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From Court to Collar: Post-Elizabethan Poetics and the Submissive Stance

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FENWICK PROJECT OF

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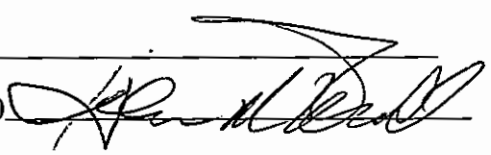
NAME (S) AND SIGNATURE (S) 

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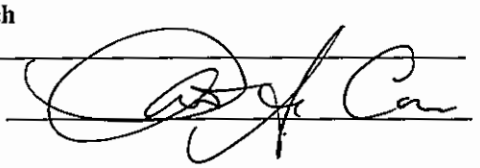
NAME (S) AND SIGNATURE (S) 

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With Deep Gratitude,
TJD

Introduction: Poetic Authority, Submission, and the Renaissance

Arma gravi numero violentaque bella parabam
Edere, materia conveniente modis.
Par erat inferior versus—risisse Cupido
Dicitur atque unum surripuisse pedem.
"Quis tibi, saeve puer, dedit hoc in carmina iuris?
Pieridum vates, non tua turba sumus..."
Ovid, The Amores: I.i

Love still a boy, and oft a wanton is,
Schooled only by his mother's tender eye;
What wonder then if he his lesson miss,
When for so soft a rod dear play he try?
And yet my Star, because a sugared kiss
In sport I sucked, while she asleep did lie,
Doth lour, nay chide; nay, threat, for only this.
Sweet, it was saucy love, not humble I.
But no 'scuse serves, she makes her wrath appear
In beauty's throne; see now, who dares come near
Those scarlet judges, threatening bloody pain?
O heavenly fool, thy most kiss-worthy face
Anger invests with such a lovely grace
That anger's self I needs must kiss again.
Sir Philip Sidney, Astrophil and Stella: 73

By our first strange and fatall interview,
By all desires which thereof did ensue,
By our long starving hopes, by that remorse
Which in my words masculine perswasive force
Begot in thee, and by the memory
Of hurts, which spies and rivals threatned me,
I calmely beg, But by thy father's wrath,
By all pains, which want and divorcement hath,
I conjure thee, and all the oathes which I
And thou have sworne to seale joynt constancy,
Here I unsweare, and overswear them thus,
Thou shalt not love by wayes so dangerous.
John Donne, On His Mistris

This project was created out of one key observation about the English Renaissance: that the poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries had to deal with social pressures, influences, and expectations far more directly than their eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth-century, or contemporary counterparts. Poetry and politics were strongly linked for the poets of the English Renaissance, and it was the balance between

individual genius and socio-political pressures that drew me to the period. Noticing in Wyatt the anger of a man helpless to rebel effectively, in Sidney and Spenser the high courtliness of frustrated men turning to polished Petrarchan lyricism, and in Donne, a man who, excluded from court, rejected the poetry-of-compliment archetype and forged ahead, rejecting submission and asserting his own wit and desire as the source of his poetry. The way Donne threatened, complained, and lusted freely made reading him a joy; his open fidelity to his ego and to his own poetic journey inspired a way of imagining the poet as one who set the course which poets to the present day continue to explore.

The pages that follow were conceived initially to save Donne from scholarship that was turning away from his poetry. I wanted to add something to the dialogue about Donne that would uphold him as the great poet that earlier critics had championed. Looking back, I realize that I may have fallen too deeply in love with the monarch of wit initially, believing that he was essentially a lone voice crying out in the desert, a voice that Herbert, Crashaw, Vaughan, and others simply heard and echoed. Tracking the evolution of the renaissance lyric from Wyatt to Donne, however, revealed a quite different story, an evolving relationship between poetry and the public laurel, whether real or imagined. The job of poet, especially during the early sixteenth century when England was trying desperately to catch up to the continent, was a vexed position in art and culture, with the limited possibility of reward, and endless possibility for exclusion, failure, embarrassment, and punishment.

Wyatt, Surrey, Sidney, and Spenser, the men whom I had in the early days of this project foolishly thought of as "everyone before Donne," were actually in a similar

position as the great "metaphysical." Though not suffering the same strict exclusion from court as Donne, these poets sought to establish poetic space for their political critiques and literary innovation. The stances they assumed were all part of the literary game of political and cultural advancement, an attempt to both explore new literary models and critique dominating political structures. The struggle to establish an individual and innovative identity was as much a motivation for these poets as for any artists, yet the unique political circumstances that surrounded them called for a clever strategy, one inspired by continental models, the taking on of the submissive stance.

Submission is a complicated term, becoming all the more complicated when applied to the culture of sixteenth-century England. As I begun to explore the relationship of sixteenth century poets with submission and the submissive stance, I found both encouraging and vexing results. Encouraging to my thesis was the poets' constant assertion of being powerless under the weight of love. In the poem by Sidney quoted above, the poet hides behind the influence of "saucy love" and is unable to state independently his desires. Love, the personified Eros, becomes a tool for expressing desire when the poet has no authority to speak freely. Though the distance between Astrophil and Sidney is important to maintain, Arthur Marotti and others have read this longing, and yet impotent, desire as the expression of a real, political desire expressed by the biographical author. When the monarch becomes the ultimate source of advancement and power, a situation experienced by practically all of the poets explored in this project, the poet must know how to speak softly to get what he wants. Submission, explored in their poetry in all of its political and sexual connotations, became this tool.

The first chapter of this thesis explores the taking on of the submissive stance and how it helped shape sixteenth century poetry as a whole. The chapter starts with a discussion of Petrarch and Ronsard's poetry, noting how the two poets acknowledge an external, and sometimes painful, locus of poetic control. The argument extends to Wyatt's adaptations of Petrarchism to establish his own use of the submissive stance, one in dialogue with literary heritage and socio-political constraints. Spenser and Sidney are considered as a "new wave" of the submissive stance, significantly altered from the stance used by Wyatt. I argue that the rise of a female monarch made impossible the unflattering image of women found in Wyatt's poetry, and therefore, Spenser, Sidney, and others were forced to turn to a polished poetry of compliment.

The second chapter explores Donne's poetry as a strong rejection of the submissive legacy of Elizabethan poetry. Drawing from both the secular and religious poetry, I argue that Donne uses direct language about his desire and needs to assert an autonomous poetic voice, free from the constraints placed on poets interested in advancement at court. This chapter owes much to the work done by Arthur Marotti whose socio-political reading of Donne in *John Donne: Coterie Poet* was extremely helpful in understanding the Inns of Court culture and its influence on Donne's poetry. Building on Marotti and other critics, I suggest that the rejection of submission, inspired by the Inns of Court culture, allowed Donne a place to critique Elizabethan culture while asserting his own literary innovation. As my chapter seeks to prove, this approach also creates a critical lens capable of shining light on all of Donne's diverse works, not simply the (Anti-) Petrarchan *Songs and Sonets*.

The third chapter offers a reading of Richard Crashaw's poetry as rejecting both submission and the uncertainty of secular love. Searching for a new and more coherent way of uniting the "metaphysical" poets, this chapter reads Crashaw's poems as continuing Donne's work of establishing an autonomous, at times didactic, poetic voice. Reading mostly the poetry in his two collections, *Steps to the Temple* (1646) and *Carmen Deo Nostro* (1652), I argue that Crashaw's background in Laudian spiritual practices influenced not only the content of his poetry, as Martz helpfully explored in his *The Poetry of Meditation* (1954), but also his relationship to desire. In Crashaw, desire for God and salvation is the only important desire, and a desire in which one need not use flattery to be fulfilled. When God, a saint, or the Virgin Mary becomes the beloved, spiritual fulfillment is guaranteed. The guarantee of fulfillment makes useless any submissive poses. Devotion is a choice, a poetic decision made not out of losing power to love, but out of an independent desire to praise God. The chapter also explores the marginalization Crashaw has suffered under the pens of modern critics and seeks, by tracing Crashaw's participation in the rejection of the submissive stance, to assert Crashaw's importance in the development of seventeenth-century poetry.

The fourth chapter explores George Herbert's influential collection *The Temple* and its rejection of the Elizabethan courtly legacy that rewarded a poet's use of the submissive stance. Herbert, Crashaw's main influence, presented an earlier continuation of Donne's mission against submission in which the courtly and Elizabethan legacy was a tradition to be attacked, avoided, and reshaped in favor of an autonomous poetic voice. A contemporary of Donne who was celebrated for his religious verse (not prose), Herbert established a *catechizing* poetics, one able to teach the reader about divine truth. His role

as poetic teacher in itself was a profound rejection of the various poses and performed stances of those poets who came before him, yet Herbert actually takes on Elizabethan poetic fashion directly throughout the collection. I offer readings of these key poems to locate Herbert's works amid the religious and literary reforms that accompanied the shift from Elizabeth to James.

Finally, the project ends with a brief conclusion looking forward from Herbert and Crashaw's religious revisions of Donne. Herbert's famous poetic "student," Henry Vaughan is considered alongside John Milton. These two men were writing their best poetry at the time when their religious and political parties were being defeated in England. Their socio-political realities, combined with their knowledge of Donne, Herbert, and Crashaw, inspired the two poets to take on a strong, and completely un-submissive tone.

A project of this magnitude depends upon a wide array of critical sources and inspiration. Louis Martz's work was my first major critical influence in this period, and his reading suggested exactly the blend of formalism and historical research my project seeks to emulate. As the debate over New Historicism's effectiveness continues, with many from formalist and humanistic critical schools questioning the approach's respect for the text, I found myself constantly seeking to explore the "world" of the poems while respecting the literary merit of the poems themselves. Poems are, indeed, more than cultural artifacts.

Renaissance poetry depends on a complicated balance between the poet, the beloved, and the voyeur/reader. It was my interest in how Renaissance readers of the day would have imagined the relationship between the poet and the beloved that inspired the

approach I take here. I read the poet's "stance," whether submissive, anti-submissive, or catechizing, to be a part of the poem's formal construction. A successful poem will in many ways create and train its own reader. Inspired by Herbert's advice that "if studious, copie fair what time has blurred," I have sought, in the tradition of many modern and contemporary scholars, to use both historical facts and close readings to unveil the rich world of Renaissance poetry.

Chapter 1: "I hope to find pity, not pardon": Petrarchism, Submission, and the Early Modern English Lyric.

> O Petrarke hed and prince of poets all,
> Whoe liuely gift of flowyng eloquence,
> Wel may we seke, but finde not how or whence
> So rare a gift with thee did rise and fall,
> Peace to thy bones, and glory immortall
> Be to thy name, and to her excellence.
> Whose beauty lighted in thy time and sence
> So to be set forth as none other shall.
> Why hath not our pens rimes so upfit wrought
> Ne why our time forth bringeth beauty such
> To trye our wittes as golde is by the touche,
> If to the stile the matter aided ought.
> But ther was neuer Laura more then one,
> And her had petrarke for his paragone.
> —*Tottel's Miscellany: 218*

> Without his roe, like a dried herring: flesh, flesh, how art thou fishified! Now is he for the numbers that Petrarch flowed in: Laura to his lady was but a kitchen-wench; marry, she had a better love to be-rhyme her; Dido a dowdy; Cleopatra a gipsy; Helen and Hero hildings and harlots; Thisbe a grey eye or so, but not to the purpose. Signior Romeo, bon jour! there's a French salutation to your French slop. You gave us the counterfeit fairly last night.
> —*Romeo and Juliet II.iv.*

Petrarch presented a challenge to early modern poets, providing an example of what poetry could and should be, and a literary trope to be adapted and revised. In that Italian, Poets throughout Europe saw a writer who could glorify his own vernacular while setting the standards for eloquence in verse. Though English writers had been aware of Petrarch during his lifetime—a translation of one of his poems appeared in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*—Sir Thomas Wyatt's translations of the poet set the course of

much of the sixteenth century's poetic mission. Petrarch's poetry was in many ways the Duchamp's *Fountain* of its time; every artist who followed seemed compelled to respond, whether in Italy, France, Spain, or England. The deeply personal nature of his poetry, his adopted stance of intense longing, inspired Wyatt and his generation to explore their own poetic ambitions and projects through an amatory discourse of submission to one's own will and a sometimes cruel, unfeeling lover. Though the poets of the English Renaissance often challenged, mocked, and strayed from Petrarch, his profound influence cannot be questioned.

Petrarch's poetry, at its core, seeks to examine the role of the ambitious poet, turning to amatory discourse and the submissive stance as a way of furthering this poetic aim. In this respect, Petrarch is more complex than many discussions of "Petrarchism" may disclose. Our own culture has popularized the image of the poet submitting to his lady and that trope is easily confirmed by some readings of these texts. Yet in Petrarch, as well as his imitators, praise of the lady is compromised by an awareness of the difficulties of being a poet. For instance, Petrarch imagines a young lover, inspired by his poems and later rejected, lashing out at the laurel:

> "Né poeta ne colga mai, né Giove
> la privilegi, et al sol venga in ira
> tal che si secchi ogni sua foglia verde.[1]"
>
> ["Let no poet ever gather from it, nor Jove privilege it, and
> let it receive the sun's anger so that all of the green leaves will
> dry!"]

[1] All quotes from Petrarch are from the Durling edition.

Though rejection is all part of the poetic game, pain, resistance, and outward submission give the poems a clever courtly, eloquent, and elevated quality, one that Petrarch's English literary audience would have felt challenged, and inspired, to imitate.

Resistance to a cruel lover, the struggle for agency, and the venting of personal grievances would become the hallmarks of English poetry from Wyatt in the 1520s through to the 1590s. Recent scholarship has explored the political implications of this sort of writing, and read in the lines of lovers' laments the very real anguish of ambitious courtiers seeking advancement, agency, and power, often to no avail. Wyatt was not the first poet, by any means, to vent in poetry. In the Henrician court, Skelton had often shown rage and disapproval: disapproval of Cardinal Wolsey, jealousy towards the great, and preferred, poet Bernard André, and irritation that his title of Poet Laureate of Oxford was not being duly respected. Yet, what he did not do was polish the English tongue, elevate and mask his plaints through the use of amatory models, or attach himself to a continental movement of poetry. Wyatt, however, did all those things by creating what I will call the submissive stance in English poetry, a stance that places a poet's persona subordinate to external forces, be they romantic, civil, religious, or metaphysical. A poet's own will could be added to this list, as desire is often externalized, positioned as yet another influence seeking to dominate the poet.

To read a tone of courtly submission in the poetry of the sixteenth century is not a new idea. Stephen Greenblatt in his influential study *Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare* asserts that those poets engaged in self-fashioning, Wyatt among them, are involved in "submission to an absolute power or authority situated at least partially outside the self—God, a sacred book, an institution such as church, court,

colonial or military administration." Greenblatt goes on to assert that Wyatt himself "may complain about the abuses of the court, he may declare his independence from a corrupting sexual or political entanglement, but he always does so from within a context governed by the essential values of domination and submission." (9,120). Submission for Greenblatt is a constant constraint behind the page, a covert supervisor of the pen. This view has opened up dialogue on Wyatt's poetry and has allowed scholars to see beyond the fire of Wyatt's verse into the very dangerous and fickle court world in which it was composed. Yet, to follow Greenblatt's course unmitigated is to risk post-structuralizing Wyatt into a mere template filled with the complexities and tastes of the early Tudor court. Drawing from formalist and New Historicist critical traditions, this chapter seeks to read Wyatt's poetry as the product of a poet formed by socio-political realities, but also inspired to rebel against them using his own poetic genius. The rise of the submissive stance paralleled the rise of English Protestantism, which made the English court the center of the political, religious, and cultural world of British subjects, a world in which the favor of the monarch or the nobility could solely determine one's success. In this harsh socio-political environment, submission enabled resistance. Effective resistance. The popularity of Wyatt's verse during his lifetime and after, and the effect it had on later generations, all assert the literary agency Wyatt effectively grasped. That agency, however, could only be attained if it were veiled. To this end, Wyatt's resistance was veiled through a dialogue of courtliness, a veil to which the "un-courtly" poets of the late Elizabethan and Stuart period would not have to conform. Asserting the existence of an external locus of control was necessary in the courtly environment of the sixteenth century. Not so in seventeenth.

It is through this courtly aesthetic, so formed and enriched by the use of the submissive stance, that I wish to read the rise of the new aesthetic in the late 1590s oddly called "metaphysical." The term "metaphysical poet," so unenthusiastically put forth by Dr. Johnson in the eighteenth century, has never fully pleased critics, and with good reason. "Metaphysical," a term by its nature hard to define, does not describe the rich metaphors and conceits of the early seventeenth century poets any more than it would describe the work of eighteenth- or nineteenth-century poets; a more specific critical view of this interesting literary period was almost immediately needed once the term "metaphysical" had been invoked. In the 1950s, in an attempt to revise the terminology used to study these poets, Louis Martz suggested the term "meditative," intended to link the aesthetic turn of the early seventeenth century poets with sixteenth century continental meditative practice. Revising Martz's early work, Barbara Lewalski suggested that the rise of the new aesthetic was rooted in the development of a Protestant poetics, of a new awareness of the Bible as literature. Though these approaches have allowed scholars to explain the difference between the "metaphysical" and sixteenth century poets, few, if any critics, have found effective ways to bridge the two groups together. I propose a reading of these poets' relationships to the submissive stance: a reading in which the former "metaphysicals" can now be named practitioners of a *poetics of assertion*.

The next chapter will explore the development of this new poetics of assertion in Donne. That goal admittedly yet necessarily risks being too expansive or too inclusive in the wide net it casts. But a major claim here is that Donne did not invent a new form of poetry without inheriting an old. A study of Donne and resistance must begin, then, by

addressing, however briefly, that which I call the submissive stance as it evolves from Wyatt through Sidney and Spenser. But even before reviewing that verse, we must return to Petrarch himself. Petrarch was for Wyatt, and all who followed, that which he is for us: the main practitioner of one of the most repeated tropes in European literature, the poet longing for what he cannot have. For instance, consider the fourteenth poem in his *Canzoniere*:

> Occhi miei lassi, mentre ch' io vi giro
> Nel bel viso di quella che v'à morti
> Pregovi siate accorti,
> Che già vi sfida Amore, ond' io sospiro
>
> Morte po chiuder sola a' miei penseri
> L'amoroso camin che gli conduce
> Al dolce porto de la lor salute,
> Ma puossi a voi celar la vostra luce
> Per meno oggetto, perché meno interi
> Siete formati et di minor virtute.
> Però dolenti, anzi che sian venute
> L'ore del pianto che son già vicine,
> Prendete or a la fine
> Breve conforto a sì lungo martiro.

