout le monde, et tout le monde est Rome.
> Et si par mesmes noms mesmes choses on nomme,
> Comme du nom Rome on se pourroit passer,
> La nommant par le nom de la terre et de l'onde:
> Ainsi le monde on peult sur Rome compasser,
> Puis que le plan de Rome est la carte du monde. (5-14)
> [He must encircle with an equal roundness everything that the Ocean encloses with its long arms, whether it be where the yearly star warms the earth the most, whether it be where the north wind blows its greatest chill. Rome was the entire world and the entire world is Rome. And if we call the same things by the same names, we could likewise dispense with the name "Rome," naming her by the name of the earth of the sea: thus one can encompass the world with Rome, since the map of Rome is the map of the world.]

Rome and the world are put in a reflexive relationship, folding into each other in the lines of the poem. One can only represent the world through representing Rome, and to accurately map

Rome one must go out to the world. This may seem hyperbolic or part of a topos of praise, but the fate of Rome and the fate of the world would have seemed immensely linked to this French poet finding himself in the faraway, cosmopolitan city. When Du Bellay arrived there in 1553, his work there was cast against a legacy of war and competition between his native France and Italy, England, Spain, and the Netherlands. Rome, with its classical legacy, was a dynamic place to look for methods of processing the past, reforming the present, and understanding the theological stakes of the nationalism and imperialism of Western Europe.[22] [23]

Du Bellay's poems combine the humanist work of remembering and reviving the glorious Roman past with the transnational Petrarchan project of creating a lyric discourse that can answer national and personal uncertainty. Du Bellay was not faced with an inspiring Rome, rather, Rome deeply shook up his life and presented to Du Bellay a vision of "the somber future of a divided Europe where the theocrats of Rome and of Geneva were equally horrifying to this Frenchman, a Europe where the Counter-Reformation was not yet clearly defined and where the oracles of the street announced a grand Renewal, or the end of world" (Gadoffre 83-84). In this sense, the *Antiquitez* that had dealt with the collation of past and present, with the ruins of Rome, reflected the fact that the ruins were being excavated in order to build new edifices.[24] The spatial

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[22] See Gaddofre 45.

[23] For more on the intensity of Rome's effect on Du Bellay's political view of Europe, see Gadoffre 45-84.

[24] Du Bellay addresses this in sonnet 27 of the *Antiquitez*: "Regarde apres, comme de jour en jour/ Rome fouillant son antique sejour,/ Se rebatist de tant d'oeuvre divines" [See next, how day by day Rome digging through its old dwelling, rebuilds itself in so many divine works.] (9-11).

vision of the *Antiquitez* involved a constant plunging downward, upward, and outward: down into the ruins of Rome, up to the present and out to sixteenth-century Europe. Infinity, time, and salvation—the ability for the soul to outlast earthly decay in union with God—is never far from the *Antiquitez*. Yet, the *Songe* that follows the *Antiquitez* makes manifest, through a series of poetic visions, what the earlier sequence left rather more implicit.

The *Songe,* which has been considered one of the most obscure poetic sequences in French poetry, expands the spatial meditation on the past found in the *Antiquitez*: the interplay between the hidden spaces of Roman antiquity, the less impressive current Rome, and the space between France and Italy.[25] The *Songe* closes the *Antiquitez* by pushing the visionary forces in the previous poems into a prophetic mode that explicitly engages in the mediation of heaven and the earth, of past and present, and of the mutable and the infinite. Like Petrarch's *Canzoniere* 323, the *Songe* emerges as a melancholic and anti-worldly series of visions. Critics have long recognized the *Songe*'s roots in the *canzone* and have seen this as an important moment in Du Bellay's humanism.[26] Yet, this inter-textual moment contains within it an important continuation of the Petrarchan vision in a way that, as contained in Marot's translation of the *canzone*, was able to speak to a Europe in religious crisis.

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[25] Gadoffre notes that "Avec la *Délie* de Scève et la 'Prose pour des Esseintes' de Mallarmé, la séquence du *Songe*...est un des textes poétiques les plus obscurs du répertoire français" [With the *Délie* of Scève and the "Prose pour des Esseintes" of Mallarmé, the *Songe* sequence is one of the most obscure poetic texts of the French repertoire] (151).

[26] See Barkan 27-34.

In the *Antiquitez*, Du Bellay was constantly looking downward and outward. In the *Songe*, he is ordered, as his readers are, to look at the vanishing point of his poetic project, out to the infinite:

> Quand un Demon apparut à mes yeux
> dessus le bord du grande fleuve de Rome,
> qui m'appelant de nom dont je me nomme,
> me commanda regarder vers les cieux. (*Songe* l. 5-8)
> [When a spirit appeared to my eyes on the bank of the great river of Rome, who, calling me by the name with which I name myself, ordered me to look toward the heavens.]

Confronted in his dream by a spirit, Du Bellay observes the Tiber only to be ordered to look beyond towards the heavens. The scene of this poem is one familiar to Renaissance paintings such as Raphael's *The Marriage of the Virgin* (1502) or *Il Spasimo* (1517). A scene in a classical landscape, two figures recast in contemporary dress, and with a reminder of eternity, the vanishing point, the image draws the observer's eye through the collation of past and present towards the infinite. Though the *Songe* is a series of anti-worldly visions, the major vision is something always beyond what is in the fore ground, it's the invisible eternity that is always behind the displays of "mondaine inconstance"—worldly inconstancy—towards which the poem reaches. The prevalence of river imagery is important, as the flow of the Tiber becomes a guiding image for the flow of time, a concept important to Du Bellay's sense of time, as both Gadoffre and Melehy underscore.[27] The river is fixed, still there, and yet the water within it is never the same. The river itself becomes a symbol in space for the triangulation at the heart of

[27] See Gadoffre 166 and Melehy 44.

this sort of Petrarchan poetry: it brings forth the past through its continued survival, is full of water which is of the present day, and is always flowing off towards the future, ever changing and yet ever a part of the past and the present.

Water features frequently in the *Songe*. In Sonnet 10, we see a river bearing witness to a triangulation of past, present, and future with a prophetic emphasis characteristic of the *Songe*:

> Sur la rive d'un fleuve une Nymphe esploree
> croisant les bras au ciel avec mille sanglotz
> accordoit ceste plainte au murmure des flotz,
> oultrageant son beau teinct, et sa tresse doree:
> las où est maintenant ceste face honoree,
> où est ceste grandeur, et cet antique los,
> où tout l'heur et l'honneur du monde fut enclos,
> quand des hommes j'estois, et des Dieux adoree?
> N'estoit-ce pas assez que le discord mutin
> m'eut fait de tout le monde un publique butin,
> si cet Hydre nouveau digne de cent Hercules,
> foisonnant en sept chefz de vices monstrueux
> ne m'engendroit encor à ces bords tortueux
> tant de cruelz Nerons, et tant de Caligules?
> [On the bank of a river a tearful nymph, crossing her arms to heaven with
> a thousand sobs bestowed this complaint to the murmur of the stream,
> tearing her beautiful skin and her golden braids: "Alas where is now that
> honored face, where is that grandeur and that ancient praise, where all the

> happiness and honor of the world was kept, when by men and by Gods I was adored? Was it not enough that the rebellious discord had made me an object of despoliation for all the world, but that this new Hydra (worthy of a hundred Hercules), spawning seven heads full of monstrous evils, has also engendered on these winding banks so many cruel Neros and Caligulas?]

This vision, of a nymph representing Rome weeping by a river, immediately collates past and present, as we've seen throughout the *Antiquitez*. Yet, the "divins esprits" that Du Bellay sought in the first sonnet of that sequence are actually placed in front of him in the *Songe*. The classical is placed into the present time, the present time enriched by the presence of the classical. The temporal folding of past and present, yet again in Du Bellay's poetry, turns to the anti-worldly. The nymph laments the loss of her city's grandeur, the looting and sacking it had to endure by invaders, and the papal empire building itself in its place, full of the vices and corruption Du Bellay found so appalling. The poem proceeds as a narrative of changing spaces and changing times and ends by underscoring how the current world is still caught up in decay and mutability.

In the pictorial world of the *Songe*, what is off in the distance, what comes from the vanishing point, is often the most destructive. In Sonnet 12 of the sequence, a beautiful fountain is surrounded by a hundred nymphs in a place where "sembloit que nature et l'art eussent pris peine / D'assembler en un lieu tous les plaisirs de l'oeil" [it seemed that nature and art had taken care to assemble in one place all the pleasures of the eye] (5-6). Du Bellay is offering us painterly composition in a thoroughly classical setting of nymphs and shiny ivory benches ("Les sièges…luissaient d'ivoire blanc" (9)). When from the distant hills, a group of Fauns assembles on the scene with loud cries ("Quand des monts plus prochains de Faunes une suyte / En

effroyables criz sur lieu s'assembla" (11-12)). The resulting destruction (the nymphs are all chased away and the beautiful streams muddied by the fauns' villainous feet) is a reminder of worldly inconstancy. Yet it advances the spatial interventions that are at the heart of Du Bellay's project: to resuscitate classical imagery in such a way as to include the conditions of its destruction. By creating poetic visions that juxtapose creation and destruction, classical beauty and the tragedy of the decay of Roman antiquity, Du Bellay is able to make poetic gestures towards the infinite and the divine, enriching his sequence with a spiritual progression similar to that of Petrarch in the *Canzoniere*.

The visions presented in the *Songe* offer a transcendent spirituality. Critical of Roman excess and yet not fully engaged in the process of reform, they offer a set of visions and poetic spaces where the past can be seen through the needs of the present. This was obviously the goal of humanism but was also profoundly at the center of the Reformation. How could early modern subjects know that they were following what Christ and the Fathers of the Church had intended? Poetic vision, far more than disputative theology or political tracts, allowed poets to work out an uncertain and liminal position. Just as in countless quattrocento and cinquecento paintings in which the Holy Family is surrounded by classical ruins and foregrounded by a dramatic vanishing point situated between the infinite horizon and heavens, Du Bellay's poetry, free from the trappings of pictorial representation, uses poetic vision as a way of imagining access to the infinite without making a clear doctrinal position. The ending of the *Songe*, where Rome in the role of the Whore of Babylon is struck down, conveys a critique of the Church in Rome and yet offers a vision of retribution with no clear replacement:

> Cent Roys vaincuz gemissoient à ses piedz,
> Les bras aux doz honteusement liez:

> Lors effroyé de voir telle merveille,
> Le ciel encore je lui voy guerroyer,
> Puis tout à coup je la voy fouldroyer,
> Et du grand bruit en sursault je m'esveille (*Songe* 15.9-14)
> [A hundred defeated kings lay at her feet, their arms shamefully bound to their backs: When, frightened to see such a marvel, I saw her again wage war against heaven, then suddenly I saw her struck down and with that great noise I woke up with a start.]

Du Bellay stages in this poem a vision of Rome's defeat cast through references to Revelations 17.[28] Rome is the symbol of past glory, of current corruption and decay, and of the futility of warring against the heavens. The usual collation of past and present is there in a dramatic assemblage, the defeated kings represent the imperial glory of Rome, coming packaged implicitly with the literary and cultural exceptionalism of Imperial Rome, and yet the pride of Rome is also at the forefront finally being punished by the heavens. The verb "fouldroyer", coming from "foudre" which means lightning, emphasizes the divine providence that strikes prideful Rome down. The vanishing point, the distant symbol of infinity, comes to the foreground in this closing poem of the sequence. Yet what remains to take its place is denied us; we see an allegorical destruction that is free from any clear image of reform.

Presented time after time with the right city but the wrong (and decayed) age, Du Bellay turned to a Petrarchan space: he speaks with Rome from the present in order to understand the nature of the infinite. Burdened by the Reformation in a way Petrarch was too early in history to know, Du Bellay's infinite is more startling, more visionary, and devoid of the devotional and

[28] See Helgerson 295.

somewhat orthodox tone of the closing poems of the *Canzoniere*. The infinite, the divine, and the providential, all powerful in the *Canzoniere* as Petrarch moves from Laura to the Virgin Mary, become the focal points of Du Bellay's work. Yet to what end? What can really be said about Du Bellay's religious affiliation?

That Du Bellay left Rome to return to France through Geneva has led to frequent speculation that Du Bellay was a Huguenot or at least a Nicodemist, hiding his true reformed faith under the guise of being a loyal Catholic. Yet, as Gilbert Gadoffre persuasively argues, one of the most influential spiritual movements in France at the time was Gallicanism, a Catholic movement dedicated to reforming the French church from within and avoiding too much interference from Rome and from foreign bishops.[29] The movement was nationalistic and somewhat ecumenical, seeking common ground between Catholics and the Huguenots united under a vision of a united French faith.[30] Jean Du Bellay, with whom Du Bellay spent his time in Rome, had praised the church to the king himself. He wrote to Henry II: "Your Gallican Church is that which today is the greatest, most complete, and least contaminated of those which touch the faith and its customs" (cited in Gadoffre 207). So while the *Songe* has often been read as a meditation on France's imperial and literary identity in the face of the legacy of Classical Rome, and these elements are certainly present in the work, the sequence emerges as an answer to the shifting national and religious identities of Du Bellay's day.[31] Rome as fallen is not just the

[29] See Gadoffre 195-196.

[30] See Gadoffre 197-208.

[31] Hassan Melehy, turning to Freud, notes that in Du Bellay's work "The poet can't bring back ancient Rome; writing about it, as Du Bellay does in the *Antiquitez* and the *Songe*, will allow an

reminder of a past empire that challenges the present to match its glory, it is an ongoing space in which to dwell, in which to have visions, and in which to stage poems that challenge sectarian and national divisions by creating the triangulation between the classical past, the vernacular present, and the infinite divine.

IV: Northern Visions of Rome: Van der Noot and Spenser

Jan Van der Noot, despite being one of the most famous Flemish noblemen in the sixteenth century, remains a surprisingly mysterious figure. His faith, especially, has been a subject of speculation by scholars for quite some time. Van der Noot, known to Spenser scholars as the author of a Calvinist tract that would include some of Spenser's early translations, was not born a Calvinist and his Protestant identity may have been quite fresh by the time he arrived in London by the end of March 1567. W.A.P. Smit notes that the most likely time for Van der Noot to have become a Calvinist was in 1566, perhaps less than a year before he found himself in London. Though Van der Noot himself notes that he fled the Low Countries "as well for that I would not beholde the abhominations of the Romyshe Antechrist, as to escape the handes of the bloudthirsty" (*A Theatre for Worldlings* A.iii), he seems to have also fled Antwerp at a time when his own political goals within the Calvinist Consistory had become frustrated.[32] Whatever

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affirmation of its having fallen into the ruin of the past and of the efficacy of present-day poetry" (69).

[32] Explaining the history of Van der Noot's arrival in London and his conversion, Smit writes: "Nu is hij schepen geweest van 1562-1563 en van 1565-1566, zodat zijn overgang tot het

his reasons, Van der Noot arrived in London at a particularly tense period in the Low Countries. In the months leading up to his flight to London, there were increasing tensions in the Low Countries as Calvinist preachers clashed with the Catholic Church and the Duke of Alba began to consolidate power. In 1567, shortly after Van der Noot was in London, Alba took control of Brussels and would eventually, by 1570, put down the first stage of the Dutch Revolt.

From the context of his departure, we can speculate that Van der Noot's Calvinism was connected to, if not entirely motivated by, his political and national ambitions at the time. While in London, he published what could be called his *Theatre* trilogy: three versions of the same work in French, Flemish, and English. The volumes feature a translation of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* 323 alongside Du Bellay's *Songe* (either in its original French or translated into Flemish or English in the respective edition) and some of Van der Noot's original poetry based on the Revelations of St. John. Following these poems, each accompanied by a woodcut depicting the vision of the poem, is a long Calvinist prose tract. In preparing the English

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Calvinisme niet vóór 1563 kàn en waarschijnlijk zelfs op 1566 moet worden gesteld. In ieder geval maakt Van der Noot bij de woelingen te Antwerpen in het begin van 1567 deel uit van het Calvinistische Consistorie…De poging tot een gewelddadige omzetting van het gezag loopt echter op een volkomen fiasco uit, en nog voor het einde der maand Maart blijkt Van der Noot reeds uitgeweken naar Londen" [Now he was in transit in 1562-1563 and in 1565-1566, so his conversion to Calvinism can not be before 1563 and should perhaps not be before 1566. In any case, Van der Noot was part of the turbulence in Antwerp in early 1567 and it even seems that he was part of the Calvinist Consistory…The attempted conversion of power in Antwerp (attempted by the Consistory) was a complete fiasco, and before the end of March (1567) Van der Noot had already emigrated to London] (10).

translation, Van der Noot, for reasons still mysterious to us, turned to a young Edmund Spenser to translate at least the Petrarchan and Du Bellayan poems into English.[33] Deciphering the purpose of these pamphlets may seem like an easy task. A Calvinist refugee fleeing from the powers of the Spanish Empire and the Inquisition lands in London and publishes a set of tracts, each in the language of a nation that currently or recently had known intense struggles between Protestant and Catholic communities, in order to offer propaganda for the cause and even hope for English intervention in the Dutch rebellion. All of these elements are certainly manifest in the history of the *Theatre*, and yet Van der Noot and his emblem-book cannot be so simply contained.

Firstly, Van der Noot's religion is far more in flux than the manifest content of his tract in the *Theatre* would have one believe. The main purpose of the prose tract of the *Theatre*—the section in which the poems are glossed and an extended anti-worldly argument delivered—is "to sette the vanitie and inconstancie of worldly and transitorie thyngs, the liuelier before your eyes" (f.ii.v). He wants, through his own poetry, his curated offering of other poets' poetry, his offered images, and his long prose tract to create a multimodal spiritual theater, a set of visions produced by text and image. Anne Lake Prescott explains that the theology of the volume "is not particularly Protestant and the use of visionary poetry helps make the book more than just an anti-papal tract. It is, or means to be, a mnemonic image of a world in which the spirit moves mysteriously behind the literal and material surface of things" (45). Echoing a similar sentiment, yet seeing a more Calvinist drive in the volume, Carl Rasmussen writes "for Van der Noot as for Calvin, spiritual knowledge, or faith, is a kind of visionary knowledge of transcendent things which manifests itself in a spiritual condition of calm and beatitude…he cannot teach

[33] See Prescott 44.

propositions because the transcendent God is not to be contained in propositions" (5). As Van der Noot oscillates between England and the Continent as well as between Protestant and Catholic (he becomes a Catholic in 1578 for reasons that may well be lost to history), vision, poetry, and anti-worldly transcendence emerge as far more important to his texts than the advancement of any single religious group.[34]

In turning to Petrarch, Van der Noot writes that he was attracted to his mourning for Laura, noting that Petrarch "for [Laura's] death (to shewe his great grief) he mourned ten yeares togyther, and amongest many of his songs and sorowfull lamentations, devised and made a

[34] Smit explains some of the confusion around Van der Noot's conversion to Catholicism, noting it cannot be explained by mere opportunism: "Toch wordt hij enkele jaren later weer Rooms-Katholiek en keert hij als zodanig in 1578 naar Antwerpen terug. Hoe wij dit moeten verklaren, weet ik niet; maar in ieder geval niet uit opportunistische overwegingen! Een dergelijke veronderstelling zou zin hebben gehad, wanneer Van der Noot eerst na de verovering van Antwerpen door Parma, in 1585, naar zijn vaderstad was teruggekeerd. Maar in 1578? Dan is Antwerpen, waarheen de Prins van Oranje en de Staten-Generaal zich na de nederlaag van Gembloux uit Brussel hadden teruggetrokken, juist, hoofdstad van de opstand geworden, wat inhoudt dat de Calvinisten er een a belangrijke rol spelen" [Yet a few years later he is a Roman Catholic when he returns to Antwerp in 1578. How we are to explain this, I do not know, but at least not for opportunistic reasons! Such an assumption would have made sense when Van der Noot first returned to his native city after the conquest of Antwerp by Parma in 1585. But in 1578? Then Antwerp, when the Prince of Orange and the States-General had, after the defeat of Gembloux, withdrawn from Bruseels and relocated there, became the capital of the uprising, meaning Calvinism played a major role in the city] (11-12).

Ballade or song, containing the sayd visions, which because they serve wel to our purpose, I have out of the Brabants speache, turned them into the Englishe tongue" (f.iii, r-v).[35] Petrarch represented for Van der Noot a model for what anti-worldliness could look like and how poetry could serve to better aid readers to turn away from the world. Van der Noot's Petrarch is a visionary poet, a lamenting poet, and a poet with a role in the vision-based Christian spirituality that the three *Theatre* volumes envision. Van der Noot finds Du Bellay's work simarly useful: "the which [Du Bellay's *Songe*] also, bicause they serve to our purpose, I have translated…"(f. Iiii, r.). The way that Du Bellay and Petrarch use vision to juxtapose the fall of the mighty with meditation on the infinite collides in Van der Noot's treatment with a moral antiquarianism located within Rome, one that becomes attached to the spiritual narrative into which Van der Noot inserted Petrarch and Du Bellay's visions. Van der Noot seems to imagine a transnational Protestantism that is reflected in meditations on the past, current repentance, and a poetic focus on the infinite and the divine. His reading of the Fall of Rome is particularly revealing of the kind of triangulation he imagines between past, present, and future:

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[35] This last clause may signal an awkward translation by Theodore Roest, the translator who brought Van der Noot's French version into this English version. As Van der Noot's original Dutch mentions that he "in onse Brabantsche sprake overgeset hebbe" [(recently) migrated out of the Brabant land] (*Het Theatre* 244), it is possible that Roest simply altered Van der Noot's assertion of translating Marot's French translation of Petrarch into Flemish and made it refer to the translation into English in order to have the passage make sense within the English *Theatre*. As Van der Noot had to turn to Roest to translate his own prose into English, it is unlikely he would have translated the poems himself.

> And forasmuch as that auncient Rome would not amend it selfe, and renounce their enorme vices, Idolatrie and superstition, and converte unto the Lorde Jesu Christe, to imbrace the true worshippyng of God, and the everlasting Gospel, they have been iustly plagued, receyving according to their desertes, such measure as they had measured to others. Therefore are the Persians, Huines, Frenchmen, Germans or Dutchmen, Vandales, Eastgothes, and Westgothes rysen against them and their Empire, have divided it, and at length have they besieged Rome, and have taken and subverted, burned, spoyled, and wholly rased it. So the Lord through his juste judgement hath revenged the innocent bloud of his children. This is showed unto us by these visions and sonets. […] Worldly vanities, al things muste passe, save the love of God: That which was lifted up into heaven, is fallen and brought even to the grounde, & most miserably perished. (16r-17v)

The fall of Rome resulting from attacks from its neighbors, with mention of the French and the Dutch, certainly resonates with Van der Noot's political situation in 1569. Yet the fact that this passage represents his reading of Du Bellay and Petrarch (brought to him in Marot's translation) suggests the true transnationalism present in this strain of Petrarchan discourse. These visions are about anti-worldliness in general, but, as was the case in Du Bellay, Rome's decay is the essential exemplar of anti-worldliness, the glorious and prideful monument of human achievement brought low by time.[36] Van der Noot imagines the history of Europe as on a vertical axis: the high and mighty being brought down from the heavens to the shame of the ground.

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[36] As Cynthia Skenazi writes: "Les Romains contemporains de Du Bellay manifestent leur vocation de bâtisseurs sous la forme dégradée et dégradante du vandalisme" [The contemporary Romans of Du Bellay's (time) manifest their vocation as builders under the degraded and

The movement between heaven and the ground, so much a part of Petrarch and Du Bellay, is emphasized as well in Van der Noot's gloss. As much of the prose treatise focuses on this movement from high to low, the closing of the treatise reveals a completing of the triangulation between a glorious past, an ignominious present, and an infinite and divine future. Van der Noot writes "No kynde of affection, envie, hate, anger, sorowe or payne, shal trouble you, ye shal put away al wickednesse, & make no accompt of worldly matters, but youre conversation shall be in heaven: ye shall then continually meditate of God and his kingdome, ye myghte contemne al worldly things from the heart. Nothing then shall be able to separate you from the love of God…" (101 r-v). As his prose had up to this point focused on the dangers of pride and the destruction of earthly creation, he shifts now towards the infinite nature of God. In turning to the legacy of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* 323, Van der Noot was highlighting the political and apocalyptic qualities of Petrarchism and imagining, as Du Bellay, Marot, and Petrarch had before him, the triangulated interplay between the Roman past, the present Europe in crisis, and the eschatological future of Christian salvation. The interplay of these three phenomena was essential to Van der Noot's project in the *Theatre*, and the interplay between these three periods emerges as more important than any Calvinist agenda. Van der Noot finds in secular lyric poetry the divine visions on which he can base his Christian polemic.

Indeed by focusing on the abstract structure behind Van der Noot's work, the emphasis on plunging into the past while envisioning the infinite and the possibilities of reforming the fallen present rather than the political labels with which it would become associated, we are able

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degrading form of vandalism] (199-200) and "Le spectacle des ruines les invite à poursuivre les ravages du temps" [The spectacle of the (Roman) ruins invites them (the viewers of the ruins) to pursue the ravages of time] (200).

to get more truly at the heart of the Anglo-Flemish culture of which Van der Noot was a part. This Anglo-Flemish culture in London featured the Family of Love, a religious group that was made up of "children of their own time, who solved the religious dilemma of the age precisely by being non-partisans" (van Dorsten 27). J. A. van Dorsten writes: "in the early sixties many Flemish Familists appear to have given outward support to the rising Church of Geneva. Being thus compromised they were forced to flee the Inquisition and wait for tolerant days to come—while their *amis* who had faithfully observed the old rites of Rome could stay behind, and look after the 'Calvinist' exiles' interests" (32). This may very well explain Van der Noot's conversion in 1567 to Calvinism and make his 1578 conversion to Catholicism less shocking. Given Van der Noot's background, labeling him as a fervent Protestant would risk too hastily interpreting his complicated and transnational life. As van Dorsten writes "Contrary to what is generally assumed, *Het Theatre* is not a Puritan tract…the militant Van der Noot's ultimate message is one of unity and peace" (77). The very title of Van der Noot's works signals something transcendent and quasi-ecumenical. *Theatrum* was a favorite concept of the Anglo-Dutch and Anglo-Flemish cultures of the age: a work that could teach humanity about itself. Poetic works like Van der Noot's *Theatre* and cosmographic works like Ortelius's famed *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* were seen linked in the Europe that was being torn apart by the Reformation. Reconciliation between the warring factions of Protestantism and Catholicism would only come through a uniting of the arts and sciences, through the combination of visual and written technologies to revive "the structure not the principles" (60) of the Christian Faith.

The emphasis on structures over principles is essential to this particular Petrarchan project and to its use of triangles and triangulation. Van der Noot turned to Petrarch and Du Bellay not for their sectarian leanings (Du Bellay, though potentially flirting with the Gallican

church, never embraced Calvinist reform), but for the structure of their poetic visions which collated past and present while hoping to turn to the infinite divine. These poems resuscitate Rome in the present fallen world and, in so doing, transcend the limits of time all together by hoping to turn to the divine and be called into eternity. They do this, as well, through a bonding of text and image. In Spenser's translation of Sonnet 3 of the *Songe* as it is presented in Van der Noot's volume, the poem presents an obelisk (translated by Spenser as a "spire") holding the ashes of a great Emperor:

> Then did appeare to me a sharped spire
> Of diamant, ten feete eche way in square,
> Iustly proportionde up unto his height,
> So hie as mought an Archer reache with sight.
> Upon the top thereof was set a pot
> Made of the mettall that we honour most.
> And in this golden vessell couched were
> The ashes of a mightie Emperour.
> Upon four corners of the base there lay
> To beare the frame, foure great Lions of gold.
> A worthie tombe for such a worthie corps.
> Alas, nought in this world but griefe endures.
> A sodaine tempest from the heaven, I saw,
> With flushe stroke downe this noble monument.

This poem is accompanied, as are all the vernacular poems in the *Theatre* by a woodcut [fig. 1].

Fig. 1 from Jan Van der Noot's *A Theatre for Worldlings*, 1569.

The image, like so many of the poems, arranges the past and present in one view. To the left of the picture, the spire ("une poincte" in Du Bellay's original and "een poyncte" in Van der Noot's Flemish) is shown intact and glorious. To the right, the obelisk is revealed as crumbled and rained upon by the heavens. Divine intervention and the infinite, in Panofsky's sense of the infinite in a picture that features a vanishing point, are represented by the clouds which bring the providential tempest as well as the horizon at the vanishing point of the picture. This image and the accompanying poem play with past and present to lead the reader to turn to God and the eternal.