> [My weary eyes, while I turn you toward the lovely face that has slain you. I beg you, be cautious, for already Love defies you, for which I sigh. Death alone can cut off my thoughts from the amorous path that leads them to the sweet port of their healing; but your light can be hidden from you by a lesser obstacle, for you are formed less perfect and of lesser power. Therefore, sorrowing, before the hours of weeping have come that are already near, take now finally brief solace for so long a martyrdom.][2]

The powerlessness, the intense longing for either love or release from pain, creates in the poem a sense of intense longing. The amatory tropes at work here are profound, and will be reflected throughout the lyrics of the English Renaissance. Petrarch's eloquence and his elevated vernacular (itself a desirable paradox) represented to the English a way of

[2] Durling's translation.

elevating their own tongue, through the use of amatory tropes and the submissive stance. They were not simply playing tag-along to Petrarch's innovative verse. They sought new ways to make Petrarch work for England, both in terms of literary/vernacular and socio-political needs and interests.

This contextual adaptation was necessary as Petrarch was working in a rather different time from his English students. In Petrarch's time, as in early sixteenth-century continental Europe, love poetry was designed not only to show off literary skill but also to convey social, religious, and political frustrations. Jane Hedley calls this poetic strategy *metonymic*, asserting that the poems are driven by a direct purpose, by a dialogue with external forces (1988). The metonymic mission, therefore, ties a poetic system strongly to its socio-political background. The submission to courtly forces, and the very real political consequences of verse written under such pressures, I argue, established the early sixteenth century aesthetic

The imitation of Petrarchan themes, informed by the pressures of local politics and culture, was not simply an English or Italian phenomenon, as a quick consideration of Pierre de Ronsard's work will reveal. For instance, in the thirty-second poem in his *Amours*:

> Quand je vous voy, ma gentille maistresse,
> Je deviens fol, sourd, muet, & sans ame,
> Dedans mon sein mon pauvre cueur se pasme,
> Entre-surpris de joye & de tristesse.
> Par tout mon chef le poil rebours se dresse,
> De glace froide une fiebvre m'enflamme
> Venes & nerfz: en tel estat, ma dame,
> Je suis pour vous, quand à vous je m'adresse.
> Mon oeil creint plus les vostres qu'un enfant
> Ne creint la verge, ou la fille sa mere,
> Et toutesfois vous ne m'estes severe
> Sinon au point que l'honneur vous deffend:

Mais c'est assez, puisque de ma misere
La garison d'autre part ne despend.

[When I see you, my gentle mistress, I become foolish, deaf, mute, and without spirit, Inside my breast my poor heart passes, between surprise of joy and sadness. On all my head my hair is drawn up all wrong, from cold ice a fever enflames me the veins and nerves: in real state, my lady, I am for you, when I address myself to you my eye fears yours more than an infant fears the nurse, or the daughter her mother, and all the time you are cruel to me if not to the point that honor defends you, but that's enough, since from my misery the other garrison does not respond.][3]

In Italy, France, Spain, and other countries, as England well knew, what would be identified as the Petrarchan experiment had been well underway when Ronsard claimed that stance. The eloquent foreign verse being read in England convinced British poets that it was time to make their own contribution. Starting with Wyatt, and continuing through the century, England would find its own way, through a politically informed submissive stance, to place itself in the European poetic dialogue, and answer poets' own needs for a veiled dialogue of resistance.

A large part of this dialogue is recorded and preserved in *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557), an anthology of verse written mostly by Wyatt and Surrey. The sense of Tottel's desire to enhance the reputation of English poetry is clear from the printer's opening address to the reader:

That to haue wel written in verse, yea &
in small parcelles, deserueth great praise, the workes of
diuvers Latines, Italians, and others, doe proue sufficiently.
That our tong is able in that kynde to do as praiseworthely
as the rest...

The collection as a whole not only seeks to reach out to a Protestant past nostalgically remembered during the reign of Mary, but also to showcase the work of British Protestant

[3] My own translation.

poets, chief among them Sir Thomas Wyatt. The voices celebrated and praised as part of England's literary revival are those which take on Renaissance literary tropes and recall the Henrician court. Wyatt is an example of what to do both poetically and politically.

In Wyatt, the Renaissance lyric truly begins to take shape, as he explores his literary and political ambitions through the submissive stance. Wyatt's work is diverse in genre, including translations, sonnets, lyrics, satires, rondeaux, and other forms. Both adapting the medieval-style lyric to fit the new poetic enterprise of the Henrician court and importing the sonnet form, Wyatt established for himself a unique spot on the Renaissance literary scene. Some of his poems are adaptations from Petrarch ("Cesar, when that the traytour of Egypt / With thonorable hed did him present...") and others are more original adaptations ("They flee from me, that somtime did me seke / With naked fote stalkyng within my chamber..."), allowing Wyatt a body of work in dialogue with both British and Continental traditions, one passionate for the case of English letters (and for the trials and tribulations of the British courtier) and one ambitious to show that the Italian tradition can be translated into English, a language very much under development in the sixteenth century. The linguistic ambition of Wyatt's work serves in many ways to praise the ingenuity of the poet, yet underneath the ambition of Wyatt's work is a legitimate pain, a cantankerous persona seeking to strike out or criticize however he can. Creating a poetic persona powerless before his love for both political and social reasons, Wyatt creates a self-aware voice, one critical of his frustrated courtly life. Some readings of Wyatt's poetry would interpret this as an actively resistant and agency-holding poetic strategy. Yet, the ire with which Wyatt writes is part of the overall submission of his work, a submission that will be copied, explored, and revised throughout the century.

Though Wyatt may be able to establish himself as an oppositional voice, he can only do so whhile acknowledging his own socio-political powerlessness.

Submission during resistance is clearly seen in some of Wyatt's most famous poems. For instance, consider number 67 in *Tottel's Miscellany*:

> She sat, and sowed: that hath done me the wrong
> Wherof I plain, and haue done many a day:
> And, whilst she herd my plaint, in piteous song:
> She wisht my hart the samplar, that it lay.
> The blinde maister, whom I haue serued so long:
> Grudgyng to heare, that he did heare her say:
> Made her owne weapon do her finger blede:
> To fele, if pricking wer so good in dede.

These lines are some of the most sensual of Wyatt's verse, and they, like many of Wyatt's lines, seek to strike back at a cruel, unfeeling lover. In this regard, Wyatt may seem to err from the archetypes of courtly love. Yet, Wyatt's desire to strike back is channeled through helplessness, an inability to harm the lady except in the most trivial (and seemingly accidental) way. The double entendre of "pricking" points to the sexual longing the poet feels all while pointing to the impossibility of legitimately achieving sexual satisfaction. As in much of sixteenth century courtly poetry, resistance is here expressed through the use of submissive language, of asserting one's desires all while acknowledging the impossibility of achieving legitimate revenge.

The impossibility of revenge and the general unfairness of love are explored in Wyatt's most famous poem, "They flee from me." Though anger and a general critique of the lady arise from the poem, the impossibility of "real" resistance is asserted. Wyatt, even when angry, is true to his stance, true to his place in the court. The poem begins in a courtly manner with a lament over the fickleness of lovers:

> They flee from me, that somtime did me seke

With naked fote stalkyng within my chamber.
Once haue I seen them gentle, tame, and meke,
That now are wild, and do not once remember
That sometyme they haue put them selues in danger,
To take bread at my hand…

It then ends with a complaint: If I have suffered for loving them, and they loved me, what do they deserve? Wyatt writes:

But all is turnde now through my gentlenesse
Into a bitter fashion of forsakyng:
And I haue leaue to go of her goodnesse,
And she also to vse newfanglenesse.
But, sins that I vnkyndly so am serued:
How like you this, what hath she now deserued?

The ending "how like you this" refers back to the lady's own seductive language earlier in the poem. The derision of its repetition and the anger so clearly present in the tone of these last lines all give Wyatt a strong poetic voice. Yet, this voice finds its power while acknowledging its own impotence. The ending question, through its speculative rather than active intention, leaves the poet still in his prison cell, still in exile, still out of favor. Wyatt knows his place, even while rallying against it.

Finally, Wyatt's poem "My own John Poyns," often cited as his strongest rebellion against the practice of courtly composition, shows Wyatt once again revealing a strong critique all while acknowledging his inability to offer active resistance. Wyatt's speaker refuses to adapt his poetry to gain courtly favor, and in doing so, may seem to reject the very game this chapter accuses him of playing. However, even the most seemingly open of criticisms are still veiled in a voice that acknowledges the supremacy of courtly ideals and language, a voice which, in a move to enhance its own political potency, seeks to veil its own courtliness through taking on a provincial, ineloquent tone.

The poem explicitly mentions the court, seeking to establish its self as outside courtly limitations:

> Myne owne Iohn Poyns: sins ye delite to know
> The causes why that homeward I me draw,
> And fle the prease of courtes, where so they go...

The poem seeks to explain the author's distance from the court, and the poem serves as an *ars poetica* against the submissive stance:

> My Poyns, I can not frame my tune to fayne:
> To cloke the truth, for prayse without desert,
> Of them that list all nice for to retaine.

The poet, contextualized by his direct address to Poyns, offers some harsh criticism, yet, the language with which he launches his attack is strikingly less eloquent than the rest of this work. That assured diction is neither evidence of ire nor a "real" Wyatt coming through, but is, rather, itself a poetic strategy. Elizabeth Heale offers the following observation:

> The voice of Wyatt's 'I' speaker is very carefully balanced between the idiom of an honest provincial gentleman insufficiently sophisticated for the arts of the court, and that of an informed and educated commentator whose pointed barbs carry weight. The latter masquerades behind the naivety of the former. (134)

In these verse satires, Wyatt takes on a persona strongly contextualized by his own real-life situations:

> But I am here in kent and christendome:
> Among the Muses, where I reade and ryme,
> Where if thou list, myne own Iohn Poyns to come:
> Thou shalt be iudge, how I do spende my time.

The shift of authority is strong in the poem. The implied separation between "kent" and "christendome" and the court from which he has fled enhances Wyatt's spiritual and local authority.

Authority to judge the quality of the poem and how the poet "spende[s his] time" is given to John Poyns exclusively. The court is shown as being outside of the home of the muses, outside of the true locus of poetic composition. Through this placement,Wyatt asserts that his poetic abilities do not come from the strategies and inspirations of court poets, but rather, from Wyatt's own identity in his hometown and close friendships. This assertion, so often cited as an example of Wyatt's ability to resist and reject the courtly life, would also be offered by some as a counter-argument to my claim for Wyatt's submissive pose. As Heale and I read the poem, however, the tone itself is reflective of a powerless expostulation, a dialogue among the oppressed. The poet is aware of the constraints put on him, aware that he must defend his exclusion from the court, yet also aware of his socio-political impotence.

The lyrics themselves, distributed as they were in manuscript form to members of the elite and near-elite, assume their audience as the main authority. The individual lyrics of the period reveal the development of a courtly aesthetic, a literary system interested in resistance. The audiences to these lyrics were undoubtedly varied, but their manuscript circulation suggests a coterie audience sensitive to the needs, woes, and frustrations of the courtier. This private/semi-public poetic strategy allowed a space to assume the position of a genius poet (as Wyatt's unique continental and native adaptations show) as well a spurned courtier.

As the century progressed and more poets sent their art to print, and, more importantly, wrote more massive cohesive works, the "sparse rhymes" strategy began to give way to the experiments of public poets, to the work of Spenser, Sidney, Greville, and Shakespeare. Their new style of work, the composition of full sonnet sequences and

larger poetic works, started a new way of seeing the poet's role: one utilizing the submissive stance, yet expanding the vision of what it meant to be a poet in a larger socio-political literary system.

One of the first major poetic works to be published by a single author in the sixteenth century, Spenser's *Shephearde's Calender* (1579) marked a different age in which, unlike Wyatt, poets sought national recognition and reward for their work, not just courtly smirks from a private coterie. Spenser's pastoral all but initiated what C.S. Lewis called the "Golden Age" of Renaissance verse. This work brought into English letters a large pastoral sequence in the tradition of Theocritus and Virgil. As poets chose to use pastoral and lyric sequences, intended for print or wider circulation in complete form, the stance of a submissive yet angry poet, Wyatt's stance, could no longer be used. Laureate ambitions didn't mix with the sort of "metonymic," open frustration of Wyatt's generation.

The way in which poets used pastoral and lyric in the mid to late parts of the sixteenth century reveals the elevated courtliness that had to emerge. Because they could no longer depend on the quasi-misogynistic language of homosocial behavior while under a female monarch, they had to turn to new models to develop a polished, ultra-complimentary submissive poetics. This shift also resulted in a wave of new literary experiments, the largest seen since Henry's reign. The reign of Mary, having seen a massive Catholic backlash against the reformers with such Protestant luminaries as Thomas Cranmer facing the stake, had provided little ground for any poetic expression. In fact, Richard Puttenham notes in his work *The Arte of Englishe Poesie* that only one true poetic accomplishment came to light: the work of Dr. Phaer, a translator of Virgil.

Yet with the rise of a second queen, Elizabeth, came the resurrection of English courtly Protestantism and English courtly culture. Poets found an outlet for presenting their works as well as exploring an intellectual and religious shift inward which could enrich their poetry.

All of the poets with whom this chapter is concerned, except Shakespeare, were outspokenly Protestant. Wyatt fought against the Pilgrimage of Grace rebellion against Henry VIII, Sidney and Greville enjoyed a very keen interest in Calvinism, and Spenser wrote poetry that elevates marriage and Protestant values, not to mention a massive Protestant epic. Simultaneously, the rise of Protestantism isolated England not only from Continental politics, but also from the countries that produced most of their poetic models. The breakdown of a Catholic universal monarchy, and the establishment of a religiously autonomous English court, opened a new space for arts and letters, a vacuum that would be filled with imitators of Wyatt and Surrey's style, as well as original adaptations of "heathen" continental and classical texts, initiated by *The Shephearde's Calender*.

Spenser's *Amoretti* are of particular note as the sequence establishes for itself a poetic space inspired by religious and literary innovation. Published in 1595 and no doubt the product of efforts dating back to the 1580s, the work explored the Petrarchan sonnet sequence in light of a liturgical calendar, ending with the marriage-affirming *Epithalamion*. Despite the somewhat assertive liturgical twist, the sonnet sequence is extremely submissive, showing, in almost every lyric, the intense longing of the poet. The very framing of a sonnet sequence leading to Christian marriage is a critique of Petrarchism, a challenge to the typical courtly lover. Of course Christian critiques of

profane love poetry go back even earlier than Chaucer, yet Spenser provides a solution to the longing of the Petrarchan sonnet sequence in his assertion of the power of Christian marriage. Spenser's voice also provides a vehicle for transporting English Protestant ideals.

The sonnet sequence is strikingly Protestant in its exaltation of marriage as the solution to lust. Yet the sequence enjoys a full range of heavy eroticism while maintaining a neo-Platonic interest in transcendence, for instance in the seventy-sixth sonnet:

> Fayre bosome fraught with vertues richest tresure,
> The neast of loue, the lodging of delight:
> The bowre of blisse, the paradice of pleasure,
> The sacred harbour of that hevenly spright.

The poems of the sequence assert their place in the literary system, championing English national/religious values and satisfying his poet's own ambition. They become both obedient assertions of national identity (Spenser's other works will continue this aim) and proof of a self-announced genius.

This genius, however, is fully subject to the political literary system at hand, in Spenser's case that upheld by the charismatic person of Queen Elizabeth I. Wyatt and Surrey's poetry, a collection of scattered rhymes and *balets*, was able to serve as comparatively candid, coterie work speaking to the common experience of exploited and frustrated courtiers. The mocking "Noli me tangere" that keeps Wyatt from sexual satisfaction in his famous sonnet is the result of political regulations, Caesar's demands. Though Wyatt's dialogue of frustrated love reflected in a sometimes surprisingly candid manner the trouble love could cause a courtier, he had to use a veiling stance of submission. In Spenser's case, his Irish colonial post was secondary to his laureate

ambition, and the submissive stance was an even more essential tool for navigating the laureate waters. Not only was submission necessary but a polished, courtly, Ovidian tone was needed to make the courtly love poem more elevated and appropriate for a female monarch. To show how Spenser in many ways adapts the poetry of Wyatt and Surrey to fit his own socio-political ambitions and needs, one need only explore his adaptations of some of Wyatt and Surrey's most famous poems.

Sonnet 78 of the *Amoretti* speaks in many ways to Wyatt's famous sonnet "Whoso list to hunt." Spenser adopts the experienced, candid tone of Wyatt to emphasize the romantic despair of the poet over the wisdom of giving up the hunt. Yet this speaker far more meek, far more enraptured by love, shows Spenser adapting his voice, too:

> Lackyng my loue I go from place to place,
> Lyke a young fawne that late hath lost the hynd:
> And seeke each where, where last I sawe her face,
> Whose ymage yet I carry fresh in mynd.
> I seeke the fields with her late footing fynd,
> I seek her bowre with her late presence deckt,
> Yet nor in field nor bowre I her can fynd:
> Yet field and bowre are full of her aspect,
> But when myne eyes I thereunto direct,
> They ydly back returne to me agayne,
> And when I hope to see theyr trew object,
> I fynde my selfe but fed with fancies vayne.
> Ceasse then myne eyes, to seeke her selfe to see,
> And let my thoughts behold her selfe in mee.