In dealing with Spenser's Roman poetry, I will be intentionally setting aside his most significant work, *The Faerie Queene*. While *The Faerie Queene* certainly deals with many of the issues found in *A Theatre for Worldlings*, it does so in an expansive allegorical narrative that speaks back to longer romances such as Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* and Tasso's *Jerusalem Liberated*. My main interest in this chapter will be with Spenser's extended engagement with

Petrarch's visionary lyrics as they were reimagined for him through the poetic triumvirate of Marot, Du Bellay, and Van der Noot. That Spenser continued to work on these poems even as he was well into writing *The Faerie Queene* suggests strongly that Spenser saw them as doing something different, something worth exploring outside of the framework of his grand masterpiece. The rest of this chapter will track Spenser's interactions with the visionary poetry of the Roman ruins from his introduction to them in the 1560s through to the publication of *Complaints* in 1591.

Spenser's translations for Van der Noot were produced quite early in his career; they date the earliest of any of his known printed works. Yet, their significance, far from being solely tied to their status as juvenilia, lingered on in Spenser's career, nowhere more deeply than in his 1591 volume *Complaints*. This volume, coming out a year after the first installment of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, is presented as a hodgepodge of "such smale Poemes" that "were disperst abroad in sundrie hands, and not easie to bee come by, by himselfe; some of them having bene diverslie imbeziled and purloyned from him, since his departure over Sea." The poems are united by what the printer sees as their "meditations of the worlds vanitie; verie grave and profitable" (165). What Spenser's role, if indeed he had any, in the publication of this volume is an ongoing critical debate.[37] Still, the *Complaints* bear witness, even if they were never intended to be published by Spenser, to Spenser's continued interest in the sort of anti-worldly, visionary Petrarchism that he had most likely first observed as Van der Noot's translator. Spenser's translation of *Canzoniere* 323, published in Van der Noot's volume as "Epigrams," is reprinted in *Complaints* as "The Visions of Petrarch, formerly translated," signaling Spenser's past role in Van der Noot's

[37] See Cheney 3 and Brink 153-160.

volume.[38] Unlike the "Epigrams," the "Sonets" have been quite altered by the time they appeared in *Complaints*. These alterations coupled with the lack of the "formerly translated" label present in "The Visions of Petrarch" could cast some doubt on Spenser's translation of the original "Sonets" in Van der Noot's volume. Yet, perhaps more likely, these alterations could signal Spenser's interest in Du Bellay's work, reflected in a desire to more carefully represent the poems.[39] They show far too much family resemblance to the "Sonets" in Van der Noot's volume for one to believe that Spenser had not worked with them as part of Van der Noot's volume. Contributing his own visionary sequence, the *Complaints* features Spenser's own "Visions of the Worlds Vanitie" a sonnet sequence in the manner of Du Bellay's *Songe* that shares its moralizing, archaeological visionary penetration into the Roman past. Yet more explicitly, Spenser focuses on the ability of the small and weak to defeat the large and powerful. He recounts in sonnet 11 of the sequence how a goose saved the Romans from a surprise attack by the Gauls:

> So when all shrouded were in silent night,
> The *Galles* were, by corrupting of a mayde,
> Possest nigh of the Capitol through slight,

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[38] Though the versions are rather similar, in *Complaints*, the spelling is often altered and some of the "Epigrams," 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7, have been extended into full sonnets in *Complaints*. The "Sonets" of Van der Noot's *Theatre*, a translation of selected sonnets from Du Bellay's *Songe*, appear as "The Visions of Bellay."

[39] See Prescott 44 for an assertion of Spenser's authorship of the translation of the "Sonets." Most critics accept Spenser's role in the translation and these translations are included in both the Yale and Penguin editions of Spenser's shorter poems.

Had not a Goose the treachery bewrayde. (145-148)

The victory of the small over the large, a central theme to the sequence, has been read as a political statement of imperial potential as Frank Ardolino (among others) has noted: "By using imagery and language depicting the fall of the mighty at the hands of the small, Spenser symbolically alludes to the victory over the Catholic Babylon, Spain, which is associated in the poems with imperial Rome as Empires that fell. Although, of course, the defeat of the Armada did not constitute the end of Spain or Spanish power, Spenser is presenting a literary sense of its decline and fall after the defeat of Philip's enterprise" (55). The description in the poems of a small and humble force managing, quite unexpectedly, to triumph over a powerful enemy would remind Spenser's audience of the defeat of the Spanish Armada. Still, a too strict political reading can risk blurring and undervaluing the intertextual and transnational Petrarchan poetics at work. Spenser's poem is strongly attached to a lyric landscape that is allegorical in a more abstract manner than, for instance, Book V of *The Faerie Queene*. Spenser, in these lyrics, purposefully eschews contemporary politics in favor of a treatment of time and space that places imperial power in the context of the vastness of God and the divine.

Rome, for Petrarch, Du Bellay, and Spenser, was a loaded symbol, a visual field with complicated moral and poetic potential. Rome was a seductress, a model for literary and political greatness, and also a perpetual and ruined symbol of the futility of human endeavor and the need to turn to the divine. As Burckhardt notes, "the ruins within and outside Rome awakened not only archeological zeal and patriotic enthusiasm, but an elegiac or sentimental melancholy" (129). This melancholy is an important presence in the *Complaints* volume and seriously undercuts any nationalistic ambitions one may read into the work.[40] Spenser's translation of the

[40] See Janowitz 24 and Ardolino 55 for readings of the nationalism of the *Complaints* volume.

Antiquitez, "Ruines of Rome: by Bellay," presents the most extended engagement in the *Complaints* with the matter of the Roman ruins and with Du Bellay. Though there are some suggestive, if not quite compelling, points to be made comparing Spenser's English rendering of Du Bellay's French, Spenser's major interpretation of Du Bellay comes in the "L'envoy" at the end of the sequence.[41] The poem, fascinated with digging into the Roman past while sprawling out across the continental Europe of the sixteenth-century, places Du Bellay in an important progression towards divinity. Du Bellay is the "first garland of free Poësie" (449) that is "worthie…of immortalitie, / That long hast traveld by thy learned wits" (451-452). The archeological work of Du Bellay's poetry is then highlighted:

> Olde *Rome* out of her ashes to revive,
> And give a second life to dead decayes:
> Needes must he all eternitie survive,
> That can to other give eternall dayes. (453-456)

Spenser frames Du Bellay as himself a source of the eternal because of his ability to revive the Roman ruins. Du Bellay's vernacular French project is then folded into Spenser's own English recasting, propelling both works forward to eternity. Spenser is casting Du Bellay as the conduit of the Roman ruins, revivifying them in a corpus of Roman poetry. Spenser's reworking of that poetry further pushes it towards divinity by placing it as the precedent to a new kind of theologically rich antiquarian poetry, that of Du Bartas, a French Protestant poet whose *L'Uranie* (1574) and *La Semaine* (1578) would provide a model for what a Protestant poetics could be. *L'Uranie* would argue for the ongoing divinity of poetry while *La Semaine* would document the

[41] For an extensive comparison of these two works see Smith.

creation of the world.[42] Spenser writes, "And after thee, gins *Bartas* hie to rayse / His heavenly Muse, th'Almightie to adore" (459-460). Du Bellay is represented as the intermediary between the Roman ruins and the divine, between the seeking of immortality and the right and true adoration of God. Poetry is seen, as we have seen time and time again, as an intermediary between heaven and earth.

Leonard Barkan, writing about the complexities of trying to "make absent things present" in poems about Roman antiquity, argues that the difficulty comes in dealing with the legacy of displacement associated with so many observers of antiquity:

> Not that the project [of representing Rome] is easy—and it gets harder for Spenser. The fantasies of reinventing Rome are created by a descendancy of displaced persons: Dante and Petrarch, who were not Romans and who were banished even from their own city; then du Bellay, who felt exiled and dispossessed in Rome. Drift, in other words, occurs not merely between the points on this line but within each one…But England is beyond the circle even of mutability and displacement, beyond the transit from the greatness of Rome to the ruins to the transportable ruins to the compensation for untranportable ruins into a realm where the whole project is further attenuated by theological problematics. (35-36)

The "theological problematics," as well as the displacement Barkan describes, seem to be something the visionary poetics of Du Bellay and Spenser attempts to overcome. By placing their dialogue with the ruins of Rome within the larger prophetic context of the end of time and

[42] See Sinfield 9.

the Christian apocalypse, they trade historical displacement for universal theological truth. Classical Rome is distant, buried, and in ruins and yet when understood as just one part of an ongoing march towards the end of time and salvation, it seems remarkably accessible for the prophetic and visionary practice of these poets.

George Puttenham in *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589) elaborates on the prophetic and visionary legacy of poets as he highlights the poet's ability to reach the divine through vision:

> That forasmuch as they were the first that intended to the observation of nature and her works, and specially of the celestial courses by reason of the continual motion of the heavens, searching after the first mover, and from thence by degrees coming to know and consider of the substance separate and abstract, which we call the divine intelligences or good angels (*daimones*), they were the first that instituted sacrifices of placation, with invocations and worship to them, as to gods; and invented and established all the rest of the observances and ceremonies of religion, and so were the first priests and ministers of the holy mysteries. And because for better execution of that high charge and function it behoved them to live chaste and in all holiness of life, and in continual study and contemplation, they became by instinct divine, and by deep meditation, and much abstinence (the same assubtiling and refining their spirits) to be made apt to receive visions, both waking and sleeping, which they utter prophecies and foretell things to come. (Book I, Chapter 3)

Poets, the first to observe nature and the world around them, were also the first to see the abstract structures of the cosmos. Their unique vocations in early society allowed them, in Puttenham's view, to become religious leaders and visionaries able to produce prophecies out of their

meditative poetic encounters. Poetic vision, then, is able to extend and contemplate the cosmos while at the same time processing the distant and cosmic divine into relatable visions. The distance between the divine and the earthly is explicitly cast as the site of poetic intervention: poetry emerges as the main conduit between the two sites. Puttenham ultimately defends poetry as a "noble, profitable, ancient, and divine…science" (Book I, Chapter 3). Poetry itself then is a point of mediation between what is ancient and contemporary and what is sacred and secular, triangulating the different spiritual and temporal sites of human and cosmic existence. Though Puttenham's work was published in 1589, there is evidence that it may actually date from 1569, the year that Spenser's translations in Van der Noot's *Theatre* were published (Vickers 191). If this is true, Puttenham's vision of a spiritually charged and visionary poetics, resonating with primeval antiquity and contemporary spiritual worth, would have been coming out of the same literary culture the young Spenser inhabited.

"The Ruines of Time," in many ways the cornerstone of *The Complaints*, provides an extended demonstration of how the legacy of Du Bellay's and Petrarch's poetry had come to encourage Spenser to engage in his own acts of spiritual vision and perspectival construction in lyric poetry. Most of the critical conversation surrounding the poem has focused on its imperial trappings, arguing that the poem, in its discussion of ancient ruins in England, longs for and comments upon an English imperial legacy. Anne Janowitz offers such an imperial reading in arguing "the ruin provides a historical provenance for the conception of the British nation as immemorably ancient, and through its naturalization subsumes cultural and class difference into a conflated representation of Britain as nature's inevitable product" (4). Janowitz continues: "The issue of national power in the poem takes the form of imperial absolutism, and introduces the poet as the agent of imperial permanence. But Spenser also insists on the transfer of power

from Rome to England by asserting the *difference* between his own situation and that of the Romans" (23). Other major work on the poem has focused on the act of memorializing in the poem. Rebecca Helfer writes about the poem: "Spenser demonstrates poetry as an art of memory, building the poem's memorial edifice within the place of ruin—Sidney's as well as Verlame's—yet less as a new Virgil than as a new Simonides, for even his own poetic monument is not 'without end'" (143). Helfer argues that by locating the site of Britain's empire in ruin, Spenser "locates immortality in ruin itself—in poetry's ruins—and the process of recollection" (128).

Both of these approaches, the poem as imperial and the poem as memorial, capture and illuminate some key elements at work in "The Ruines of Time." However, I will depart from these critics in focusing on Spenser's calling the poem "The Ruines of Time"—rather than "The Ruines of Verlame"—a title which fits the bold, and even universal, ambitions of the poem. Though Spenser, on the model of Du Bellay, will use a visionary encounter with a particular place (here the site of Verolamium, near the St. Alban's of Spenser's day) to make greater claims about mortality and the temporal politics of art making, he will in the end, like Petrarch in *Canzoniere* 323, turn to a more visionary and abstract mode not tied to any one particular place. "The Ruines of Time," I argue, combines, as *Complaints* does in including the translations of both poems, the tradition of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* 323 and Du Bellay's *Antiquitez* and *Songe*. The visionary nature and hybridity of "The Ruines of Time" exist to fully insist on a Petrarchism based on space, on vision, and on triangulated composition rendered into verse.

The poem begins by combining past and present in the poet's encounter with a particular English space:

> It chaunced me on day beside the shore
> Of silver streaming *Thamesis* to bee,

Nigh where the goodly *Verlame* stood of yore

Of which there now remaines no memorie,

Nor anie little moniment to see,

By which the travailer, that fares that way,

This once was she, may warned be to say. (l. 1-7)

The poet is at once at a specific site in England and also in a space resonating with hidden memories of the classical past. That there is nothing memorializing the site of Verolamium represents the loss of classical knowledge and the general ignorance of the current English about their own antiquity. Ortelius, as related by Camden in his 1586 *Britannia*, referred to a British classical past which "the negligence of writers and credulitie of the common sort had in a manner proscribed and utterly banished from amongst us" ("To the Reader"). As in the case of Du Bellay's Rome, the lack of any kind of conservation or memorialization on the sites of antiquity themselves has left the poet only with a visionary memorial, which presents itself in the model of Du Bellay's *Songe:* "There on the other side, I did behold / A Woman sitting sorrowfullie wailing, / Rending her yeolow locks, like wyrie golde" (8-10). Vision, in these lines, is performing the task of archeology it digs into the ground to reconstruct what is lost and invisible.

But as the poem reconstructs the buried past in vision, it turns immediately to anti-worldliness:

Ah what delight (quoth she) in earthlie thing,

Or comfort can I wretched creature have?

Whose happines the heavens envying,

From highest staire to lowest step me drave,

And have in mine owne bowels made my grave,

That of all Nations now I am forlorne,

The worlds sad epectacle, and fortunes scorne. (22-28)

Verolamium coming to life to become a revivified spectacle of fallen Empire and the cruelty of time and providence brings the reader directly back to the Spenser's translation of the *Antiquitez* which was published alongside this poem. Spenser's third sonnet in "Ruines of Rome: by Bellay" presents the lines, clearly echoed in the spirit of Verolamium's plaint above: "*Rome* now of *Rome* is th'onely funerall, / And onely *Rome* of *Rome* hath victorie / Ne ought save *Tyber* hastning to his fall / Remaines of all: O worlds inconstancie" (37-40). The Thames bearing witness to the self-burying absent Verolamium becomes analogous to Rome itself and part of the same spatial strategy, the layers of earthly time, both past and present, buried concurrently and re-surging in the same space only to be dwarfed by the immensity of time itself.

Image after image in the poem reflects how time has made Verolamium recede into nature. "Where my high steeples whilom usde to stand, / On which the lordly Faulcon wont to towre, / There now is but a heap of lyme and sand" (127-129) Verlame tells the poet. Finally, there is simply nothing left to recount, only the voice itself remains:

They all are gone, and all with them is gone,

Ne ought to me remaines but to lament

My long decay, which no man else doth mone,

And mourne my fall with dolefull dreriment.

Yet it is comfort in great languishment,

To be bemoned with compassion kinde,

And mitigates the anguish of the minde. (155-161)

As with the poems written after Laura's death in the *Canzoniere,* lamentation, recollection, and the turning away from pride towards anguish become a central aspect of the poem. Though the spirit had earlier declared "I was that Citie, which the garland wore / Of Britaines pride, delivered unto me" (36-37), the poem immediately transcends being simply about an English and British space:

> But whie (unhappie wight) doo I thus crie,
> And grieve that my remembrance quite is raced
> Out of the knowledge of posteritie,
> And all my antique moniments defaced?
> Sith I doo dailie see things highest placed,
> So soone as fates their vitall thred have shorne,
> Forgotten quite as they were never borne. (176-182)

The spirit of Verolamium, then, becomes the main observer of the ruins of time as a whole, a global entity confronting a universal human truth: we all die and our creations eventually crumble as if they were never here. The idea of the earth swallowing up the past at the same time it briefly stages the present allows an image of the earth to emerge as a closed cycle of death and birth that is without any great significance. Rather, as we've seen in Du Bellay and Petrarch, this temporal and commonplace observation about the mutability of the Earth has to, in the end, be transcended and linked to Christian eternity for the whole process to have any meaning.

As the poem begins to address the possibility of divine transcendence, the focus of the poem shifts from Verolamium itself to the recent death of the Earl of Leicester, "a mightie Prince, of most renowmed race, / Whom *England* high in count of honour held" (184-185). Verolamium, by this point established as the great observer of earthly decay and misfortune,

plays the main observer: “I saw him die, I saw him die, as one / Of the meane people, and brought forthe on beare, / I saw him die, and no man left to mone” (190-192). Leicester’s presence in the poem is a moving and transnational gesture. Leicester was disgraced at the time of his death and was associated with some of the continental and Dutch engagements that have their roots in the political situation that brought Van der Noot to England’s shores. Bruce Danner emphasizes the importance of Leicester’s presence in the poem, especially in light of John Florio’s admiration of it: “Leicester’s death in 1588…and his mismanagement of the campaign against the Spanish supremacy in the Netherlands in 1585 left both his personal reputation and his political faction in disarray. It was Spenser’s resolute praise of Leicester in the face of this public criticism that Florio finds so moving” (88). Danner goes on to read the poem as part of an ongoing display of dissatisfaction with Lord Burghley. Though this historicizing gesture is illuminating to a poem so clearly tied to Leicester, I want to emphasize how the poem uses Leicester, and ultimately Sir Philip Sidney, as examples of how to traverse the destructive and empty closed system of the earth to access a transcendent divine. Leicester’s failed reputation and the unfair treatment he received at the end of his life and after his death become just another compelling, but representative, example of how human ambition, like the steeples of *Verlame*, comes crashing down in the end.

The divine begins to make an appearance shortly after Verolamium laments the death of Leicester. She utters a *contemptus mundi*:

> All is but fained, and with oaker dide,
> That everie shower will wash and wipe away,
> All things doo change that under heaven abide,
> And after death all friendship doth decaie.

Therefore what ever man bearst worldlie sway,

Living, on God, and on thy self relie;

For when thou diest, all shall with thee die. (204-210)

The anti-worldly gesture here is clear: only the divine lasts. The turn to the divine is a way for the spiritual self to transcend and survive the cycle of time. The poem, focusing on Leicester and the Sidneys in general, is constantly reaching out in space to a more global and universal truth. "He now is dead, and all is with him dead" (211), the poem notes, as the suffering of the poem's particular elements radiates out to become a site where the world's suffering under the weight of time becomes increasingly relevant and urgent.

When the poem turns to consider Sir Philip Sidney more closely, Sidney's role in the spatial dynamics of triangulating the present mourning of Sidney, Sidney's past glory, and the current Sidney who has entered into eternity performs once again the temporal and spatial gestures that were such an essential element in the earlier poetry of Petrarch and Du Bellay. Sidney, both poet and victim of time, acts as the poet who, in Puttenham's understanding, is able to negotiate his own journey out of the earthly into the space of divine revelation:

His blessed spirite full of power divine

And influence of all celestiall grace,

Loathing this sinfull earth and earthlie slime,

Fled back too soone unto his native place,

Too soone for all that did his love embrace,

Too soone for all this wretched world, whome he

Robd of all right and true nobilitie.

Yet ere his happie soule to heaven went
Out of this fleshlie goale, he did devise
Unto his heavenlie maker to present
His bodie, as a spotles sacrifise;
And chose, that guiltie hands of enemies
Should powre forth th'offring of his guiltles blood:
So life exchanging for his countries good. (288-301)

This poetic framing of Sidney oscillates between the terrestrial and the celestial in a way intended to mimic Sidney's own journey. Yet pure ascension of the Neo-Platonic sort is not what the reader finds in this passage. Indifference to the material and the earthly is noticeably absent. Sidney, who hates the world, still loves England and righteousness as it's found on earth, but confirms this through a sacrifice—the sacrifice of his own body to a Spanish bullet in Zutphen—that renders Earthly concerns unimportant for Sidney. Sidney, the English poet *sine qua non*, is understood only by the ways in which his spirit, body, and verses come to define the relationship between heaven and earth.

The poem makes Sidney's double presence on earth and in the infinite divine quite clear, when the spirit of Verolamium addresses Sidney in heaven:

So there thou livest, singing evermore
And here thou livest, being ever song
Of us, which living loved thee afore,
And now thee worship, mongst that blessed throng
Of heavenlie Poets and Heroes strong.
So thou both here and there immortall art,

And everie where through excellent desart. (337-343)

Sidney is imagined as a poet member of the divine order—as if he were one of the saints in the Maestà singing perpetually to the divine and becoming himself an object of worship and divine mediation ("and now thee worship" emerges in the lines above with a particular poignance as it attests to the intense spiritual transformation that has taken place). Yet Sidney is also present on Earth as the songs of his followers produce him. Sidney, like the imagined ruins of Verolamium or the image of a saint in a Renaissance painting, is made real to the present by being represented in the artistic creation of the living. He, as was the case in the image of Laura by Simone, is created in this poem by being poetically copied on heaven and presented to the world. The synchronicity with which Sidney is present in heaven but also present on Earth in the artistic construction of current English poets, combined with the thematic focus on ruins and antiquity helps to make "The Ruines of Time" a moment of poetic culmination in the Petrarchan spatial legacy. Triangulating the past, present, and the infinite divine as the poem does, it reveals a mode of Petrarchan poetry that reads the *Canzoniere* not as a primarily seductive or amatory text but rather as a prophetic manual of the ways in which poetry can answer the massive pressure of time, loss, and mutability.

Not surprisingly, "The Ruines of Time" is insistent on mapping the path out of this world into the next. As Verolamium ceases her anti-worldly song, the poet who encountered her begins to receive visions. The last vision seems to provide a model for the transcending of the earth that resonates with the consideration of the dead Sidney previously in the poem:

Lastly, I saw an Arke of purest golde

Upon a brazen pillour standing hie,

Which th'ashes seem'd of some great Prince to hold,

Enclosde therein for endles memorie
Of him, whom all the world did glorifie:
Seemd the heavens with the earth did disagree,
Whether should of those ashes keeper bee.

At last me seem'd wing footed *Mercurie*,
From heaven descending to appease their strife,
That Arke did beare with him above the skie,
And to those ashes gave a second life,
To live in heaven, where happiness is rife:
At which the earth did grieve exceedingly,
And I for dole was almost like to die. (659-672)

In these lines, Spenser is taking stock of *Canzoniere* 323 and its afterlife. That poem and Du Bellay's *Songe* resonate in these lines as Spenser imagines the dead bodies of Sidney and Leicester finally receiving their due in this abstracted vision. Where normally, both in Petrarch and Du Bellay, the ark would usually fall down to Earth and shatter, becoming yet another symbol for the world's inconstancy, Spenser intervenes in the tradition to allow the "Arke" to ascend to heaven with a little help from an intervening classical figure. Where Petrarch's *Canzoniere* had only offered transcendence turning towards the Virgin Mary and Du Bellay's *Songe* ended with an obscure strike of providential lightning, "The Ruines of Time" seeks almost to conclude the tradition, arguing that the spatialized Petrarchism rooted in *Canzoniere* 323 can in itself be a poetic exercise able to be used to attain divine knowledge that does not adhere to any clear religious affiliation. Like the Familists, Van der Noot among them, Spenser offers, in

this specific poem, vision in the place of proscription and the universality of time over the particularity of theological disputation.

These key figures in the history of Renaissance lyric poetry, Petrarch, du Bellay, Spenser, champions of the vernacular and experts on the classical tradition, can too often be reduced to nationalist and imperial figures trying to bring back the glory of Rome through their writings in order to channel that power into their own culture's imperial destiny. Petrarch's *Africa*, Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, and Du Bellay's *Deffence* all have strong imperial elements. Yet their visionary lyrics, which are so interested in the interplay of layers of time and history as well as the perpetual human problem of accessing the divine, were a crucial element of their careers. The melancholy, spatial, and anti-worldly legacy of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* 323 would engender, as this chapter has hoped to reveal, a transnational and spiritual form of Petrarchism that would be able to, through its visionary rather than disputative content, reveal a spiritual and divine truth that is directly relational to the consideration of the Renaissance present and the antique past. Just as Petrarchism itself was able to pass from Catholic to Protestant countries bearing with eloquent flexibility the different spiritual markers of Renaissance Europe, the poems and the authors themselves seem to have sought to manufacture a similar flexibility opening up a spiritual commons in their works channeled through their poetic visions.

Chapter Two: "This Extasie doth unperplex": Cosmic Vision and Local Spaces in Donne's Poetry

I. Introduction

In rejecting the tidy narrative of linear scientific progress, Hans Blumenberg in *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* ends his tome with a consideration of Giordano Bruno:

> What comes into play here [in Bruno's work] is not only the pedantry of the intelligence that sets up rules and maxims, as with Bacon or Descartes, but also an imagination that is always pressing towards total conceptions, exhaustive schemes, like that of Giordano Bruno. (557)

Blumenberg goes on to argue that this expansive proclivity towards "total conceptions" influenced Bruno's metaphysics in his sense of the Godhead:

> Both theocentrism and anthropocentrism are the abandoned counterpositions of this new metaphysical model, in which the Divinity bears innumerable names for a transcendent substance that stands behind everything, and is no longer the 'person' who could choose one nature from the abundance of the forms of his creation for his Incarnation…(561)

Bruno, who arrived in England and lectured at Oxford just as a young John Donne was about to begin his studies at that same university, offered an expansive vision of the universe and the divine at a period in which new scientific knowledge about the cosmos was taking hold of Europe. In this chapter, I will track the ways in which the poetic vision of John Donne begins to

take on this expansive viewpoint in its treatment of divine and cosmic spaces. I will argue, especially, that the poetic ego for which Donne has been so frequently celebrated or decried is deeply indebted to the sort of speculative and philosophic vision that Bruno described, theorized, and practiced. By focusing on poems from the Catholic and transitional spiritual phases of Donne's life, I will link Donne's speculative searching for the divine with the speculative plotting of philosophical and cosmic space performed in the Brunonian model. Most importantly, I will argue that the Copernican revolution and Bruno's reading of that revolution, far from being a catastrophic or secularizing event for humanity in Donne's work, as Angus Fletcher and Thomas Docherty have argued, was actually an energizing opportunity for Donne to apply his poetic ego to the consideration of an expanding and changing universe in ways that still maintain and profoundly seek out a connection to the divine. Whereas Petrarch, Du Bellay, and Spenser tried to find traces of divinity in the spiritual remnants of the Roman past, I will explore in this chapter how Donne seeks out traces of the infinite and the divine in his treatments of space and the cosmos.

I will begin by considering the astronomical culture of sixteenth-century England, mainly through an exploration of Copernicus and Bruno's work, and show what Donne saw in the "new philosophy" for his own poetry. A major claim of this section will be to argue against a critical commonplace that Copernicus and Bruno's ideas would have sent Donne into a kind of spiritual crisis resulting in a secularization and individualization of his poetic vision. I will argue instead that Donne seems to have taken Copernicus and Bruno as inspiration for new ways of considering cosmic and terrestrial space with Bruno's reading of Copernicus particularly encouraging Donne to engage with the cosmos through prophetic, spiritual, and visionary poetic methods. Donne's poetry can be seen as a work of scientific philosophy, stretching Aristotlean,

Copernican, and Brunonian ideals to fit the immensity of his poetic ambition. I will then consider some of Donne's *Songs and Sonets* and the *Holy Sonnets* as bearing witness to an interest in cosmic space and its ability to become a site where spiritual quandaries and impasses can be argued in a heterodox manner. I'll argue that Donne's amatory lyric voice becomes a tool for astronomical and spatial investigation. Finally, this chapter will take on two of Donne's long poems: *Metempsychosis* (1601) and *The Anniversaries* (1611) and try to place these poems, the first rarely studied and the second with an extensive critical tradition, within a heterodox vision of Donne's spatial poetics.