The knowledgeable start to Wyatt's work is here replaced with an image of a confused, wandering lover who simply searches for his love wherever he can begin to sense her essence. As Wyatt's voice is one of a lover experienced in dejection, Spenser's is performatively naïve. The resolution of the poem does not come in Wyatt's style of resignation. Rather it comes in a sort of self-delusion, an imagining of the beloved. The

beloved's centrality to the poet's creative direction (a strategy for sure) praises her power over the poet's own wit.

Spenser reverses Surrey's image of the ideal woman when he adapts Surrey's most famous poems, "Happy ye dames," a poem which seeks, among its many poetic missions, to uphold Penelope of Homer's *Odyssey* as the ideal woman, waiting tirelessly for her husband. Spenser's Penelope, or Penelope-like love, is turned cruel, and the poet presents himself as one of Penelope's many suitors rather than Odysseus himself:

> Penelope for her Ulisses sake,
> Deuiz'd a Web her wooers to deceaue:
> In which the worke that she all day did make
> The same at night she did againe vnreaue,
> Such subtile craft my Damzell doth conceaue,
> Th'importune suit of my desire to shonne;
> For all that I in many dayes doo weaue,
> In one short houre I find by heer vndonne.
> So when I thinke to end that I begonne,
> I must begin and neuer bring to end:
> For with one looke she spils that long I sponne,
> & with one word my whole years work doth rend.
> Such labour like the Spyders web I fynd,
> Whose fruitlesse worke is broken with least wynd.

The "fruitlesse worke," the poet's attempt to woo, is how Spenser chooses to describe his own poetic works. This is, of course, not a sincere assessment of someone with laureate ambitions, but as always, a dramatic pose. Spenser develops further the poetic submission that Wyatt and Surrey started, enhancing his self-deprecating tone to announce himself as a poet suitable to represent the Elizabethan court.

This sort of self-effacement or exploration of the self through all-consuming love will characterize most of the poetry of the 1580s and 1590s. The scattered poems of Wyatt and Surrey are free from the dedicatory politics of longer published works. Spenser's epic, *The Faerie Queene* may seem to reject submission yet still opens with an

acknowledgement of the importance of dedications. The work is dedicated; "To the most high, mightie and magnificent empresse renowmed for pietie, vertve, and all gratiovs government Elizabath by the grace of God Queene of England Fravnce and Ireland and of Virginia, defendovr of the faith, &c. Her most hvmble servavnt Edmvnd Spenser doth in all humilities dedicate, present and consecrate these his labovrs to live with the eternitie of her fame."

This acknowledgement reveals much about the cult of Elizabeth, the group of writers and artists who praised Elizabeth in their work. The praise of her virtue and piety has its roots in Petrarchan dialogue: Elizabeth becomes *the* courtly lady. The praise of her political power, her near omnipotence in matters spiritual and temporal, enhances a dialogue of national pride, of establishing a unique British aesthetic, one to which Spenser would have to conform. Yet, Spenser could use a variety of genres to express his own poetic abilities and his opinions, frustrations, and desires. *The Faerie Queene* was written parallel to *The Amoretti*, and the lyrics, read in context of the larger epic being composed behind it, show Spenser's need for a varied voice, able to carry both his ambition and personal feelings.

Spenser's need to please both his ambition and the literary system in which he works further ensures his use of the submissive stance, subjugating his own poetic autonomy and recognizing his place within a larger literary system. For instance, in Sonnet 33:

> Great wrong I doe, I can it not deny,
> To that most sacred Empresse my dear dred,
> Not finishing her Queene of faery,
> That mote enlarge her liuing prayses dead;
> But lodwick, this of grace to me aread:
> Doe ye not thinck th'accomplishment of it,

Sufficient worke for one mans simple head,
All were it as the rest but rudely writ.
How then should I without another wit:
Thinck euer to endure so taedious toyle.
Sins that this one is tost with troublous fit,
Of a proud loue, that doth my spirite spoyle.
Ceasse then, till she vouchesafe to grawnt me rest,
Or lend you me another living brest.

Spenser is essentially asking for more time. The poem begins with compliment and ends with a demand, gradually ascending in its resistant tone. Yet, even while asserting his needs, Spenser's tone is one of acknowledgement, of submission to the literary system of patronage in which he participates. Spenser knows his place and knows his political obligation to produce.

This acknowledgement gives the *Amoretti* maturity not found in other sonnets of the period, and allows Spenser to assert an individualized role even while becoming a voice for the Queen's literary, political, and religious preferences. Spenser is aware of the importance of his "race...through Faery Land" to his career, and yet longs to experiment with the more individual and personal work of lyric writing. After having completed half of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser longs for a break in Sonnet 80:

...Give leaue to me in pleasent mew,
to sport my muse and sing my loues sweet praise:
the contemplation of whose heauenly hew,
my spirit to an higher pitch will rayse.
But let her prayses yet be low and meane,
Fit for the handmayd of the Faery Queene.

Spenser seeks to find a balance between the projects serving his own creative needs (praising his love, experimenting with Petrarchan models) and those of his creative needs that reflect more ambitious patronage (the composition of *The Faerie Queene*). Though

Spenser is able to assert a call for poetic autonomy, his verse often acknowledges the constraints of the literary system.

Spenser was, of course, not alone. Sidney was one of the strongest and most influential players within the literary system of Elizabethan England. His poetry provided models of eloquence and desire, and his early death in battle a sort of courtly martyrdom. To be his friend was an honor (as Fulke Greville well knew). Death only enhanced Sidney's status as an icon and pushed his manuscript verse into print. A well-educated and high born man, Sidney wished to improve the literary situation of England, a situation he saw as not too promising. The boldness with which he describes the literary production of England is astonishing and would seem to make greater room not only for Sidney's own critical voice, but his poetic additions to the English literary system as well:

> Chaucer, undoubtedly, did excellently in his *Troilus and Criseyde*; of whom, truly, I know not whether to marvel more, either that he in that misty time could see so clearly, or that we in this clear age go so stumblingly after him. Yet he had great wants, fit to be forgiven in so reverent an antiquity. I account the *Mirror of Magistrates* meetly furnished of beautiful parts, and in the Earl of Surrey's lyrics many things tasting of a noble birth, and worthy of a noble mind. The *Shepheardes Calender* hath much poetry in his eclogues, indeed worthy the reading, if I be not deceived...Besides these I do not remember to have seen but few (to speak boldly) printed that have poetical sinews in them; for proof whereof, let but most verses be put in prose, and another, without ordering at the first what should be the last; which becomes a confused mass of words, with a tingling sound of rhyme, barely accompanied with reason.
>
> —from *The Defence of Poesy*

Sidney, like Spenser, seeks to set out his own poetic mission and identity, but also like Spenser, he must acknowledge his role within the socio-political literary world of Elizabethan England.

Though Sidney never enjoyed the same laureate status that Spenser carried, his literary accomplishments must have seemed equally noteworthy at the time, evidenced by Spenser's dedicating his pastoral sequence to Sidney. Though Spenser claims the composition of the first great English epic, Sidney wrote the first sonnet sequence in English, *Astrophil and Stella*, a feat that must have convinced the English literati that they had finally shown themselves equal to the continent in terms of literary production. As with most pioneers of a genre, Sidney seeks mainly to challenge Petrarchan techniques while establishing a tradition of English poetic eloquence. He asserts a poetic authority, the authority to teach, even while under the power of his socio-political world. Sidney, creating in his Astrophil a laughable lover-poet, is able to mock the genre while he participates in it, asserting paradoxically his autonomy and submission all at once.

For instance, Sidney establishes an autonomous stance right from the beginning of his sequence:

> Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,
> That she (dear she) might take some pleasure of my pain;
> Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know;
> Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain;
> I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe,
> Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertain;
> Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow
> Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburnt brain.
> But words came halting forth, wanting invention's stay;
> Invention, nature's child, fled step-dame study's blows;
> And others' feet still seemed but strangers in my way.
> Thus great with child to speak, and helpless in my throes,
> Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite,
> 'Fool,' said my muse to me; 'look in thy heart, and write.'

Sidney's poet refuses to subjugate his voice to "others' leaves." Yet, this is in many ways exactly what Sidney himself does throughout the sequence. He seeks to become the very "English Petrarke" that others labelled him. His exploration of the courtly, submissive

pose was the most extensive to date. The ire of Wyatt's verse was revised in Sidney to something more refined, less native, and, according to Jane Hedley, more "inward looking" or "metaphoric."

The very polished nature of the work is what makes its use of the submissive stance so necessary. The eloquence of the Petrarchan pose demands submission. Angry resistance and the assertion of an individualized, contemptuous voice would break down the tone necessary to follow the courtly love trope. The Ovidian trope of being struck by love's arrow unites Spenser and Sidney, pointing back toward Petrarch and away from Donne. The external locus of control that this trope demands will prove impossible for Donne's poetic mission yet is essential to that of Sidney, who can simply blame "saucy love" for his excess. For instance, the second sonnet of *Astrophil and Stella*:

> Not at first sight, nor with a dribbed shot,
> Love gave the wound which while I breathe will bleed:
> But known worth did in mine of time proceed,
> Till by degrees it had full conquest got.
> I saw, and liked; I liked, but loved not;
> I loved, but straight did not what love decreed:
> At length to love's decrees I, forced, agreed,
> Yet with repining at so partial lot.
> Now even that footstep of lost liberty
> Is gone, and now like slave-born Muscovite
> I call it praise to suffer tyranny;
> And now employ the remnant of my wit
> To make myself believe that all is well,
> While with a feeling skill I paint my hell.

The "full conquest" of love dominates the poet's decisions and even his *ars poetica*. The effect of claiming an external locus of control, like the effect of Wyatt's common dialect in "Mine own Iohn Poyns," is to allow for a semi-independent/ resistant poetics to arise even within the rigid confines of a strong political and literary system. Elizabethan poets

take on resistant language, but only so far as to assert their homosocial bonds to other frustrated courtiers.

The resistance present in the sonnet sequence is subtle, but strong in the poems' meditation on desire and desire frustrated. Desire fills *Astrophil and Stella* in a way that even Donne's most libertine poetry cannot claim. "Desire," however, is itself a loaded term, and as Arthur F. Marotti's work has shown, a term that encompasses both sexual and political yearnings. Since Elizabeth I was herself a "courtly lady," unmarried, virginal, and as well-connected as anyone in England could claim to be, the attempts to gain her favor took on a sense of courtly longing, of romantic desire. Elizabeth could be read as the object of all courtly poetry of the period, even if just in the poets' intense longing for her attention and favor. Poets sought to please her through cultural innovations in her name, as Sidney's sequence and Spenser's epic show.

Yet, Sidney was not alone in his innovative poetic and religious works. Fulke Greville, Sidney's closest friend and biographer, engaged in poetry for many of the same reasons, and employed the submissive stance to the same political and literary ends. A servant to Queen Elizabeth and, eventually, part of King James's council, Greville, like all of the other poets explored so far in this chapter, combined politics at court with poetry. The great servant to two monarchs and friend to one of the greatest poets of desire saw his own poetic identity as inextricably tied to his submission to temporal and religious authority.

Greville, like his friend Sidney, was a powerful, though obedient, poet of the submissive pose. Greville also engages in intense social satire all while playing the Petrarchan poetic game. For instance, his sequence of short lyrics *Caelica* begins:

Love, the delight of all well-thinking minds;
Delight, the fruit of virtue dearly lov'd;
Virtue, the highest good, that reason finds;
Reason, the fire wherein men's thoughts be prov'd;
Are from the world by Nature's power bereft,
And in one creature, for her glory, left.

Beauty, her cover is, the eyes' true pleasure;
In honour's fame she lives, the ears' sweet music;
Excess of wonder grows from her true measure;
Her worth is passion's wound, and passion's physic;
From her true heart, clear springs of widsom flow,
Which imag'd in her words and deeds, men know.

Time fain would stay, that she might never leave her,
Place doth rejoice, that she must needs contain her,
Death craves of Heaven, that she may not bereave her,
The Heavens know their own, and do maintain her;
Delight, love, reason, virtue let it be,
To set all women light, but only she.

Greville, in typical Sidneian terms, upholds Love, Delight, Virtue, and Reason as great virtues one abandons when enraptured with the lady. He exalts her beauty above all else and personifies time, place, and death also to be enamored of her, longing to be in union with her forever. The omnipotence of her being, and the extent of others' love for her sets Greville's own poetic voice behind the power of the lady's influence. Petrarchan submission supports much of his poetry.

Greville also subjugates himself to the religious politics of the day, making even his satires, so often the genre allowing the most individuality, yell out the Elizabethan party line:

Merlin, they say, an English prophet born,
When he was young and govern'd by his mother,
Took great delight to laugh such fools to scorn,
As thought, by nature we might know a brother.

His mother chid him oft, till on a day,
They stood, and saw a corse to burial carried,

The father tears his beard, doth weep and pray;
The mother was the woman he had married.

Merlin laughs out aloud instead of cryings;
His mother chides him for that childish fashion;
Says, Men must mourn the dead, themselves are dying,
Good manners doth make answer unto passion.

The child (for children see what should be hidden)
Replies unto his mother by and by,
'Mother, if you did know, and were forbidden,
Yet you would laugh as heartily, as I.

'This man no part hath in the child he sorrows,
His father was the monk that sings before him:
See then how nature of adoption borrows,
Truth covets in me, that I should restore him.
True fathers singing, supposed fathers cring,
I think make women laugh, that lie a-dying.'

The satirical jab is aimed at the corruption of the Catholic Church. The monk is shown as being uncaring, not mourning for his real child, not to mention the breaking of his sacred vows. Not only was this anti-Roman view common in the period of both monarchs, both Greville and Sidney were interested in Genevan religious reform and represented the first wave of Calvinist thinking expressed in Elizabethan letters. That first wave of deep Reformation thought, however, supported monarchy while it called for deeper religious change than Elizabeth herself welcomed. Political and literary ambition were often combined in this alternatively aggressive and submissive stance.

The composition dates for Greville's poems are difficult to determine, as the lyrics were never published completely in his lifetime. The poem cited above could have been written anywhere between 1577 and the reign of King James I. Since Anti-Roman Catholicism was popular with both monarchs, this poem would very much represent religious fashion at court, establishing Greville as a poet and religious thinker in line with

religious fashion and the religious opinions of the court. Yet profoundly unlike Donne's Satires, this poem has none of the internal anguish, none of the humble thinking or individual seeking that enhances Donne's work. Merlin, representing native English intelligence and morality, speaks with a certain, self-assured tone. Greville's certainty is the product of his loyalty to court opinions.

Internal anguish and the development of an autobiographical tone, experimented with occasionally by Sidney and Spenser, arises strongly in Shakespeare's Sonnets. The strong presence of a dramatized ego asserts an individual voice against socio-political realities and literary expectation, playing the role of the courtly lover, but providing some very candid commentary. For this reason, Shakespeare's relationship to Petrarchism seems tenuous at best. The second epigraph at the beginning of this chapter shows Shakespeare mocking Petrarchan tropes. As Rosaline fades into Juliet in Romeo's mind, so too does the legitimacy of Petrarchan love. Of course, Shakespeare is only pointing out what scholars have known for the last few decades, that Petrarchan poetry has little to do with love. Sidney's poetry drips with desire, Spenser's with a mature, reflective religiosity, and Shakespeare's with a decadent, craftily autobiographical dramatic voice.

This autobiographical pose in many ways helps Shakespeare to resist Petrarchism while employing the submissive stance, a move necessary to join the more "gentled" sonneteers of his age. Shakespeare is able to challenge the traditions of courtly love through experimentations with bisexual themes and blatantly contemporary references. For instance, Sonnet 33:

> Full many a glorious morning have I seen
> Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye,
> Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
> Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;

Anon permit the basest clouds to rise
With ugly rack on his celestial face,
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace:
Even so my early sun one early morn did shine
With all triumphant splendour on my brow;
But out alack, he was but one hour mine,
The region cloud hath masked him from me now.
Yet him for this, my love no whit disdaineth:
Suns of the world may stain, when heaven's sun staineth.

The sonnet, about the death of his son, is driven by a somber and personal tone. The pun on sun/son makes the poem's personal context clear, and yet the Petrarchan themes that dominate the poem, such as mortality ("But out alack, he was but one hour mine") and the linking of human and spiritual realities ("Suns of the world may stain, when heaven's sun staineth") are well employed. The tension between a lover and a son, the layered nature of who is being addressed, makes the poem an uncomfortable experiment in courtly love. The Petrarchan themes are, as they are in *Romeo and Juliet,* changed, challenged, and shown inadequate. The traditional love sonnet breaks down in Shakespeare, as anger becomes slightly less veiled, and frustrations become more dramatic, more played out. Though the submissive stance is still in place, its appeal, especially to a dramatist well outside the court, has begun to fade. In its place, a sort of lyric realism begins to solidify.

One of the most unique of Shakespeare's sonnets, and one of the most submissive, is Sonnet 20. Though the Petrarchan specifics are changed in the poem (the exact details of patronage distinct from the lady/poet paradigm), Shakespeare does not break fully away from the submissive stance, but rather seeks ways to imitate and, thereby, question its use. The skeleton of a courtly love poem lingers beneath the

surprising meditation on frustrated gender. The subject of much critical debate because of its homoerotic undertones, the sonnet is in many ways a veiled challenge against nature:

> A woman's face with nature's own hand painted
> Hast thou, the master mistress of my passion;
> A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted
> With shifting change, as is false women's fashion;
> An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling,
> Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth;
> A man in hue, all hues in his controlling,
> Which steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth;
> And for a woman wert thou first created,
> Till mature as she wrought thee fell a-doting,
> And by addition me of thee defeated,
> By adding one thing to my purpose nothing:
> But since she pricked thee out for women's pleasure,
> Mine be thy love, and thy love's use their treasure.

The gender-play in this poem is striking, from the beginning "master mistress dichotomy to the ending pun on "pricked." The poet is completely subject to an external locus of control. The beloved was always intended to be a man, has always been intended for the love of women (an elevated status), it is the poet who was a woman until nature, in her jealousy, gave him a penis and cursed him to exclusion from a romantic relationship with the man. The feminizing of Shakespeare's poet is a distinct use of submission, as is the poet's powerlessness: "Till mature as she wrought thee fell a-doting,/ And by addition me of thee defeated." Shakespeare allows his speaker to be fully dominated by nature, and to rail powerlessly against the forces of nature.

As the 1590s and the perceived end of Queen Elizabeth's reign overlapped, the direction of British poetry continued to shift away from the courtly aesthetic and towards a more individualized, often devotional poetry. The poetry of the seventeenth century is free from much of the submissive courtly dialogue of Spenser and others. In the chapter that follows, I argue that this shift arises out of Donne's unique poetics, as well as a shift

to more realist poetic strategies. Donne, like Spenser, is able to compliment a lady while bemoaning her romantic entrapment of his heart. Yet, what separates Donne from Spenser is the role of wit in the male lover's resistance. This difference, I believe, is rooted in the poets' different relationships to Elizabethan courtly culture. Where many other poets of the period had to depend on the tastes and expectations of the Elizabethan court, Donne was able to reject both a firm religious assignment in the ongoing religious debates of the time and an expected submissive poetic stance. Spenser, as Helgerson's study supports, sought to be a poet on the national scale and did so through an at least outwardly flattering relationship to Elizabeth and her court. Donne, enjoying high class and yet exclusion from the inner circles of the court, allows himself no place in the submissive poetics that dominated his time. Rather, Donne reworks Petrarchan tropes to include room for a bitter, Inns-of-Court inspired, wit. This new style of wit and its effect on the poetry of the early seventeenth century will be the subject of the following chapters.

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Chapter 2: "Rob mee, but binde me not": John Donne and the Submissive Stance

Questus eram, pharetra cum protinus ille soluta
legit in exitium spicula facta meum,
lunavitque genu sinuosum fortiter arcum,
"quod" que "canas, vates, accipe" dixit "opus!"
Me miserum! Certas habuit puer ille sagittas.
uror, et in vacuo pectore regnat Amor.
---Ovid *The Amores* I.i

Now even that footstep of lost liberty
Is gone, and now like a slave-born Muscovite
I call it praise to suffer tyranny;
And now employ the remnant of my wit
To make myself believe that all is well,
While with a feeling skill I paint my hell.
---Sir Philip Sidney *Astrophil and Stella*: 2

For this, love is enrag'd with mee,
Yet kills not; if I must example bee
To future Rebells; If th'unborne
Must learne, by my being cut up, and torne:
Kill, and dissect me, Love; for this
Torture against thine owne end is,
Rack't carcasses make ill Anatomies
---John Donne "Loves exchange"

John Donne (1572-1631) has always been considered unique in English Renaissance poetry, and for good reason. Donne forged a unique poetics, openly critiquing Elizabethan society, and describing male-female relations in erotic and often bitter terms. However, Donne's individualistic poetics has often cursed him with critical isolation. His poetry is often understood as being an isolated flash of genius, albeit one inspiring a "school of Donne" that lasted into the seventeenth-century. Contemporary criticism has questioned this idea, and so do I. This chapter seeks to read Donne in a larger literary context, tracing much of what makes his poetic voice unique to its

engagement with Renaissance lyric conventions, particularly his rejection of the submissive stance. Excluded from court culture, and influenced by the biting coterie literature of the Inns of Court world in which he lived, Donne was able to speak freely, using his distance and exclusion from the inner circles of the literary world to practice a poetics of assertion that defied the censors of constructed courtly stances.

In approaching Donne through his rejection of submission, I am trying to do many things critically. I seek to follow out Richard Strier's call to understand Donne, as earlier critics have, as a radical and new voice in the late Renaissance.[4] I also seek to suggest a new critical approach that will help critics to not only articulate Donne's differences from his predecessors, but also to understand Donne's legacy in the poetry of Crashaw, Herbert, and Vaughan. The latter mission will be carried out in the following chapters, and the former I pursue below. This chapter aims to prove the validity of this critical approach by considering the role of the submissive stance in what I call the three stages of Donne's literary career:

1) The Frustrated Anti-/Pseudo- Courtier Poet: representing Donne's poetics through the 1590s, expressed through the Satires, Elegies, and some of the *Songs and Sonets*.
2) The End-of-Reign Poet: representing Donne's poetics from 1601-1604, expressed through selected poems of the *Songs and Sonets* and in "Metempsycosis."
3) The Court Poet/Theologian: representing Donne's poetics through the Stuart Years, including some of the *Songs and Sonets*, most of the prose works, "The Anniversarie", and the Divine Poems.

[4] See Resistant Structures: Particularity, Radicalism, and Renaissance Texts. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Though any categorizing is, by nature, problematic, I believe that by dividing Donne's poetic strategies and historical experience into these three stages, the reader can most easily see the evolution, rejection, and contemplation of the submissive stance.

Though most of this chapter's focus will be on the verse satires and lyrics, I will also consider selections from Donne's other works. It is always a questionable venture to try and map out an author's entire work with one critical lens, yet Donne's sense of his place in the course of Elizabethan and early Jacobean letters, coupled with his bitterness about socio-political exclusion, create in his work a consistent aversion to submissive poetry. Donne searches for, and claims, authority in almost all of his poems that only the creation of active, and largely uncensored, poetic voices can offer.

Donne's verse satires showcase his earliest turn from submission. The poems serve as grounds for exploring the philosophical, political, and religious questions of the Elizabethan period. They are some of Donne's earliest works and were some of the most celebrated among his contemporaries. In the satires, Donne explores the significance of his early political and religious affiliations. Donne was often excluded and the satires strike out at that exclusion. David Norbrook, very much in line with my own reading, suggests that the Donne who emerges from the poetry "constantly seeks to put his feet down on the ground, to become part of a society from which he feels alienated. And yet...desires also to maintain a critical distance, a standpoint outside the existing social order from which he can criticize it" (6). The Satires are, I argue, in many ways exactly about this desire to gain ground back from the humiliating exclusion he would have suffered under Elizabeth I. Beyond Norbrook, however, is Donne's constant desire not only not to be submissive to any political entities, but also to establish for himself a

literary reputation outside the court and outside of traditional models. His reputation, if the poems themselves can serve as proof, seems to have been established even when Donne was rather young:

> He names mee, and comes to mee; I whisper, God!
> How have I sinn'd, that thy wraths furious rod,
> This fellow chuseth me? He saith, Sir,
> I love your judgement; Whom doe you prefer,
> For the best linguist?
> -*Satyre IV*

Whether Donne liked it or not, the very people he hated may have known who he was, may have been a part of his coterie.

Donne's mission of self-promotion is based in the search for literary and political authority. Donne is immensely outspoken on political issues, but in the tradition of many a critical social observer, poetry was his weapon of choice. Donne seeks to use poetry to vent his socio-political exclusion and to add to the world of English letters. Not content to be a simple satirist, Donne wants to take on the literary system as a whole. The satires are the training ground for this sort of mission. Donne's strong rejection of submission, his constant search for authority, and his claim to poetic genius, all make the satires essential reading in the development of Donne's unique, self-sufficient poetics.

The first satire provides a window into Donne's early training and, also, his early rejections of the submissive stance. It is a fascinating critique of both the humanist scholar and the libertine Inns-of-Court gentleman. Donne's wit has full license in this work, granted by his Inns-of-Court membership: "Outside the codes of complimentary politeness, he freed his wit, his language, his critical impulses, and his feelings in the kind of verse that the Inn's atmosphere of 'liberty' encouraged" (Marotti 38). In the poem's simplest interpretation, the tenets of humanism are juxtaposed against the life of a

libertine. The opening images of the poem illustrate the speaker's reclusive, scholarly lifestyle:

> Away thou fondling motley humorist,
> Leave mee, and in this standing woodden chest,
> Consorted with these few bookes, let me lye
> In prison, 'and here be coffin'd, when I dye;
> Here are Gods conduits, grave Divines; and here
> Natures Secretary, the Philosopher;
> And jolly Statesmen, which teach how to tie
> The sinewes of a cities mistique bodie;
> Here gathering Chroniclers, and by them stand
> Giddie fantastique Poets of each land.
> Shall I leave all this constant company,
> And follow headlong, wild uncertaine thee?

These lines reflect a dichotomy between an ascetic, scholarly lifestyle and that of a young, would-be courtier libertine. The "constancy" of the books and the reclusive nature of his study show someone uncomfortable with the world, and scared to leave the safety of his study. The last two lines, "Shall I leave all this constant company,/ And follow headlong, wild uncertaine thee?" reveal both a derisive and a profoundly curious tone. The life of study and no sex has left the scholar timid, intrigued, and skeptical of the young man's lifestyle.

The scholar, though consistently critical of the libertine's lifestyle, has an almost morbid fascination with the sinfulness of his foil's way of life. He puts an emphasis on the libertine's sexual exploits:

> Why should'st thou that dost not onely approve
> But in ranke itchie lust, desire, and love
> The nakednesse and barenesse to enjoy,
> Of thy plumpe muddy whore, or prostitute boy
> Hate vertue, though shee be naked, and bare...

I would argue that Donne here is lampooning both types of students. The virtuous and pensive speaker is not only frail but fascinated by licentious sex throughout the poem ("But sooner may a cheape whore, who hath beene/ Worne by as many severall men in sinne," etc). Thus, the speaker's morality is called into question as either being stained by excessive sexual curiosity or held by pathetic frailty.

The libertine too is thoroughly mocked, revealing Donne's dislike of ostentatious would-be courtiers. The courtier in these lines is driven by lust yet not brave enough to fully enjoy it. Donne's distaste drips from the lines of his speaker as he describes their trip through the street:

> Now we are in the street; He first of all
> Improvidently proud, creepes to the wall,
> And so imprison'd,and hem'd in by mee
> Sells for a little state his libertie,
> Yet though he cannot skip forth now to greet
> Every fine silken painted foole we meet,
> He them to him with amorous smiles allures,
> And grins, smacks, shrugs, and such itch endures,
> As prentises, or schoole-boyes which doe know
> Of some gay sport abroad, yet dare not goe.

The courtier is further proven to be slave to his lust when he sees his prostitute in a window:

> At last his Love he in a windowe spies,
> And like light dew exhal'd, he flings from mee
> Violently ravish'd to his lechery.
> Many were there, he could command no more;
> Hee quarrell'd, fought, bled; and turn'd out of dore
> Directly came to mee hanging his head,
> And constantly a while must keepe his bed.

Running to intercourse with his "love," he is given one of many turns that night, and then tossed out of the brothel to the sadness of his own bed. The "came to mee" rings out as a sort of victory for the scholar, and yet neither represents truly attractive social models.

This early poem is one of Donne's earliest efforts at turning away from the poetic climate of his day. Rejecting the typical early exercises of a poet, the pastoral or short lyric, Donne exercises his early wit in these formal satires, showing that his greater desire lies with distinguishing himself from the courtier culture of the day than in imitating their classical verse forms. The universal distaste of Juvenal is made specific, made English. Yet the poem is, I believe, not as successful as some of his other satires. Donne, much like Milton in his early *Comus*, is simply separating out follies rather than exploring true to life complexities. Rather than a scholar and an Inns-of-Court gentleman, the reader is given flat parodies of both. Yet, the poem represents the earliest example of Donne's greater literary mission, to create his own poetic terms with which to both describe the life of a late Renaissance figure, as well as to meditate upon some of the religious and philosophical issues that will dominate his poetry.

The second satire represents a more calculated attack on the court culture of Spenser and Sidney. It is perhaps Donne's most scathing poetic rebellion against the court. In this poem Donne asserts himself as both a poet and a Christian outside of the mainstream. As far as the poetry of the age goes, the opening of the poem reads like a declaration of war:

> Sir; though (I thank God for it) I do hate
> Perfectly all this towne, yet there's one state
> In all ill things so excellently best,
> That hate, toward them, breeds pitty towards the rest.
> Though Poetry indeed be such a sinne
> As I thinke that brings dearths, and Spaniards in,
> Though like the Pestilence and old fashion'd love,
> Ridlingly it catch men; and doth remove
> Never, till it be sterv'd out...

Donne's "otherness" is established from the very beginning. Though this may seem simply bitterness over frustrated career interests, some scholars, including M. Thomas Hester, have seen in these lines evidence of the Elizabethan view of history, Ovidian in nature, that the world keeps getting worse. Hester writes that:

> ...there is another Donne, another feature of the historical and personal situation to which attention should be directed. This is the position of Donne *at the end*—at the end of the sixteenth century, of one phase of Christian humanism, of a moment of English literary history. (4)

For Donne at this stage of his life the sixteenth century couldn't have seemed a promising era, and the future held no sure promises. After all, this was the century that condemned his family, that saw debates over God divide a continent and take the lives of many friends and family, and that saw the rise of insincere, mediocre, and pandering verse read at court.

These opening lines mock the men who become filled with poetry like a "pestilence," and are drained by their efforts. The draining of their resources is not meant as a complimentary testament to their devotion, rather, it mocks the stances so many of Donne's contemporaries were taking in their poems, the stance of the defeated, the diseased, and the desperate, lacking the poetic authority Donne holds sacred. Donne links the waning times to the sad state of poetry:

> ...the insolence
> of Coscus onely breeds my just offence,
> Whom time (which rots all, and makes botches poxe,
> And plodding on, must make a calfe an oxe)
> Hath made a Lawyer, which was (alas) of late
> But a scarce Poet; jollier of this state...

As Donne himself was a man who mixed law with poetry (though sometimes quite openly despising the former pursuit), he sees how terrible the effects are when poets act

as lawyers and "[throwe]/ Like nets, or lime-twigs, wheresoever he goes,/ His title of Barrister, on every wench,/ And wooes in language of the Pleas, and Bench..." Corrupt laws and corrupt poems conflate to form one terrible system, one which Donne hates. Yet Donne, by critiquing this system, separates himself from it, asserting once again his poetic role as satirist, free to write as he pleases, and free from the pitfalls of the Inns of Court life.

Laws, in both the religious and secular sense, have drowned out poetry as they have drowned out Donne's chances of social advancement. The power of the second satire, reacting to this exclusion, comes mainly from Donne's primary emotion through its composition: hate. In fact the first two satires represent the start of a poetic journey that in some ways the third and fourth satire complete. Between the second and third satire, hate becomes "kinde pitty," and a more mature satiric voice emerges, one that rejects submission less through witty, venting poetry and more through the well constructed poetic worlds that are the hallmark of Donne's body of work.

The third satire, the most frequently anthologized, serves as a commentary on anger, and conflicting emotion. As the first two satires lay out the angry situation of Donne's poet, excluded from court and surrounded by lazy sinfulness, the third satire takes on God, and with it, Donne's place in society as a man whose religion forced him out of the mainstream. The uncertainty of how to present himself emotionally reveals a profound concern with society and the etiquette of expressing one's inner turmoil; Donne is actually meditating upon the results of his rejection of submission. Having an independent voice has left Donne uncertain of how to express the turmoil of his inner religious conflict:

Kinde pitty chokes my spleene; brave scorn forbids
Those teares to issue which swell my eye-lids,
I must not laugh, nor weepe sinnes, and be wise,
Can railing then cure these worn maladies?

The turmoil, however, is not uniquely personal but reflects a universal question:

Is not our Mistresse faire Religion,
As worthy'of all our Soules devotion,
As vertue was to the first blinded age?
Are not heavens joyes as valiant to asswage
Lusts, as earths honour was to them? Alas,
As wee do them in meanes, shall they surpasse
Us in the end, and shall thy fathers spirit
Meete blinde Philosophers in heaven, whose merit
Of strict life may be'imputed faith, and heare
Thee, whom hee taught so easie wayes and neare
To follow, damn'd?

Angry over his religious exclusion, Donne threatens that those who do not even follow Christian doctrine will surpass contemporary Christians in holiness. Donne asserts himself as able to speak authoritatively, questioning religion independently.

The poem, like all of Donne's poetry, will not submit to convention, especially a convention demanding a submissive voice. Though satire, by nature, resists convention, Donne is not content to rally as an angry outsider. Rather, he offers advice, argues, and seeks to better the situation through clever argumentation. Even while seemingly flustered and frustrated, Donne's wit shines through in the poem as not only a vehicle for understanding salvation history, but also a way to establish a way of thinking that allows for his unpopular and illegal family history. Furthermore, the poem actually gives Donne a place from which to exert some of his religious authority. Though he speaks from a place of profound moral quandary, Donne's speaker not only seems to have the solutions to the religious issues at hand, but delivers them strongly:

...must every hee
Which cryes not, Goddesse[5], to thy Mistresse, draw,
Or eate thy poysonous words? courage of straw!
O desperate coward, wilt thou seeme bold, and
To thy foes and his (who made thee to stand
Sentinell in his worlds garrison) thus yeeld,
And for forbidden warres, leave th'appointed field?
Know thy foes, the foule Devill h'is, whom thou
Strivest to please: for hate, not love, would allow
Thee faine, his whole Realme to be quit...

These lines mock the would-be courtier, so concerned with the love and honor of his own lust and his lady, but not at all bothered by the consequences of his soul. A biographical reading would suggest, perhaps quite aptly, that these lines show Donne perhaps gazing back at his own experience with "forbidden warres" and the previous lusty nature of his poetry. Dating of this poem is uncertain, and some date it as late as second decade of the seventeenth century, leaving room for such a retrospective gaze's presence in the poem.

The poem's main satirical effect, and its main rejection of submission, comes from its rejection of all of the predominant religious movements of its day. In lamenting, "Seek true religion. O where?" Donne is offering a sort of *contempus mundi* in which he asserts the difficulty of finding true spiritual comfort and salvation given the corruption of the world. In the satire's world, a Catholic worships as he does "because he doth know/ That shee was there a thousand yeares agoe." Calvinists prefer a religion that is "plaine, simple, sullen, yong,/ Contemptuous, yet unhansome..." While Anglicans follow "lawes/ Still new like fashions..." Even Atheists and modern day Ecumenical worshippers are later labeled unsuitable. What rises out of the poem is a need for a unique and personal spiritual journey:

[5] "Goddesse" refers to the deification of the beloved often used in Petrarchan, submissive poetry. By using the term, Donne is cementing his rejection of courtly styles of address and compliment.