Donne's poetry plays with scale and vision, with the ephemeral and the infinite. Donne's work is, above all, however, appropriative. It attempts to own that which it sees and rallies uncomfortably when an object of inquiry, the true church for instance, remains outside its grasp. In this sense, Donne is well within the visual culture of his age. Spiritual uses of poetic vision and perspective, the subject of the last chapter, contain an appropriative element germane to Donne's works, as Fernand Hallyn notes: "Perspective, in sum, imposes an order through which the painter appropriates the world and offers this appropriation to others. This is what Alberti called 'knowledge by comparison'" (69). To say that Donne engages in this sort of perspective is not to argue that he creates images, but rather that he is interested in appropriating the world and, in moves similar to those made by vernacular painters and writers working within the Petrarchan legacy discussed in the last chapter, incorporating trans-temporal and cosmic elements into his appropriations. To put this in more poetic terms, Donne is a poet obsessed with his own visions, sentiments, and beliefs, interacting with these internal phenomena in a more interrogative than congratulatory way, scouring the inside of his poetic subjectivity to gain ownership of the world outside of himself. One of the ways Donne does this is by playing intricate microcosms against

visions of an immense universe. Gaston Bachelard in *The Poetics of Space* notes how both the act of making a miniature and of reflecting on immensity can be linked acts of appropriation. He writes, "The cleverer I am at miniaturizing the world, the better I possess it. But in doing this, it must be understood that values become condensed and enriched in miniature. Platonic dialectics of large and small do not suffice for us to become cognizant of the dynamic virtues of miniature thinking. One must go beyond logic in order to experience what is large in what is small" (150). Confronted, through Bruno's work and astronomical culture of the late sixteenth-century, with the immensity of the world, Donne's microcosms become a way to meditate on immensity and scale itself. As Bachelard notes, "immensity is within ourselves…Indeed, immensity is the movement of motionless man. It is one of the dynamic characteristics of quiet daydreaming" and "it is often this *inner immensity* that gives the real meaning to certain expressions concerning the visible world" (184-185). Writing about the ways in which we inhabit space, Bachelard can point us towards a significant pattern in Donne's work: to appropriate an expanding world we need to make it small in order to understand what size is, and to understand the physical world around us we have to tap into the immensity held within ourselves. Spaces, large and small, cosmic and local, in Donne's poetry, are always seated in the poetic self, in the visionary potential of the act of writing.

II. Donne's Cosmic Interlocutors: Copernicus and Bruno on the move.

The publication of *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* in 1543, and the development and transmission of Copernicus's heliocentric astronomy in the following century, were two of the preeminent moments in Renaissance science. This work attempted to revise a Ptolemaic

worldview that had dominated European astronomy for centuries and presented a vision of what it was to live on earth—to live on a moving orb—that went against observed phenomena. The earth that had once been at the center of the universe, was now a moving planet among others. Critics have read this last fact as a major secularizing crisis in early modern thought. Thomas Docherty believes the Copernican hypothesis denies humans "the paradisical world of essences" and resulted in a worldview in which "the human was expelled….from a paradise in which all elements 'knew their own place,' and where everything was 'proper'" (88). Docherty locates Donne's work as presenting itself as part of a "revolutionary present".[1]

The introduction of Copernicus into England may have been less than revolutionary for sixteenth-century subjects. Robert Record's *The Castle of Knowledge*, published in London in 1556, helped introduce Copernican thought to England. The most famous moment in the *Castle* comes when the Master and Scholar, the interlocutors of the work, begin to debate the new discoveries of Copernicus. The Master informs the young Scholar that:

> Copernicus, a man of great learninge, of much experience, and of wonderfull diligence in observation, hathe renewed the opinion of Aristarchus Samius, and affirmeth that the earthe not only moveth circularye about his owne centre, but also may be, yea and is, continually out of the precise centre of the world 38 hundred thousand miles: but bicause the understanding of that controversy dependeth on profounder knowedg then in this Introduction may be uttered

[1] See Docherty 94: "[Donne's] poems are frequently organized around a moment which might be called the 'revolutionary present'. That is to say, they are arranged around a moment of transposition from one state of affairs to another, most simply understood as a moment of the putative 'present' sandwiched between an imagined future and a posited past."

> conveniently, I will let it passe tyll some other time.

The Scholar, however, cannot resist the bait and lashes out against the more experienced Master's assertion:"Nay syr in good faith, I desire not to heare such vaine phantasies, so farre against common reason, and repugnante to the consente of all the learned multitude of Wryters and therefore lette it passe for ever, and a daye longer." The Scholar's rebuke reframes their debate as between experience and authority. The Master understands the math involved, has participated in visualizing and evaluating the complexities of Copernican astronomy and has the ability to connect it to its classical precedent in Aristarchus of Samos. Record, in launching his arguments about astronomy through the wisdom of the Master and the anti-worldly interests of the prefatory materials, is able to dovetail the spiritual and observational natures of cosmography. Indeed, the Master's somewhat harsh rebuke of the Scholar highlights the dual importance of observational data and philosophical experience:

> You are too yonge to be a good judge in so great a matter: it passeth farre from your learning, and theirs also that are much better learned then you, to improve his supposition by good argumentes, and therefore you were best to condemne no thinge that you do not well understand: but an other time, as I sayd, I will so declare his supposition, that you shall not only wonder to hear it, but also peradventure be as earnest then to credit it, as you are now to condemne it. (165)

Copernican astronomy, to the Scholar and most likely to Record, is something to gradually understand over a long period of study and contemplation. The scholar's hasty reaction reveals how potentially revolutionary the new information is, and yet Record makes sure this reaction is instantly contained. Orthodoxy and obedience do not trump mathematical fact. This seemingly modern idea is at the heart of the Master's response and highlights how important contemplation,

study, and patience were to understanding this new theory.

Explorations of Copernicus's relationship to Renaissance culture should stop imitating the scholar and move towards the master, understanding the complex range of reactions Copernicus's work would have engendered as well as the ongoing scientific process it helped create. Indeed the importance of Copernicus's revelations has less to do with him than with those who come after him, as Thomas Kuhn notes: "the significance of *De Revolutionibus* lies, then, less in what it says itself than in what it caused others to say. The book gave rise to a revolution that it had scarcely enunciated. It is a revolution-making rather than a revolutionary text" (135). The Copernican revolution was not a revolution but rather the beginning of an extended conversation that led many cosmographers, poets, and other members of the European intelligentsia to apply philosophical and literary lenses to Copernicus's Neo-Platonic influenced cosmology. Indeed, what may have been the most interesting part of Copernicus for Renaissance readers were the possibilities of what his work could mean in a wider philosophical context, rather than the mathematical and astronomical argument the work tried to deploy.

Though the mathematical complexity of Copernicus's major work, compared to the philosophical and literary exuberance of, say, Giordano Bruno's work, is quite extensive, the *De Revolutionibus* remains a work deeply indebted to aesthetic modes of ordering and even to perspectival concerns. When Copernicus argues for the centrality of the sun in the solar system, he turns to astronomical calculation but also to principles of aesthetic logic:

> In the center of all rests the sun. For who would place this lamp of a very beautiful temple in another or better place than this wherefrom it can illuminate everything at the same time? As a matter of fact, not unhappily do some call it the lantern; others, the mind and still others, the pilot of the world. Trismegistus calls

> it a 'visible god'; Sophocles' Electra, 'that which is upward on all things.' And so the sun, as if resting on a kingly throne governs the family of stars which wheel around…The Earth moreover is fertilized by the sun and conceives offspring every year. (Copernicus 24-26)

Copernicus argues using the logic of aesthetic ordering. Fernand Hallyn writes: "From the point of view of its agreement with the empirical data or its predictive utility, the Copernican system presented no real advantage over its geocentric rivals, its superiority resides chiefly in the coherence that is eminently significant from the point of view of scientific logic, but the fact remains that Copernicus himself presented it in an aesthetic light" (100). Copernicus was aligning the universe with an aesthetic and philosophical principle that supported his mathematical arguments. By emphasizing the historical, philosophical, and aesthetic reasons for the sun's placement, Copernicus was linking his work to some of the Platonic and Humanistic trends of his age. Rejecting the idea that man needs to be defined by his physical location in the universe, many Renaissance humanists believed, as Hans Blumenberg explains, that "man is no more subject to enforced localization by the world than the mirror is characterized by the object it reflects" (207).[2]

Neoplatonic philosophy, a significant influence on Copernicus, would have encouraged Copernicus to view his work as contributing to theological, philosophical, and mathematical

[2] Blumenberg explains this more fully: "This heliocentrism reflects the way in which anthropocentrism is conceived here: not as the creature's being distinguished by its topographical location, but, in reverse, as the defining of the neutral 'position' by the function of the substance that occupies it. The Sun 'makes' its position into the center of the world" (207).

goals.[3] Ficino's *De Sole* and *Platonic Theology* would have emphasized for Copernicus the importance of the Sun and of visionary and philosophical considerations of the heavens. In the *Platonic Theology*, Ficino, quoting Plato, had asserted that the Sun was a manifestation of God's illuminating light.[4] The message of Renaissance Platonism, resisting, in some ways, the Aristotelianism of medieval scholasticism, was, in the model of Plato, to devote all studies whether "ethics, dialectic, mathematics, or physics" to "a spirit of utmost piety, to the contemplation and worship of God" (Ficino 9). As Plato in the *Timaeus* had related the study of matter to the study of triangles and, ultimately, to the study of the divine, Ficino laid out a similar Platonic vision where the mind moves from "particular forms to universal and absolute forms" (37). Copernicus seems to have had similar ambitions for his own work:

> Among the many and varied literary and artistic studies upon which the natural talents of man are nourished, I think that those above all should be embraced and pursued with the most loving care which have to do with things that are very beautiful and very worthy of knowledge. Such studies are those which deal with

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[3] For a full discussion of the question of Copernicus's relationship to Ficino's work see Knox 402-3.

[4] Ficino writes: "Plato, the father of philosophers, realizing that our minds bear the same relationship to God as our sight to the light of the Sun, and that therefore they can never understand anything without the light of God, considered it just and pious that, as the human mind receives everything from God, so it should restore everything to God. Hence in the sphere of moral philosophy one must purify the soul until its eye becomes unclouded and it can see the divine light and worship God. And in the examination of causes, the final object of our search into them should be the cause of causes, and once we find it we should venerate it" (9)

> the godlike circular movements of the world and the course of the stars, their magnitudes, distances, risings and settings, and the causes of the other appearances in the heavens; and which finally explicate the whole form. (8).[5]

Copernicus imagines, as Ficino had, moving from particular observations to eventually reaching the *tota forma* of the heavens.

The scandal of the Copernican hypothesis, then, may have truly been in its claim to transcendent vision. Someone who wishes to read the Copernican hypothesis as being secularizing or shockingly novel may wish to turn to Luther's reaction around 1539, four years before *De Revolutionibus* was printed, to the heliocentric hypothesis. Remarking that some new man was trying to throw out the whole art of astronomy and make up something new for his own gain, Luther seems to quite surprisingly throw out an alliance with a new hypothesis that could have backed up some of the Reformers' key claims (among them, as Blumenberg argues, that true Christian knowledge and revelation did not come from any kind of sacred placing in the universe but from an inner awakening (319)). Yet the idea that human knowledge could penetrate the heavens was simply unacceptable. Blumenberg writes "for Luther the heavens that Copernican reform thinks it can put in order or at least comprehend in their order are, rather, the heavens that the fearful conscience pictures as collapsing upon it" (321). Perhaps more accurately, Luther advocated, in the *Table Talk*, an understanding of the cosmos based completely in scriptural Christian devotion and free from speculation:

> Great wrong is done to God's creatures by the star-expounders. God has created and placed the stars in the firmament, to the end they might give

[5] This passage is found only in the Thorn centenary and Warsaw printed editions of *De Revolutionibus*, but is also found in the autograph of the work.

> light to the kingdoms of the earth, make people glad and joyful in the Lord, and be good signs of years and seasons. But the star-peepers feign that those creatures, of God created, darken and trouble the earth, and are hurtful; whereas all creatures of God are good, and by God created only for good, though mankind makes them evil, by abusing them. (Luther 343-344).

Though Luther here is advocating against judicial astrology and fortune telling based on cosmic observations, he espouses an astronomical practice based entirely on scripture and Christian doctrine. The heavens are not a source of revelation; they only reflect Christian truths.

To claim to see into the universe became a heterodox act. Luther's denunciation of Copernicus in 1539 and the trial and execution of Giordano Bruno by the inquisition in 1600 give evidence for the sixteenth-century uneasiness, on both sides of the Reformation, with speculative astronomical philosophy. Far from being simply a product of a newly heliocentric world, Donne would have read this culture as engaged with the powers of vision in a bold new way and would have used these visions to navigate his own heterodox spaces built out of his experience as a recusant in Elizabethan England. Donne's experience with Copernicanism would most likely have had its major starting point in 1584, the year Donne entered Oxford University, and the year after Bruno had lectured at Oxford. Bruno would bring to England a version of Copernican thought that was deeply invested in the power of vision. Bruno, as a reader of Copernicus and as a philosopher of science, had not only one of the largest egos in Renaissance cosmography but also one of the boldest speculative agendas—wanting to push his theories and the theories of others further than the math which they worked could support. "Giordano Bruno was an expert in the art of 'fleeing forward,'" Blumenberg writes, "He took what filled his

contemporaries with uneasiness or alarm—namely, the expansion of the cosmic housing to an unimaginable magnitude—and drove it one step further, into the pure negation of conceivability" (356).

Writing in 1584 in England and to an audience that included Philip Sidney among other luminaries of English letters, Bruno characterized Copernicus and his achievements. In *The Ash Wednesday Supper*, Theophilo says of Copernicus:

> He was a man of deep, developed diligent and mature genius; a man not second to any astronomer before him except in order of succession and time; a man who, in regard to innate intellect, was greatly superior to Ptolemy, Hipparchus, Eudoxus and all others who followed their footsteps. This estate he attained by freeing himself from a number of false propositions of the common and vulgar philosophy, which I will not go so far as to term blindness. Yet, Copernicus did not go much further…because, being more a student of mathematics than of nature, he could not plumb and probe into matters to the extent that he could completely uproot unsuitable and empty principles and, by resolving perfectly all the difficulties in the way, free both himself and others from numerous empty enquiries and fix their attention on constant and sure things. (86)

What Bruno opened up to his English audiences, then, was a place for cosmography to fill in with philosophy what Copernicus's too mathematical approach had left out. As Hilary Gatti has noted about Bruno, though he "recognizes his dependence on the data collected and ordered by the practicing scientists," he stills feels free "to comment on and interpret their discoveries in a far larger context than the one in which the 'normal' scientist must operate, a context that will require the command of vision and imagination, as well as a prophetic insight that attempts to

interpret nature in the higher terms of universal patterns or laws" (51). Bruno's attempt in his writings was to open up space for the philosophical, the visionary, and the prophetic to enter into the places that, in the Copernican model, were being held too closely to mathematics. As a philosopher of science, Bruno felt he added a necessary extension of the Copernican ideals that embraced the "important and far-reaching" consequences of the new science (Gatti 52). Bruno, who had enjoyed a professional relationship with Fulke Greville and Philip Sidney, had in the 1580s injected a bit of prophetic and speculative cosmology into the literary and intellectual world of 1580s England.[6]

By adding the process of visionary speculation to the very strict mathematical approach of Copernicus's work, Bruno was able to imagine an expansive and heterodox universe. Bruno's major longing is for freedom: freedom of the intellect, freedom of moving, and freedom from being held by the orthodox customs of his period. In *The Ash Wednesday Supper*, Bruno's interests in freeing the human mind take center stage:

> The Nolan [Bruno], in order to cause completely opposite effects, has freed the human mind and the knowledge which were shut up in the strait prison of the turbulent air. Hardly could the mind gaze at the most distant stars as if through some peepholes, and its wings were clipped so that it could not soar and pierce the veil of the clouds to see what was actually there. It could not free itself from the chimeras of those who, coming forth with manifold imposture from the mire and pits of the earth (as if they were Mercuries and Apollos descended from the skies), have filled the

[6] For more on Bruno's relationship with Sidney and Greville, see Gatti *Essays on Giordano Bruno* 44-46 and 115-126.

> whole world with infinite folly, nonsense and vice, disguised as so much virtue, divinity, and discipline. (89)

Bruno's major goal was to in many ways free human thought to engage in a visionary motion through the universe, opening up possibilities for human endeavor. In *The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast* (1584), Bruno writes against "the vices which predominate and are wont to tread upon the divine side." He then offers an exuberant vision of the love of beauty's power to purge and strengthen the mind: "The mind is repurged of errors and becomes adorned with virtues, because of love of beauty, which is seen in goodness and natural justice, and because of hatred and fear of the contrary deformity and displeasure" (80). An ethereal set of quasi-prophetic utterances follows:

> There, where one sees the nine-stringed Lyre, ascends the Mother Muse with her nine daughters, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, Logic, Poetry, Astrology, Physics, Metaphysics, and Ethics; whence, as a consequence, fall Ignorance, Inertia, and Bestiality. The mothers have the universe as their area; and each of the daughters has her particular subject. (81)

Bruno casts the universe as the main object of human inquiry. To look upward is to look at the space of true revelation towards God and infinity. His brand of astronomy and of philosophy is deeply speculative, visionary, and colored by literary and aesthetic imagination.

Some treatments of Bruno's work risk overemphasizing the conclusive nature of Bruno's arguments about the freedom of the mind and of the possibility of infinite universes. Angus Fletcher, for instance, has argued that Donne's work responds to Bruno et al. by oscillating between the old and the new ways of seeing the universe. Yet Bruno's work was to open up new hypotheses within the body of Copernican astronomy. The Copernican hypothesis, though

expanded and made visionary under Bruno, was quite old by the time Donne was composing his poetry and it is hard to believe that he enjoyed any great nostalgia for the Aristotlean and Ptolemaic universe—especially when so many features of this system were preserved by Copernicus. Antonella Del Prete, in her work *Bruno, L'infini et les mondes*, reminds us that though in Bruno we may get an image of "an infinite universe, the image of a god who has lost his personal aspect and his capacity to direct nature and history, a uniform world, deprived of physical and metaphysical landmarks, subject to perpetual change…" that "one must underscore the term used by Bruno: another world *can* be found in another space, it's only a possibility" (5, 43). Even in the beginning of Bruno's most compelling work on the subject, *De l'infinito, universo e mondi* [*Of the Infinite Universe and Worlds*] (1584), Bruno casts the possibility of infinite worlds as one based in speculation beyond the capability of human senses: "*Filoteo*: Non è senso che vegga l'infinito, non è senso da cui si richieda questa conchiusione; perché l'infinito non può essere oggetto del senso" [It is not sense that may see the infinite, it is not through sense that this conclusion can be reached; because the infinite can not be the subject matter of the senses] (13).

The importance comes in actually trying to speculatively imagine these worlds: to engage in the bold act of trying to conceive of the infinite and the inconceivable. Fletcher is right to note that "the whole purpose of Donne's literary works is to imbue the natural cosmos with spirits of mysterious intuition," yet I see no reason to believe that "[Donne's] thoughts always negotiate with the New Science over [a] desire for calm, for that incipient restructuring of cosmic knowledge he sees as a source of perpetual hyperactivity" (114). Though Fletcher rightly believes that Donne's lyrics can "indicate a violent, even tortured sense, of heterogeneous motions" (120), "violent" or "tortured" do not seem to be applicable labels to an expansive

vision of traveling through the universe. If anything, the English state on Earth, with its prohibitions against Catholics, would have seemed far more of a violent or tortured place for him to be. If anything, upwards is for Donne a far safer and calmer spot. It is when he stops—to marry, to write, to love, or to study—that he seems to risk the most.

III. The Lyrics: Understanding the Universe through the Intimacy of Space

John Donne's early life was defined, in ways both intellectual and political, by his family's alliance with the Catholic Church. This alliance is at the center of John Carey's biography *John Donne: Life, Mind, and Art* where Carey argued: "Donne was born into a terror, and formed by it" and has been studied in many considerations of Donne's life and works. Donne's earliest education was certainly at the hands of a Catholic (19). "That his tutor was a good Catholic, perhaps even a seminary priest," Bald writes in his biography of Donne, "may be accepted without question" (39). This upbringing would seem to have given Donne an ambivalent sense of his role in English society. Bald illustrates some of these conflicts in Donne's early life:

> The sense of being apart from others in his family's fidelity to the old religion would have brought with it, on the one hand, a feeling of almost aristocratic exclusiveness as well as a specific pride in his descent from the line of Sir Thomas More. On the other hand, there was around him a constant sense of watchfulness, of whispered conversation and innuendo, of disguises and secret comings and goings. (41)

Donne, then, would have always known two societies, two ways of life, and two ways of comprehending the divinity of the universe and of the self. As a Recusant, a Catholic who

refused to attend Anglican services, Donne's spiritual life was defined by outward protest and beliefs held secret or open depending on the social circumstances in which he found himself.

His studies at Oxford and his travels abroad (1584-1591), the major events of Donne's life before he turned in earnest to writing the poems of the *Songs and Sonets*, reveal a similar ambivalence. At Oxford he was at Hart Hall, a hall with no chapel that, because it could not host the required Anglican services, had become a haven for Catholics who could study at Oxford while maintaining their faith as a sort of open secret. His studies there seem to have been both in the traditional studies of Aristotelian philosophy, theology, civil law, and rhetoric while also engaging in the private study of French and Italian literature and Canon Law.[7] His studies, then, shared the same two layers of his life: outward participation in English culture (with the obvious exception of Anglican services) paired with a series of inner beliefs that presented an alternate divinity, even an alternate world. During Donne's travels abroad, most likely occurring between 1589 and 1591, he visited Italy, perhaps by way of the Low Countries and France, eventually ending up in Spain. England was at war with Spain from 1587 to 1604 and Donne, as Bald underscores, could only have gone as a Catholic refugee.[8] Bald offers a version of what Donne may have had to do while in Spain: "He would obviously have had to be discreet, and some of the obscurity which attaches to these early travels may be due to his having availed himself of opportunities denied to his Protestant countrymen" (52).

Donne's life and work, then, would have always been affected by a vexed relationship with the categories that hold human societies and the world together: national and religious allegiances would have presented a young English Catholic like Donne with a world of

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[7] See Bald 48.

[8] See Bald 52.

ambivalence, resistance, and dejection. As John Carey writes:

> The disadvantages of being a Catholic in Elizabethan England are difficult to generalize about. On the one hand, as the careers of Donne's father and stepfather suggest, it was possible, if you were sufficiently circumspect or well-connected, to prosper. On the other hand, you might end up having your intestines torn out. Developments in international politics could make your situation suddenly more dangerous, without your taking any steps in the matter. You could not, if you remained faithful to your religion, hope to play any part in public life, and you were debarred from taking a university degree by the requirement that graduates should subscribe to the Thirty-Nine articles. (15)

The early life of a Catholic Recusant would necessarily have contained some ambiguities but in Donne's life, descended as he was from Sir Thomas More, a figure who so perfectly encapsulated the glory and danger of being a Catholic in England, these forces would become even more pointed. The rise of astronomical discussion in England in the latter half of the sixteenth-century provided for Donne an opportunity to consider the interaction between the universe and the self as the key theme of his poetry. Starting at Oxford just a year after Bruno had made the first attempt to teach Copernicanism there, Donne would have certainly known of Bruno and his works bears witness to some of Bruno's ideas about man's interaction with the universe.[9] As we saw above, Bruno, in *The Ash Wednesday Supper*, published during Donne's first year at Oxford, attempted to free humanity to engage in a visionary connection with the universe. This act is deeply connected with a consideration of the self, and the self becomes

[9] See Gatti 43.

folded into the process of looking outward at the universe. "One of the principal difficulties in attempting to paint a cosmographical picture, Bruno explicitly states, is that the human observer finds himself trapped in the picture, unable to take a few steps back to observe the form of the whole, as ordinary painters do, without falling into the abyss," Gatti observes (49). One's self is always a major part of any kind of astronomical picture. Donne's shorter lyrics are invested with this sense of a personal vision that penetrates, appropriates, and represents the cosmos. The expansive quality of Brunonian cosmology, with its emphasis on processing the cosmos through the philosophical and exuberant mind of the gazer, comes to influence many of the *Songs and Sonets*, especially two poems that reveal Donne's interest in the relationship between humanity and the cosmos: "The Extasie" and "The Sunne Rising."[10]

In "The Extasie," Donne reveals how his vision of the erotic and romantic are intertwined with his views of the cosmic. Louis Martz argues that the "wit of the title [of the poem] depends upon the double reference to 'sensuall Extasie' and mystical *extasis*; the whole poem develops from the physical desires implied in the curious 'composition of place' with which the poem opens" (212). Similarly, Ramie Targoff in *John Donne: Body and Soul* notes the ways in which the poem offers love "as a bodily as well as spiritual experience," an act which "differentiates him from the vast majority of practitioners in the 'philosophy of love'" (58). Building on this

[10] Hilary Gatti for instance writes: "As a philosopher of science himself, Bruno recognizes his dependence on the data collected and ordered by the practicing scientists. At the same time, however, he claims his independence to comment on and interpret their discoveries in a far larger context than the one in which the 'normal' scientist must operate, a context that will require the command of vision and imagination, as well as a prophetic insight that attempts to interpret nature in the higher terms of universal patterns or laws" (51).

critical tradition, I want to explore a striking moment in the poem, when the souls and the bodies of the lovers become separate:

> As ’twixt two equall armies, Fate
> Suspends uncertaine victorie,
> Our soules, (which to advance their state,
> Were gone out,) hung ’twixt her, and mee. (13-16)

This is the important moment of *extasis* in which the body and souls are separated and a purer language of the soul is created:

> And whil’st our soules negotiate there,
> Wee like sepulchrall statues lay:
> All day, the same our postures were,
> And wee said nothing, all the day.
>
> If any, so by love refin’d,
> That he soules language understood,
> And by good love were growen al minde,
> Within convenient distance stood,
>
> He (though he knew not which soule spake,
> Because both meant, both spake the same)
> Might thence a new concoction take,
> And part farre purer than he came. (17-28)

The souls of the two lovers mingle in the air between their bodies and speak a transcendent and

purifying language. The bodies of the two lovers enclose the space and the air in which the souls can intermingle. The bodies, though devoid of the recently departed souls, provide the frame for the souls' negotiation. Targoff argues "it is indisputable that [the poem] reifies the categories of body and soul," but emphasizes that Donne does not go so far as to "[embrace] a Platonism that debases the flesh" (57). Romantic love and spiritual love, flesh and body, are, as both Martz and Targoff believe, quite prominent in the poem (this should not be surprising in a poem containing the line "To'our bodies turne wee then" (69)).

Yet the way space—particularly the space between their bodies—is used in the poem allows Donne's lines to transcend the critical debate between spiritual and sexual ecstasy and come to argue for a dynamic, visionary, and Brunonian way of dealing with the material space of the cosmos. Above all, Donne reveals the ecstatic experience as revelatory and informative. "This Extasie doth unperplex /…and tell us what we love" (29-30). As love "interinanimates two soules" (42), the poem describes a situation in which their intermingled souls become a key towards self revelation: "We then, who are this new soule, know, / Of what we are compos'd and made, / For, th'Atomies of which we grow, / Are soules, whom no change can invade" (45-48). The ecstatic experience being described here has allowed Donne to enter the Lucretian and atomistic building blocks of the universe. The souls of the two lovers, held within the empty space between them, constitute impenetrable particles of material that cannot be further broken down. As the atomists believed that only atoms and empty voids characterize the universe at the most basic level, Donne's poem provides a similar vision: "On man heavens influence workes not so, / But that it first imprints the ayre, / Soe soule into the soule may flow, / Though it to body first repaire" (57-60). The soul is presented as moving through the air provided by heaven. The key point of exchange occurs in the empty space between the two lovers where the

indivisible (though able to be combined) souls mingle. Empty space—the space of the voids of the universe—is spiritually charged in Donne's poem.

The soul-less bodies in the poem, the void between them, and the souls intermingling in the middle becomes a sort of mini-universe in which the basic units of human experience can be most readily understood and seen. The intense localness of the poem opens up into a meditation on the building blocks of the universe, on the divine nature of voids and spaces that can be understood through the interaction of the two lovers. Bruno, in *The Ash Wednesday Supper* presents a similar cosmographic technique located in the observations of the self. Theophilo describes the work of "the Nolan," Bruno's representative in the text, as providing a kind of illuminating ecstasy into the self and the universe:

> Thus by the light of his senses and reason, he opened those cloisters of truth which it is possible for us to open with the key of most diligent inquiry; he laid bare covered and veiled nature, gave eyes to the moles and light to the blind, who could not fix their gaze and see their image reflected in the many mirrors which surround them on every side; he loosed the tongues of the dumb who could not and dared not express their entangled opinions, [and] he strengthened the lame who could not make that progress of the spirit which base and dissoluble matter cannot make. He makes them no less present [on them] than if they were actual inhabitants of the sun, of the moon, and of the other known stars; he shows how similar or different, greater or lesser are those bodies which we see far away, in relation to the earth which is so close to us and to which we are joined; and he opens our eyes to see this deity, this our mother [the earth] who feeds and nourishes us on her back after having conceived us in her womb to which she

> always receives us again, and he [leads us] not to think that beyond her there is a material universe without souls, and life and even excrement among its corporeal substances. In this way, we know that if we were on the moon or on other stars, we would not be in a place very different from this—and maybe in a worse place, just as there may be other bodies quite as good and even better in themselves and in the greater happiness of their inhabitants. Thus we will know so many stars, heavenly bodies, deities numbering many hundreds of thousands…(90)

These sentiments would eventually lead Bruno to the stake in 1600. One can see traces of Donne's worldview in this: a universe charged with souls, similar to our own, an interest in the way the self can open up to more universal truths. Bruno's vision of transcendence in the passage above is much more directly Platonic than that of Donne. As Targoff noted, Donne preserves the relevance of the body, and we saw in the passage above, Donne values "dissoluble matter" as the atomist building blocks of the soul and the universe. Yet Donne's vision of space—both local spaces such as that between lovers and cosmic space like the space of the firmament—is charged with the bold revelatory inquiry Bruno offers. Donne, like Bruno, seems to believe that debates about the very nature of the soul and the cosmos cannot be left solely to scientific inquiry but need to be opened up into the ecstatic meditation of poetry.[11] The poem expands outwards as it offers a defense of the body's relevance to considerations of the soul: "But O alas, so long, so farre / Our bodies why doe wee forbeare? / They'are ours, though they are not wee, We are /

[11] For instance, Hilary Gatti notes "Bruno [suggests] that the new scientific inquiries are so important and far-reaching that the scientists themselves cannot be required or expected to draw out all the conceptual implications inherent in their discoveries about the universe. This is the task of philosophers or science" (52).

The'intelligences, they the spheares" (49-52). The separation of the lovers' bodies and souls offers a microcosm of the universe, a solar system in miniature based on the act of deconstructing bodies.

In "The Extasie," to analyze the self meditatively is to deconstruct the basic building blocks of matter and of human existence. In "The Sunne Rising," Donne also tries, in a more corporeal form than we see in "The Extasie," to become a complete world. As in "The Extasie," Donne creates a moment that is outside traditional time in order to interrogate the basic components of movements of time and space. The poem, connected to the *alba* tradition of Occitan poetry, rejects the notion that the Sun should be allowed to end the lovers' time together as would be more standard for the genre. Yet by calling the sun "Busie old foole, unruly Sunne" (1), Donne chooses an insult that subtly signals the Copernican shift of the Sun's place. To call the sun unruly, with its connotations of being outside of regulation and sense, liberates the sun as much as it would liberate Donne's lovers. Donne writes:

> Must to thy motions lovers seasons run?
> Sawcy pedantique wretch, goe chide
> Late schoole boyes, and sowre prentices,
> Goe tell Court-huntsmen, that the King will ride,
> Call countrey ants to harvest offices;
> Love, all alike, no season knowes, nor clyme,
> Nor houres, dayes, moneths, which are the rags of time. (4-10)

In these lines, Donne recognizes the supremacy of the Sun in regulating human experience in general while preserving a unique role for himself and his lover outside of that supremacy.

Thomas Docherty's *John Donne: Undone* provides an extended reading of the spatial,

theological, and Copernican dimensions of this poem. He argues that the "poem continues the line of spatial manipulation [found in "The Sunne Rising"] by converting the body of the woman into a map, a representation or metaphorical sign for the whole world" (31) and that the female figure "becomes mediated as a symbol of the market-place itself" (32).[12] In addition, Docherty argues that "the Copernican discoveries are enacted" in the poem, noting that "the sun, whose sphere of influence has already been simplified into a mere strip of light, has its circumferential movement contracted" (34). To these two readings, Docherty finally adds a third: that there is a tension between the sun and the "Son" rising in the poem, resulting in "resurrection [being] articulated in the poem…even if in an apparently perverse way" (36). These arguments are finally packaged in Docherty's ultimate assertion that the poem fights against secular time: "This now is the experience of living in time, in secular history; and the struggle against it is an attempt to reconstitute or reconstruct some quasi-eternal or essential transcendent 'presence' or 'self' which will guarantee personal and individual self-unification and identity" (38). Docherty's interrelated arguments about this poem are worth dealing with at length because they reveal the risks of reading Donne's individualized vision as championing an anxious individualized view facing what Docherty calls "secular time." It's nearly impossible that Donne would have believed in, or even understood, the concept of "secular time," and the spatial, theological, and temporal operations of the poem are only secular if a secular subject were to insert himself or herself into the situation Donne's poet describes.

The anxiety that Docherty reads into the poem is also present in Ben Saunders's *Desiring Donne*. Turning to the work of Jacques Lacan, he writes about certain of Donne's lyrics, "The

[12] Docherty continues: "East and west are yoked together, coming to a fulcrum point in the figure of the female body" (31).

Sunne Rising" among them, "[Donne] transfers the loving gaze into a mirrored shield against the petrifying Medusas of the Symbolic-Real. But elsewhere in his work, he cannot sustain these Imaginary identifications, and as a result, his own sense of self can become threatened" (168). Saunders observes that in these poems "Love provides the magic by which we can transform ourselves into the everything that will serve as a stay against the nothing. But for both thinkers [Donne and Lacan], the Imaginary fantasy cannot quite cover the abyssal gap upon which it is founded. The nothing shows through" (169). Docherty and Saunders both see "The Sunne Rising" as a desperate attempt to preserve the self in the face of a giant abyss: whether the giant secular universe or the threat of nothingness. Why this pessimistic reading of Donne's spatial poetics? Why this minimizing of the self? The Copernican hypothesis and its related theories about the Sun were not some new revolutionary ideal that immediately transformed all of English intellectual society. The process was not only slow, but held at a privileged, almost spiritual distance from everyday thinkers. As Theophilo remarks in *The Ash Wednesday Supper*: "this burden is not for the shoulders of everyone, but for those, like the Nolan [Bruno], who can bear it, or at least can move it toward his ends without experiencing perilous difficulty, as Copernicus was able to do. Moreover, those who possess this truth should not communicate it to every sort of person unless they want to wash the ass's head, as the saying goes…" (92). As the Master demonstrates in Record's *Castle of Knowledge*, there is a prestige to understanding and believing in the Copernican hypothesis. The major divisions between those who believed the Copernican hypothesis and those that did not, as characterized by many of the scientists themselves, had to do with the boundaries between advanced scholars and amateurs, not between faith and reason.

Returning to the poem itself, we see that in "The Sunne Rising" Donne attempts to engage

in a visionary confrontation with the sun. The sun is not reduced in importance, as Docherty suggests, but rather has a privileged visionary engagement with the sun. Donne and his lover, both collapsed into the synecdoche of the bed, become an astronomical and cosmographical counterpoint to the sun around which the rest of the world revolves and shifts:

> If her eyes have not blinded thine
> Look, and to morrow late, tell mee,
> Whether both th'India's of spice and Myne
> Be where thou leftst them, or lie here with mee.
> Aske for those Kings whome thou saw'st yesterday
> And thou shalte heare, All here in one bed lay. (15-20)

In an almost cartoonish act of competition with the sun, Donne collects the world, from the East to West Indies, into his bed, taunting the sun ("Thy beames, so reverend, and strong / Why shouldst thou thinke? / I could eclipse and cloud them with a winke" (11-13)). Donne is challenging the sun to a race. The sun whose motions regulate the day and whose movements across the sky reach different places at different times loses to Donne's all-encompassing spatial poetics that draws the world into the bed. Though the romantic element of the poem, its praise for the lady and its use of the convention of the *alba*, can help underscore the amatory impulse of the poem, the act of sexual and romantic congress is so intense that it encompasses the entire universe, the poet seems far more driven by his conquest of the sun and the space of the universe than any kind of detailed engagement with the nature of his romantic love.

Reminded of Bachelard's assertion that immensity must be understood through one's own interiority, we can see the ways in which this poem is, above all else, a commentary on how the poetic imagination and the mind of the observer can come to consume, rearrange, and encompass

the universe. When Donne writes, “She’is all States, and all Princes, I, / Nothing else is” (21-22), his poem reveals a universe that exists only in the phenomenological experience of the observer. Brunonian cosmography believed in the power of the observer’s unique vision as an essential tool for comprehending the universe. When asked about the teachings of Copernicus, the Nolan in *The Ash Wednesday Supper* “replied that in judging and determining he saw through neither the eyes of Copernicus nor those of Ptolemy but through his own eyes.” He later distinguishes between two kinds of men who study the universe: “interpreters who translate words from one language to another” and “others who penetrate into the sense.” The Nolan is ultimately praised for finding “the way to ascend to the sky, compass the circumference of the stars, and leave at his back the convex surface of the firmament” (88). Though *The Ash Wednesday Supper* does focus on more technical treatments of the Copernican hypothesis, especially in the Third Dialogue, the Brunonian project is mainly an act of visionary engagement and hypthesis. Like Kepler in his *Somnium*, Bruno believes the only way to truly understand and access the Copernican heliocentric universe is to actually see it with one’s own eyes, which, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, could only be achieved through visionary writing (Kepler 11-17).

Donne, in “The Sunne Rising,” reverses the Brunonian visionary act while preserving its main tenets. Instead of freeing the mind to rise upward and penetrate the cosmos, to fly among the stars, the poet brings the world and the sun to itself. The major force of the poem is to make the only relevant cosmic space that space that is experienced by the poet. The bed is itself the Platonic ideal of earthly existence: “Princes doe but play us; compar’d to this, / All honor’s mimique; All wealth alchimie” (23-24). Temporal power, honor, and wealth are copies of the world created in the lover’s bed. Worldly space and worldly position, then, collapse into the lovers’ bed. The bed becomes its own cosmos as the poem comes to a close:

Thou sunne art halfe as happy'as wee,
In that the world's contracted thus.
Thine age askes ease, and since thy duties bee
To warm the world, that's done in warming us.
Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere;
This bed thy center is, these walls thy spheare. (25-30)

The sun is "half as happy" because it can only ever shine on half the world ("the world's contracted thus") but the bed provides a world the sun can warm completely. The microcosmic aspect of the poem is well-known: the bed becomes the entire world that the sun can shine on. The very last line sets up a Ptolemaic cosmos. The earth and the universe, held within the bed, become the center of the sphere of the universe (what would be called by a Renaissance thinker "the world"). Though one may be tempted to read this as a nostalgic gesture for the pre-Copernican world, the poem presents it as an artificial construct produced by an extraordinary love. The power of the last line comes in how *unordinary* the arrangement is.

Love is the animating force of Donne's vision of space. It is Love that brings the cosmos into their bed, Love which makes the arrangements of the social order just a mere copy of what they have. Yet the true narrative of attraction, certainly the one that gets the most attention in the poem, is the passionate relationship between Donne and the sun itself. The conversation between Donne and the sun—with its ability to completely alter the order of the natural world—arises out of the playful and exaggerated movements the poem stages.[13] Rather than having an ordered

[13] Angus Fletcher writes: "John Donne's lyrics can be excerpted to indicate a violent, even tortured sense, of heterogeneous motions" (120). Though I disagree with the "tortured" label, I

view of the sun that we see in Copernicus's own writings, we are presented with a vision of the universe far closer to a Brunonian strategy of visionary engagement with space, entering into a literary dialogue with the sun in order to experimentally reshape the parameters of the sun's relationship with earth. The poem enacts not the Copernican revolution but rather the power of the poetic visionary to penetrate the cosmos. Puttenham and Sidney, as we saw above, also advocated for the visionary capabilities of poetry. Donne, who was beginning his life as a poet right as Puttenham, Sidney, and Bruno were writing, reflects this cosmological legacy of poetry by asserting the poet's ability to creatively rearrange the cosmos according to his own subjectivity.

For a poet in Donne's position—a Catholic in a country where to openly profess one's faith was punishable by death—the social and cosmic world of late-Elizabethan England, at war with Spain, would have made the vast universe not a distant and terrifying void, but a place where the social and political divisions of English society could be transcended. In both "The Extasie" and "The Sunne Rising," Donne uses intimate moments of love to push poetic visions outward to such a scale that individual differences dissolve in the vigorous imagination of a poet for whom the largest cosmic objects become just another aspect of his bedroom poetic vision. Nations, cultures, and, presumably, different faith groups become irrelevant in the vision of Donne's poem. In these lyrics, like Bruno, Donne is more interested in stretching observations and doctrines to their visionary limit rather than respecting the limits of what can be proven or observed. For Donne's poetics, observation is such a phenomenological, personal, and spiritual act that the only way to view the cosmos is, as Bruno asserted, through his own eyes. For a poet

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agree with Fletcher that movement, rather than clear aesthetic placement and ordering, comes to shape Donne's lyric engagements.

like Donne interested in the cosmos and in accessing other worlds, Bruno would have been a clear example for how to write with what Hilary Gatti has called in Bruno's work "a remarkably unorthodox autonomy" (103).

In *The Holy Sonnets*, Donne's poetic and spatial vision imagines divine and cosmic spaces in poems that are at once deeply anxious and repentant in their treatment of the sacred while also maintaining a strong sense of individualized vision and presence. Louis Martz asked about these poems: "May it not be that all three poets [Southwell, Donne, Herbert] are working, to some extent, under the influence of methods of meditation that led toward the deliberate evolution of a threefold structure of composition (memory), analysis (understanding), and colloquy (affections, will)? The 'Holy Sonnets' seem to bear out this conjecture" (43). Martz's argument is that the poems are a composed meditative space in which a spiritual event or problem can be understood in such a way as to change his feelings and behavior. The Ignatian dictum that one must imagine that he is in the same time and space as a key Christian event and then internalize that time and space within himself does seem, as Martz argues, to be a resonant spiritual background piece to these poems, and yet I believe we can take Donne's spatial imagination even further and beyond the Ignatian tradition.

Whereas the Ignatian spiritual exercises were designed to exercise the spirit and keep one's mind closer to God, Donne's encounters with God and the sacred in the *Holy Sonnets* are remarkably more interested in the kind of totalizing and expansive conclusions that Brunonian vision makes possible. The emphasis, as well, on a central ego entering into the key questions of divinity and the cosmos help to make the brief sonnet sequence an extended visionary engagement with the boundaries between the Heaven and Earth. In *Holy Sonnet* V[14], Donne

[14] *Holy Sonnets* are numbered according to the Grierson edition as reproduced in Shawcross.

forges a link between speculative cosmic discovery and speculation over his salvation:

> I am a little world made cunningly
> Of Elements, and an Angelick spright,
> But black sinne hath betraid to endless night
> My worlds both parts, and (oh) both parts must die.
> You which beyond that heaven which was most high
> Have found new spheares, and of new lands can write,
> Powre new seas in mine eyes, that so I might
> Drowne my world with my weeping earnestly,
> Or wash it if it must be drown'd no more:
> But oh it must be burnt; alas the fire
> Of lust and envie have burnt it heretofore,
> And made it fouler; Let their flames retire,
> And burne me ô Lord, with a fiery zeale
> Of thee and thy house, which doth in eating heale.

Donne stages his fall into sin on the cosmic level. He is a planet, well made, but thrown away from the Sun by sin. His desire here is to drown or cleanse his world with cosmic tears that astronomers have found in the distant heavens. Here we see the object of Brunonian inquiry—the cosmos well outside the visible portions near Earth—longed for as a kind of punitive yet curative salve. Ultimately, however, even on this expanded and cosmic scale, the Christian endtimes and their burning flames are what will ultimately have to destroy and, therefore, heal Donne's errant soul. As Donne projects his longing onto the expanded, perhaps even infinite, universe, he maintains, just with more immensity, a sense of Christian time and eschatology.

In *Holy Sonnet* IX, Donne projects the anxiety over his own salvation and election onto questions of natural philosophy. With an almost taxonomic interest, he asks:

> If poysonous mineralls, and if that tree,
> Whose fruit threw death on else immortall us,
> If lecherous goats, if serpents envious
> Cannot be damn'd; Alas; why should I bee? (1-4)

Donne undermines his sense of privilege among the rest of creation. Yes, humans are unique in their ability to know God and the moral consequences of their actions, Donne seems to say, but this privilege opens them up to unique punishment:

> Why should intent or reason, borne in mee,
> Make sinnes, else equall, in mee, more heinous?
> And mercy being easie, and glorious
> To God, in his sterne wrath, why threatens hee? (5-8)

At the basic level, Donne is wondering why the gifts of "intent" and "reason" can make sins worse in the eyes of God. Yet Donne is also exploring what it means to be human. The reason and knowledge that comes with being human allows for the sort of speculation and philosophizing that drives this sonnet, but Donne is again trapped by the demands of his soul and his hopes for its salvation.

He attempts to envision a role in the world where he is either exempt from judgment or guaranteed salvation through mercy, but no such role exists. As in the previous sonnet, Donne expands his vision widely—in this case including Eden, the animal kingdom, and inanimate objects in the natural world—only to realize that no matter where his philosophizing goes, he is

trapped within the basic question of whether or not he will be saved. Still, to highlight how trapped he is, he ends the sonnet with one more speculative leap. He asks for God to forget his sins, to forget him, and to free him from the pressures of his sins:

> But who am I, that dare dispute with thee?
> O God, Oh! Of thine onely worthy blood,
> And my teares, make a heavenly Lethean flood,
> And drowne in it my sinnes blacke memorie.
> That thou remember them, some claime as debt,
> I thinke it mercy, if thou wilt forget. (9-14)

Rather than a meditation on how his tears mixed with Christ's blood could wash away his sins, Donne is much more interested in the *memory* of those sins. As we'll see in the next chapter, Crashaw will cast the sort of fluid exchange that Donne describes as an opportunity for a complete transformation of the soul as well as a dynamic mixing of heaven and earth. Yet for Donne no such transformation is in play. Donne wants to be forgotten not forgiven. As he produces an expansive poetic vision that travels through the different categories of life and existence that can be found on earth, he feels trapped, rather than blessed, by the limits his body and soul put on his visionary and sprawling intellect.

Where the *Holy Sonnets*, for the most part, deal with Donne's intense anxiety over his election and salvation, Donne's "Hymne to God my God, in my sicknesse" offers a culmination of his desire, in the Brunonian sense, to travel out of the earth and towards heaven through his poetic vision. Yet the poem is able to perform this with confidence free from the anxiety that defines the tone of the *Holy Sonnets*. Donne begins the poem by highlighting the contemplative thought that is a necessary precursor to entering eternal life:

Since I am comming to that Holy roome,
Where, with thy Quire of Saints for evermore,
I shall be made thy Musique; As I come
I tune the Instrument here at the dore,
And what I must doe then, thinke here before. (1-5)

The emphasis on "thinke here before" highlights the prepatory contemplation Donne undergoes. He imagines that he will be transported from a corporal to incorporal form ("I shall be made thy Musique") and rival cartographies of the body emerge, as the poem continues, between Donne and his physicians:

While my Physitians by their love are growne
Cosmographers, and I their Mapp, who lie
Flat on this bed, that by them may be showne
That this is my South-west discoverie
Per fretum febris, by these streights to die. (6-10)

In these lines, Donne's body is a source of information, a readable image and text that maps the way to the next world. Like the discovery of the Straits of Magellan, the discovery of Donne's passage to his "West"—his death and his entry into eternal life—is essentially a spiritual and cartographic discovery embedded within his own body.

In arguing that he is a map to be read, Donne, as in "The Sunne Rising," asserts that the world can be found within him and that the cosmos can be brought down to his body. Yet in this poem Donne, as microcosm, negotiates his shift from the earth to the heavens. He employs an

expansive poetic vision to negotiate the poem's dramatic movement. Donne, as world and universe, is moving from a tangible to an intangible body, from life to death:

I joy, that in these straits, I see my West;
For, though theire currants yeeld return to none,
What shall my West hurt me? As West and East
In all flatt Maps (and I am one) are one,
So death doth touch the Resurrection.

Is the Pacifique Sea my home? Or are
The Easterne riches? Is *Jerusalem*?
Anyan, and *Magellan*, and *Gibraltare*,
All streights, and none but streights are wayes to them,
Whether where *Japhet* dwelt, or *Cham*, or *Sem.*

We thinke that *Paradise* and *Calvarie*,
Christs Crosse, and *Adams* tree, stood in one place;
Looke Lord, and finde both *Adams* met in me;
As the first *Adams* sweat surrounds my face,
May the last *Adams* blood my soul embrace. (11-25)

Donne extends the map metaphor in bold sacred directions. He is not just a map able to contain both west and east (death and birth, respectively, in the poem), but a representive of all salvation history. His national and theological allegiances seem unimportant; he could be from any corner of the world and still be facing this key moment. His home on earth is only important insofar as

it places him after the Fall of Eden and before his salvation in Christ. To face his resurrection he combines the sweat of human toil with the blood of Christ's redemption.

In closing the poem, Donne envisions becoming transportable divine text. As he has spent the last decades of his life preaching the word of God to others, he yearns for this to be reversed onto him, to become his own sermon to his own soul. Donne's salvation, in the poetic vision offered by the poem, becomes its own text, its own translation from earthly to spiritual forms:

> So, in this purple wrapp'd receive mee Lord,
>
> By these his thornes give me his other Crowne;
>
> And as to others soules I preach'd thy word,
>
> Be this my Text, my Sermon to mine owne,
>
> Therefore that he may raise the Lord throws down. (26-30)

If Donne is the entire world, covered in Adam's sweat that is humanity's punishment for its sin, Donne now wants to bathe that world in Christ's blood. He longs to humble himself by transforming his sickness and death into a text and sermon that, in striking him down, will make him eligible for salvation.

Donne's philosophical and poetic vision reaches out to the world, indeed becomes the world, in order to interrogate the very local problem of Donne's soul's salvation. Donne's enhanced vision that reduces cosmic and global spaces to Donne's body is not just the result of egotism and pride, but represents an inquisitive philosophical and theological strategy. Like Bruno, when facts and what is visible to the naked eye are not enough, Donne believes that speculative vision can fill in the gaps. In the final sections of this chapter, we will see how

Donne's major longer poems, *Metempsychosis* and *The Anniversaries*, take this world-encompassing speculative poetic practice to a larger scale.

IV. Metempsychosis: The muse sprawls outward.

In 1601, after spending many years writing many of his satires and many of the lyrics that would make up the *Songs and Sonets*, Donne wrote *Metempsychosis*, a long poem with a vexed and scant modern critical heritage, that seems to have been a cause of ambivalence and uneven interest even in its own time. In the 1633 edition of Donne's *Poems*, the full poem and the introductory epistle are presented first. In the 1635 edition, the introductory epistle maintains its primary spot, while the poem itself is placed between the section devoted to Letters and that devoted to the Divine Poems. In the 1639 edition, the epistle and the poem are placed between the Letters and Divine Poems. Why this sudden demotion after a primary spot, or, more relevant, why the primary spot in the first place? One answer comes easily: the epistle to *Metempsychosis* was clearly intended by Donne to be an introduction to his poetic career. Referring to himself as "a new author," Donne writes "Now when I beginne this booke, I have no purpose to come into any mans debt; how my stocke will hold out I know not; perchance waste, perchance increase in use…" (309). The epistle reads as the introduction to a new author and a new work, the perfect epistle to begin a collection by an author first putting his words to print. One can see why this would be attractive placement for the editors of the 1633 edition from this standpoint alone. However, as I'll explore below, this may not have been the only reason.

As for why the poem was demoted in the following editions, there is also a simple

possible explanation: many readers do not like the poem today and there is no significant reason to believe more readers liked it in Donne's day. The poem that Donne called a "Poêma Satyricon" has been far from the favorite of Donne's critics. Ramie Targoff, who devotes her entire study *John Donne: Body and Soul* to Donne's views on the soul sees little importance in the poem, claiming that *Metempsychosis* represents a phase in which "Donne experimented with the notion that a single soul might be serially reincarnated…but that this satiric poem was left unfinished reflects, I believe, his ultimate distaste for its conceit" (8). Kenneth Gross in his article "John Donne's Lyric Skepticism: In Strange Way" considers *Metempsychosis* mainly to provide a window into the more popular lyrics and in Karl P. Wentersdorf's illuminating essay "Symbol and Meaning in Donne's *Metempsychosis* or *The Progresse of the Soule*" a convincing argument emerges that "Donne set out to show that the whole of history—as exemplified in the transmigration of one 'great soule', a shaper both of imperial destinies and of religious revolutions—had continually been dominated by erotic forces" (89). Yet this argument brings us back to the common critical belief that Donne's all consuming eroticism is the source of his poetic invention. We are, it would seem, back again on the road to the lyrics.[15]

Yet, as Janel Mueller has pointed out, many Renaissance literary projects, including, for instance, Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, are unfinished and this can hardly, as she asserts, "bar it from serious consideration" (109). Yet Donne's poem rarely receives this "serious consideration." Mueller argues that the proximity of Donne's work to Ovid's *Metamorphosis* may be behind the work's importance and composition and its unfinished status clearly a result "of the implications of his source materials. If [Donne] could have been dispassionate, finally detached like Ovid, he

[15] Wentersdorf, for instance, is eager to argue that *Metempsychosis* is linked to Donne's sexual biography (90).

would have permitted himself local responses and still avoided an absolute taking of sides [between moral nihilism and Christian doctrine]. But rather than take neither side, Donne found himself taking both" (134-135). Finally, considering the poem "a transition piece by which Donne found his true personal and poetic direction," Mueller argues that "the *Metempsychosis* is well placed at the head of his poems" (137). Would it be expected that a transition piece be at the head of one's collection of poems? And why would Donne choose as a transition piece a form that he never took up before nor ever again? The *Metempsychosis* clearly speaks to a specific connection with readers, serving as some kind of crucial introduction to the works that follow and yet, as the critical dissatisfaction with the poem reveals, never clearly fitting in with the rest of his own oeuvre.

Metempsychosis, I will argue, is a cosmographic poem and a hallmark of Donne's ability to undermine strict religious doctrines while meditating on abstract philosophical quandaries. As a poem concerning infinity ("Infinitati Sacrum"), the poem's focus is rather all-encompassing, even by Donne's standards. What Bruno's work had attempted to demonstrate was that poetry and visionary prose, far more than the strict mathematics of Copernicus's original work, could adequately deal with the philosophical and cosmographic theories circulating about the universe. In this poem, Donne questions, as Montaigne had before him, the very nature of human existence. *Metempsychosis*, then, may seem to be just a playful romp about a traveling soul, whirling through history and society like a picaresque character. But, the poem, introducing the wider world to Donne's poetic voice in 1633, is something of a précis of Donne's poetics written from a position of a poet starting out. He begins his preface to the poem as if it were the beginning of his career as a poet. Even though Donne has been writing poems for at least a decade before *Metempsychosis,* he frames this as his beginning as a poet. "Others at the Porches

and entries of their Buildings set their Armes; I, my picture; if any colours can deliver a minde so plaine, and flat, and through light as mine." A picture, in the place of a Coat or Arms, helps, in Donne's mind, to present the representation of what he believes his simple and plain mind, which like the flat surface of a painting does not contain the tangling web of history, military power, and political influence of a Coat of Arms, but simply himself, presented simply.

This is a Montaignean gesture *par-excellence.* It was Montaigne who wrote of his *Éssais* "je suis moy-mesme la matiere de mon livre" [I am myself the matter of my book]. John Klause in his essay "The Montagneity of Donne's *Metempsychosis*" explores this connection in depth, finding in Donne's ultimately unsuccessful epic the theme of a lyric essay in the mold of Montaigne's work. While confessing that "the epic strain in *Metempsychosis* is weak indeed" and "the absence of an authoritative point of view in *Metempsychosis* renders hopeless the quest for allegorical meanings, which in any case fail to emerge with perceptible consistency," Klause eventually believes that the poem comes to represent a more elaborate process of Donne-reading-Montaigne (424, 429).[16] However, Klause seems to not believe in the quality per se of this endeavor: "The moment, the monadic self, the incompetent mind: these themes in Montaigne's

[16] Klause presents an impressive account of this. He writes: "But Donne sought out Montaigne assiduously for help with the general themes of his poem and to provide suggestions for many of its details. Not only does metempsychosis appear in the *Essais* as a matter for jest (2.12.283) and at the same time part of a more serious general context in which all is perennial and contradictory movement (*branloire*; 3.2.222); the idea of transmigration is introduced, as in Donne's poem, by reference to Ovid (2.11.217), with an eye to 'divine justice' (218), and it is followed by the 'Apologie of Raymond Sebond,' with its conclusions about 'custom,' 'opinion,' and the ambiguities of human judgment" (435).

Essais, then, taken up by Donne, help to explain why an 'epic' like *Metempsychosis* is doomed to be only an 'attempt'" (439). Klause's point that Donne's work seems to come directly from a reading of Montaigne is helpful and a push in the right direction after many decades of pushing this poem into the field of a failed mock-epic. Yet Klause sees the poem's sloppiness, its lack of clarity, and the "monadic self" that carries through as being ultimately a failed attempt, an attempt (*un essai*) that is ultimately unsustainable and ineffective.