To'adore, or scorne an image, or protest,
May all be bad; doubt wisely, in strange way
To stand inquiring right, is not to stray;
To sleepe, or runne wrong is: on a huge hill,
Cragged, and steep, Truth stands, and hee that will
Reach her, about must, and about must goe;
And what the'hills suddennes resists, winne so;
Yet strive so, that before age, deaths twilight,
Thy Soule rest, for none can worke in that night.

The lines, "To'adore, or scorne an image, or protest,/ May all be bad..." shows a resistance to taking a clear position on the iconoclasm debate, a resistance, I believe, that gives the poem more of a personalized, and less officially Protestant, tone. Donne finds his own way, and in doing so, asserts his poetic and religious authority.

The fourth satire, though perhaps lacking the vast philosophical significance of the third satire, is still one of the most effective pieces of anti-court literature of the period, and marks one of the most eloquent assaults against submission in poetry. The beginning of the poem is delightfully sarcastic, changing in bitter ire for intense distaste, fuming anger for calculated satire:

Well; I may now receive, and die; My sinne
Indeed in great...

My minde, neither with prides itch, nor yet hath been
Poyson'd with love to see, or to bee seene,
I had no suit there, nor new suite to shew,
Yet went to Court...

The court becomes a place of sin, of corruption in the literal sense. Donne reveals his Catholic background in saying that one time in court can surely be just as damaging as one time at Mass: "...But as Glaze which did goe/ To'a Masse in jest, catch'd, was faine to disburse/ The hundred markes, which is the Statutes curse,/ Before he scapt; So'it pleas'd my destinie..." Donne's punishment for being with a Courtier is even worse,

involving a fine, but also the torment of having to keep the Courtier's company for longer than he wishes.

The language of the courtier is put, in many ways, in opposition to that of the poet. Where the poet by this stage of the satires has identified himself as a seeker of the genuine, the courtier is seen speaking in false, artificial language:

> ...yet I must be content
> With his tongue: in his tongue, call'd complement:
> In which he can win widdowes, and pay scores,
> Make men speake treason, cosen subtlest whores,
> Out-flatter favorites, or outlie either
> Jovius, or Surius, or bother together.

The deception and lack of depth found in the courtier's language is in direct opposition to that of the satirist, who has grander ideas in mind for his poetry:

> I shooke like a spyed Spie; Preachers which are
> Seas of Wits and Arts, you can, then dare,
> Drowne the sinnes of this place, for, for mee
> Which am but a scarce brooke, it enough shall bee
> To wash the staines away; though I yet
> With *Macchabees* modestie, the knowne merit
> Of my worke lessen: yet some wise man shall
> I hope, esteeme my writs Canonicall.

From these lines emerges a single poetic ego, unable to change society, but able to wash away the corruption from himself. The last lines speak not only about the satirical lessons but also about Donne's vision of his poetic future, perhaps able to be placed alongside the great poets of his day. Though the coterie tradition separated Donne from figures like Spenser and Drayton who widely published their works, manuscript circulation could still gain fame, as it did Sidney, whose *Astrophil and Stella* was published only posthumously. Donne establishes in these poems a voice over and against the court,

interested in serving only the personal needs of the individual poet, recording both current events and greater philosophical and religious longings.

If the satires represent Donne's critique of the socio-political world of a young Inns of Court Catholic, then the amatory poems represent a more mature and sophisticated attack on the world of courtly Petrarchism and its use of the submissive stance. Of all of Donne's writings the erotic and amatory poetry has been the cornerstone of his writing to modern readers, especially the poems' tensions with his later Divine Poetry. Donne's erotic and amatory verse is a layered creative process existing in two distinct categories: the erotic intended solely for coterie consumption, and the amatory intended for public performance, occasional publication, or posthumous publication. The use of the erotic elegy allowed for a misogynistic, almost pornographic assertion of the poet's power, drawn from literary tropes well known in the pornographic manuscripts circulation during Donne's time. The use of the lyric allowed Donne space to play the game of Spenser and Sidney while rejecting the submissive stance that, as the previous chapter has explored, dominated much of their work. To do what many scholars have done, and consider the whole of Donne's secular verse as coming from one varied, but unified voice, is helpful, but perhaps slightly misleading. For instance, a poem like "The Baite" which was published during Donne's lifetime in 1612 within the pages of William Corkine's *Second Book of Ayres,* could not be considered under the same historicized critical lens as a poem like "Loves Progress" that was not published until 1661, well after Donne's death. The erotic elegies and the *Songs and Sonets* are two branches of the same poetic mission: to assert the poet's voice against a courtly and literary culture that excludes him.

"To his Mistris Going to Bed" has, among the elegies, earned a lot of critical attention in recent years, mainly because of its provocative sexuality. Yet the poem is also one of Donne's strongest rejections of submission, as class differences drop away in the poem with the lady's clothes:

> If, as John Carey in his Oxford dissertation and Marotti in his recent book have argued, the lover is a poor but aspiring Inns-of-Court student and the lady a rich wife of the merchant class, then her much-desired stripping represents not only titillation of the reader but the divestiture of social barriers as well as clothes (Low 39).

Nakedness does indeed hold an exalted view in the poem as well as an opportunity for Donne to enjoy complete fulfillment, a joy rarely attained in more Petrarchan poetry:

> Full nakedness, all joyes are due to thee.
> As soules unbodied, bodies uncloth'd must bee
> To taste whole joyes.

Beyond nakedness, however, is the importance of pleasure, and, with it, the importance of fulfilling desires. My reading of the poem differs from many of the class-conscious readings in my assertion that the poem serves both to create a locus of class mobility (or a complete absence of class...in both senses).

In the poem, the poet also challenges English ideals about Paradise, asserting his own vision of heaven, one in which he is not only included, but perhaps the sole inhabitant. Donne as a Catholic, or at least a man of Catholic family origin, would have been placed in hell by the theology of the Protestants, but in this elegy, a new, carnal, and assured paradise is created in the sensuality of the poem's intercourse:

> ...Thou Angel bring'st with thee
> A heaven like Mahomets Paradise; and though
> Ill spirits walk in white, we easily know

By this these Angels from an evil sprite:
They set our haires, but there the flesh upright.

Donne manages to create a paradise "between the sheets" in which virtue is not found in the debates between Continental and British doctrines, but within well-understood sensuality:

Like pictures, or like bookes gay coverings made
For laymen, are all women thus arraid;
Themselves are mystique bookes, which only wee
Whom their imputed grace will dignify
Must see reveal'd. Then since I may knowe,
As liberally as to a midwife showe
Thy selfe...

Besides challenging ideals about religion, the poem's sensuality also attacks Petrarchan elevations of the courtly lady. Where most poets of the sixteenth century would be happy for simple reciprocated love, Donne demands to have the woman "as liberally as to a midwife showe" herself. Donne wants it all, sensually and religiously speaking, and in his own constructed and un-submissive world, he can have it.

In a similar vein, "Loves Progresse" serves to assert the phallic needs of the poetic persona, and in so doing mocks the courtly poetics of the age. Speaking against those who "doe not propose/ The right true end of love" and therefore are like those who go "to sea for nothing but to make him sicke," Donne proposes a sort of love that focuses on pleasure and unity of male and female, all spoken through intensely sensual metaphor. The salvation-through-intimacy *topos* is maintained in Donne's assertion that "Perfection is in unitie." Yet this poem is more "erotic" in the traditional sense, and, by that same token, more concerned with an attack on the Petrarchan court poetry of the day. The erotic, coterie-focused layer of the poem is a playful meditation on the vulva and on oral

sex, with vaginal terminology scattered throughout. The dedication to all things sexual is a deliberate opposition to the dishonest praises of courtly poets.

The poem is driven by a series of direct attacks on the lies of courtly poets. The move towards "the Centrique part" is, in many ways, a move towards an honest representation of male, misogynistic desire, a desire freed from the subjugation of a female Queen and free from the social pandering of court poets. Donne asserts the importance of acknowledging sexual desire in dialogues about love:

> ...Must I cool my blood
> Till I both bee, and find one, wise and good?
> May barren Angels love so: But if wee
> Make love to woman, Vertue is not shee,
> As Beauty's not, nor Wealth. Hee that strayes thus,
> From her to hers, is more adulterous

The mocking here is directed towards the courtly romantic poetry that praises woman's "vertue" and "beauty" to gain "wealth." The cooling of the blood is indicative of the speaker's having to separate his romantic/poetic strategies from legitimate sexual desire. The sort of "cleaned-up" censored love of advancement-seeking "barren angels" is very much the sort of poetry that the elegies and, to a less bombastic degree, the *Songs and Sonets* challenge.

The centrality of female genitalia in the poem also gives a window into its possible reception. Ian Frederick Moulton in his study *Before Pornography: Erotic Writing in Early Modern England* reminds readers of early modern English poetry that many of the poems we consider high art today would have been bound with bawdy and pornographic verse. Donne's poetry is obviously more complicated than a simple early modern autoerotic aid, yet pornographic verse was a significant genre in manuscript circulation in the Inns-of-Court and in the universities. Therefore, Donne and his

audiences would inevitably have been more than familiar with even bawdier verse forms than Donne's. This form of "pornographic-parody" in which outwardly sexual verse takes on both literary and social relevance is yet another assertion of a dominant poetic stance. Donne, in these poems, not only seeks pleasure in his own metaphorical world of eroticism, but uses his pleasure seeking as a way of making social and literary commentaries.

The Songs and Sonets are perhaps the most well known of Donne's works next to the Holy Sonnets. They represent small, polished poetic experiences that are directly in critical dialogue with the Petrarchan tradition and courtly culture, so much so that they are sometimes mislabeled as being themselves Petrarchan. I wish to show that the collection of poems represents, in many diverse forms, Donne's rejection of the submissive stance in the genre of submissive, Petrarchan poetry. Whereas the Elegy was a form well ostracized from poetic circles, and the Satire by nature a critical form, the love lyric was very much a popular form linked to a courtly coterie culture. As Donne's complete oeuvre shows, Donne never takes on a verse form without in some ways critiquing it.

Some of Donne's short lyrics appear to be extremely submissive and Petrarchan in nature. Two of these poems are "The Baite" and "The Good Morrow." However, I believe the relationship between the poetic persona and the lover in these poems reveals an avoidance, if not outright critique, of the submissive stance. Donne is not as obviously defiant in these two poems and the paradigms they represent, but this should not be confused for his following the line of courtly poetry. For instance, the Marlovian poem

"The Baite" begins with what would seem an entreating lover in the style of Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love":

> Come live with mee, and bee my love,
> And we will some new pleasures prove
> Of golden sands, and christall brookes,
> With silken lines, and silver hookes.

Though the first three lines are exemplary of a courtly, submissive pose, any such stance is quickly refuted with the absurdity of the fourth line. The ironic tone is quite different from Marlowe's original which critiques the pastoral mode as well, but not nearly as openly:

> Come live with me, and be my love,
> And we will all the pleasures prove,
> That valleys, groves, hills and fields,
> Woods or steepy mountain yields.
>
> And we will sit upon the rocks,
> Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks
> By shallow rivers, to whose falls
> Melodious birds sing madrigals.
>
> And I will make thee beds of roses,
> And a thousand fragrant posies,
> A cap of flowers and a kirtle
> Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle.

Donne's poem is focused far more on the actual act of pursuing a lover than on trying to do it himself. For instance, the poem's main focus is on the woman's ease at trapping men:

> Let others freeze with angling reeds,
> And cut their legges, with shells and weeds,
> Or treacherously poore fish beset,
> With strangling snare, or windowie net...
>
> For thee, thou needst no such deceit,
> For thou thy self art thine own bait,

That fish, that is not catch'd thereby,
Alas, is wiser farre then I.

Unlike Marlowe's poem, Donne's features a masculine speaker that seeks the woman's love only in the implications of the final line. The majority of the poem praises her ability to ensnare other men, an act on which the poet comments but cannot influence. The very fact that the lady is ensnaring men other than the speaker shows that she is untrue and inconstant, Donne's two major charges against women. This poem, which was set to music and published in 1612, was perhaps aimed at an audience interested in post-courtly poetics, an audience whose tastes had gone beyond the Petrarchan influences of the 1590s.

Similarly, "The Good-morrow" also uses many Petrarchan themes, yet as in "The Baite" the seemingly Petrarchan themes are used in a subversive way, seeking to expand upon the tradition of Sidney and Spenser. In the poem, the two lovers depend on each other for self-realization, placing the two lovers on equal, dependent planes:

I wonder by my troth, what thou, and I
Did, till we lov'd? were we not wean'd till then?
But suck'd on countrey pleasures, childishly?
Or snorted we i'the seaven sleepers den?
'Twas so; But this, all pleasures fancies bee.
If ever any beauty I did see,
Which I desir'd and got, 'twas but a dreame of thee.

A poetics of compliment emerges strongly in the poem through Donne's assertion that all beauty he has seen up until meeting her was "but a dreame of thee," the same sort of sentiment that arises in "Aire and Angels" when Donne asserts that "twice or thrice had I lov'd thee,/ Before I knew thy face or name." Yet what separates this poem from the vast body of courtly poetry is the symbiotic nature of the two lovers, who until realizing love

through one another, simply "suck'd on countrey pleasures" (a euphemism for unemotional sex). Unless they both love simultaneously, they shall never reach salvation:

> What ever dyes, was not mixt equally;
> If our two loves be one, or, thou and I
> Love so alike, that none doe slacken, none can die.

Once again a profane salvation through earthly love is preferred over religious controversy. In love, Donne is capable of giving compliment, but only when he may do so assertively while maintaining control of the poetic moment.

In "Withcraft by a picture," Donne critiques the legacy of Petrarchan meditations on the eye, the courtly lady's deadliest weapon, by finding a solution to the often described ocular conquest:

> I fixe mine eye on thine, and there
> Pitty my picture burning in thine eye,
> My picture drown'd in a transparent teare,
> When I look lower I espie;
> Hadst thou the wicked skill
> By pictures made and mard, to kill,
> How many wayes mightst thou performe thy will?
>
> But now I'have drunk thy sweet salt teares,
> And though thou poure more I'll depart;
> My picture vanish'd, vanish feares,
> That I can be endamag'd by that art;
> Though thou retaine of mee
> One picture more, yet that will bee,
> Being in thine own heart, from all malice free.

Distinguishing his poem from many by others which came before it, Donne not only makes the woman's eyes the locus for a seizure of independent will, but finds his way out of it through his own wit. The first stanza explains in detail the trap which has been lain. The lady's eyes capture his image and the speaker feels a sense of helplessness as he

observes his likeness drowned in her tears. The second stanza answers this challenge through the consumption of her tears followed by a quick retreat. Though his image may remain still in her heart, he compliments the woman's heart as being a place where his image may be held without malice: "One picture more, yet that will bee,/ Being in thine own heart, from all malice free."

Using a fiercer tone, "The Apparition" also rejects submission and shows a blunt anger reminiscent of some of Shakespeare's work. When Donne is hurt by a lady, he does not always complain passively or beg release. Sometimes, he gets revenge:

> When by thy scorne, O murdresse, I am dead,
> And that thou thinkst thee free
> From all solicitation from mee,
> Then shall my ghost come to thy bed,
> And thee, fain'd vestall, in worse armes shall see;
> Then thy sick taper will begin to winke,
> And he, whose thou art then, being tyr'd before,
> Will, if thou stirre, or pinch to wake him, thinke
> Thou call'st for more,
> And in false sleepe will from thee shrinke,
> And then poore Aspen wretch, neglected thou
> Bath'd in a cold quicksilver will lye
> A veryer ghost then I;
> What I will say, I will not tell thee now,
> Lest that preserve thee;'and since my love is spent,
> I'had rather thou shouldst painfully repent,
> Then by my threatnings rest still innocent.

The tone is colloquial, angry, and curt. The poem, unlike many of his others, does not depend on complex metaphors. Indeed, the poem is effective because of its raw and emotional nature. Elizabethan examples of this sort can be found in, say, some of Shakespeare of Marlowe's drama, but the tone is harsh for a lyric, especially during a decade when patronage was the driving force of much of lyric poetry. Donne speaks to

his lady with great anger and passion, not rebuking the lady pitifully or begging mercy. Donne demands for what other Elizabethan poets grovel.

As the politics of the period changed, so too did Donne's rejection of submission. As Elizabeth I's reign was showing signs of ending in the early seventeenth century, a Donne emerges that begins to write quite strongly against monarchy. Donne, seeing the end of an oppressive regime that excluded him, takes on a victorious tone. The two poems most exemplary of this stage of Donne's career are "The Anniversarie" and "Metempsycosis," Donne's mock-Spenserian epic. "The Anniversarie," like so many of the poems discussed above, mocks temporal power for the power of love:

> All Kings, and all their favorites,
> All glory'of honors, beauties, wits,
> The Sun it selfe, which makes times, as they passe,
> Is elder by a yeare, now, then it was
> When thou and I first one another saw:
> All other things to their destruction draw,
> Only our love hath no decay;
> This, no tomorrow hath, nor yesterday,
> Running it never runs from us away,
> But truly keepes his first, last, everlasting day.

The poem, which can be dated to 1602, one year after Donne's scandalous marriage to Ann More, like many of Donne's poems, places the lovers' relationship in a locus of power over the universe, time, and the monarchy. The use of microcosm completes the metaphorical rejection of temporal authority, asserting that the only true monarchy is the monarchy of the two lovers:

> And then wee shall be thoroughly blest,
> But wee no more, then all the rest.
> Here upon earth, we'are Kings, and none but wee
> Can be such Kings, nor of such subjects bee;
> Who is so safe as wee? Where none can doe
> Treason to us, except one of us two.

True and false feares let us refraine,
Let us love nobly,'and live, and adde againe
Yeares and yeares unto yeares, till we attaine
To write threescore: this is the second of our raigne.

The poem excludes all of the institutions that governed the composition of Elizabethan courtly verse: the monarchy, the English church, and the court. Donne challenges the monarchy not only of the center of the government, the Queen, but also of the center of the cosmos, the sun. He will continue this rejection of submission in one of his most famous poems, "The Sunne Rising."