Was Montaigne's project ineffective? Or was his project more effective because the reader has more tolerance for contradiction and self-focused rambling in prose than in metrical, Spenserian verse? Whatever the basic flaws of his project may be, Donne seems to anticipate we won't like the results and nor will he. "Naturally at a new author," he writes, "I doubt, and sticke, and doe not say quickly, good. I censure much and taxe; And this liberty costs mee more than others, by how much my owne things are worse then others. Yet I would not be so rebellious against my selfe, as not to doe it, since I love it; nor so unjust to others as to do it *sine talione*. As long as I give them as good hold upon mee, they must pardon mee my bitings" (3-9). Donne, as a reader, is highly critical of new authors, and yet, as a new author himself, he expects the same treatment. It is as if he believes this poem is payment, an entrance fee, into a continued critical relationship with the literary community around him. It is as if Donne needs to offer a work to be censured in order for his own ability to censure to continue. And yet, the point that the preface to *Metempsychosis* seems to be urging is that there is no clear boundary between what is bad and what is good, there is only an ongoing discourse, an ongoing exchange of representations and opinions (of code and of signifiers, to put it in structuralist terms). We find ourselves in the textual universe of reading described by Guy Rosolato: "un nouvel univers foisonnant qui s'impose à un regard intérieur qu'entretiennent les signifiants" [a new abounding universe which

demands an interior look at what the signifiers (of the text) uphold] (175). What becomes necessary is an investigation of the language of our interiority. Discovering and comprehending the linguistic signs of one's interiority becomes the key to human understanding. One finds, in reading Donne, that to understand the universe, to understand God, to understand anything that really matters, one has to start with the hidden language of one's interior as it interacts with a persistent desire to know something outside of itself that can never be fully grasped (for Donne a lover, a soul, God or all three).

What the preface needs to urge then is a critical reading of this work that appreciates its inner contradictions. "None writes so ill," Donne reminds us, "that he gives not something exemplary to follow, or flie." All written discourse is a model and Donne presents, finally, what his model is:

> All which I will bid you remember, (for I will have no such Readers as I can teach) is, that the Pithagorian doctrine doth not onely carry one soule from man to man, nor man to beast, but indifferently to plants also: and therefore you must not grudge to finde them the same soule in an Emperour, in a Posthorse, and in a Mucheron, since no unreadinesse in the soule, but an indisposition in the organs workes this. (20-26)

There is, then, one pure strain through humanity and nature made only different in the expressions allowed by the particular organs in which the body happens to be housed. The spirit maintains a memory throughout, even if its bodily powers shift. In an amusing example Donne considers a soul that "could not move when it was a Melon, yet it may remember, and now tell mee, at what lascivious banquet it was serv'd" (27-28). As Donne notes, though the bodies may be limiting, "her memory hath ever been her owne" (32). By tapping into the soul, Donne, like

Spenser and Camden in the last chapter, is able to access, through poetic vision and imagination, a direct link to antiquity and the foundations of human and divine history. Donne's eagerness on this topic closes the preface. He longs to "so seriously deliver you by her relation all passages from her first making when shee was that apple which Eve eate, to this time when shee is hee, whose life you shall find in the end of this booke" (32-36). Donne's goal is to reveal all human experience contained within the memory inside a divinely planted soul.

The poem's epic trappings, and the cause of the troubled critical legacy under which the poem has long suffered, result from the epic *cano* moment that begins the poem: "I sing the progresse of a deathlesse soule, / Whom Fate, which God made, but doth not controule, / Plac'd in most shapes: all times before the law / Yoak'd us, and when, and since, in this I sing" (1-4). These lines are easy to roll over as a *de rigueur* invocation beginning Donne's alleged epic, and yet Donne paints some of his boldest poetic strokes right in these lines. He sings of an immortal soul, created by Fate, a creature of God and yet not controlled by Him; a soul that was placed in most creatures and yet seems to run by its own will and its own law. The poem works hard to establish this trend of independent movement and authority within creation, noting that "thee, eye of heaven, this great soul envies not," (11) asserting that soul is not to be envied even by the sun:

> By thy male force, is all we have, begot.
> In the first East, thou now beginst to shine,
> Suck'st early balme, and Iland spices there,
> And wilt anon in thy loose-rein'd careere
> At Tagus, Po. Sene, Thames, and Danow dine,
> And see at night thy Westerne land of Myne,

Yet hast thou not more nations seene then shee,

That before thee, one day beganne to bee,

And thy fraile light being quench'd, shall long, long out live thee. (12-20)

One sees here echoes of Donne's lyric "The Sunne Rising" in which Donne challenges the Sun's light in regard to the light of his sight for his love: "Thy beames, so reverend, and strong / Why shouldst thou thinke? / I could eclipse and cloud them with a winke, / But that I would lose her sight so long" (11-14). Donne is interested in offering dynamic terrestrial experience that serves as a dynamic alternative to the transcendent glory of the heavens and the cosmos.

Though the preference for terrestrial experience—Donne's moment in bed with his lover or the soul jumping from matter to matter throughout the world—might seem to be a preference for the secular and modern (the "revolutionary present" of Donne's lovers, as Docherty calls it) what emerges in Donne's *Metempsychosis* is not a meditation on the heavens but a lived out tour of the earth by something originating out of the heavens. Harking back to the sort of Brunonian cosmography discussed above, Donne tries to understand the world of man and vegetation through individualized experience and reflection. What Donne is able to do is manufacture a dramatic situation in the poem that carries out this sort of reflection. Donne creates through his meditation on this soul an alternative to the orthodoxies available. He addresses Janus, here a symbol for Adam: "Nor holy *Janus* in whose soveraigne boate / The Church, and all the Monarchies did floate; / That swimming Colledge, and free Hospitall / Of all mankinde…" Donne asks, "did'st thou in that great stewardship embarke / So diverse shapes into that floating parke / As have beene mov'd and inform'd by this heavenly sparke" (21-24, 28-30). The soul is a foundational, antiquarian moment in the world's history, a sprawling access point into the diverse natural and material elements of the earth.

Metempsychosis, in short, is a cosmographic text in the early modern sense of the term. It represents what Ricardo Padrón refers to as "that branch of learning dedicated to understanding the natural world" that "endeavored to understand as a unified whole a number of subjects that the West would consider separately, including astronomy, meteorology, chronology, and geography" (49). What Donne is able to do is imagine a chronological, geographical, and historical text that, through a visionary mapping of the soul's progress, creates a terrestrial reflection of God's creation: a heterodox mélange of creation. Critics rush too soon to associate heterodoxy with secularism. Donne's cosmography coincides with a divine philosophy in which to be an outsider, an agent unlike the rest of the universe (like the soul in Donne's poem), is to gain the best intellectual access to the universe.

This is what Empson was discussing in his infamous essay "Donne the Space Man" in which he writes, "the young Donne, to judge from his poems, believed that every planet could have its incarnation, and believed this with delight, because it automatically liberated an independent conscience from any earthly religious authority" (81). *Metempsychosis*, which features incarnation after incarnation, does not serve as a proto-postmodern mockery of the belief in the Incarnation (an intellectual stretching of Christianity's tenets until they shatter under the farce), but rather attempts to expand the belief in the Incarnation so it becomes a part of the universe rather than simply part of an individual church body. Though certain aspects of the poem signal it to be the product of a Donne entrenched in Catholic identity—the possible jab that links Luther to the prophet Mohammed in the seventh stanza, for instance—there is a universal mistrust in authority and moral absolutism. From the beginning of the preface where we hear Donne remark that he "forbid[s] no reprehender, but him that like the Trent Councell forbids not bookes, but Authors, damning what ever such a name hath or shall write" to his praise for the

great soul "which oft did teare, / and mend the wracks of th'Empire, and late Rome, / And liv'd when every great change did come" (68-70). Change from high to low and from good to bad is not presented in *Metempsychosis* as an ongoing process towards divine revelation, but rather as a built in and omnipresent part of human life. As in Book XV of the *Metamorphoses*, Donne seems to believe that "we too ourselves, who of this world are part, / Not only flesh and blood but pilgrim souls, / Can make our homes in creatures of the wild / Or of the farm" (Ovid *Metamorphoses* XV, 462-465). Each individual, like the universe, contains good and bad. The souls that enliven bodies, and there are many souls that circumnavigate history and the universe, reflect this diversity. Donne makes that clear in presenting a sprawling narrative among many possible narratives arguing for one overwhelming point: we all contain multitudes.[17]

Indeed, *Metempsychosis* is, in the Montaignean sense, an exploration of the self that projects outward into the world. Donne declares it as much in the fourth stanza:

> Great Destiny, the Commissary of God,
> That hath mark'd out a path and period
> For every thing, who, where wee of spring tooke,
> Our wayes and ends seest at one instant; Thou
> Knot of all causes, thou whose changelesse brow
> Ne'r smiles nor frownes, O vouch thou safe to looke
> And shew my story; in thy eternall booke.
> That (if my prayer be fit) I may understand

[17] For instance in Stanza 30 when the Sea Pie collapses into the water carrying the fish, Donne notes "The soules no longer foes, two wayes did err,/ The fish I follow,'and keep no calender/ Of the'other; he lives yet in some great officer."

So much my selfe, as to know with what hand,

How scant, or liberall this my lifes race is spand. (31-40)

The length of Donne's life becomes as caught up in destiny as the creation and direction of the soul itself. Donne's poetic exploration of the soul becomes deeply interwoven with the story and destiny of the soul. What follows, then, is a poem about movement: the movement through Donne's life and the soul's movement through many different lives:

But if my dayes be long, and good enough,

In vaine this sea shall enlarge, or enrough

It selfe; for I will through the wave, and fome,

And shall in sad lone wayes, a lively spright

Make my darke heavy Poëm light, and light.

For though through many streights, and lands I roame,

I launch at paradise, and I saile towards home;

The course I there began, shall here be staid,

Sailes hoised there, stroke here, and anchors laid

In Thames, which were at Tigrys, and Euphrates waide. (51-60)

This extremely dense stanza reveals the intensity of Donne's spatial agenda. Imagining his life to swell, he imagines its navigation to encompass both the heavens and the Earth and for his poem to be a freeing and enlightening visionary journey through the expanses of his own life. All of human history and all of Salvation History seem to dissolve in the course of Donne's life, a life that seems to be especially linked to the soul of Donne's poem. Donne's methodology here is not only meditative, it is nearly phenomenological. He argues, in the guise of Montaigne and Raymond Sebond, that one's free perception of the natural and of the created world is the only

tool through which one can understand God's creation.

The observation of the natural world then, has spiritual consequences. In this sense, we see that the poet in *Metempsychosis* is channeling a concern that Gatti sees among those crucial to Bruno's cosmography discussed earlier in relation to Donne's lyrics, that "in attempting to paint a cosmographical picture…a human observer finds himself trapped in the picture, unable to take a few steps back to observe the form of the whole, as ordinary painters do, without falling into the abyss" (49). To represent the universe—in terms of its history, geography, divine roots and destiny, the goal of cosmography writ large—is to have to be in the picture. *Metempsychosis*, rejecting any sense of empirical distance, explores the history of human experience and its place in the cosmos through lived experience, exemplified through a soul that is able to carry itself through many lived experiences. Lived experience, rather than pure philosophizing becomes the clear preference of the poem. After asking why God would create a law in Eden only for his creations to break it ("Would God (disputes the curious Rebell) make / A law, and not have it kept?" (103-104)), Donne aggressively shifts focus:

> But snatch mee heavenly Spirit from this vaine
> Reckoning their vanities, less is their gaine
> Then hazard still, to meditate on ill,
> Though with good minde, their reasons like those toyes
> Of glassie bubbles, which the gamesome boyes
> Stretch to so nice a thinnes through a quill
> That they themselves breake, doe themselves spill:
> Arguing is heretiques game, and Exercise
> As wrastlers, perfects them; Not liberties

Of speech, but silence; hands, not tongues, end heresies. (111-120)

The bold ending of Donne's declaration certainly departs a bit from Bruno's desire to "[free] the human mind and the knowledge which were shut up in the strait prison of the turbulent air," and yet Donne urges an investigation that stays within the local and the embodied aspects of human existence while aiming to access universal truth. What the poem attempts is a meditative play within the restraints of lived life—a fitting strategy for a poet like Donne who is so famous for his meditations on the productive and ecstatic spiritual experiences possible within the binding constraints of human, flawed life. The poem, by praising the merits of silence over speech and actions over words, sends the reader into a place where meditation emerges as a powerful tool in philosophical contemplation, but where such contemplation should not, as those glassy bubbles children play with, be overextended until it bursts into heresy and ruin. What is proposed then is a meditation reflected lived-out experience, a visionary connection to events rather than fanciful speculation.

The most powerful model of this available to Donne at the time of this poem's writing would have been in the meditative, Counter-Reformation spiritual practices that would have certainly been a profound part of Donne's early life as an English Recusant. Martz notes that "the enormous popularity of methodical meditation in this era may be attributed to the fact that it satisfied and developed a natural, fundamental tendency of the human mind—a tendency to work from a particular situation, and finally to some sort of resolution of the problems which the situation has presented" (39). This local focus with local aims resonates in greater divine truths but it remains fixed in the local experience. Jesuit meditative practices of inserting one's self into the life of Christ reflect this strategy: they demand a meditation on a specific situation that sprawls prudently out towards a solution and a spiritual revelation.

Not surprisingly, Donne's poem engages in exactly such a placement by beginning in Eden at the site of "that tree" (79), the same site of "that Crosse, our joy, and griefe, where nailed did tye / That All, which always was all, every where" (73-74). The local focus of the poem—the intense focus of Donne's vision and the lived out experience of the soul—still is able to open up into "that All" because of its meditation on Christ and an important locus in Salvation History. By placing the soul he wishes to follow at the center both of human experience and of divine history, Donne is able to meditatively navigate a cosmographically invested history of man and the world without overstepping his bounds as a created subject, as a humble creature of God. While Donne launches at paradise, he heads towards his proper home. Through vision and imagination, he is able to explore the world philosophically and cosmographically while meditating on the humility inherently needed in such a practice.

In *Metempsychosis*, as in Camden's *Britannia* or Spenser's "Ruines of Time," visionary reconstruction and explanation are always preferable to philosophical conjecture. The natural world that emerges in Donne's poem (and it does emerge) is the product not simply of poetic fancy or empirical observation but a kind of cosmographically charged visionary poetics that touches, feels, and reconstructs its subject. After the apple is removed from the tree, the soul pushes itself into the form of a mandrake root, serving, in Donne's treatment of it, as its entry into the human and natural world. Donne's description is vivid, bawdy, and intense:

> His right arme he thrust out towards the East,
> West-ward his left; th'ends did themselves digest
> Into ten lesser strings, these fingers were:
> And as a slumberer stretching on his bed,
> This way he this, and that way scattered

His other legge, which feet with toes upbeare;
Grew on his middle parts, the first day, haire,
To show, that in loves businesse hee should still
A dealer bee, and be us'd well, or ill:
His apples kindle, his leaves, force of conception kill. (141-150)

The fact that the mandrake may be used "well, or ill" reveals what, as I discussed above, is the major moral focus of the poem: that in all creation there is a mixture of good and bad in everything. The mandrake's birth is a sort of mirror image for nature of the creation of Man. The sprawling out of the mandrake sets into motion an intimate tour of the natural world that combines history, theology, visionary poetry, and geography. For instance, considering the sexual free-for-all that occurs after the soul enters a bird prompts Donne to observe that "Men, till they tooke laws which made freedome lesse, / Their daughters, and their sisters did ingresse, / Till now unlawfull, therefore ill, t'was not" (201-203). The poem uses a poetic reconstruction of an imaginative quasi-historical moment to make a point about the diversity of creation and the changing historical status of moral and divine law.

After its stage as a mandrake and after becoming a tiny cole in an egg, the soul eventually settles upon "a female fishes sandie Roe / With the males jelly, newly lev'ned" (223-224). Fish—and the soul inhabits quite a few different fish—seem to be a good fit for Donne's soul. They inhabit an odd line between animal and plant, there are special religious dispensations regarding their slaughter and consumption, and they are liminal creatures often existing outside the moral hierarchies long projected onto the animal kingdom (fish, for instance, seem to be a much blanker moral slate on which to work than the elephant in Donne's poem). Donne seems to explicitly offer such a rationale for choosing fish:

Is any kinde subject to rape like fish?
Ill unto man, they neither doe, nor wish:
Fishers they kill not, nor with noise awake,
They doe not hunt, nor strive to make a prey
Of beasts, nor their yong sonnes to beare away;
Foules they pursue not, nor do undertake
To spoile the nests industrious birds do make;
Yet them all these unkinde kinds feed upon,
To kill them is an occupation,
And lawes make fasts, and lents for their destruction. (281-290)

Fish become a symbol in the poem through which the inclinations and laws of men and nature are revealed. The way we treat fish and they way they are allowed to exist in nature emerge as symbols for the moral ambiguity of the world. They are a creature that harms no one and yet are harmed by everyone. They exist naturally and are treated in a way that makes no clear rational sense. They are, as in Raymond Sebond's conception of God's book of nature, a natural testament to a world in which good and bad, virtuous and evil exist outside of clear delineations. Fish are good and treated badly and not just by nature but, as the last two lines of the stanza make clear, also by the professional and theological laws of men.

Another peculiar moral episode in nature comes when the soul enters a mouse. After having been a giant fish, one that came to encompass an entire world, his sudden downfall teaches the soul that "great things might by lesse / Be slain" and so "to gallant mischiefe doth herselfe addresse" (379-380). Having been taught that to be large is to be subject to the envy of the world and to revenge, the soul, taking a page out of Spenser's "Visions of the Worlds

Vanitie," decides to become a mouse. For no clear reason other than jealousy, and perhaps simply because it can, the mouse aims at "Natures great master-peece, an Elephant, / The onely harmlesse great thing; the giant / Of beasts" (381-383). The result is a peculiar topos in anti-vanity literature with Spenserian roots:[18]

> In which as in a gallery this mouse
> Walk'd, and surveid the roomes of this vast house,
> And to the braine, the soules bedchamber, went,
> And gnaw'd the life cords there; Like a whole towne
> Cleane undermin'd, the slaine beast tumbled downe;
> With him the murtherer dies whom envy sent
> To kill, not scape, for, only hee that ment
> To die, did ever kill a man of better roome,
> And thus he made his foe, his prey, and tombe:
> Who cares not to turn back, may any whither come. (391-400)

As in the case of the fall of the giant fish, these larger creatures become symbols for the world as a whole as well as the self-destructive tendencies that jealousy and envy can create within them. The mouse kills the elephant that is its own home for simple envy, killing itself in the process. By tracking the soul through these animals, Donne is able to create an extended allegory and meditation on social and political human life—a desire reflected in the direction of the poem which gradually heads closer and closer to humanity.

Indeed, we even get as close to humans as an Ape who, after being inhabited by the soul,

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[18] The eighth stanza of Spenser's "Visions of the World's Vanitie" features a very similar scenario where an elephant is brought down by an ant that crawls inside it.

questions the very boundaries between humans and animals.[19] Playing with human children, he recognizes a likeness between his body and theirs: "His organs now so like theirs hee doth finde, / That why he cannot laugh, and speake his minde, / He wonders. Much with all, most he doth stay / With Adams fift daughter *Siphatecia*, / Doth gaze on her…" (454-457). Feeling no difference in thought or anatomy but intense difference in linguistic abilities of expression, the Ape-housed soul becomes something like the first Petrarchan lover:

> He was the first that more desir'd to have
> One then another; first that ere did crave
> Love by mute signs, and had no power to speake;
> First that could make love faces, or could do
> The valters sombersalts, his owne bones to breake
> To make his mistresse merry; or, to wreake
> Her anger on himselfe. Sinnes against kinde
> They easily doe, that can let feed their minde
> With outward beauty; beauty they in boyes and beasts do find. (461-470)

Deep, unrequited, and ineffable love is the creation of a beast that cannot explain how he feels and when he does finally discover how to make his intentions clear, so horrified is the object of his affections that "she neither puls nor pushes, but outright / now cries, and now repents…"(486-487) until her brother enters and kills the Ape with a stone. The death of the not-quite-human lover seems to be the perfect launching pad for the soul to finally become human.

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[19] This question of the divide between humans and animals has become a major topic in recent theory, especially in Giorgio Agamben's *The Open: Man and Animal* and Jacques Derrida's *La bête et le souverain.*

The soul finally settles in *Themech*, Cain's sister and wife.

The poem thus has taken a tour from the site of origins of human and divine history, channeled through a mandrake, a bird, various fish, a giant fish, a mouse, an elephant, a wolf, a wolf-dog hybrid, an ape, and then finally a woman. The poetic tour, so often insisted to be only a mock epic, is not simply a farce or an Ovidian attempt at a bawdy epic. Though the poem is bawdy and irreverent, it makes clear the uncertainty that lived-out experience of nature tries, in the meditative model Martz described above, to offer the reader. It becomes a model for understanding nature, history, and the sacred through a method of interpretation that embraces the ambiguity and uncertainty of nature. The poet, in ending his poem, asserts that the reader's thoughts were foremost in his mind:

> Let me arrest thy thoughts, wonder with mee,
> Why plowing, building, ruling and the rest
> Or most of those arts, whence our lies are blest,
> By cursed *Cains* race invented be,
> And blest *Seth* vext us with Astronomie.
> Ther's nothing simply good, nor ill alone,
> Of every quality comparison,
> The onely measure is, and judge, opinion. (513-520)

All the ways that man has found to be useful—plowing, building, and ruling—are from Cain, the cursed murderer of Abel, while Seth, born to replace good Abel, gave us Astronomy which Donne takes issue with because it has ventured too far into God's plan. Are these closing lines actually a condemnation of astronomical, and therefore cosmographical, thinking? The poem ends by asserting that nothing is wholly good or bad and only our changing opinions are the final

arbiters throughout time. Individualized experience once again emerges as the central locus for considerations of the natural and spiritual nature of the universe.

V. The Anniversaries: The limits of knowledge.

Metempsychosis was written by a Catholic Donne (though his Catholicism would not last the rest of the decade). The poem, in its avoidance of clear judgment and its playful journey from soul to soul, reveals a Donne interested in finding the truth out in a panoramic trip through various vegetal and animal bodies. The desire to break loose, to transcend the bonds of human vision and of social expectation, is a major force in this poem and in all of the poems we have considered thus far. Turning to the *Anniversaries*, we are dealing with a Protestant Donne (*Pseudo-Martyr* had been published the year before) who shows, near the end of the *Second Anniversary*, open contempt for Catholicism. Yet Donne is not doctrinaire in these poems and a heterodox and individualized vision of the divine universe emerges in these early years of Donne's openly held new faith. In the previous chapter, we saw how Petrarch could use Laura's death as the starting point for an extended visionary encounter that triangulated the ideal past with the fallen present and the promise of the infinite (*Canzoniere* 323). Donne, similarly, uses the death of Elizabeth Drury as an occasion to offer an expansive vision of the universe in which the only way to truly access and contemplate a changing universe is to anatomize an exemplary individual soul. Drury, for Donne, becomes the window to the universe, the key, as Bruno might say, that finally allows man's mind to penetrate the cosmos and understand the divine order of the world.

The critical heritage of this work is distinguished with two of the greatest books on Donne taking up the poem: Martz's *The Poetry of Meditation* (1954) and Barbara Lewalski's *Donne's Anniversaries and the Poetry of Praise* (1973). Both works attempt to explain the generic heritage of Donne's poetic choices in the poem. Martz outlines *The First Anniversarie*'s debts to Jesuit meditative practice but ultimately finds the structure of the poem "another aspect of its failure," yet wishes to note "the richness with which Donne develops these strictly religious aspects of the work" (233). Reading some of the more cosmographic comments offered by the poem, Martz dismisses their spiritual claims on the reader, noting "Man's claim to worldly power and knowledge mean only that he refuses to undergo the spiritual discipline necessary for his salvation" (235). Lewalski, challenging Martz, notes: "Given [the] conventional expectation for the genre of the anatomy, the somewhat rigid and schematic organization of *The First Anniversarie*, to which Louis Martz objects, is wholly appropriate" (228). Lewalski's work on the two poems, more generally, seeks to analyze the ways in which Donne received generic precedents, used some of them, and helped to mold and reform others. She is especially critical of Martz's emphasis on the Jesuit influence on these poems (Lewalski 8). Both these studies turn to genres and the intertextual climate of Jacobean England and Renaissance Europe to explain the peculiarities of these two linked poems. Though their work is valuable and foundational, I believe a less constrained and generically-driven critical apparatus needs to be used to appreciate the poems as a visionary, meditative, and spiritual work dealing with the theological implications of one recently ended life's influence on our ability to contemplate man's place, body and soul, in the universe.

More recently, Ramie Targoff in *John Donne: Body and Soul* has argued that the two poems represent two ways of viewing the soul's relationship to the body:

> Given the wretched condition of the world so vigorously evoked in *The First Anniversarie*, we have no reason to expect such resistance from the soul. Despite the promises of its title, however, *The Second Anniversarie,* or *Of the Progresse of the Soule*, does not ultimately celebrate the soul's ascension. Instead, the poem portrays the unnaturalness of separating the two parts of the self. (88)

Targoff's secular reading, I believe, takes too literally Donne's instructions to his own soul, which far from being necessary to urge his soul to actually want to ascend to heaven, offer the reader of *The Second Anniversarie* a lesson in cosmic transcendence and in the ways in which the soul, freed by death or, in this case, by an intense meditation on death, can access cosmological and theological truths. The difference, then, between *The First Anniversarie* and *The Second Anniversarie* seems to me to be of secondary importance: the first poem's anatomy of a world made dead by Drury's death continues in the second poem's meditations on the soul. I wish to offer a reading of these linked poems that does not try to sort out Donne's partisan position on the philosophical composition of the soul. I am also not attempting to explain the generic background of Donne's poetic choices. Ample studies of these, as I've shown above, already exist. My reading, inspired by Richard Strier's work in *Resistant Structures*, argues that some of the cosmological and spatial elements of the poem participate in, but ultimately resist, some received ideas about ways to view the astronomical and cosmological elements of the heaven.[20] By following Strier's suggestion to look at the "surface" and "obvious" (3) elements of the poem and to be "interested in moments when texts resist even very brilliant, illuminating, and well-founded hypotheses," (4) I will offer a vision of Donne's cosmography that emerges in *The Anniversaries* as an individual, experimental, and radical journey through the cosmological

[20] See Strier 3-5.

immensity found within the human soul and the human mind when their attention or circumstances are turned outward towards the universe. By not "explaining away" the quirky cosmological performances of Donne's poem through genre classification, I'll strive to preserve the discomfort and radicalism of a text that, like Bruno's cosmological writings of 1584, is more about the personalized visions of a poet connected to his own meditative potential than a philosopher taking a position in an academic debate.

Considering the "surface" of *The First Anniversarie*, we see immediately that the death of Elizabeth Drury is almost immediately carried out to the cosmological level. Though Lewalski and others have placed this poem within the genre of a funeral sermon, Drury's death is brought immediately to bear on the spiritual consequences for the entire world. Addressing the world, Donne writes:

> Her death did wound, and tame thee than, and than
> Thou mightst have better spar'd the Sunne, or Man;
> That wound was deepe, but 'tis more misery,
> That thou have lost thy sense and memory.
> T'was heavy then to heare thy voyce of mone,
> But this is worse, that thou art speechlesse growne.
> Thou hast forgot thy name, thou hadst; thou wast
> Nothing but she, and her thou hast o'rpast. (25-32)

The world has endured two types of pain here: the wound of the death itself as well as the loss of identity her death caused. Some critics have pointed out the Petrarchan conceits at work in this poem.[21] Though Donne has the sort of *contemptus mundi* in mind that Petrarch performed in

[21] See Martz 223 for instance.

Canzoniere 323 and other poems written after the death of Laura, there is in Donne's poem no clear move towards a spiritual replacement. In the *Canzoniere*, Petrarch turns eventually to the Virgin Mary (the "Vergine Bella"), replacing his lost love, a love for which he sank into pride, ambition, and despair, with the more purifying love of God and the sacred. Donne, however, transcends any sense of this particular example by making the world itself not in love with Drury. Rather, the world's identity is entirely caught up in Drury. Donne rushes to the ecstatic linking of two subjects, the world and Drury, without taking the intermediary step of explaining it through love. Drury and the world are not even "interinanimated," to use the term from "the Extasie," the world is simply nothing but what she is.

Donne is left then with a world turned into nothing, a dead world. Yet this becomes for Donne an opportunity for a deep consideration of the world: a consideration we could even call forensic, in its longing for the complete and total view a post-mortem examination can give. Donne explains:

> But though it be too late to succour thee,
> Sicke world, yea dead, yea putrified, since shee
> Thy intrinsique Balme, and thy preservative
> Can never be renew'd, thou never live,
> I (since no man can make thee live) will trie,
> What we may gaine by thy Anatomy.
> Her death hath taught us dearely, that thou art
> Corrupt and mortall in thy purest part. (55-62)

Donne uses Drury's death, and the death of the world that followed, to consider the flawed and temporary nature of the world. This *contemptus mundi* is not, however, rooted in an aesthetic

ordering that prefers the heavens. Rather, the view into the world and even the cosmos that Donne is able to produce in his poetry is one of uncertainty and frenetic, radical change:

> And new Philosophy cals all in doubt,
> The Element of fire is quite put out;
> The Sun is lost, and th'earth and no mans wit
> Can well direct him, where to look for it.
> And freely men confesse, that this worlds spent,
> When in the Planets, and the Firmament
> They seek so many new; they see that this
> Is crumbled out againe to'his Atomis.
> T'is all in pieces, all coherence gone;
> All just supply and all Relation:
> Prince, Subject, Father, Sonne, are things forgot. (205-215)

As in "The Sunne Rising" a new ordering of the Sun has helped to break up social and cosmological conventions, opening up a space for heterodox imagination and performance. However, Donne's version of it in *The First Anniversarie*, as seen above, is less exuberant and taunting and more muted. Yet Donne's *contemptus mundi*, based on the mutability of the world and the novelty of his times, never quite abandons its fascination with observing and debating the cosmos:

> We think the heavens enjoy their Sphericall
> Their round proportions embracing all
> But yet their various and perplexed course,
> Observ'd in divers ages doth enforce

Men to finde out so many'Eccentrique parts,
Such diverse downe-right lines, such overthwarts,
As disproportion that pure forme. It teares
The firmament in eight and fortie sheeres,
And in those constellations there arise
New starres, and old do vanish from our eyes:
As though heav'n suffred earth-quakes, peace or war. (251-261)

These lines could tempt the reader with a pessimistic reading; the cosmos is all bent out of its true shape and no one quite knows what to make of all this ongoing astronomical novelty and discovery. Yet what is so striking about these lines is how much they conflate man's theories of the universe with the universe's actual shape. Humanity's wandering mind in considering the heavens, our attempts to comprehend and revise our theories to explain the irregularities of its collective observations over centuries, places humanity in an ongoing and intimate dialogue with the universe. This dialogue ultimately collapses the flawed mutability of human experience (symbolized here by the earthquakes and war) and casts its gaze upward to the heavens. What is eternal then is not the firmament as we know it but the soul.

Indeed, Man is seen as encroaching on the heavens:

So, of the Starres which boast that they do runne
In Circle still, none ends where he begunne.
All their proportion's lame, it sinks, it swels.
For of Meridians and Parallels,
Man hath weav'd out a net, and this net throwne
Upon the Heavens and now they are his owne. (275-280)

The cartographic lines of man's conception of space are cast upward so that even the cosmos can be owned by the cosmographic eye of humanity. "Loth to goe up the hill, or labor thus / To goe to heaven, we make heaven come to us" (281-282), Donne continues. Yet Donne might as well be speaking of his own poetry, which in this very poem is bringing the heavens down to his level. His secular and devotional poetry, including "The Sunne Rising" and *Metempsychosis* as well this poem, all try to use the lines (also including lines of verse) of human representation to understand, own, and anatomize the heavens.

So when Donne asks "What artist now dares boast that he can bring / Heaven hither, or constellate any thing" (391-2) and claims that "The Art is lost, and correspondence too" (396), he would seem to be offering himself as the answer. Bruno explored the uncertainty in attempting to understand and represent the cosmos from within (like Donne) in the preface to *The Ash Wednesday Supper:*

> If in this portraiture, it seems that the colors do not correspond perfectly to life, and the lines do not appear to you exactly as they should, you should know that the fault is a result of the fact that the painter could not examine the portrait from those aspects and distances to which artists are accustomed; since, besides the fact that the canvas or field was too close to his face and eyes, it was not possible to take the least step backward, nor to place himself to one side or the other without fear of making the leap that the son of the famous defender of Troy made. (73)

In Bruno's astronomical writings, he admits, flaws are inevitable because while one is in the middle of the world one tries to represent, one's perspective will inevitably be flawed. The idea of describing the motion of the earth while in motion was a major part of the perspectival aspect of Copernican astronomy as Fernand Hallyn has argued (69-70). Donne, in closing *The First*

Anniversarie seems to imagine that poetry can hover in between the divine heaven (which seems out of reach to our eyes) and the mutable and changing world of the visible planets and earth. He writes: "Verse has a middle nature: heaven keepes soules / The grave keeps bodies, verse the fame enroules" (473-474). Donne's poetic encounter is not meant to give a full account of the soul or of the remnants of bodies, but of fame itself. Donne represents fame as the immaterial, often post-mortem remainders of a person that hovers between his divine destiny in heaven and his body in ruins on the earth. In Donne's vision, poetry can access the cosmos and act as a mediating force between the heavens and the earth.

In *The Second Anniversary,* Donne takes on divine matters far more extensively, linking Drury's soul's move towards heaven to an opportunity to approach God and to attain complete knowledge. Notably, Drury does not stay in the "ayre," that place of mediating intermingling of souls we saw in "The Extasie," but rather immediately goes from earth to heaven:

> Twixt Heaven and Earth: she staies not in the Ayre;
> To looke what Meteors there themselves prepare;
> Shee carries no desire to know, nor sense,
> Whether th'Ayrs middle Region be intense,
> For th'Element of fire, shee doth not know,
> Whether shee past by such a place or no;
> She baits not at the Moone, nor cares to trie,
> Whether in that new world, men live, and die. (189-196)

Drury, deceased, has no interest in cosmological inquiry and rushes straight through the intermediary space between earth and heaven: "But ere shee can consider how shee went / At once is at, and through the Firmament" (205-206). To be dead is to be beyond caring about

cosmography, caring so much more for one's own salvation, but for Donne, the poet on earth, the interest is clearly there. He chides his own soul: "When wilt thou shake off this Pedantery, / Of being taught by sense, and Fantasy?" (291-292). Donne's desire is for his soul to be able to, through an increase in altitude, gradually come into a fuller knowledge of truth:

> Thou look'st through spectacles, small things seem great,
> Below; But up unto the watch-towre get,
> And see all things despoyld of fallacies:
> Thou shalt not peepe through lattices of eies,
> Nor heare through Laberinths of eares, nor learne
> By circuit, or collections to discerne. (293-298)

The higher one goes, the more ridiculous and clouded human knowledge seems. Only by going upward towards heaven can one gain true knowledge and vision of the earth below.

Donne, in his poetry, seeks to use poetic vision as a way of transforming earthly experience into a gateway to divine and universal knowledge, even if it's only a gateway that reveals how little humans can know. In "The Sunne Risine," Donne re-arranged the cosmos from his bed. In "The Extasie," the space between two lovers and their interinanimated souls revealed an atomistic vision of the building blocks of the human world and the human soul. In *Metempsychosis*, Donne sprawls out horizontally across the earth and through time, one body to another, until a massive amount of human experience has been explored. As *The Anniversaries* is a piece of occasional poetry written to grieving parents, it, by necessity, does not have the playfulness of some of Donne's other poems, but it shares the same desire to take terrestrial grieving and observations and process them through poetic vision to work out the boldest, most cosmologically and philosophically relevant experiments possible.

The heterodoxy this whole project displays comes from its dependence on an individual vision being able, through changes in perspective, to see difference in the ordering of social and cosmic spaces. Donne does not long to be dead (though in *Biathanatos* he betrays an interest in making one's self dead) but he does long to transcend the everyday limits of human thought. His poetry creates a para-scientific, para-ecstatic experience in which his own vision becomes a site for experimentation. Donne's poetry, like Bruno's philosophy, inhabits a space that is persistently cosmological even in its most local sense. For Donne, by understanding the local and the personal, the boundaries of one's own mind, we can truly begin to understand the cosmos, the heavens, and the earth's place within the greater divine universe, or, at least, understand the limits of our understanding. As Donne writes in *The Second Anniversarie:* "What hope have we to know our selves, when wee / Know not the least things, which for our use bee?" (279-280). By beginning to meditate on the local and the personal aspects of one's own love, vision, or fear, we can begin to, as Bruno did, see the cosmos in our own eyes through the immensity of our own selves.

Chapter Three: Divine Folds and Sacred Pleats: Revising Crashaw's Baroque Vision

I. Introduction

Crashaw, despite and perhaps even because of the vivid imagery found in his poetry, is a poet of abstract space, transcendent vision, and immensity. Crashaw's brand of "metaphysicality"—his poetic's sense of place and being—is, like that of Donne, always playing with space and perception, shifting the focus further and further outward while maintaining a heterodox and irenic view of the inward movements of the soul. Yet the rather reductive and aggressive assessment offered almost ninety years ago by T.S. Eliot has all too often continued to dominate critical discourse on Crashaw's life and work:

> Subtract from Donne the powerful intellect, substitute a feminine for a strongly masculine nature, posit a devotional temperament rather than a theological mind, and add the influence of Italian and Spanish literature, take note of the changes in the political and ecclesiastical situation in England and you have Crashaw (162).

The idea that Crashaw is not as rigorously intellectual or theological as Donne has persisted even in scholars devoted to the Baroque legacy of Crashaw's work. Austin Warren, for instance, describes Crashaw's intellect and sense of his "métier" as "neither speculative nor subtle; almost purely a creation of sensibility" (98). The un-intellectual quality of Crashaw's verse has been linked with a view of the un-intellectual excess of the Baroque itself, an art movement sometimes considered to be full of "theatricality, sham piety, sentimentalism, sexual hyperbole,

and vulgar taste" (Petersson 45). Yet, as I will argue here, the Baroque and Crashaw's place within it was also a legitimate site for contemplating God and the sacred. Shaped by and yet resistant to the categorizations and disputations of nearly a century of religious reform, debate, and counter-reform, the Baroque afforded a charismatic and fluid mode of discourse to produce, out of the conventions of the preceding centuries of Renaissance thought, a machinery for boldly and erratically combining secular and sacred spaces and objects in a way that sanctifies and re-sanctifies them both. The Baroque was not simply a visual phenomenon, but, at its core, represented an attitude and set of strategies that emphasized dynamic vision and revelation earned through the interplay and combination of exterior and interior spaces and surfaces.

Anthony Low offers an important warning to any scholar seeking to link Crashaw's poetry to the Baroque movement. While admitting that "Crashaw's poetic style may be partly understood in terms of two aesthetics that flowered in Europe during the seventeenth century: Mannerism and Baroque," Low is cautious to observe that "having named such general resemblances [in Crashaw's work], one can only go so much further in drawing specific conclusions…Mannerist and Baroque are useful terms generally, but as soon as one begins to consider specific painters, musicians, or works of art, they begin to break down as such terms tend to do" (116-117). Yet when the Baroque becomes greater than the sum of the individual works often associated with it, it becomes a useful critical tool for understanding the spatial, spiritual, and emotional visions out of which some seventeenth-century works of art emerge.

By carrying the critical treatment of the Baroque beyond the work of Wöllflin, Panofsky, and others and turning to the theoretical and mathematical Baroque offered in the work of Gilles Deleuze, this chapter will emphasize the ways in which Baroque thought and expression could exist and thrive as a practice, what Deleuze calls "a function," rather than as a movement or

style. To understand the Baroque as a performance rather than as a label can help us see in Crashaw's famously vivid imagery the workings of a visionary and contemplative rather than visual and emotional poetics. With this in mind, I will offer a reading of Crashaw's poetry, his Latin epigrams alongside his English lyrics, that underscores his poems' ability to enact, in the Donnean tradition, a transcendent and heterodox movement through earthly and divine spaces across time. Crashaw advances yet remains in dialogue with the legacy of Petrarch, Du Bellay, Spenser, and Donne. His trans-temporal spiritual journey occurs in a poetic environment deeply interested in texture and scale and with the intimate and the immense. As Crashaw comes to employ the Baroque within the Laudian Protestant and Roman Catholic traditions, he does so in a way that emphasizes the oscillation between the secular and the sacred, the material and the immaterial that comes to define spiritual and meditative practice in Crashaw's writing. Crashaw's blood, tears, wounds, and spiritual ejaculations are not just ways of articulating repentance and asking forgiveness as they are in Donne's *Holy Sonnets*, but they become a textured site of spiritual encounter and a site where terrestrial and divine objects and spaces can become intermingled in Crashaw's poetic imagination. Crashaw, far more often than Donne, is frequently willing to abandon his particular ego and the anxieties about his own salvation to focus on a desire to dissolve into the immensity of the heavens and the sacred, an immensity his poems insist can be found on earth. Crashaw's Baroque, which fits with Deleuze's philosophy of the Baroque, longs to fold together earthly and divine elements, producing a virtual space where the earthliness of the divine and the divinity of the earthly can take over the being of the poet and reader.

II. Towards a Visionary Baroque: Histories and Theories of Baroque Vision, Meditation, and Art

The Baroque, as Crashaw would have encountered it, was a sprawling phenomenon in the arts, reaching out across cultures and even, as Deleuze argues, to different textures and temporal states. "It endlessly produces folds," says Deleuze, "…folds coming from the East, Greek, Roman, Romanesque, Gothic, Classical folds" (3). Combinatory and international, the Baroque, as a movement, as an essence, and even as "an operative function," to use Deleuze's term, calls out to Heaven and "unfurls all the way to infinity." The folds come to define a way of working with different infinities and with different multiplicities. Deleuze writes:

> First, the Baroque differentiates the folds in two ways, by moving along two infinities, as if infinity were composed of two stages or floors: the pleats of matter, and the folds in the soul. Below, matter is amassed according to a first type of fold, and then organized according to a second type, to the extent its part constitutes organs that are 'differently folded and more or less developed.' Above, the soul sings of the glory of God inasmuch as it follows its own folds, but without succeeding in entirely developing them…There are souls down below, sensitive, animal: and here even exists a lower level in the souls. The pleats of matter surround and envelop them…Leibniz constructs a great Baroque montage that moves between the lower floor, pierced with windows, and the upper floor, blind and closed, but on the other hand resonating as if it were a

> musical salon translating the visible movements below into sounds up above. (3-4)

For Deleuze, the Baroque is the interplay of different souls closed off between two floors. The visible and material floor below becomes the source material for the translated quasi-musical resonant art of the upper, closed off floor. Paul Cefalu elaborates:

> The expressiveness of each Baroque pleat or fold, each detail of every monad, is not merely a direct emanation from univocity, but is in itself the starting point of a new narrative, history, or expressivity that is contained within yet another fold. The Baroque image, then, might be compared to a divine emanation, but to the extent that each particular dilation in turn bifurcates into a series of diverging paths, and the sum of all possible paths...represents the One, it is more proper to speak of a horizontal than vertical movement. Paths refer to themselves in addition to the One from which they are sources, rather than to a unilateral upward movement towards the Divine. (85)

Importantly, the movement of the Baroque is not directly transcendent. It does not move simply up towards the heavens. But rather, as we have seen in the visionary poetry of the previous chapters, the poet's vision moves in an intermediary space between the earth and heaven, sprawling outwards while also moving up and down. Essentially the poet's vision attempts to master both the horizontal and vertical axes of human existence, sprawling outward into worls and upward and downward between terrestrial and heavenly spaces.

The result of this endlessly moving "operative function" is a Baroque aesthetics that is able to combine rather than differentiate between different philosophical, theological, and historical markers. The tensions between Pagan and Christian cultures or between the classical and modern aesthetics are embraced as an ongoing conflict to be represented rather than resolved. "The Baroque attitude," Erwin Panofsky writes "can be defined as being based on an objective conflict between antagonistic forces, which, however, merge into a subjective feeling of freedom and even pleasure: the paradise of the High Renaissance regained after the struggles and tensions of the manneristic period, though still haunted (and enlivened) by the intense consciousness of an underlying dualism" (12). Standing exuberantly between the Renaissance and what has come to be understood as the modern, the Baroque age embraced contradictions and embraced an urgent and personal spirituality based in ecstatic vision.

The Baroque, as a concept, rests at the intersection between a historical movement and an ongoing object of theorizing. As a historical phenomenon, the Baroque remains one of the more controversial markers in the history of Renaissance art and culture. Heinrich Wöllflin in *Principles of Art History* (1915) defined what was new in the Baroque as "that conception of absolute unity in which the part, as an independent value, is swallowed up in the whole" (185). He sees this as a departure from "Classic Art" (the previous art of the Renaissance) which besides not striving for this all-encompassing unity "does not know the notion of the momentary, the poignant, or of the climax in the most general sense: it has a leisurely, broad quality. And though its point of departure is absolutely the whole, it does not reckon with first impressions" (167). Erwin Panofksy, critiquing Wöllflin's dichotomy between Classic or Renaissance art and the Baroque in a lecture composed sometime between November 7, 1934 and May 3, 1935, prefers to define "the Baroque attitude" as something "based on an objective conflict between

antagonistic forces" (12) and sees the Baroque as far more a "revolt against mannerism" than "against the 'classic' Renaissance" (11).[1] Panofsky, as Deleuze and others will later echo, concludes by celebrating the Baroque as representing "the only phase of Renaissance civilization" that was able to overcome "its inherent conflicts not just by smoothing them away (as did the classic Cinquecento), but by realizing them consciously and transforming them into subjective emotional energy with all the consequences of this subjectivization" (16). Though Panofsky critiques Wöllflin, both historians emphasize the Baroque attempt to find unity and the lack of interest in what Wöllflin calls "articulated beauty" (169). Where Wöllflin sees unity coming at the expense of parts, Panofsky sees a subjective unity born out of cultural and epistemological conflicts.

Panofsky's conclusion opens the door to the theoretical Baroque of Gilles Deleuze in *The Fold* that would expand the Baroque condition to include the condition of modern life.[2] Deleuze, offering a similar but more exuberant reading of the Baroque, writes: "the Baroque universe witnesses the blurring of its melodic lines, but what it appears to lose it also regains in and through harmony. Confronted by the power of dissonance, it discovers a florescence of extraordinary accords, at a distance, that are resolved in a chosen world, even at the cost of

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[1] Panofksy notes that Wöllflin's "book does not mention a single work of art executed between, roughly speaking, the death of Raphael in 1520 and the full-fledged seventeenth century. And when we thus simply eliminate what happened in the hundred years in between, we do receive the impression of a straight, diametrical contrast between Baroque and Renaissance where, in reality, a much more complex development had taken place" (8).

[2] I should note here that Panofsky anticipated this conclusion, writing that the Baroque represented "the beginning of a fourth era, which may be called 'Modern' with a capital M" (16).

damnation" (82). Most mainstream theories of the Baroque focus on the importance of dissonance: heterodox elements somehow forming a unified whole. Bernini, the visual artist most closely linked to the Baroque, emphasized aesthetic unity across different art forms in his own work. Giovanni Careri writen in his study *Baroques*: "Bernini was proud to have been 'the first to attempt to unite architecture with sculpture and painting in such a manner that they make a beautiful whole [*un bel composto*]'" (27-29). For Bernini, as for the Baroque, the search for a wholeness made from previous divisions was a key element in the formation of a new art form. The Baroque attitude seeks Heaven not simply by an upward progression from base to ideal forms (as the Neoplatonists would have it), but rather through a more circuitous and hybrid strategy that pulls elements of Heaven down to earth and thrusts earthly imagination up into the divine.

The importance of ecstasy to the Baroque has a long critical tradition. Bernini's The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa (1652), part of his work in the Cornaro Chapel in Santa Maria della Vittoria in Rome, offers a clear vision of a figure in ecstasy. It is based in Teresa's own account of her ecstatic experience. Teresa was pierced by an angel's flaming golden arrow. She recounts:

> I saw in his hand a long spear of gold, and at the iron's point there seemed to be a little fire. He appeared to me to be thrusting it at times into my heart, and to pierce my very entrails; when he drew it out, he seemed to draw them out also, and to leave me all on fire with a great love of God. The pain was so great, that it made me moan; and yet so surpassing was the sweetness of this excessive pain, that I could not wish to be rid of it. The soul is satisfied now with nothing less than God. The pain is not bodily, but spiritual; though the body has its share in it, even a large one. It

> is a caressing of love so sweet which now takes place between the soul and God, that I pray God of His goodness to make him experience it who may think that I am lying. (*Autobiography* Chapter 29, 17)

The ecstasy itself is represented as a Baroque act: a confluence of pleasure and pain, earthly and heavenly. Penetration and combination become the dominant themes of the piece, represented in the folds of her clothing that give the appearance of a porous body. Beams of light pour down from heaven and, with the flaming dart of the angel, approach to penetrate her, creating a spiritual union that is experienced through the ecstatic mixture of pleasure and pain.

Beyond ecstatic experience, the reach of the Baroque across cultures, languages, and genres is also an essential aspect of its role as an artistic movement and practice. Within Europe, Rome, the center of the Baroque, was becoming an important international city in the first half of the seventeenth century and artists began to see the Rome of their own day as a source of inspiration and cross-cultural exchange. Whereas Petrarch, Du Bellay, and Spenser had sought to reanimate the ruins of Rome to charge their poetry with something like an archaeological animation, the city of seventeenth-century Rome would have been, in its contemporary and Catholic form, a source of inspiration for a Baroque artist born in the early seventeenth century. "Il y a donc tout un univers à Rome," [There was therefore a complete universe in Rome] writes Yves Bonnefoy in his study of the period. Rome was "une sorte de carrefour aux innombrables passants, aux reconcontres imprévisibles" (7) [a sort of intersection of innumerable passers-by in unpredictable meetings]. The Baroque imagination then, from its birthplace in Rome, was able both to imagine and visit innumerable places and peoples. Besides being simply international, the Baroque was diverse both in its medium and its content. "Baroque art could unite the lordly and the lowly in wonder at the fireworks in a public square," Careri notes, "and yet reserve more

sophisticated delights for a connoisseur discovering a sculpture whose mythological subject concealed an unexpected allegory" (8). Indeed, the Baroque is one of the first art forms to have engendered global expressions in literature, music, dance, architecture, painting, sculpture, and theater all at relatively the same time.

Movement among genres, people, and spaces is essential to the Baroque attitude. "The Baroque is set apart from what precedes it by an interest in movement above all," writes Robert Harbison, "movement which is a frank exhibition and escape from classical restraint" (1). Decades earlier Austin Warren described the Baroque style as "exuberant, rhetorical, sensual, grandiose," arguing "the repose and symmetry of Renaissance art have yielded to agitation, aspiration, ambition, an intense striving to transcend the limits of each genre" (65). There is an almost inevitable critical temptation to describe the Baroque through a series of terms that cannot literally describe a still image. By defining movement, the element absent from a still image or sculpture, as the key departure of the Baroque, these scholars raise an essential point about how the Baroque functions: it depends not on its own completeness, but on its relationship to the viewer. The Baroque method cannot ever be fully defined by what is seen, it can only be defined by how it is seen by those who experience it. In this way, the Baroque is persistently resistant to being sorted or separated from Renaissance, Mannerist, or Classical styles.

In this sense, critics' emphasis on the Baroque's visual lushness may undersell the subtler meditative strategies employed by the Baroque. Baroque works of art remain incomplete within themselves—to an unsympathetic eye they can seem garish, excessive, or gaudy—but in the devotional and ecstatic spaces which the works create, a sense of movement, of abandon, and of connection to the sacred can be created. One must enter into a Baroque work of art. Discussing Bernini's work in the Cornaro Chapel, Rome, Wittkower writes that "like the Cornaro family,

the worshipper participates in the supra-human mystery shown on the altar, and if he yields entirely to the ingenious and elaborate directives given by the artist, he will step beyond the narrow limits of his own existence and be entranced with the casuality of an enchanted world" (158). The viewer has to yield in order for the Baroque to work. Though all works of art depend on the reaction of their viewer, the Baroque exploits this to offer an experience where poetic vision is not observed by the reader but fully encountered. Baroque works oscillate between the creator and the created, both in facing a work of art and in facing the divine potential within a work of art. The Baroque works to transmit the reader into new spaces.

Christopher Johnson points to the Baroque's particular use of hyperbole as the key to its innovation. He writes that "while Baroque writing tends to trumpet its own literariness and belatedness, the Baroque hyperbolist's abuse of commonplaces, received traditions and forms, and, above all, of literal truths, even as it may flirt with affectation, absurdity, and aporia, often creates real conceptual novelty and powerful emotive effect" (3). "Baroque hyperbole is more than a figure of style," he writes, "it is a mode of thought, a way of being" (4). The purpose of this way of being, he argues, is to measure "the tension between the ideal and the real, between the word and world" and to "[help] mark the limits of objective and subjective representation in the historical moment when the earth was being mapped, the cosmos reordered, nations forged, and…the 'human' or modern individual invented" (4-5). Combining all these different definitions of the Baroque—whether originating in art history, literature, or philosophy—the Baroque emerges as a movement towards innovation and recombination borne out of the fragmented pieces of older artistic conventions. Conventions, such as the mixture of classical and divine subjects as well as the Renaissance interest in order and geometric layout in pictures, are

not scrapped but are used as compost for new artistic sprouts. Old fabrics become folded into new. Innovation, dressed as a recombination of tradition, emerges out of the Baroque.

Innovation, however, could be especially dangerous when applied to theology. Both sides of the Reformation debate were claiming orthodoxy on their side, not innovation. For this reason, though the Baroque is often understood by critics to be a bold artistic movement, it is often associated primarily with Catholic Counter-Reformation ideology. Austin Warren defined the Baroque as "the Catholic counterstatement to the reformer's attacks on the wealth of the Church and her use of painting and sculpture" (65). "The artists typical of the period accepted authority," as Roy Daniells writes, "whether the spiritual authority of the Church or the authority which the Renaissance had given to the art forms of Rome and Greece." Yet Daniells continues to acknowledge the frequently cited combinatory nature of the Baroque, noting that "this fidelity to tradition was accompanied by a desire to reconstitute the elements, rearrange, and recombine them, so as to achieve new effects" (53). Though Daniells, like most scholars of the Baroque, sees innovation in the combinatory practice of the Baroque, he, also like most scholars of the Baroque, sees a strong association with Catholic orthodoxy.

It is true that even in the most exemplary Baroque art object, Bernini's *Teresa*, Catholic devotion's link to images and image making is being triumphantly upheld. Yet as Murray Roston has noted, the Baroque, a seventeenth-century phenomenon, reaches its strength in the decades after the Council of Trent (1545-1563) upheld the importance of images to Catholic doctrine.[3] Roston argues that the Baroque is "the response of the era…to man's cosmic discoveries" and should be understood "in less sectarian terms" (30). Roston's focus on the Copernican and Galilean discoveries leads to an intriguing argument on the link between the Baroque and the

[3] See Roston 29.

New Science, but the Copernican and Galilean contributions to the history of science do not seem to be the major focus of the spatial and cosmic interests in Baroque art. Crashaw's work, long seen as the closest thing to a Baroque English poet we can hope to find, focuses much more on trying to inhabit the sources and roots of the European poetic tradition than on addressing the new Copernican developments.

III: Crashaw's Baroque Style

For Crashaw, the Baroque was defined by the act folding and refolding, to use Deleuze's terms, the pleats of classical matter into new and frenetic spiritual stuff. In this charismatic and meditative poetics, Baroque artists were no doubt somewhat in line, though not as much as one might assume, with the spirituality of Saint François de Sales, whose *Introduction à la vie dévote* (1609, revised 1619) offered a meditative path to understanding Christ. The influence of Salesian spirituality and its Jesuit roots on English literature was first and most lastingly championed by Martz. The major goal of *The Poetry of Meditation* was to argue against a "School of Donne" based in wit and offer instead an era of meditative poetry, founded in England by Robert Southwell and guided by works of Salesian spirituality and devotion. Martz underscored the importance of "placing oneself in the presence of God, as the first point in preparation for meditation" in Salesian spirituality. The first steps begin in the "abstract" sense of "a livelie and feeling apprehension of the omnipresence of God" (250). To envision God with what Saint Teresa would call the eyes of the soul and to accomplish this through a process that combines bodily and divine experiences would become the major goal of Crashaw's poems.

But these poems' methodology is not staged in the ways we've seen in previous chapters. We do not have revelations of the sort one would see in Dante's *Divine Comedy,* Petrarch's *Secretum,* Spenser's "Ruins of Time," or Joachim du Bellay's *Les Antiquitez de Rome*, where the poet engages in a dialogue with another figure. Rather, Crashaw produces artistic visions that confound any notion of where the poetic voice may be. The poetic voices at work are not in geographic space, but float so directly between secular and sacred spaces that the poetic visions of Crashaw produce the meditative space in which their poems can flourish.

Crashaw arrives in the prefatory materials of both the *Epigrammata Sacra* (1634), written by Crashaw, and of *Steps to the Temple* (1646), written by a writer identified as "the author's friend," as a poet ushering in a return to divine poetry that will see "our divine Poet [Crashaw] sit above, and looke downe upon poore Homer, Virgil, Horace, Claudian, &c." Crashaw is unlike these secular poets "who had amongs them the ill luck to talke out a great part of their gallant Genius, upon Bees, Dung, froggs and Gnats, &c and not as himself here, upon Scriptures, divine Graces, Martyrs and Angels" (76). Innovation and excellence in poetry come from not only a focus on the divine, but also from a privileged access to the space of the divine. Writing about the modernity of what he refers to as Milton's "delirium," Gordon Teskey notes "the artist no longer stands apart but undergoes the experience himself and, as I have said, mediates a portion of it to us" (15). Whereas in previous visionary poetry, that of Petrarch, Du Bellay, Spenser, and Donne, the poet was privileged simply to see and to imagine, in Crashaw, and more widely in the Baroque, the poet is able to inhabit and reform the spaces of their vision. Where Donne may plead with the divine, Crashaw explains, through his Baroque vision, the nature of the divine to the divine itself.