In a similar move against submission, Donne's "The Sunne Rising" places Donne in a sensual microcosm of the world, above the authority of temporal power. The poem once again shows Donne manipulating reality and the expectations of love to glorify his lover, and, more specifically, his wit's ability to praise her, asserting through complex metaphors the centrality of their love in both the kingdom and the universe. At first, in the poem, Donne and his lover in bed are victims of the sun, unable to resist it:

Busie old foole, unruly Sunne
Why dost thou thus,
Through windowes, and through curtaines call on us?
Must to the motions lovers seasons run?

Donne then resists the constraint of the Sun:

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.

This is a typical Donne voice, an irreverent, arrogant speaker trying to create, with his wit, a place in which to find influence and power. Donne is not submissive, not even to the Sun.

Though this poem shares a lot of the irreverent proclamations of dominance that other poems in this chapter have considered, a new Donne is clearly emerging from the poem. The irreverence reminds the reader, once again, that Donne is going against the grain, rejecting the submissive stance of mainstream, Elizabethan poetics. A Donne arises that is not as interested in mocking the dominant social order and literary tastes of his day, but of glorifying himself within the greater context of political and religious personal searching. "The Sunne Rising" places Donne at the center of the universe because of his proximity to the greater-than-the-sun lady. Clear throughout, however, is Donne's implication that he shares this glory, and uses it to taunt the sun:

> Thy beames, so reverend, so strong
> Why shouldst thou thinke?
> I could eclipse and cloud them with a winke,
> But that I would not lose her sight so long:
> If her eyes have not blinded thine,
> Looke, and to morrow late, tell mee,
> Whether both the'India's of spice and Myne
> Be where thou leftst them, or lie here with mee.
> Aske for those Kings whom thou saw'st yesterday,
> And thou shalt heare, All here in one bed lay.

Donne's noted use of microcosm allows his speaker to assert that entire cosmos both geographically and politically lies in the locus of his lovemaking. This poem, like others by Donne, asserts not only a resistance to the *status quo*, but a justification of this resistance through a masterful use of wit. Donne is "cleaning up his act," so to speak: finding ways to justify himself to a new world order.

The polished, yet still critical, Donne emerges in his mock-epic. One of the more overlooked of Donne's poems, yet one that shows the real power of his witty flourishes, is his long poem "Metempsycosis" written in 1601. The poem is constructed in a canto

form using modified Spenserian stanzas. The opening mocks the *cano* beginning of Virgilian epic:

> 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.

The soul in the epic is un-"yoak'd" and travels with a sort of amoral passivity from the apple of Eden all the way to Themech, sister and wife of Cain, and most likely an allegory for Queen Elizabeth I. The passivity and flexibility of the soul has been used by Kenneth Gross as a possible explanation for the sometimes wild turns in the *Songs and Sonets*:

> Donne's account of this soul interests me because it provides a powerful opening analogy for the larger subject in this essay, that is, the spirit that animates the difficult texts of the Songs and Sonnets. The life of Donne's soul reminds us of the volatile gestural and conceptual drive of these poems—in their confrontations with change and contingency, in their ruthless toying with the language of magic, heresy, or sedition, in their complex shifts of partisanship (political, theological, erotic), in their movements between affection and aggression, hope and paranoia, between a remarkable sense of freedom and a sense of constraint, between a will to mastery and a chilling awareness of failure. That soul gives us an image of something that could tie together the often violently shifting passages from stanza to stanza in these lyrics, where the end of a poem seems often to forget its beginning. (373)

Though Gross's theory is fascinating and may lead to more rich studies of the sometimes volatile nature of the lyrics, I believe he overemphasizes the violence and volatility of the lyrics. Rather, by understanding both "Metempsycosis" and the shorter lyrics through a consideration of the literary and socio-political conversations in which they engage, a unified poetic emerges.

Despite the poem's strong indictment of submission and its critique of the poetry of compliment, no full and organic study of "Metempsycosis" exists in the Donne bibliography. A consideration of the last two stanzas of the poem, however, may establish the path future studies of the poem and of Donne's other works might take, a reading of the poem's main indictment of the Elizabethan culture about to come to an end, as well as asserting the poem's direct and didactic relationship with its reader:

> Another part became the well of sense,
> The tender well-arm'd feeling braine, from whence,
> Those sinowie strings which do our bodies tie,
> Are raveld out; and fast there by one end,
> Did this soule limbes, these limbes a soule attend;
> And now they joyn'd; keeping some quality
> Of every past shape, she knew treachery,
> Rapine, deceit, and lust, and ills enow
> To be a woman, *Themech* she is now,
> Sister and wife to *Caine*, *Caine* that first did plow.
>
> Who ere thou beest that read'st this sullen Writ,
> Which just so much courts thee, as thou dost it,
> Let me arrest thy thoughts; wonder with mee,
> Why plowing, building, ruling, and the rest,
> Or most of those arts, whence our lives 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.

Donne's morality, based on internal thought rather than external doctrine, emerges yet again in these lines, rejecting the call to virtue, and the temptation to satire, trusting only the wisdom of individual informed opinion. Donne seems aware of the glories of the age about to end, the scientific and political advances under Elizabeth I. Yet, Donne also is clear that these advances came with a cost, their root in sin and corruption, the very same sin and corruption Donne described in the satires. An older Donne has become less

unilaterally critical, yet the poem cements Donne's rejection of the submissive stance. "Metempsycosis," though rarely read today, was placed first in the 1633 edition of Donne's poetry, I believe as a testament to its relevance to a Caroline audience. The poem represents a Donne leaving the Elizabethan period about to put away the role of the excluded, bitter satirist. Written in 1601, the poem begins the decade that will see great changes in Donne's work and most likely his full-on conversion to conformity to the English church.

As the Jacobean era progressed and Donne began to question the inner workings of his faith, and his potential conversion to the Church of England, he wrote many divine poems. His approach to God is personal, erotic, and assured, allowing Donne to approach God on his own terms, knowing that he will receive what he asks for. Notably, his Holy Sonnet "Show me deare Christ, thy spouse, so bright and cleare," reveals a Donne invoking the true church through an assertive and witty poetic strategy. Donne is able to approach God, directly, and ask pivotal spiritual questions:

> Dwells she with us, or like adventuring knights
> First travaile we to seeke and then make love?
> Betray kind husband thy spouse to our sights,
> And let myne amorous soul courte thy mild Dove,
> Who is most trew, and pleasing to thee, then
> When she'is embrac'd and open to most men.

Underneath the strong religious yearning is the request for a husband to share his spouse, whom, paradoxically, he most loves when she is "open to most men." The poem shows, in this regard, traces of Donne's secular work and shows that when dealing with God,

though a new poetics is necessary, a submissive tone that would diminish the poet's voice would be unacceptable within Donne's poetic strategy. [6]

The most famous of the Holy Sonnets, "Batter my heart," is another bold invocation of God using an assertive voice. The poem becomes a critique of Petrarchism in its divine uses of sensual language. Donne, as Crashaw will do later, creates a poem in which the outcome of his supplication is, as in Petrarchist poetry, uncertain. Yet Donne's critique of submission demands that he know exactly the outcome of his desires. Donne knows he will be fulfilled. As Gardner writes:

> His language has the ring of a living voice, admonishing his own soul, expostulating with his Maker, defying Death, or pouring itself out in supplication. He creates, as much as in some of the *Songs and Sonnets*, the illusion of a present experience, throwing his stress on such words as 'now' and 'here' and 'this'...The plain unadorned speech, with its idiomatic turns, its rapid questions, its exclamatory Oh's and Ah's, wrests the movement of the sonnet to its own movement" (xxxi-xxxii).

"The illusion of a present experience" is a key concept that Gardner helpfully sets forth. Though Donne's poem reveals in profound poetic terms the anguish of a search for salvation, the actual composition of the poem shows a speaker who knows the result of the poem he has started, a poet knowing, that in the end, his wit will lead him to salvation, as the clever ending paradox is as much a testament to the poet's wit as the power of God to save: " Take mee to you, imprison mee, for I/ Except you'enthrall mee, never shall be free,/ Nor ever chast, except you ravish mee." Donne asserts the power of his wit, submissive to no courtly or religious uncertainty.

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[6] Maureen Sabine's work on this sonnet focuses on the loss of Marian devotion and the Saints' calendar in England. She, in the same mode as Carey, suggests that the poem bears painful memories of Donne's recusant past.

As Donne begins to approach the year of his ordination, he has undoubtedly begun to grasp the Protestant faith, and, thus, the speaker of one of his latest Divine Poems, "Goodfriday, 1613. Riding Westward," reveals a sort of confidence, even under the performance of submission to the divine. Submission, in this context, as in Crashaw, is a choice taken on—a mark of the freedom and brilliance to choose, and choose wisely. The poem rejects submission even while meditating upon the poet's own sinfulness and inferiority before God. As in "The Flea," Donne begins the poem by presenting an argument:

> Let mans Soule be a Spheare, and then, in this
> The'intelligence that moves, devotion is

Once again, the poet controls the poem's gaze, as Gardner suggests, not leaving time for meditation on images, but demanding submission from the reader. In an iconoclastic moment, he also refuses to submit to meditating on Christ himself:

> There I should see a Sunne, by rising set,
> And by that setting endlesse day beget;
> But that Christ on this Crosse, did rise and fall,
> Sinne had eternally benighted all.
> Yet dare I'almost be glad, I do not see
> That spectacle of too much weight for me.
> Who sees Gods face, that is selfe life, must dye;
> What a death were it then to see God dye?

Martz, in his classic reading of the poem, points to a sort of present iconoclasm against continental meditative practice: "He is thus refusing to perform the devotion proper to the day; he is refusing, that is, to *see* the place and participate in its agony as if he were 'really present'" (54). I would go even farther in suggesting that Donne is unwilling to perform the proper devotion because of how much it would obscure his poetic presence. The strong presence of "I" in the poem makes its true subject clear: Donne himself.

Maintaining control of both the poem's focus and its images demands that Donne not subjugate his voice to a single image. The poem centers, therefore, not on the image of Christ crucified, but rather on the thought process it inspires in Donne.

As this chapter has sought to demonstrate, Donne places his own wit in the center of his poems. He demands that his wit not only take on patrons, lust, and God, but also that his poetics be able to take on societal and spiritual complications. The complexity of Donne's poetry is rooted in his effort to think through the struggles that would have affected the courtier poet of his day. A consideration of the poems through the lens of Donne's poetic ego, an ego that refuses to take on stereotypical poetic roles even within the patroness-poet relationship itself, allows a coherent, and universally un-submissive Donne to emerge. Social context, explored through Donne's unique poetics, can open up the greater world of Donne's poetry.

I hope to have shown that though Donne's subject matter may have changed profoundly through the course of his life, one main poetic strategy is constant: the rejection of a submissive stance. Though with changing of regimes the exact rules of the game changed, and Donne became less of a Juvenalian satirist and more of a court theologian, the performance of his wit in the face of political and spiritual frustrations always placed Donne's poetic voice above whatever problems he may face. The stability of Donne's wit, from the early satires through the later Divine poems, is, above all things, a testament to the constant nature of Donne's poetic strategy and identity. When forced out of the court, Donne will punish it in verse. When entering into a new religion, he will perform the anguish and searching for all to see. No matter how grueling of frustrating

his world may become, Donne's wit is able to emerge autonomous and dominant, creating a poetic voice free from the constraints of the mainstream poetics of his day.

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Chapter 3: From Poet-Saint to Laudian: Bringing Crashaw back from Exile

O cruel fight where fighting friend
With love doth kill a favouring foe
Where peace with sense is war with God
And self-delight the seed of woe.

Dame Pleasure's drugs are steeped in sin:
Their sugared taste doth breed annoy.
O fickle sense, beware her gin,
Sell not thy soul for brittle joy!
—*Robert Southwell "Man's civil war"*

For being one of the least respected, least read, and least understood "metaphysical poets," Richard Crashaw (1612-1649) has had a huge amount of ink spilled about his life, poetry, and religious journey. Born the son of a violently Puritan minister who owned a large collection of Jesuitana (solely for polemical purposes), Crashaw may be the literary branch of the rebellious child archetype. He saw in the early years of his life the death of his mother, stepmother, and father. From then on, Crashaw, somewhat without a family in life, spent the rest of his life nurtured by various Laudian institutions. He wrote devotional poetry, as well as some secular exercises in translation, and to Catholics from his death to the present, served as a a Catholic alternative to the Protestant poetics so prevalent in Donne, Herbert, and Vaughan. Yet, Crashaw, being the provocative subject he is, has had much injustice done unto him by critics eager to either shut him out of the British canon with a continental, Italianate label, or to champion him for his religious background over his literary achievements. Either trap risks obscuring the very real intensity of his work as well as its clever assertion that submission to God, not to courtly powers, can actually result in profound power.

Having just read my assertion that John Donne carved out a unique poetics for himself through the rejection of the submissive stance, the reader might think it odd to move on to Crashaw, a poet so classically seen as being submissive, feminine, and meek. In fact, critics have delighted in writing on Crashaw because of how un-Donnean he really is. T.S. Eliot, who could take the credit for introducing these poets to the popular literary scene (even if he did so with hasty critical techniques), has passed down one of the classic distinctions between the two: "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). From these words, Crashaw's critical fate was cemented, a meek, religious, and obedient man whose thoughts are of God alone, based on feeling rather than intellect.

The mission of this chapter is not to champion Crashaw as a rival to Donne in the canon of seventeenth century literature. In terms of talent, intrigue, and general readability for the modern reader, Donne really does dominate Crashaw. Yet, for those interested more in the greater development of seventeenth century poetry and less in the tastes of the modern reader, Crashaw is a crucial subject. He is indeed a poet whose personae are meek before God, embodying at once High Church appreciations for the power of the word in prayer, and also the Ignatian principles of meditation and indifference. Yet it is their very meekness through which Crashaw's poetic voices find their triumphant, ecstatic poetic experiences. Though Crashaw's poetry enjoys none of the libertine bravado of Donne's secular poetry, nor the self-absorbed, desperate seeking

of Donne's divine poetry, Crashaw has found his God, has no need to seek for it, and, though he submits to the will of God, rejects the submissive Petrarchan stance with as much fortitude as Donne himself, replacing Penelope Rich with the Blessed Mother and foresaking the "Dark Lady" for Christ himself. Though Crashaw knows his place under God, he asserts his ability as a poet to describe not only Christian realities, but also the path to profound personal meditation. His longing can be satisfied through his own poetic imagination.

Crashaw's poetic role is one of an assured supplicant, a poet longing for a spiritual experience that he knows he can attain. Exploring this point, Anthony Low's study *The Reinvention of Love: Poetry, Politics and Culture from Sidney to Milton* offers some interesting observations on Crashaw's reworking of the Petrarchan stance:

> Crashaw's writings also reveal a strong bend not toward the poetry of desire but the poetry of pleasure, of enjoyment, and of delight...They revel in the simple gratification of the senses by what is presently in view, rather than in longing for something perfect, distant, esoteric, and unobtainable. (109)

The absence of longing is a crucial trait in Crashaw's poetry. A trait which, as Low suggests, marks Crashaw's work as "almost the opposite of most of his contemporaries" (113). Crashaw's voice, meek, sometimes feminine, is still a voice with its needs satisfied, a voice which suggests satisfaction and a love for spiritual fulfillment. Free of the Petrarchan strain which "really seeks frustration, disappointment, destruction of himself and others, and ultimately death" (108), Crashaw's poetry is able to speak of one who has found spiritual truth, an especially compelling action given the persecution of both Laudian and Catholic practices under the Puritan regime.

Crashaw's rejection of the Petrarchan stance is, predictably enough, rooted in a much different desire than Donne's. Where Donne seeks to establish a unique poetic voice, a voice independent from the submissive court culture from which he was excluded, Crashaw, born well after the golden age of court poetry, rejects the stance to support a new type of devotional poetry: one in which the ego of the poet is secondary to the divine object of the poem. The poet exists in a space outside courtly limitation and the hope for earthly reward; the poet speaks only to God and those seeking God, and knows his spiritual longing will be fulfilled. Crashaw, then, creates a self-effacing poetics of devotion that encourages the reader to follow the religious meditations of the poem rather than respect and admire the craft and ingenuity of the poet. The monarch of wit has become the monarch of prayer, leading the reader in a series of meditative poetic experiences.

If read in this light, Crashaw's spiritual excesses, strong belief, and deep devotional imagery can be seen not as the side effects of a sappy and God-obsessed mind, but a new poetics of devotion using sacred parody, the adaptation of amatory tropes to sacred ends, in the tradition of Southwell and others. The femininity, the focus on breast feeding and circumcision, and the emphasis on charity and meditation are all, I would argue, methods of challenging the poetics of Puritanism (with its focus on the Omnipotent) with a poetics concerned with the simplicity and peacefulness of charity, devotion, and maternal Love, as Martz writes: "So in the English literature of the seventeenth century, we see the emphasis on Charity producing the religious love lyric; while the emphasis on Omnipotence makes possible the creation of those two Puritan

epics in poetry and prose"(167).[7] The focus on love allowed Crashaw space to rebel against the courtly aesthetic flooding the literature of the previous generation. While Puritan epic sought to catechize through allusions to authority, Crashaw catechizes through an appeal to love and an end to spiritual seeking. Even beyond Martz's point, this choice is not a simple literary challenge between two modes of expression. Crashaw's devotional mode is a challenge to biblical poetics while emphasizing the importance of scripture, a challenge against the exclusion of Ignatian techniques, yet the creation of a unique aesthetic rooted in the legacy of Elizabethan poetry even while rebelling against it. Crashaw is, in many ways, as was Southwell before him, a translator and collaborator between the continental influences leaking into England and the unique British literary heritage into which both were born.