In this sense, something innovative is at work in Crashaw even if it is not purely original with him. To seek a language that can contain within it the essence of the divine is a challenge through which the ambition of both Donne and Crashaw was formed. Essentially, this pushes meditative poetry to its limits. By contemplating the scriptures and the life of Christ these poets attempt to reshape divine truths rather than simply encounter or *see* them. Crashaw longs to actually inhabit and alter the divine by the mere fact of his presence: processing his visions through paradox and exaltations that argue for an increased role for the human and poetic imagination as it encounters the divine.

The act of approaching the divine through human thought has a deep legacy in Renaissance Europe from which Crashaw would have drawn much of his early sense of how to contemplate the divine. Ignatius of Loyola offered a version of visionary contact with the divine that was based in meditative practice. The practice, as it became filtered through St François de Sales and Fray Luis de Granada, involved three major steps, as they are discussed in Martz's study *The Poetry of Meditation*:

> It is clear from the various practices mentioned by these writers that there were three different ways of performing this imaginary "composition." The first is to imagine oneself present in the very spot where the event occured…the second is to imagine the events as occurring before your eyes…and the third is performed when persons "imagin that everie one of these things whereupon they meditate passeth within their own harte." (30)

St François de Sales writes that as you invoke God, "votre âme se sentant en la présence de Dieu, se prosterne en une extrême révérance, se connaissant très indigne de demeurer devant une si

souveraine Majesté, et néanmoins, sachant que cette même Bonté le veut, elle lui demande la grâce de la bien servir et adorer en cette méditation" [your soul will feel itself in the presence of God, prostrating itself in an extreme reverence, knowing itself very unworthy to rest before so sovereign a Lord, and nevertheless, knowing that this same Goodness wants it, your soul will ask for the grace to serve and adore it well in this meditation] (71). Meditative prayer, like meditative poetry, attempts to gain access to God, but this seems quite contained in comparison with a Baroque vision.

The work of Ignatius, as it is interpreted in Roland Barthes's study *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, may hold the key to understanding the sort of audacious and transfiguring vision of the divine that we see in the works of Crashaw. Barthes argues that, for Ignatius, the idea of God as an ineffable being always beyond the limits of language is unacceptable. "L'articulation apparaît à tous comme la condition, le gage et la fatalité du langage: pour dépasser le langage, il faut épuiser l'articulation, l'exténuer après l'avoir reconnue [articulation appears to all like the condition, the gauge, and the fatality of language, in order to exceed language, one must exhaust articulation, to stretch it after having recognized it]" writes Barthes describing the language of mystical writing that Ignatius eschews. "On le sait, ce n'est pas là le but d'Ignace [We know it, Ignatius's goal is not there]," Barthes writes, "la théophanie qu'il cherche méthodiquement est en fait un sémiophanie, ce qu'il travaille à obtenir, c'est le signe de Dieu, plus que sa connaissance ou sa presence…" [the theophany that he searches for methodically is, in fact, a *semiophany*, that which he works to obtain is God's sign, more than His presence or His familiarity] (57). For Ignatius, in Barthes's view, language is such an important gateway to God that to simply say that

He is ineffable is unacceptable.[4] Language becomes a tool by means of which the divine is understood, appropriated, and represented.

Scholars such as Louis Martz, Alison Shell, and Anthony Raspa have already thoroughly explored the link between the Jesuit and Catholic imaginations and the literary imagination of English Catholics and Protestants.[5] My goal here is not to argue that Jesuit theology or meditative practice was an important literary source for Crashaw (this subject has already been well established) but rather that the visionary potential of the sort of semiotic project offered in Jesuit spirituality can lead us into new understandings of the Baroque: a textual and intellectual Baroque. Whereas the Jesuit and Salesian exercises promoted a system of meditation in which the contemplative stages himself in prayerful thought within a scriptural or divine locus to maintain focus on the divine and cleanse and strengthen the soul, Crashaw's poetry oscillates between the earthly and the divine, folding and mixing the terrestrial and the transcendent to produce a poetic that is at once material and anti-worldly, at once deeply Catholic, classical, and irenic. This chapter will explore how these folds of theological and poetic discourse can reappropriate Crashaw's intellectual project as within and yet beyond the tradition of visionary poetics embodied by Petrarch, Du Bellay, Spenser, and Donne.

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[4] Barthes writes that: "le langage est son horizon définitif, et l'articulation une opération qu'il ne peut jamais abandonner au profit d'états indistincts--ineffables" [Language is its definitive horizon, and articulation an operation that it can never abandon to the profit of indistinct-ineffable states] (57).

[5] See Martz 3-15, Shell 21-104, and Raspa 11-36.

IV. Crashaw's Epigrammata Sacra and the Brevity of Baroque Vision.

Nothing about the conditions of Richard Crashaw's birth in either late 1612 or early 1613 gives any hint that a future champion of the Laudian movement and eventual Catholic was born. Austin Warren, Crashaw's major biographer, writes that his father, the Rev. William Crashaw, was a fiery puritan who took delight in seeking out and "exposing 'Romish' forgeries and falsification" (Warren 18). His father even made sure to mention his hatred of Catholicism in his will, a document Crashaw surely would have known quite well:

> I accounte Poperie (as nowe it is) the heape and chaos of all heresies and the channell whereinto the fowlest impieties & heresies yet have byne in the christian Worlde have runn and closelye emptied themselves. I beleeue the Popes seate and power to be the power of the greate Antichrist and the doctrine of the Pope (as nowe it is) to be the doctrine of the Antichriste. Yea that doctrine of Divells prophecied of by the Apostle and that the true and absolute Papist soe livinge and dyeing debarrs himself of salvation and ought that we knowe,…(cited in Martin xix).

A simple case of son rebelling against father can't be ruled out given the intense religious disparity between the two Crashaws. William Crashaw died in 1626, when Crashaw was around fourteen years old and one of the legacies of his childhood may have been access to the books about Catholicism that were in his father's collection, undoubtedly to help him understand the closet papists he wished to expose. We know that the elder Crashaw was also "a purchaser of poetry" though he read it "for doctrine alone." When he composed his own poetry, it, in

Warren's estimation, "rarely rise[s] above pious doggerel" (19). Still, Crashaw grew up in a house that believed in the link between poetry and devotion, especially when offered in the Latin tongue. One can speculate as well that the library in Crashaw's boyhood home "rich in the literature of Popery" (Warren 19) would have had some significant effect on Crashaw, potentially giving him a look into many different voices of Renaissance Christianity and the political debates at stake. Though Crashaw is often mistakenly thought of as essentially a Catholic poet—he is not, he wrote the majority of his verses while a conforming English Protestant—his particular brand of Christianity and his poetics of Christian devotion may owe their heterodoxy and violent passions to these early experiences with his father.

Richard Crashaw published his Latin verses, the *Epigrammata Sacra*, in 1634. This volume, rarely dealt with by critics, contains some poetic techniques that not only help to explain his later work, but are within themselves small triumphs in the history of both metaphysical and neo-Latin poetry. They reveal, above all, a concentrated obsession with paradox and with the search to find spiritual revelation in compact, almost bare, linguistic performances. Their provenance in terms of Crashaw's own life can surely be found in his early days at the Charterhouse School where he was a student from 1629 until 1631. Each Sunday, students at Charterhouse were required to write "four Greek and four Latin verses on some part of the Second or New Testament Lesson for the day" (Warren 22). This exercise surely was the origin of the *Epigrammata Sacra*. At Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he matriculated on July 6, 1631, Crashaw would have gotten a further taste of religious sectarianism and controversy. Pembroke's theological leanings were Arminian and its rituals were high church. Crashaw's

tutor, the Rev. John Tournay, whom Crashaw deeply admired, preached against the doctrine of Justification by Faith Alone and, in so doing, enraged the Puritan party at Cambridge.[6]

Crashaw's entire education, from boyhood through to his Bachelor's degree from Cambridge that he received in 1634 and beyond, was cast in the light of growing sectarian divisions interrupted in Crashaw's experience by a new and exciting meditative climate. Crashaw was a frequent visitor to Little Gidding, a meditative space based around a Protestant monastic devotion founded in 1626 by Nicholas Ferrar. His association with the community seems to have begun when he was assigned to tutor Ferrar's nephew around 1635. When he lost his fellowship at 1643 during the English Civil War, Crashaw, as L.C. Martin believes, seems to have turned first to Little Gidding before continuing his exile abroad (Martin xxv). Warren described the activities there:

> They established a system of daily offices, one for each hour, consisting of Psalms, a portion of the Gospel, and a hymn; three times a day, the family visited the church, going in order, two by two. After the monastic custom, the meals were silent, the place of conversation being taken by the reading aloud from the Bible, Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, volumes of history and travel (37).

Little Gidding and Nicholas Ferrar, coupled with the high church and literary intellectual upbringing he received at Charterhouse and Cambridge, helped steer Crashaw in a unique spiritual direction that, though thoroughly Protestant, rejected Puritan rigor for quasi-monastic meditation.

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[6] See Warren 24

The *Epigrammata Sacra* and the related Latin epigrams found in Bodleian Library MS. Tanner 465 seem to bear witness to this unique spiritual space in the launching of a Baroque poetic: one that not only seeks to defend the role of beauty in spiritual truth, but that also seeks to do this through the use of paradoxical and spatially charged poetic scriptural vignettes that seek out spiritual truth through the deployment of an almost fumblingly innocent poetic persona.[7] In the opening poem to the reader, the "Lectori," Crashaw begins by imagining the space of his collection as a paradoxical access-point to the divine as well as a place capable of purifying poetry. "Salve. Jàmque vale. Quid enim quis pergeret ultrá?" [Hello, and now farewell. For why would someone continue further?] (l. 1). Crashaw launches his sequence as a paradoxical activity in which the reader enters against his best interest. Warning that "Delitiis folio non faciente tuis" [this book does not make itself for your pleasures], Crashaw imagines his series of epigrams as a sort of spiritual training and a space of meditation. Yet the specific effect Crashaw imagines is not simply to know Christ better but to reenact and re-perform the elements of suffering and pain through which Christ's divinity was expressed.

Crashaw's sacred epigrams were not without literary precedent and yet, even so, they offer a sort of essential Baroque theology, based in paradox. "Literary conventions demanded that a man of learning should produce epigrams," notes Hoyt Hopewell Hudson in *The Epigram in the English Renaissance* (81). The writing of epigrams had been a classic training technique for young humanists since well before Thomas More, who was himself a significant writer of

[7] All quotations from Crashaw's poetry and prose are from the George Walton Williams edition unless otherwise noted.

epigrams.[8] English epigrams as well had gained currency during the turn of the century, as evidenced by this satirical piece from John Donne on "Raderus," the man who had published a censored edition of Martial's epigrams: "Why this man gelded Martial I muse, / Except himself alone his tricks would use, / As Katherine, for the Court's sake, put down stews." The contemporary references to Matthew Rader (as well as the less contemporary pun on Katharine Parr's name) presented with a satirical edge preserves a lot from Martial. Yet Crashaw, in turning to Latin epigrams, uses Martial's form to go in deeply theological and paradoxical directions. This is not wholly unique to the history of the Latin epigram.[9] Decades before, in mourning for the death of Jane Seymour, the poet Armagil Wade wrote the following epigram in her honor:

> Phoenix Iana iacet, nato Phoenice, dolendum
>
> Saecula Phoenices nulla tulisse duos.
>
> [Here lies Jane, a Phoenix, having given birth to a Phoenix: alas, that no age allows of two Phoenixes!][10]

This sort of praise in which one body (the corpse) is read as another transcendent body (the Phoenix) can be traced through Crashaw's epigrams. Yet there is, in Crashaw's work, a religious and poetic mission that exceeds the quiet and brief utterance of Wade's verses. Still, Crashaw's

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[8] As Hudson notes "More's *Epigrammata* was published at Basel by John Froben, in March of 1518" (36). For a full study of these Epigrams see Hudson 23-80.

[9] See Hudson 81-139 for a study of scholarly epigrammatists after Thomas More. Though many of these poets engage in paradoxical poetic discourse, they usually do so free from the theological and biblical inspiration that Crashaw thoroughly embraces.

[10] Text and translation of this epigram are from Hudson 135.

intense theological focus paired with his interest in exploring immensity and infinity in the brief space of the epigram allows Crashaw to argue for a theologically and intellectually rigorous epigram not as driven by ribald playfulness, such as that found in epigrams by Jonson or Donne.

Anthony Raspa, in his study of Jesuit poetics in the English Renaissance, notes the convergence of the increase in popularity of the epigram with the emerging Baroque movement in Continental Europe. "In that fortunate moment in the convergence of epigram and Baroque world view," Raspa writes, "the genre [of the epigram] had, it appeared, become noteworthy solely for the one quality of pungency" (135). Pungency, which can either refer to the "intensity of grief or distress" or, in a more antiquated form, to "having a sharp point or points," includes not just the usual connotation of a concentrated feeling or experience but includes as well the important role of grief, pain, and the potential violence of its discourses.[11] As spears, tears, pain, and regret become the wellsprings out of which Crashaw's poetic imagination flows, this new late sixteenth and early seventeenth century convergence of the Baroque and the scholarly Latin epigram becomes even more germane to understanding the Baroque spaces his brief verses create.

When Deleuze writes that "Baroque architecture can be defined by [a] severing of the facade from the inside, of the interior from the exterior, and the autonomy of the interior from the independence of the exterior, but in such conditions that each of the two terms thrusts the other forward" (28), he highlights the complex relationship between interiority and exteriority that defines certain modes of Baroque expression that seem particularly urgent to Crashaw's

[11] Definitions quoted from the OED. See the OED entries on pungency for further information on these denotations.

project in the *Epigrammata Sacra*. Crashaw hopes his book will help break down the fluid boundaries between interior and exterior in his readers as they come to encounter his poetry:

> Nam tibi fac madidis meus ille occurrerit alis,
>
> (Sanguine, seu lacryma diffluat ille suâ:)
>
> Stipite totus hians, clavísque reclusus & hastâ:
>
> Fons tuus in fluvios desidiosus erit? (*Lectori* 113-116)
>
> [For let my book have met you with wet wings (whether it is soaked with blood or tears), the tree (the cross and the tree of life in Eden) opens everything and the nail and spear open it up. Will your spring be idle in (filling)[12] these rivers?]

There is an interesting ambiguity in these Latin lines that points to Crashaw's interest in the interplay between exterior and interior. In George Walton Williams's edition of Crashaw's works, the line "stipite totus hians, clavísque reclusus & hastâ" is translated as "everything opens with the tree and is closed with nails and spear" (646). "Hians" means clearly to open, but "reclusus"—though normally defined as "to open what has been closed"—has a post-classical and rare denotation: "to shut off or up."[13] Williams's translation seems to draw from this less common denotation, while the sense of Crashaw's lines is perhaps better preserved when the more common meaning is presented.

The tree, the site of the crucifixion, opens all up while it is the nails and spear that further tear open Christ's body releasing blood. Crashaw's presentation of this image exploits the

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[12] This implied addition is drawn from George Walton Williams's translation.

[13] From the *Lewis & Short Latin Dictionary.*

tension between interiority and exteriority. The nails, spear, and tree form a system around the body of Christ that frames and punctures His body, radiating divinity outward. Crashaw would revisit the image of the crucified Christ frequently, emphasizing the transformative powers of the nails and the spears to take the private experiences of the suffering Christ and transmit them outward to others. Deleuze's observation, echoing Wölfflin, that "the Baroque world is organized along two vectors, a deepening toward the bottom, and a thrust toward the upper regions" (29), could describe the Baroque world in action in Crashaw's poetry on the crucifixion. Crashaw's epigram on John 20:20, in which the nails and spear appear again, works to move between the upper (heavenly, universal) and bottom (earthly, personal) spheres:

Quicquid *spina* procax, vel stylo *clavus* acuto,
Quicquid purpureâ scripserat *hasta* notâ,
Vivit adhuc tecum: sed jam tua vulnera non sunt:
Non, sed vulneribus sunt medicina meis.
[Whatever the insolent thorns and the sharp-ended nails
whatever the spear has written in their purple sign
Lives still with you: but now they are not your wounds.
No, but they are the medicine for my wounds]

Crashaw reveals language ("notâ") to be the vehicle through which Christ's suffering is communicated and through which His divine healing can be understood. The notation of Christ's wounds and healing become, in a Deleuzean moment, a separation of interior and exterior (the blood and wounds of Christ placed in opposition to the nails, thorns, and spear that penetrate Christ's body) while both are thrust forward (the penetrating objects coalesce with Christ's body to form the "notâ purpureâ" of the epigram). The reader is invited to meditate upon the

penetrability of the body as a key source of divine healing. Christ heals humanity with the fluid from his penetrated body.

Crashaw's way of inhabiting the scene of Christ's crucifixion involves becoming healed by it in the real moment, to consume the medicine of the language of Christ's wounds. Yet here we are not in the world of meditation and contemplation. This is not so much imagined as manifested. The bleeding Christ is not just one entity or scene or event but an independent world closed off from the rest of human experience and yet radiating, paradoxically, through all experience. As Deleuze advances his vision of the two floors of the Baroque, he writes: "the lower level is assigned to the façade which is elongated by being punctured and bent back according to the folds determined by a heavy matter, forming an infinite room for reception or receptivity" (29). Facing the image of Christ crucified: this is the façade, full of opportunities to be received but not containing the actual spiritual weight of the image. "The upper level," conversely, "is closed, as a pure inside without an outside, a weightless, closed interiority, its walls hung with spontaneous folds that are now only those of a soul or mind" (29). Though veiled in a theoretical description aimed at extending the Baroque's reach into the twentieth century, Deleuze's vision of the Baroque as two separate floors that are nevertheless part of "a similar world, a similar house," bears a unique importance in approaching the Baroque vision of Crashaw's epigrams. The façade of the wound, visible in what Deleuze calls the lower floor or level of the Baroque, folds into the meditative and healing interior of the pure soul: the inner energy of Christ's relation to the Godhead. Only through a folding of the material façade of the image with the invisible, yet necessary, interior healing soul of the crucified Christ can the Baroque object of the epigram, Christ himself, be read and experienced properly.

The epigrams in the collection work to bridge the gap between divine and earthly spaces. They achieve this through a poetics based in scriptural reading that uses scripture not as a *sola scriptura* Calvinist end in itself, but as the starting point of a poetic visionary encounter that, as Deleuze would argue, preserves the integrity of the separate floors of a Baroque structure (one floor of the façade of matter, one floor of the mind) while always insisting that the exterior and the interior, the material and the spiritual belong in the overall architecture of human spiritual experience. In other words, the material and the spiritual are folded together, compared, juxtaposed and torn apart in the hope that out of this method of rewriting scriptural moments a true encounter with the divine can occur that transcends typical divisions between Protestant and Catholic. For instance, in Crashaw's Epigram on John 1:1-18, language, appearance, and visionary revelation play off one another to reveal paradox as a window into the divine:

> Monstrat Joannes Christum. Haud res mira videtur:
>
> Vox unus, verbum scilicet alter erat.
>
> Christus Joanne est prior. Haec res mira videtur:
>
> Voce suâ verbum non solet esse prius.
>
> [John shows Christ. This is by no means to be seen as a wonder:
>
> One was the voice, clearly the other was the word.
>
> Christ is before John. This is to be seen as a wonder:
>
> The word exists not usually before its voice.][14]

Crashaw engages the paradoxical nature of Christian truths in this epigram. John is understood as the voice that calls out the coming of Christ, while Christ, the *logos* or *verbum* of the world, is

[14] This epigram is found in Bodl. Ms. Tanner 465 and is included in the George Walton Williams and the L.C. Martin editions.

understood as the language in which John must speak. By reducing this logic down to its simplest form, where John embodies the voice and Christ the language, Crashaw interrogates the temporality of Christ's revelations. The ancient and foundational *logos* that Christ represents is presented in the Gospel of John as a reimagined creation ("In principio erat verbum" standing in for "In principio creavit Deus caelum et terram"). This epigram highlights the relevance of voice, language, and temporality to Crashaw's poetics. He is, in the Barthes model, attempting to unpack and understand the *sign* of God as he comes to meditate upon the temporality of God's self-revelation and ontology.

This epigram is not merely meditative. It attempts to create a worldly dialogue and language that does not simply transcend itself to reach the divine, but which collapses the worldly and the divine through a poetic act of Baroque vision. "The universe as a stairwell marks the Neoplatonic tradition," Deleuze writes, "But the Baroque contribution par excellence is a world with only two floors, separated by a fold that echoes itself, arching from the two sides according to a different order. It expresses, as we shall see, the transformation of the cosmos into a 'mundus'"(29). As Donne's poetics expressed an interest in the infinite aspects of the Brunonian universe, and Spenser's Roman poetry attempted to collapse the past and present in order to reach out to the infinite, Crashaw imagines an infinite and divine space that, like the two floors of the Baroque, folds together the visible material world with the closed off and invisible world of the soul. The poetics that he employs in the epigram, based in their brief observations of crucial scriptural moments, plays with the intense proximity of the divine, offering the reader small moments of ecstasy that launch him or her into the space of the divine. Crashaw creates this ecstatic poetic moment by embracing contradictions and opposing forces, by using the language of paradox to create and inhabit divine spaces.

Divine space, in Crashaw's world, is formed out of matter with texture, contour, and depth. These material characteristics form a conceptual and poetic space in which the debates over divine revelation--one of the key issues of the Reformation--could be played out in a poetic/artistic setting. Crashaw argues that one needs not simply to see God to understand the true nature of the divine, but one also must be allowed to make God speak. One must, in other words, appropriate the sign, grammar, and syntax of divine expression. God is located on earth in the words of the scriptures as they become processed through the poetic imagination. Vision and space become important animating forces throughout the epigrams. For instance, in the epigram on "Luke 2:7: Non erat iis in diversorio locus [There was no room for them at the inn]":

Illi non locus est? Illum ergo pellitis? Illum?

Ille *Deus*, quem sic pellitis; ille *Deus*.

O furor! Humani miracula saeva furoris!

Illi non locus est, *quo sine nec locus est*.

[There is no place for him? You banish him therefore? Him?

He is God that you banish so, he is God.

O madness! The cruel miracle of human madness!

There is no place for him, without whom there would be no place]

In this epigram, the lack of available room at the inn for the holy family becomes extended to a meditation on the divinity of space and matter. As is usual with this mode of Baroque expression, the difference between divine and earthly spaces becomes collapsed in the vision of the Crashaw's epigrammatic voice.

Crashaw presents the innkeeper mainly as a misguided regulator of space. Keeping order in a full inn, he honors the terrestrial limitations of the interior space yet does not see the link between Christ *in utero* and the metaphysical origins of all space. Crashaw confronts the innkeeper not simply with a condemnation of his harsh "banishment" of the Holy Family, though he does provide that, but with an extended lesson in matter and space. As God is the source of all space, it is madness, to use Crashaw's term, to not allow space for him. Austin Warren writes about Crashaw's epigrams' fascination with the Incarnation: "The Infinite takes upon itself the lineaments of the finite; the Absolute makes its entrance upon history. The Everlasting of Days becomes an infant, and God a peasant carpenter…"(83). Warren shows how the boundaries between the limited, finite world of the everyday and the transcendent world of the divine become deeply connected through the Incarnation. The two versions of "place" offered in this epigram signal a visionary and Baroque appreciation for the possibility of a *bel composto* emerging out of the disjunction between what Deleuze would call these two "floors." Warren argues that these epigrams are driven by "not tropes merely but, rather, characteristic forms of vision—the metaphor, the antithesis, the paradox" (90). Though I agree that the strong use of paradox and antithesis help to create the Baroque spaces of these epigrams, I want to emphasize how the sense of a readable and accessible divine, a divinity able to be understood through the poetic act, comes to define Crashaw's poetic.

Gisèle Mathieu-Castellani, referring to the emblematic works of the French poet Jean de Sponde, notes "there is not a single object…which does not have the status of an exemplum in the service of persuasion, there is not a single feature which does not constitute a sign and cry out to be deciphered; landscape appears to be a protocol for reading the (mental) world—not allegorical, but emblematic" (33). Mathieu-Castellani eventually concludes that in the Baroque

work of Jean de Sponde, a poet who, like Crashaw, is interested in the interplay between love and death, the reader is presented with "the visible as entirely readable, the readable as thoroughly intelligible" (34). Echoing Barthes's reading of the Ignatian project of finding the semiotic traces of God, Mathieu-Castellani's reading is as applicable to Crashaw as it is to de Sponde. For Crashaw, the divine world is fully readable and intelligible. The epigrams in the *Epigrammata Sacra* reveal the readability of divine truth as it becomes processed through a poetic vision charged with a paradoxical and meditative energy. There are two spaces at work in Crashaw's epigrams: the social and economic place (the inn, for instance) and the cosmological and theological places created by God. Crashaw brings these two spaces into a jarring and interwoven relationship that, in true Baroque form, still represents a "bel composto." The inn is able to become an adequate symbol for both the humble space of Christ's birth and the expansive cosmological space his Godhead engendered. Crashavian paradox, in Baroque style, is combinatory, spatial, and visionary: it creates philosophical spaces in which the Christian God is understood through scripture and is imagined by a metaphysical conceit and a visionary poetics that seeks proximity to the divine. As we saw in Donne's lyrics, the inhabiting an imagined, poetic space becomes a theologically rich act. Yet in Crashaw we do not simply have a poetic persona traveling through space or playing with space through the interplay of the immense and the miniscule. Crashaw's Baroque style involves a detailed layering of divine and earthly senses of space that creates an experience for the reader of oscillating between the earthly and the divine.

V: Crashaw the metaphysical: Steps to the Baroque Lyric

Crashaw's precise role among the metaphysical poets has been a frequent critical subject. Martz, as we saw above, placed Crashaw among Donne, Herbert, and Southwell because of a perceived allegiance with the Jesuit and Salesian meditative traditions. Barbara Lewalski's *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century English Lyric* argues that the so-called "metaphysicals" can be better understood through a consideration of the Protestant Biblical poetics she sees at work in their poetry. This critical lens, however, minimizes Crashaw's importance and impact in the development of the poetics of the commonly (if problematically) named "metaphysicals." "The poets described here [Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, Traherne, Taylor] do not derive their principal strength from the tag-ends of medieval or Counter-Reformation spirituality and symbolism which they sometimes exhibit," Lewalski notes, "but rather from their active engagement with new modes of religious thought and their eager experimentation with new resources for religious poetry" (*Protestant Poetics* 5-6). Lewalski, trying to break off Crashaw from the tradition of Donne and Herbert, invokes the Baroque:

> As compared to the Protestant religious poets of the period, Crashaw clearly calls upon different emblematic resources and exploits them in characteristically different ways. Whereas Crashaw renders an atmosphere by evoking a myriad of fleeting images from Baroque sacred art and Jesuit emblem books, the Protestant poets often interpret biblical and sacred metaphors in images which are, like the Protestant discrete emblems, strongly visual, logically precise, and elaborately detailed (197).

Lewlaski labels Crashaw's images as "fleeting" in contrast to the "strongly visual, logically precise, and elaborately detailed" images found in the Protestant poets of his era. Though Lewalski is right that Crashaw's images, which are, at times, unruly, fluid, and quasi-

pornographic, embrace the Baroque in a way that his more Protestant contemporaries do not, I do not agree with Lewalski's criteria. Crashaw's images, though deeply sensual, are often no less visual, logically precise, or elaborately detailed than those of his Protestant colleagues.

R.V. Young has provided one of the major critiques of Lewalski's claims in *Doctrine and Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Poetry: Studies in Donne, Herbert, Crashaw, and Vaughan*. Calling the notion of a "Protestant poetics" a "a flawed view of the devotional poets" Young highlights the ways in which interpretations based on a notion of a uniquely protestant way of approaching devotional poetry "neglect the paradoxical richness and play of wit generated by the tension between the poetic evocation of spiritual experience and a doctrinal or theological proposition" (4). As Young argues, the poetry of devotion in England, especially that poetry by figures such as Donne, Herbert, Crashaw, Traherne, and Vaughan, is rarely clearly propagandist or doctrinal. Though scholars are wont to use prose to explain poetry, to smooth out ambiguity with the weight of Renaissance divine writings, the act of writing poetry was, in the period, by its very nature an individualized and potentially irenic act so that even poets and poems with a clear theological allegiance are able to produce visionary poems that, like the meditations of St Ignatius or St François de Sales, offer guidelines to a divine experience rather than focus on a set of pedantic or dogmatic dicta. The visionary poetry in which Crashaw speaks is the poetry of meditative experience and, as such, becomes so tied up in the sensual and sensuous decoding of visions and revelations, that no clear theology emerges. Rather, a rough assemblage of traditions channeled through Crashaw's personal spirituality emerges in dialogue with the contentious history of Caroline Christianity.

Crashaw's first collection of English verse, *Steps to the Temple*, was published in 1646. Unlike the *Epigrammata Sacra* twelve years earlier, this volume was published in hard times.