Submission is one of the unifying themes of Crashaw's poetry, but the submissive stance of Crashaw's characters, whether it be of the poet himself, the Virgin Mary, or Christ crucified, is radically transformed in his work. It is through submission that Crashaw's personae gain their power, and it is through meekness, he argues, that one truly finds poetic and spiritual autonomy. Petrarchism works in much the same way, but for Crashaw the emphasis on reward is taken to a divine level—the submissive supplicant is empowered by God, not left to wonder whether his suit will be granted. I wish to suggest that Crashaw's art is one which seeks to carve out space for a new poetics between secular and submissive courtly poetry and the glory driven puritan interests. His work is poetry of Christian ecstasy, glorifying the poetic voice even while placing it prostrate before God.

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[7] Referring to Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

Crashaw began to articulate this unique poetics in his epigrams, the earliest of his poetic work. At Charterhouse, where Crashaw completed his initial schooling, students were obliged to compose Latin and Greek epigrams on biblical topics. This practice is undoubtedly the root work of Crashaw's greater collection. Yet, the epigrams are evidence of much more. They show Crashaw adapting a genre often used for satirical and experimental purposes. Crashaw's epigrams reveal a mind seeking to explore the situational reality of biblical texts, a strategy informed by Ignatian meditation. In regards to the submissive stance, Crashaw's role as poetic creator, poetic genius allows him to create spiritual imagery and reality, and to serve, as Herbert did, as a poetic catechist.

Crashaw was in dialogue with a long epigrammatic tradition. The writing of epigrams was not an odd act for a poet of the late Renaissance. Donne and Jonson both wrote many themselves. Yet, the way in which Crashaw uses the art form is unique in terms of the other great seventeenth century poets of the day. For Crashaw, the epigram is a way to meditate upon scriptural themes, indeed, to participate in the Ignatian meditative strategy of placing one's self "into" a biblical story. The idea of a biblical poetics uniting much of the poetry of the seventeenth century stems mainly from the work of Barabara Lewalski, who offers a poetic fascination with the bible as a counter-point to much of Louis Martz's work: "Martz has forged numerous links connecting major seventeenth-century poets with Counter Reformation and medieval meditative tracts and traditions, but without much consideration of this developing indigenous Protestant tradition"(147). The indigenous Protestant tradition of which Lewalski speaks seems to leave out Crashaw: "Crashaw writes out of a very different aesthetics emanating from Trent and

the continental Counter Reformation, which stresses sensory stimulation and church ritual (rather than scripture) as means to devotion and to mystical transcendence"(12).

Recent critics, principal among them R.V. Young Jr., have begun to challenge this exclusion. Young argues that the use of the bible as both scripture and poetry was not uniquely a Protestant poetic strategy: "An examination of continental literature in the era of the Counter-Reformation...reveals a distinct Catholic interest in the Bible as a literary work and model; and this interest bore fruit in England in the poetry of Richard Crashaw"(30). Young's perceptive work, so often illuminating the importance of continental texts in Crashaw's oeuvre, still seems to place the locus of Crashaw's literary heritage outside of England. The epigrams are, rather, commenting directly on the link between literature and prayer, showing how a poet can add to the body of spiritually relevant and enhancing texts. In using the epigram as a spiritual tool, Crashaw is rejecting the literary mode of Donne and Jonson, even as he rejects the submissive stance. Crashaw's poetic vision, though based on God, is still rooted in the authority of his own poetic and meditative exercise.

To understand Crashaw's rejection of the courtly epigram we have to consider his two models. Ben Jonson (1572-1637) and John Donne (1572-1631) were not only temporal contemporaries but poetic ones as well, running through many of the same witty routes. Though Donne's voice may have surpassed Jonson's, Jonson's influence permeates Donne's poetry. One of Jonson's great non-dramatic achievements was the composition of his series of Epigrams. Though Donne's collection is perhaps a less significant part of his greater body of work, his epigrams still are an important aspect of his poetic evolution, experimenting towards a unique poetic voice. Jonson's epigrams

showcase a wit concerned with the state of English literature and his place in the canon.

He praises the poet king, James I:

> How, best of kings, dost thou a sceptre bear!
> How, best of poets, dost thou laurel wear!
> But two things, rare, the Fates had in their store,
> And gave thee both, to show they could no more.

He also praises his fellow poet, John Donne:

> Donne, the delight of Phoebus, and each muse,
> Who, to thy one, all other brains refuse;
> Whose every work, of thy most early wit,
> Came forth example, and remains so, yet:
> Longer a-knowing, than most wits do live,
> And which no affection praise enough can give!

Jonson also works beyond these panegyrics and writes many witty and raucous lines:

> *On Old Colt*
>
> For all night sins, with others' wives, unknown
> Colt, now, doth daily penance in his own

and with lines that reveal a personal struggle to come into poetic confidence:

> *To the Ghost of Martial*
>
> Martial, thou gav'st far nobler epigrams
> To thy Domitian, than I can my James:
> But in my royal subject I pass thee,
> Thou flatterd'st thine, mine cannot flattered be.

This wide array of feelings and the general secular nature of these epigrams places them within the greater epigram tradition at the time, the one in which Donne also participated.

For all of these poets, the epigram was used as a sort of poetic training ground to test out one's wit, and explore poetic responses to classical models. Donne's epigrams are no exception. They take on classical themes and express them with Donne's classic wit:

> *Pyramus and Thisbe*

Two, by themselves, each other, love and feare
Slaine, cruell friends, by parting have joyn'd here.

Hero and Leander

Both rob'd of aire, we both lye in one ground,
Both whom one fire had burnt, one water drownd.

The straightforward paradoxes, the well-known themes, and the kind of juvenile smirk that pervades the tone of these short poems all reveal a poet in training to become a great wit. Both Jonson and Donne's epigrams show the evolution of a poet interested in exploring wordplay, classical themes, and paradox to create a unique poetic voice, and seek out recognition as such.[8]

In Crashaw, however, a different voice emerges. The epigrams are in Latin and reflect exclusively scriptural themes. Yet, these epigrams do not function as mere retellings of scripture. They place the writer as an observer and commentator of scriptural events, giving advice to those involved, and praising God all the while. The playful twists on classical themes become, here, a solemn, catechizing voice. A unique and distinct poetics, rooted in both biblical and meditative influences, emerges from the commentaries:

Christus ad Thomam

Saeva fides! Voluisse meos tractare Dolores?
Crudeles digiti! Sic didicisse Deum?

Vulnera, ne dubites, vis tangere nostra: sed eheu
Vulnera, dum dubitas, tu graviora facis.

[O harsh faith! Did you wish to prolong my sorrows?
O cruel fingers! Have you discovered God in this way?

[8] Richard Helgerson's *Self-Crowned Laureates* gives an excellent treatment of this thesis as it relates to Jonson.

You wish to touch my wounds lest you doubt, but alas,
You make those wounds worse while you doubt!][9]

This epigram, which explores the words of Christ in response to Thomas' doubts, is driven by the exploration into the details of the apostle's need for proof. The "crudeles digiti" which must probe the wound represent a great pain of doubt, and show the importance of faith. Despite the strong religious tone present in the epigram, and the undoubtedly devotional motives behind its composition, the persona present in the poem is one guiding and commenting, not wavering and seeking. Crashaw's admonishing of Thomas resounds as a powerful assertion of Crashaw's vision of faith.

Easily the most famous epigram, "Mulier Canaanitis" shows Crashaw's feminine vision of faith. The poem shows an appreciation for feminine, meek styles of prayer, shown to be powerful through their meek and passive nature:

Quicquid Amazoniis dedit olim fama puellis,
Credite: Amazoniam cernimos ecce fidem.

Foemina, tam fortis fidei? Iam credo fidem esse
Plus quam grammatice foeminei generis.

[Whatever the old legend said about the Amazon girls,
Believe it: lo you see Amazonian faith.

A woman, and of such strong faith? Now I believe that faith is
More than just grammatically of the feminine gender.]

The combination of the secular, and erotic, theme of the Amazonian women with the debate over the gender of faith, is striking. Rather than sexually dominant, as the real Amazons, they are shown to be prayerfully dominant. No doubt influenced by the wide array of female saints and mystics whose prayerful presence was prevalent at the time

[9] George Walton Williams' translation is used here, as with all translations from the epigrams in this chapter.

such as Santa Teresa, Blessed Isabelle, The Virgin Mary, and others, the poem justifies and exalts the strength of feminine faith.

The use of feminine tropes allowed Crashaw a deeper critique of Elizabethan masculine poetics, and rebelled against the rough exclusion of feminine faith practices, which for many years were ostracized to the margins of culture. Crashaw was able to use his Laudian influences to reject the previous generation of poet's discourse of femininity, giving the feminine power not through deception, but through prayer. The most compelling exploration of feminine faith in Crashaw is provided by Maureen Sabine's seminal work *Feminine Engendered Faith: The Poetry of John Donne and Richard Crashaw*. In this study, Sabine, among her many accomplishments, links Crashaw to a feminine mystical tradition: "In his craving to recover the child's sense of undifferentiated oneness with the mother and so begin again to understand the all-enveloping love of divinity, Crashaw drew upon the legacy of earlier female mystics like Julian of Norwich"(118). By focusing on and praising feminine mystics, Crashaw draws from a literary wellspring outside of Petrarchism. The feminine style of meditation, centered on images of breast-feeding, maternal nurturing, etc, has a large presence in Crashaw's poetry:

> Suppose he had been Tables at thy Teates,
> Thy hunger feels not what he eates:
> Hee'l have his Teat e'er long (a bloody one)
> The Mother then must suck the Son.

Thomas F. Healy has linked this sort of poetics with a medieval devotional precedent: "Crashaw's image, however, is not of his own devising but has its origins in the medieval conception of Christ as mother. Margery Kempe, for instance, announces that she will

'sowkyn euyn on Chrystys breast,' a desire readily found among medieval saints, including Catherine of Siena"(49-50). By linking Crashaw to both Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe, two English devotional writers, Healy reveals a Crashaw able to toe the line, as earlier writers were able, between England and the continent.

The enterprise of the epigrams, so full as they are of feminine references to faith, scriptural devotions, and neo-latin poetic techniques, is to propose a poetics that is free from the masculine focus on power so prevalent in Puritan poetics, and yet British enough to not simply be continental translations. They also show a poetic mind interested in teaching rather than showing off cleverness as in Donne and Jonson. The Latin text, though detracting from the unique "Britishness" of the works, does give the poems an elevation and universality, lifting the texts above the more playful epigrams of Donne, Jonson, and others, who followed Martial far closer than did Crashaw. The choice of language also indicates the poet's alignment to Laudian thinking, which saw transcendence and real spiritual worth in some of the lofty linguistic practices of their Catholic heritage. These poems are the work of a youthful and developing poet. Their roots in school exercises represent the early formation of Crashaw's voice, a voice secure in the reciprocated love of God. Crashaw's voice is not the seeker that Clutterbuck found in Donne's poetry, and the satisfaction of a poetic persona resting comfortable in meditation of God is beyond continental. It is a revolutionary poetic move, championing Laudian tenets above the impending brutality of the Puritan regime. Not only does Crashaw reject Petrarch and the "truant pens" of earlier poets, he rejects the swords and iconoclastic axes of the Parliamentary army as well. The short, emphatic work in the

epigram is shown out at length, and in great meditative detail, in the longer lyrics, works which explore, in meditative contexts, various aspects of Christian devotion.

Crashaw wrote most of his poetry before 1645, the year he appears to have converted to Roman Catholicism. That means, contrary to many assumptions, he composed the bulk of his English poetry while a conformist in England. Crashaw's poetics, like Laud's religious doctrine, was a *via media* between Protestant and Catholic worlds. And if we approach Crashaw's poetics as a translation of Catholic Reformation personalities, practices, and devotions into a British and Laudian reality, we can avoid exiling Crashaw to the Island of Excess. In Crashaw rises a poet who is fascinated with ecstasy, transcendence, and the power of meditation, but also a poet in dialogue with the Elizabethan legacy. The relationship with women and pleasure, the great and explored relationship of Elizabethan poetry, will be cast into a new light, where the meek, rather than the deceptive and dominating, are made powerful through strong meditation and trust.

The importance of prayerful and ascetic living also fascinated Crashaw and informed his poetics. Crashaw most likely describes Little Gidding, a "religious house" intended for meditation and contemplation within Protestant England, in his poem "Description of a Religious House and Condition of Life":

> Our lodgings hard and homely as our fare.
> That chaste and cheap, as the few clothes we wear.
> Those, course and negligent, as the natural locks
> Of these loose grooves, rough as th'unpolisht rocks.
> A hasty portion of prescribed sleep;
> Obedient slumbers? That can wake and weep,
> And sing, and sigh, and work, and sleep again;

This description of a religious house reveals the crux of Crashaw's poetics: a devotion to form and a deep respect for the spiritual strength of weeping. Crashaw, a student in many ways of George Herbert, goes beyond Herbert's claim to reject "office, art, or news," and rejects seemingly every comfort. Though the tone of the poem is, seemingly, submissive, the focus of the poem is on the spiritual strength of those who follow the rigid lifestyle. Crashaw's readers would have known this lifestyle was a choice, and a choice that indicated strong meditative strength, and the authority to catechize, to teach the reader through example. This, and other of Crashaw's poems, seeks to do exactly this.

As I said above, Crashaw's poetry reveals a strong devotion to worship and the power of love and weeping. Crashaw's poem "The Weeper" has received a disproportionate amount of critical attention,[10] which has been one of the main reasons why Crashaw's poetry as a whole has been treated as the work of "a metaphysical poet manqué"(Young 8). Yet the poem, as a historical artifact, reveals Crashaw's strong relationship to saintly devotion and pre-reformation ideals of worship:

> Hail sister springs,
> Parents of silver-footed rills!
> Ever bubbling things!
> Thawing crystal! Snowy hills!
> Still spending, never spent; I mean
> Thy fair eyes, sweet Magdalene.
> (1-6)

[10] As R.V Young laments in his study *Richard Crashaw and the Spanish Golden Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982): "The weeper has too great a place in Crashavian studies." (2).

In these opening lines, one can see the influence of Donne in the poem's use of microcosm, expanding the tears to include vast realities. Yet, Crashaw's poetics is one of private and yet universally applicable devotion. That is, a poetics of praise that can be used by others, poems that may be prayed not just by the poet. Crashaw's poetics, therefore, is not only concerned with the creation of a voice beyond what came before, but also providing spiritually enriching texts. The poem is able to be both pleasing in a literary sense, but also in a prayerful sense, praising not a socio-politically contextualized courtly lady, but a universal and transcendent spiritual entity.

The description of eyes that weep for love and devotion rejects previous descriptions of a lady's eyes. The image of a lady's eyes is a tradition that goes back, most notably in Renaissance poetics, to Petrarch's *Canzoniere*,[11] and was channeled to Crashaw through Spenser, Donne, and others. The hyperbole aimed towards "sweet Magdalene" is similar to one that would be used to a lover, especially praising how exalted she is in heaven (a trope used often in earlier Renaissance poetry), yet her eyes inspire rather than ensnare:

> Upwards thou dost weep,
> Heaven's bosom drinks the gentle stream.
> Where th'milky rivers meet,
> Thine Crawls above and is the Cream.
> Heaven, of such fair floods as this,
> Heaven the Crystal Ocean is
>
> Every morn from hence,
> A brisk Cherub something sips
> Whose soft influence
> Adds sweetness to his sweetest lips.

[11] For instance the lines: "Così costei, ch'è tra le donne un sole,/ in me movendo de' begli occhi i rai/ cria d'amor penseri atti et parole:/ ma come ch'ella gli governi o volga/ primavera per me pur non è mai."

Then to his Music, and his song
Tastes of this breakfast all day long.
(19-30)

These lines are so notable because of how they highlight Crashaw's sensual, and yet religious, poetics. Her tears are seen as being desirable to Heaven while being a near-sexual source of inspiration to the Cherubs. The religiosity of the tears, therefore, is combined with an artistic potency ("Whose soft influence/ Adds sweetness to his sweetest lips."). The tears encounter divinities concerned both with the secular aims of poem making and the divine work of an angel. What fails about the poem is its incredibly hyperbolic nature, a flourishing poetic which blurs the seriousness of its attempted devotion. When being inextricably bound to the poetry of Herbert or Donne, Crashaw's poems can't help but seem inferior. As Young writes: "To treat Crashaw as a Metaphysical poet is to assume that he is imitating Donne and Herbert rather badly. (9)" Yet Crashaw is not trying to imitate Donne or Herbert. He is seeking to respond to their poetics with a sensitivity to both continental and British literary tradition.

He continues to adopt previous conventions when he echoes Donne's poetry, using its conventions while reforming it for a more sacred end. For instance, the following lines from Crashaw's "On a Prayer Book Sent to Mrs. M.R." echo Donne's "The Sunne Rising" in which the aubade tradition is strategically transformed:

O fair! O fortunate! O rich! O dear!
O happy and thrice happy she
Dear silver breasted dove
Whoe'er she be,
Whose early Love
With winged vows,
Makes haste to meet her morning spouse:
And close with his immortal kisses.

Happy soul who never misses,
To improve that precious hour:
And every day,
Seize her sweet prey;
All fresh and fragrant as he rises,
Dropping with a balmy show'r
A delicious dew of spices.

In Donne's use of the Ovidian technique the lovers' bed becomes the locus amoenus, the place of paradise. In Crashaw's poem, however, the rising to meet the day is the moment of love, and the kisses have been transformed from a nocturnal act of passion to a daily practice of devotion. These lines, in many ways imagining the soul's pursuit of God, show a transformation of seductive language in order to show Man's longing for God. This is shown, with a profoundly more dominating poetic ego, in Donne's Holy Sonnets and much of the *Songs and Sonets* as well. For Crashaw the gentility and safety of the experience of admiration shows how a dialogue of seeking and longing need not depend on the game of submission and dominance played in Petrarchan discourse.

To this end, Crashaw chooses The Virgin Mary as his transformed courtly lady, similar to (though for different reasons) the way Sidney used Queen Elizabeth I. The Virgin Mary's impact on Renaissance poetry has interested scholars for many decades now. Laudian spiritual interests, combined with Continental spiritual practices, no doubt provided Crashaw with ample Marian material from which to craft the celebrated poem "Sancta Maria Dolorum." The poem is based on the Latin *devout plainsong* "Stabat mater dolorosa" and is significant to Crashavian studies because of the way it champions not only Marian devotion but also the poetic ego, the emerging voice fully in control of the spiritual intercourse. The development of a poetic ego in the face of a supposedly self-effacing spiritual act is reminiscent of Donne's "Good Friday, 1613. Riding Westward."