Crashaw left Cambridge in January 1644, heading first to Little Gidding and then to Leiden, eventually visiting Italy and settling in the Louvre in Paris in the court of Queen Henrietta Maria in 1645, after possibly returning briefly to England sometime in 1644-5. During this period, Crashaw converted from the Laudian Protestantism he knew in England to Roman Catholicism.[15] *Steps to the Temple* was published in London for Humphrey Moseley's bookshop "at the Princes Armes in St. Paul's Churchyard." That Crashaw is referred to as "sometimes of Pembroke Hall, and late Fellow of S. Peters Coll. In Cambridge" brings with it a sense of loss and irony, of a poet writing in exile to a readership he can no longer live among. The closing of the preface to the reader by the "Author's friend" emphasizes Crashaw's distance from English society:

> Enough Reader, I intend not a volume of praises, larger then his booke, nor need I longer transport thee to thinke over his vast perfections, I will conclude all that I have impartially writ of this Learned young Gent. (now dead to us)…(cited in Martin 77).

Crashaw would not die until 1649. His death here is social and national; he is dead to England, to London, and to English letters, and so appears more as a prophet than a poet seeking readership and approval.

The prefatory materials to this volume do not make apologies as Donne's introduction to *Metempsychosis* or Spenser's introduction to the "Ruins of Time" do; rather, Crashaw is seen

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[15] Warren notes "that Crashaw returned from Leyden to England seems probable; and, since the King's court was in residence at Oxford from July, 1643 to April, 1644, it is also probable that Crashaw took refuge at the last stronghold of the Royalist cause…Perhaps it was at Oxford that he made his submission to Rome, which appears to have occurred in 1645, shortly before his final departure from England" (51-52).

from the beginning as a bearer of Christian prophecy and revelation. “This is onely for those,” the preface states, “whom the name of oure Divine Poet hath not yet seized into admiration.” The volume is meant to convert new readers to Crashaw, not to rally those who already support him. “They [the poems] shal lift thee Reader, some yards above the ground: and, as in Pythagoras Schoole, every temper was first tuned into a height by severall proportions of Musick; and spiritualiz’d for one of his weighty Lectures” (75). These poems offer a transcendent prophetic experience:

> So maist thou take a Poem hence, and tune thy soule by it, into a heavenly pitch: and thus refined and borne up upon to the wings of meditation, in the Poems thou maist talke freely of God, and of that other state. Here’s Herbert’s second, but equall, who hath retriv’d Poetry of late, and returned it up to its Primitive use; Let it be bound back to heaven gates, whence it came. Thinke yee, St. Augustine would have steyned his graver Learning with a booke of Poetry, had he fancied their dearest end to be the vanity of Love-Sonnets and Epithalamiums? No, no, he thought with this, our Poet, that every foot in a high-borne verse, might helpe to measure the soule into that better world: Divine Poetry: I dare hold it in position against Suarez on the subject, to be the Language of the Angels; it is the Quintessence of Phantasie and discourse center’d in Heaven; ’tis the very Outgoings of the soule; ’tis what alone our Author is able to tell you, and that in his owne verse (cited in Martin 75)

Despite Crashaw’s persecution by the Parliamentarians, he is not cast as a propagandist for the Royalist cause. Rather, he is understood as a poet who returns poetry to its divine, primitive, and antiquarian roots. We do not find a poet who is cast as an important Laudian exile flirting with

Catholicism nor do we find a poet who is going to come bearing the ecstatic excess of a certain Italianate Baroque style. Crashaw is not praised for his sectarian leanings nor for the exuberance and richness of his poetry (the characteristics that have defined his modern critical reception), he is praised for being able to speak "the Language of the Angels." As Barthes described the Ignatian search for "semiophanie," we see Crashaw's major English language debut as someone who can comprehend, through the ritualistic power of his poetry, the language of divinity itself.

With this reading in mind, a poem such as "The Weeper," which opens the collection, can be appreciated in new light, not simply understood as another example of Crashaw's gaudy excess and illogical piling on of motifs. Mario Praz in *The Flaming Heart* described "The Weeper" as having "an air of unbearable luxuriance like certain works of Southern Baroque architecture, in which the design is obscured by stuccoed stalactites and a glitter of glassy ornaments: works which so resemble the impermanent creations of a mirage, that a breath of air seems sufficient to dispel them" (229). Since Praz, the critical reception of "The Weeper" has mostly been pejorative, with an emphasis on the ridiculousness and sloppiness of Crashaw's perceived excess.[16] The poem which begins "Haile Sister Springs, / Parents of Silver-forded rills! / Ever bubling things!" (1-3) could easily invite readings that label its exclamations as excessive, illogical, and ultimately not poetically successful. Scholars who have defended the poem, most notably Paul A. Parrish, have often emphasized the "feminine achievement," the triumph of a

[16] Paul A. Parrish offers a survey of the critical history (129n) that tracks the pejorative critical trend from Mario Praz to Austin Warren through to the more recent work of Robert Martin Adams.

feminine model of faith and devotion, at work in Crashaw's poem.[17] Though this is an interesting line of inquiry, it still makes apologies for the poem as a poem, turning to its theological and political implications as a way of saving what is ultimately a poem that has a slim chance of being able to "win over large numbers of readers" (Parrish 139).

"The Weeper," however, does not live up to its reputation. It is, when considered in light of the Baroque interests in the interplay of interior and exterior spaces and the poetics of vision that uses the human imagination to fold universal and local spaces together, a quite meditative and prophetic work. Crashaw's images can be sensual and excessive without being fragile, fleeting, and unsuccessful. Like the short poetic utterances found in the *Epigrammata Sacra,* "The Weeper" is interested in the Baroque plotting of divine and earthly spaces within a *bel composto* of images and conceits that, far from being random, are unified by their interest in turning the tears of a weeping Mary Magdalene into a semiotic key to the divine—an earthly sign out of which Crashaw's poetic vision can access God and produce poetic utterances with divine weight and consequences.

From the very beginning of the poem, the interest in accessing the divine through the compact yet rich semiotic sign of Mary Magdalene's tears is placed at the forefront:

Heavens thy faire Eyes bee,

[17] Parrish acknowledges that though "'The Weeper' is not the kind of poem that will win over large numbers of readers…a more purposeful recognition of Crashaw's unabashed focus on an emotional response, both his and the Magdalene's, will allow us to place 'The Weeper' more comfortably within Crashaw's achievement…" Ultimately, Parrish argues that, in the poem, "Crashaw gives us instead a rhetorical and emotional display that befits the feminine achievement that is the poem's subject and its art" (139).

Heavens of ever-falling stars,
T'is seed-time still with thee
And stars thou sow'st whose harvest dares
Promise the earth: to countershine
Whatever makes Heavens fore-head fine (2. 1-6)

Though images such as stars pouring out of eyes have inspired the kind of doubting criticism that has dominated Crashavian scholarship for the past decades, this image is hardly excessive in itself. The unwavering sincerity of the poem, free from the skepticism earned from a rakish past, differs greatly from the doubting and philosophical tone we find in Donne's divine poetry. Donne's probing introspection and his directions to his own soul are quite different from the bold staging we see in Crashaw's work. Where Donne requests the intervention of the divine, Crashaw orchestrates and directs the intermingling of divine and earthly elements.

This intermingling most often takes the form of folding, specifically the folding of divine and earthly spaces together. Crashaw, like Deleuze, is interested in the play between interior and exterior surfaces that creates the Baroque vision of spiritual truth being offered.[18] The intersection between the earthly and the divine, and the spiritual motion that is possible between them, emerges consistently as the animating force of the poem. When Crashaw notes that "It is not for our Earth and us, / To shine in things so pretious" (3. 5-6), he highlights the spatial

[18] I focus here on the ways in which the interior and exterior remain discrete identities that nevertheless become part of a greater unity in their direction forward. We do not witness in Crashaw the preference for the interior over the exterior, as we would in, for instance, Shakespeare's Sonnet 146, but rather a combining of the two entities in such a way that argues for the mutual and yet distinct roles in the Baroque spiritual truth at work in Crashaw's poem.

dynamics at play. It is not for "our Earth and us," for humanity or the place we live, to have the starry tears falling from eyes actually fall to the ground. So when Crashaw asserts that "upwards thou dost weep" (4.1), the spiritual motion of the poem is caught up in a paradoxical inversion that ultimately collapses the boundaries between the earthly and the divine.

The reader is then thrust upward towards the Milky Way. "Heavens bosome drinks the gentle streame," the poem continues, "Where th' milky rivers meet, / Thine Crawles above and is the creame" (4.2-4). The tears, created in earth, become transubstantiated into a divine fluid so perfect it reaches the heavens, becoming the cream of the Milky Way. This is an ongoing fascination of Crashaw who, in his epigram "To the Infant Martyrs," had told potential Infant martyrs not to delay their martyrdom because they enjoy milk on earth: "Nor let the milky fonts that bath your thirst, / Bee your delay; / The place that calls you hence, is at the worst / Milke all the way." The "via lactea" as it is called in the Latin version of the epigram, is cast as a sacred home for the saved within the observable firmament. Christian and Classical references are folded together. The Milky Way, in "The Weeper," is compared to holy tears while, in the myth painted by Tintoretto just a few decades earlier, the celestial fluid was the milk flowing from Hera's breasts. When Crashaw remarks that "Heaven, of such faire floods as this, / Heaven the Christall Ocean is" (4.5-6), he conceives of the heavens as fluid, holy, and made up of divine liquid that is created on earth.

This poem celebrates the spiritual power of images while referring in oblique ways to the hidden, cut off spiritual interior potential of an image from which an intense divinity emerges. Though the poem emphasizes visible action ("Every morning from hence / A briske Cherub something sips" (5.1-2) or "Angels with their Bottles come; / And draw from these full Eyes of thine, / Their masters water, their owne Wine" (6.4-6)), the emphasis on secretion and the stream

or font-like nature of the weeping Magdalene's eyes suggests an interiority confronting the exterior. Extraction, then, emerges as a bridge between interiority and exteriority. "There is no need at all / That the Balsame-sweating bough," Crashaw writes, "so coyly should let fall / His medicinable Teares" (12.1-4). Rather, Mary Magdalene's tears emerge as "a dew / More soveraigne and sweet from you" (12.5-6). Her tears are a kind of key semiotic symbol connecting the human destiny with the divine. Though Crashaw's poetry is often understood for its visual richness (or excess) and emblematic wit, poems like "The Weeper" have a theoretical and theological sophistication that prefers motion, between heaven and earth and between the interior and the exterior, that links it with a philosophically-rich, rather than simply visually-rich, interpretation of the Baroque.[19]

"The Weeper" is within the same philosophically rich, paradoxical, and even sparse poetic tradition of the *Epigrammata Sacra*. Mary Magdalene, through her divine tears, "dost…melt the yeare / into a weeping motion" (16.1-2). Here we are again facing Harbison's understanding of the Baroque, a movement "set apart from what precedes it by an interest in movement above all, movement which is a frank exhibition of energy and escape from classical restraint" (1). Rather than be overwhelmed with images in some kind of gaudy Baroque display, Crashaw's poem rallies around the one image, the tears, around which the entire divine and terrestrial world seems to circle. "Time as by thee he passes, / Makes thy ever-watry eyes / His

[19] Austin Warren, for instance, describes the emblematic quality of Crashaw's art noting that "the connection of the emblem with poetry was, from the start, close: indeed the term often transferred itself from the picture to the epigram which ordinarily accompanied it" (73). Warren, however, importantly notes that this kind of visually-rich wit "may be more than an offering: it may be an instrument of vision" (75).

Hower-Glasses" (17.1-3). Again, the poem reveals the tears as a key to all the epistemological and ontological structures of existence. They transcend the markers of time as much as they transcend the everyday logic of earthly living. Crashaw presents these tears as a privileged substance, a fluid which like his poetic vision itself is able to mix high and low, interiority and exteriority, in such a way as to provide a vision of Christian devotion that produces a meditative experience focused on the movement of one key divine essence: the Magdalene's tears.

Deleuze, in characterizing the Baroque, notes "the Baroque invents the infinite work or process" and that, in the Baroque, "the infinite fold separates or moves between matter and soul, the façade and the closed room, the outside and the inside" (34-35). The process Deleuze describes is not an allegory but an actual connection with the Christian Godhead. Crashaw highlights the infinity of this process, the weeping as a dominant and ongoing process of Christian love ("Thus must we date thy memory. / Others by Dayes, by Monthes, by Yeares / Measure thy Ages, Thou by Teares" (20.4-6)). The tension between matter and soul is even clearer: the tears are both material and an expression of an inner, dominant, and pure love emanating from a divine aspect within Mary Magdalene. Crashaw's Baroque vision of her tears is a sustained semiotic exploration, using tears as a window through which a poetic vision can meditate on the key questions of the Baroque (crossing over frequently with the spatial and material elements Deleuze will later find in the Baroque movement): how can interior and exterior be part of the same discourse? And how can this discourse extend to the infinite? For Crashaw, Mary Magdalene's tears, which end by the poem by asserting their desire to "to goe to meet / A worthier object, Our Lords feet" (23.5-6), are a semiotic key unlocking the infinite and the divine. They do not reveal a necessarily Catholic truth, though they emphasize a quasi-hagiographic emphasis on ecstasy and the body, but a visionary and, in the view of many

Renaissance theorists at the time, a primitive one. By returning to the "divine roots" of poetry, Crashaw's poems offer revelation, ritual, and worship that is rooted in the semiotic exploration of his verses. Crashaw's imagination, like that of Ignatius, is as visionary and linguistic as it is Catholic.[20]

In "The Weeper," we saw how Mary Magdalene's tears served as a gateway into a meditative act bridging the divine and the secular. In Crashaw's hymn to St. Teresa entitled "In memory of the Vertuous and Learned Lady Madre de Teresa that sought an early Martyrdome," Love itself will serve a similar meditative and semiotic role as key to understanding, envisioning and inhabiting divine and earthly spaces. The poem begins: "Love thou art absolute, sole Lord / Of life and death…" (1-2). Love is not just an important Christian virtue, it is in fact the "sole" Lord over human experience ("life and death"). From the very beginning, Crashaw understands Love as a one-word key—a unified singular concept—through which the ontology of human

[20] Though Ignatius's *Exercises* are part of a Catholic and Counter-Reformation meditative tradition, their linguistic and cultural work extends beyond their sectarian usefulness. Barthes offers an interesting reading of this in noting that "l'imagination ignacienne peut donc et doit avoir d'abord un function apotropaïque" (54). By asserting that the Ignatian imagination is ultimately an attempt to ward off certain distractions, Barthes emphasizes the Ignatian goal "d'occuper tous les sens psychologiques (la vue, l'odorat, etc.) en les consacrant successivement à un meme sujet…" [to occupy all the psychological senses (vision, smell, etc.) and consecrate them successively in the same subject] (55). In Crashaw's case the tears, the supreme object of meditation that leads to the feet of Jesus, are offered as a gateway towards sanctifying time, the body, and earthly space by offering an extended meditative movement upward towards the divine.

existence can be understood. Love is "absolute" and also a linguistic concept. When the poem continues by asserting: "To prove the word / Wee need to goe to none of all / Those thy old souldiers…" (2-4), Love emerges as "word" one can "prove"—a semiotic and spiritual absolute authority.

The poem distinguishes immediately between gaudy and material shows of strength and the spiritual meekness that truly is the seat of Love. "We need to goe to none of all," Crashaw writes, offering a list of what is not required: "Of those whose large breasts built a throne / For love their Lord, glorious and great" (10-11). Material and imagistic excess are set aside in these lines for the "private seat" (12) found "in the milde / and milky soule of a soft childe" (13-14). Here we see again the importance of interior and exterior as the "absolute" and "sole Lord" Love takes residence within the soul of a young child. The poem does not waste time in making clear that the relationship between earthly and sacred modes of living and ways of bridging the gap between the two are its main poetic concerns:

> Scarce had shee learnt to lisp a name
> Of Martyr, yet shee thinks it shame
> Life should so long play with that breath,
> Which spent can buy so brave a death (15-18).

Just barely born, and Teresa already longs to end her life, getting maximum value for her possession by trading it in early through martyrdom. She longs to be a martyr even before she has the linguistic conception of what a martyr is. "She never undertook to know, / What death with love should have to doe" (19-20) and "yet though shee cannot tell you why, / Shee can love and shee can dye" (21-22). The desire to die is not a logical or philosophical one, it is, rather, a visceral response to love being lodged within the soul.

In this sense, the semiotics of the divine and the earthly are quite different. No true comprehension is needed in this poem; as long as love, the absolute sign of the divine, inhabits the soul, the body and spirit are activated to move towards the divine. "Love knows no nonage, nor the mind," (32) the poem argues, love is a consistent and stable entity. Love is the only factor, the only sign, and the only concept that matters to someone truly inhabited by it: "Tis Love, not years, or Limbes, that can / Make the martyr or the man" (33-34). Identity, itself, is tied up in love. Teresa's interiority, governed we know by love itself, guides her in a state of motion through the world, but ultimately, towards Heaven. The poem makes this paradox, of being out of the world while in it, a clearly essential part of its theological and meditative impulse:

> Farewell then all the world, adieu
> Teresa is no more for you:
> Farewell all pleasures, sports and joyes,
> Never till now esteemed toyes.
> Farewell what ever deare may bee,
> Mothers armes, or fathers knee.
> Farewell house, and farwell home:
> Shees for the Moores and Martyrdome. (57-64)

By attempting to convert the Moors ("So shall shee leave amongst them sowne, / Her Lords blood, or at lest her owne" (55-56)) or at least die trying, she inhabits a liminal space between the "world" and the divine as well as between life and death. Her meek exterior and her Love-housing interior are similarly at odds, revealing Teresa to be caught up in a *bel composto* of

paradoxical characteristics that, in their entirety, reveal a spiritual logic based in meekness, submission, and the absolute transcendent power of love.

The most important paradox of the poem, perhaps, is that Teresa emerges as a living martyr:

> Thou art Loves victim, and must dye
> A death more misticall and high.
> Into Loves hand thou shalt let fall,
> A still surviving funeral. (75-78)

If the Baroque, as Deleuze suggested, "invented the infinite work or process," the poem presents us with a spiritualized notion of infinite death. The poem imagines Teresa in a constant state of death, never ending:

> O how oft shalt thou complaine
> Of a sweet and subtile paine?
> Of intolerable joyes?
> Of a death in which who dyes
> Loves his death, and dyes againe,
> And would for ever so be slaine !
> And lives and dyes, and knows not why
> To love, but that he still may dy. (97-104)

To be truly inhabited by love is to die constantly and to open oneself out to the "killing dart" (106) which causes "those delicious wounds that weep / Balsome, to heale themselves with" (108-109). As in "The Weeper," a spiritually potent liquid leaks out from a dark, closed off

interior. The wounds leak their own medicine, keeping Teresa in a constant state of death and porousity emerging directly from divine love.

Yet there is an end projected: a moment in which "thy deaths so numerous, / Shall all at least dye into one, / And melt thy soules sweet mansion" (111-113). Crashaw confronts the fact that out of the constant loop of deaths she experienced while living there did emerge one death that actually took her from the world. Crashaw does not cast this event simply as a union wih God, but as a moment of divine semiotic revelation:

> O what delight when shee [the Virgin Mary] shall stand,
> And teach thy Lipps heaven, with her hand,
> On which thou now maist to thy wishes,
> Heap up thy consecrated kisses. (130-133)

When Teresa is welcomed into Heaven, she will understand the language of Heaven taught to her not in earthly linguistic signs but from the Virgin Mary's body itself.

This semiotic revelation seems to collide with the words Teresa left behind. Crashaw praises them as

> Those rare works, where thou shalt leave writ,
> Loves noble history, with witt
> Taught thee by none but him, while here
> They feed our soules, shall cloath thine there.
> Each heavenly word, by whose hid flame
> Our hearts shall strike fire, the same
> Shall flourish on thy brows; and bee
> Both fire to us, and flame to thee:

Whose light shall live bright, in thy face

By glory, in our hearts by grace. (156-165)

The words of Teresa's writings, understood as coming solely from Love, are spiritual food for those on earth, nourishing our interiors while the words themselves become a cloaking and exterior cover for Teresa in heaven. This inversion suggests that the passage between earth and heaven can be understood as an inversion of the "inner room" of our souls into the exterior façade of the body. Teresa's privileged location allows her to finally house on her exterior what can only be held on the inside on earth. As the poem finally reveals, her face can be covered in glory there while only by grace can the same divine knowledge enter into our bodies on earth. These lines display the Baroque relish for emphasis on motion, erratic combination, and an interest in the distinction between and the porous nature of exteriors and interiors.

Crashaw's frequent meditation on the flowing of liquids, on the interplay between exterior and interior, and on the search for the absolute semiotic sign of the divine all play into his poetry's Baroque desire to understand, inhabit, and, ultimately, bridge the gap between the earthly and the divine. The Baroque, as a historical and theoretical construct, was far more combinatory than transcendent and Crashaw's search is as eclectic, transnational, and ecumenical as the Baroque itself. As the "Apologie" makes clear:

What soule soever in any Language can

Speake heaven like hers, is my soules country-man.

O 'tis not Spanish, but 'tis heaven she speakes,

'Tis heaven that lies in ambush there and breakes (21-24).

Crashaw's language and his Baroque lyric vision do not speak Spanish, or French, or Italian, they attempt in English to speak the language of heaven and a language of meditative

Protestantism well-established in the Laudian church and the community at Little Gidding. Crashaw's vision, like his high-church upbringing, is flexible, Baroque, and combinatory.

Crashaw's poetry is driven by a desire to combine and rearrange. The most striking example of this comes in "The Flaming Heart." This is a Baroque offering *par excellence*. It urges a model of interpretation based on revision and rearrangement as well as meditating on the boundaries between the interiority and exteriority of the body. The image is a painting of Teresa in ecstasy being pierced by a Seraphim's dart. To correctly interpret this we are not to, in the Ignatian sense, place ourselves within the event nor are we to meditate upon the image that the painting offers. Rather, we must illogically misread our way to the most spiritually true conclusion:

> Well meaning readers! You that come as friends
> And catch the pretious name this piece pretends;
> Make not too much hast to'admire
> That fair-cheek't fallacy of fire.
> That is a Seraphim, they say
> And this the great Teresia.
> Readers, be rul'd by me; and make
> Here 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. (1-12)

Crashaw urges his readers to give over their agency in order to fully understand the image. The image itself is incorrect: the Seraphim is wrongly privileged by the painter. A sort of folding must occur to get it right, where the holiness of the Seraphim is worked into the holiness of Teresa. This is not a simple act of Ignatian meditation in which the reader inserts himself into the scene or imagines himself observing the scene, this is an active act of reappropriation and rearrangement based in the ability to produce the most effective spiritual lesson possible.

After chiding the painter that "had thy cold Pencil kist her PEN / Thou couldst not so unkindly err / To show us This faint shade for Her" (20-22), Crashaw urges a further rearrangement of the painting's religious signifiers:

> Doe then as equall right requires,
> Since HIS the blushes be, and her's the fires,
> Resume and rectify thy rude design;
> Undresse thy Seraphim into MINE.
> Redeeme this injury of thy art;
> Give HIM the vail, give her the dart (37-42).

The line "undresse thy Seraphim into MINE" reveals the depth of Crashaw's spatial project in this poem. This is not simply a correction or rebuke but rather, with the emphasis on undressing one figure *into* the other, Crashaw's suggestion that to read the image correctly, you must fold it. In Deleuze's understanding of the two floors of Baroque existence he notes that the division consists of "Above, individual beings and true forms or primal forces; below, masses and derivative forces, figures, and structures." As Crashaw faces the painting that has been, in his mind, done incorrectly, he works to bring the lower level (which is derivative and material) into the upper level of primal forces here represented as true divine feeling. "The actual does not

constitute the real," Deleuze writes, "it must itself be realized, and the problem of the world's realization is added to that of its actualization" (104). Crashaw is trying to work out the potential of the image, to bring *the actual* in front of him into *the real*, to replace the derivative lower forces of the painting into the upper primal floor of ecstatic devotion.

Crashaw's justification for the rearrangement asserts Teresa's ability to layer the divine and the earthly and to problematize and ultimately transcend the boundaries between the "two floors" of earthly matter and the soul:

> Give Him the vail; that he may cover
> The Red cheeks of a rivall'd lover.
> Asham'd that our world, now, can show
> Nests of new Seraphims here below. (43-46)

Teresa has broken the boundaries between the heavenly and the earthly. Crashaw unfolds the *actual* image to reveal the *real* image: Teresa as the supreme source of divinity in the image.

> Give her the DART for it is she
> (Fair youth) shootes both thy shaft and THEE
> Say, all ye wise and well-peirc't hearts
> That live and dy amidst her darts,
> What is't your tastfull spirits doe prove
> In that rare life of Her, and love?
> Say, and bear wittnes. Send she not
> A SERAPHIM at every shott?
> What magazines of immortall ARMES there shine!

Heavn's great artillery in each love-spun line.

Give then the dart to her who gives the flame;

Give him the veil, who kindly takes the shame. (47-58)

Crashaw presents Teresa as a source of divinity on earth and reverses the arrangement; the Seraphim does not hand her the dart of divinity, she launches Seraphims from her body and written words freely. To a modern reader, these lines can seem excessive and evidence even of the "dizzy imagination" (249) that Mario Praz ascribes to Crashaw. Yet there is a real sophistication here in Crashaw's insistence that the individual Teresa, as an independent entity, can contain within herself, on Earth, a full and infinite divinity. Crashaw locates in Teresa a woman of full faith and devotion who is able, through this devotion, to truly contain the divine within herself and dispense it outwardly to the devoted. We can see in these lines some of what Deleuze finds in Leibniz. Deleuze writes that for Leibniz "the world was an infinity of converging series, capable of being extended into each other, around unique points. Thus every individual monad expresses the same world in its totality although it only clearly expresses a part of this world, a series or even a finite sequence" (60). This porosity that Deleuze finds in Leibniz's mathematical Baroque carries well into the Crashavian Baroque where each entry point, each individual can, through a poetic devotion dedicated to the mixing and arranging of space, access and intermingle with the infinite. Whereas Donne, like Bruno, worked to transport his mind out into the cosmos, Crashaw mixes and folds the cosmic and infinite with the local to form a Baroque *bel composto*.

As the poem comes to an end, Crashaw emphasizes the importance of feeling as he asks for his own realization out of both the flawed version of his self that exists as well as the flawed image needing this Baroque rearrangement:

By all thy dowr of LIGHTS and FIRES;
By all the eagle in thee, all the dove;
By all the lives and deaths of love;
By thy larg draughts of intellectuall day,
And by thy thirsts of love more large than they;
By all thy brim-fill'd Bowles of fierce desire
By thy last Morning's draught of liquid fire;
By the full kingdome of that finall kisse
That seiz'd thy parting Soul, and seal'd thee his;
By all the heav'ns thou hast in him
(Fair sister of the Seraphim!)
By all of HIM we have in THEE;
Leave nothing of my SELF in me.
Let me so read thy life, that I
Unto all life of mine may dy. (94-108)

These ecstatic ejaculations allow Crashaw to participate in the scene. He is not, however, in the Ignatian or Salesian senses simply inserting himself into the scene. The meditative movement from memory to understanding and to will found in the Ignatian tradition is not present here. In "reading" her life and her works, Crashaw longs to dissolve into the divine immensity that Teresa has come to represent. When Crashaw asks Teresa to "leave nothing of my SELF in me," he does not wish to be made better or reformed as Donne does in the *Holy Sonnets* but to actually be completely transformed into a different being. The model of reading that Crashaw presents is one that can actually transform, through textual engagement, the ontology of the reader. When

Crashaw asks Teresa to "Let me so read thy life, that I / Unto all life of mine may dy," he is asking to become connected and interwoven to the divine infinity of her spiritual ontology ("By all the heav'ns thou hast in him…By all of HIM we have in THEE").

For Crashaw, to write is not just to pray but also to transubstantiate one's earthly thoughts and substance to a divine and primal desire for God. Like the cosmically minded Donne, Crashaw wishes to utilize a poetics that can extend his vision into the cosmos and the boundaries between heaven and earth. Yet, for Crashaw, self-doubt and repentance take a secondary role to a poetics of Baroque ecstasy. His view of earthly matter is similar to that of Deleuze who writes that "matter…offers an infinitely porous, spongy, or cavernous texture without emptiness, caverns endlessly contained in other caverns: no matter how small, each body contains a world pierced with irregular passages, surrounded and penetrated by an increasingly vaporous fluid, the totality of the universe resembling a 'pond of matter in which there exist different flows and waves'" (5). For Crashaw, the body and the poem and the world are not related by a microcosmic/macrocosmic view, nor is the major question of his poetry his own personal salvation. Rather, the "cavernous" and "irregular" intersections between the earthly and the divine, as they become activated in the reader's imagination and soul, become the focal point of Crashaw's poetry.

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