In many ways the poem serves as an extension, and perhaps correction, of Donne's mission to assert a strong and deliberate poetic voice in the face of intense spiritual devotion.

Crashaw provides in this poem his most striking assertion of passive power—the strength derived from meek adoration, and from spiritually rewarding suffering. Unlike the fickle pains of Petrarchan love, a real purifying pain emerges from this poem. In addition, Crashaw answers Donne's inability to look upon Christ's grieving mother. In Donne's poem, the poet is unable to look upon the sad sight of Mary grieving: "If on these things I durst not looke, durst I/ Upon his miserable mother cast mine eye,/ Who was Gods partner here, and furnish'd thus/ Halfe of that Sacrifice which ransom'd us?" Though Donne is able to recognize the importance of Mary in the scene of the crucifixion, he is unable to meditate fully upon the image, an image which Crashaw engages from the beginning of his poem:

> In shade of death's sad TREE
> Stood Dolefull SHEE.
> Ah SHE! Now by none other
> Name to be known, alas, but SORROW'S MOTHER
> Before her eyes
> Her's, and the whole world's joyes,
> Hanging all torn she sees; and in his woes
> And Paines, her Pangs and throes.
> Each wound of His, from every Part,
> All, more at home in her own heart.

The role of Mary as intercessor between humanity and God is upheld in her joy's co-existence with "the whole world's joyes." Even more significant in the poem is how the focus is not on the suffering of Christ and the importance of the Crucifixion, but rather on how the Crucifixion affects the relationship between divine mother and divine son. The

bold, Christ-centered lines of Donne[12] are replaced with a feminized poetics of faith. As Maureen Sabine writes: "In looking at the Crucifixion from an unexpected, maternal perspective, Crashaw was further exploring the feminine character of suffering which he connected to the quiet sacrifices not only of childbearing and home life but of the 'man of sorrows' hanging submissively on the Cross"(172). Sabine, therefore, argues that Crashaw is involved in a dialogue about strong faith in the submissive stance.

Though the stance, visually, may indeed be submissive, the role of spiritual intercourse through active suffering is so strong in Crashaw's poetry that the exalted submissive roles can hardly even be called submissive. The act of kneeling before God is done willingly and results, in Crashaw's view, from a strong spiritual and poetic core. There is no need to flatter, no need to rebel. To this end, in "Sancta Maria Dolorum" Crashaw uses the dialogue between tears and blood, as well as between family and divine relationship, as his main poetic device throughout the poem. As the poem's two central images, their interplay reveals a dialogue between the feminine and masculine, the personal and the grand, and, I would argue, Continental and Protestant meditative strategies. Eugene R. Cunnar's historicist reading sees, quite usefully, a Laudian agenda in the poem: "In particular, the poem reflects a thorough knowledge of the theology and iconographical controversy over the problem of "lo spasimo," or the Virgin's swoon under the cross and her subsequent role in salvation. Crashaw carefully structures his poem to reveal a theological position on Mary that emphasizes her intercessory and co-redemptive roles in salvation. Additionally, the poet emphasizes the importance of

[12] For instance: "But that Christ on this Crosse, did rise and fall,/ Sinne had eternally benighted all." Or "Could I behold those hands which span the Poles, / And tune all spheares at once peirc'd with those holes?"

feminine principles in the salvific process"(101-102). Where the Elizabethan aesthetic demanded a sort of veiled misogyny and sexual potency, the Crashavian aesthetic demanded exactly the opposite. For instance, the swoon, itself a gesture known both in profane and sacred discourse, is a submissive action, yet made in Crashaw's poetry an act of intense spiritual power and significance in salvation history.

Crashaw's use of sacred parody allowed Crashaw to polish religious verse into high poetic art, capable of competing with and criticizing the poetry of his day. For instance, his adaptation of "Stabat mater dolorosa" reveals his interest in diagramming profound spiritual moments while polishing and intensifying their imagery and tone. The prayerful lines in which the poet asks to be taught to weep like the blessed mother are somewhat flat in the original Latin:

> Eia mater, fons amoris,
> Me sentire vim doloris
> Fac, ut tecum lugeam.
> Fac, ut ardeat cor meum
> In amando Christum deum,
> Et sibi complaceam.

While the English lines are full of Crashaw's signature emotional flourish:

> O Mother turtle-dove!
> Soft sourse of love
> That these dry lidds might borrow
> Something from thy full Seas of sorrow!
> Oh in that breast
> O thine (the noblest nest
> Both of love's fires and flouds) might I recline
> This hard, cold, Heart of mine!
> The chill lump would relent, and prove
> Soft subject for the seige of love.

The intensity of the Marian experience mixes with the poet's intense desire to feel the transforming power of Mary's sadness to form a quite radical spiritual poetic gesture. The

three closing lines are reminiscent of Donne's poet's calling out for a similar siege of love ("I, like an usurpt towne, to'another due,/ Labour to'admit you, but Oh, to no end..."). Once again, however, Crashaw has taken Donne's paradigm and shifted it towards a feminine, Marian angle to emphasize the spiritual strength present in "meek" feminine devotion. Yet, like Donne, Crashaw tries to impress, asserting, through his unique poetry (poetry unlike much of that available at the time), a distinct place for himself in British letters.

A continental link between prayer and poetry came in Saint Teresa de Avila, a Carmelite nun whose poetry often approached God in sexual terms. Though Crashaw, for a number of reasons this chapter has insufficient length to address, never engages in the same erotic conversation with God, he does alter the poetry of praise, of courtly compliment, to praise key women in the body of Christian imagery and literature. As we saw with "The Weeper," a poem dedicated to Mary Magdalene, and "Sancta Maria Dolorum," dedicated to the Virgin Mary, Crashaw praises these women as the apotheosis of virtue and godliness. This is not, in itself, unlike the sort of work done by Spenser or Sidney. Yet for what the women are praised, and the assertive tone Crashaw takes in praising them, places his poetry outside of a courtly aesthetic. In approaching Saint Teresa, Crashaw is able to praise her in non-sexual terms, rejecting the socio-politically motivated poets of the previous generation through a language of praise that transcends considerations of earthly pleasure.

In many ways, Crashaw, in his role as catechist, upholds Teresa as an example of right living. He entitled his final version of his ode to her "A HYMN TO THE NAME AND HONOR OF THE ADMIRABLE SAINT TERESA, Foundress of the Reformation

of the Discalced Carmelites , both men and women; a Woman for Angelical height of speculation, for Masculine courage of performance, more then a woman. Who yet a child outran maturity, and durst plot a Martyrdom." This marathon title reveals a respect for her founding of a religious order and praise for her early desire for martyrdom. This title, published in Paris in 1652, differs from the original 1646 title, "In memory OF THE VIRTUOUS AND LEARNED LADY MADRE DE TERESA THAT SOUGHT AN EARLY MARTYRDOM." It is likely that Crashaw's Catholicism, far more cemented towards the end of his life than in 1646, led him to choose a title more endorsing of Catholic Reformation principles then his earlier Laudian title. Either way, both poems reflect his dedication to principles found in both Laudianism and Catholic Reformation thinking, as the study of his Teresan poem below will reveal. It is, I would argue, this strong dedication to restraint and self-effacing prayer that place Crashaw below the other "metaphysicals" in the eyes of critics.

Crashaw's poem to Saint Teresa, the most notable if not the most successful of his poems, is one of the clearest indicators of Crashaw's view on martyrdom and the importance of love. Love is championed from the very beginning of the poem:

> Love, thou art Absolute sole lord
> Of *Life* and *Death*. To prove the word,
> We'll now appeal to none of all
> Those thy old Soldiers, Great and tall,
> Ripe Men of Martyrdom, that could reach down
> With strong arms, their triumphant crown;...
>
> Scarce has she learnt to lisp the name
> Of Martyr; yet she thinks it shame
> Life should so long play with that breath
> Which spent can buy so brave a death.
> She never undertook to know
> What death with love should have to do;
> Nor has she ere yet understood

Why to show love, she should shed blood
Yet though she cannot tell you why,
She can *Love*, and she can *Die*.

Crashaw wildly glorifies martyrdom and early death[13]. Beyond this, the poem champions a sort of blind obedience to God, being willing to die for your faith while never really knowing exactly why "she can love, and she can die." As the poem continues Teresa is called back from martyrdom:

Sweet, not so fast! Lo thy fair Spouse
Whom thou seek'st with so swift vows,
Calls thee back, and bids thee come
T'embrace a milder *Martyrdom*.

Again the romantic term "sweet" and the spousal language used suggests Romance as a way of showing a reformed poetic, freeing itself from the sinful, shallow uses of romance in earlier Renaissance poetry. Text becomes a way of reaching God, as both Crashaw's poem itself is meant to do and Teresa's writings themselves. Crashaw praises Teresa's writings' link to God:

Those rare *Works* where thou shalt leave writ,
Love's noble history, with wit
Taught thee by none but him, while here
They feed our souls, shall clothe *Thine* there.

The words which enrich the souls of everyday man shall clothe Teresa in heaven in Crashaw's vision. Just as his "learned leaves" could reform Religion and invoke Charity, so too do these words enhance Teresa's power and Crashaw's own power. As Treviño Benet writes: "With the magnification of Teresa's verbal and written witness, Crashaw elevates her almost to the level of her spouse...the power Crashaw attributes to the written

[13] This theme is continued in many of his sacred epigrams on the infant martyrs.

word could hardly be greater. (143)" Indeed the written word as way to God, indeed, as way to Charity, is one of Crashaw's main religious points.

Crashaw later in the collection apologizes for the hymn to St. Teresa, an apology which allows for a glimpse into Crashaw's nationalism and his continued rejection of the submissive stance. The title of the apology as it was printed in Paris in 1652 some three years after Crashaw's death is "An Apology for the Foregoing Hymn as having been writ when the author was yet among the protestants." Crashaw, perhaps writing the original poem as early as the 1630s, would have risked offending many of his readers by praising a former citizen of Spain. Yet, Crashaw seeks to allay these concerns in the apology poem by claiming that baptism dissolves nationality:

> Forbid it, mighty Love! Let no fond Hate
> Of names and words so far prejudicate.
> Souls are not *Spaniards* too, one friendly flood
> Of *Baptism* blends them all into a blood.
> *Christ's* faith makes but one body of all souls
> And love's that body's soul...

Once again, Crashaw presents an inclusive vision of Christianity, wrapped up in a profoundly conciliatory tone.

The apology suggests that the taboo of mentioning Spain is perhaps not primarily based in religion, but rather political rivalry. Crashaw was a great patriot of Britain, writing a poem against the Gunpowder Plot, and writing many panegyrics to Charles I, to Queen Henrietta Maria, and for the births of all of their children. Crashaw even spent the last days of his life in Paris where an exiled Queen Henrietta Maria held court. Crashaw's allegiance to Britain transcended in many ways its political situation, and most historians and critics think that Crashaw's conversion to Catholicism was more a move against the Puritans' aggression than a deeply held calling. Crashaw's spirituality was indeed one

based in the Laudian *via media*, and though Crashaw's poetries and pieties reflect Catholic Reformation writings, they are, as I hope to have shown, deeply in dialogue with the British Literary tradition. Furthermore, they continue the mission that Donne espoused, a mission of rejecting submission and (as in Donne's later works) the typical Petrarchan archetypes and poetic stances. Crashaw should be read by scholars not as a meek and asexual devotional poet, but as a poet seeking to expand the limits of devotional poetry, to speak of longing for God while fully convinced one shall experience God. This critical approach allows for a complete Crashaw, one free to experiment with Catholicism, High Anglicanism, and meditative practice all while keeping his place in the British literary and national tradition.

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Chapter 4: "Lovers are still pretending": George Herbert's *The Temple* and the End of Courtliness

Wilt thou forgive that sinn, where I begunn,
Which is my sinn, though it were done before?
Wilt thou forgive those sinns through which I runn
And doe them still, though still I doe deplore?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For I have more.
—*John Donne* "To Christ"

How wide is all this long pretence!
There is in love a sweetnesse readie penn'd:
Copie out onely that, and save expense.
—*George Herbert* "Jordan (II)"

Serpit agens, facilisque docet mortalia corda
Sensim immortali assuescere posse sono.
Quod si cuncta quidem Deus est, percunctaque fusus,
In te una loquitur, caetera mutus habet.
—*John Milton* "Ad Leonoram Romae Canentem"

George Herbert (1593-1633) has always proved a complicated subject for modern critics. Despite pioneering a new sort of religious poetry, inspiring Richard Crashaw and Henry Vaughan, and anticipating John Milton, Herbert has often been treated as Donne's less passionate, moralizing side-kick. Herbert, far more than Donne, has been reduced to an agent of Calvinistic thinking (Strier 114), and since he did not write with the same broad range of topics as his earlier, once more libertine counterpart, his work is rarely read as being as complex, or, if complex, complex only in its religious content. He has often been accused of solely looking upward, of being a purely religious poet

uninterested in social aspects of a poet's life. The printer's statement at the beginning of *The Temple* makes this conclusion all the more tempting:

> The dedication of this work having been made by the author to the Divine Majesty only, how should we now presume to interest any mortal man in patronage of it? Much less think we it meet to seek the recommendation of the Muses, for that which himself was confident to have inspired by a diviner breath than flows from Helicon. The world therefore shall receive it in that naked simplicity with which he left it, without any addition either of support or ornament more than is included in itself.(3)

Herbert is often considered to religious to be interesting, too concerned with God to be situated in a larger social context.

Recent scholarship has found ways of separating Herbert from Donne, using various critical approaches to appreciate Herbert's religious poetics. Louis Martz, in his study *Poetry of Meditation* (1954), explored Herbert and considered the influence of St. Francois de Sales on the poet. He reads Herbert in a thoroughly Catholic context and as an example of Catholic literary influence in the poetry of the late Renaissance. Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, in her influential *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (1979), expanded upon Martz significantly for the first time, and revealed a Protestant Herbert asserting a notion of his work which Richard Strier, Christopher Hodgkins, and many others have subsequently endorsed, adding their own layers to what they perceive as Herbert's Protestant character. Other than historicist explorations, few studies have appreciated Herbert in formalist terms, principal among them Helen Vendler's *The Poetry of George Herbert* (1975), which sought to rescue Herbert from accusations of "minor poet" status.

All such rescuing of Herbert from Donne, however, has done little to offer new, effective ways to see the two men in context. Herbert continues the rejection of submission

that Donne championed. They are linked in their relationship to the courtliness of the period, and to the lingering legacy of Elizabethan poetics. Facing a socio-political world in which the fashion of courtliness was beginning to wane, and in which theological treatises and sermons were gaining more attention from the monarch than poetry, Herbert sought to establish a poetics which combined his own religious interests, the theological preferences of the Jacobean literary system, and his unique and assertive poetics. Herbert arises as a poetic teacher and clergyman, depending on a voice based in solid theology and divine inspiration, not in the "idle wit" of Elizabethan poets.

Herbert, however, should not be thought of in exclusively religious terms. Herbert was quite ambitious at court, and this ambition influenced his use of the submissive stance. Even Herbert's contemporary Izaak Walton, however, knew the true Herbert as one interested, not repelled by, the courtly life of Jacobean England:

> At the time of being Orator he had learnt to understand the Italian, Spanish, and French tongues very perfectly; hoping, that as his predecessors, so he might in time attain the place of a Secretary of State, he being at that time very high in the King's favour; and not meanly valued and loved by the most eminent and powerful of the Court nobility. This, and the love of a Court conversation mixed with a laudable ambition to be something more than he then was, drew him often from Cambridge to attend the King wheresoever the Court was...(279)

Courtly ambition, therefore, was no stranger to Herbert, and however "laudable" his ambition may have been, if Walton is correct (always a question), Herbert's relationship to the court may have been just as frustrated as Donne is, especially after the death of James I. During the early years of James's reign courtliness, and its literary explorations, were strongly in flux. The end of Elizabeth's monarchy proved a large literary and political shift, accompanied by a rise in theological thinking and, ironically, corruption. The mixture of

deep dialogue about theological issues and profound sin and corruption at court undoubtedly added to Herbert's frustration and helped to form his poetics. Herbert's poetry places its trust in God, not in the fickle favor of a monarch.

The exact nature of Herbert's voice, however, is a subject of debate among scholars. Many scholars have read in Herbert a trembling subject of God, a poet who knows his place. Richard Strier, for example, writes that "these poems are all spoken from a deeply humbled and penitent point of view"(9) and that "it is important to realize that in spite of their pleas, these poems do not contest the appropriateness of God's wrath"(8). Gordon Braden reinforces and expands upon Strier's allegations:

> In writing about the writing of poetry, Herbert is actually writing about the effacement of the self as a lesson in humility. The lesson is in many ways a particularly Protestant one. New antipathy to human pride and new subtlety in its detection are among the characteristic features of Reformation theology. Part of the rationale for the doctrine of justification by faith is that it deprives the individual of any sense that his will can ever preempt God's. (265)

And yet, though both scholars deftly observe one of the central points of Herbert's poetry, the Soul's utter dependence on God, neither scholar extensively explores the significance of Herbert's tone in proclaiming the importance of humility, and how it relates to his rejection of the submissive stance. Herbert's proclamations are part of his role of poetic teacher.

Stanley Fish has done the most significant research from this perspective in his study *The Living Temple: George Herbert and Catechizing*. Fish asserts that "the temple of Herbert's title is the 'spirituall Temple' that is built up by catechisms to be the dwelling place of God" (54). Herbert arises, therefore, as a sort of teacher, as establishing in the reader's mind a lesson. Fish uses as his primary text Herbert's poem "The Church-Floor,"

noting the poem's dependence on internalized comprehension, a series of poetic points "built up in the heart of the reader" (55). The poem conflates spiritual and architectural institutions to a literary and spiritual end. Working from Fish's argument, I wish to show how Herbert's role as architect of the metaphysical "temple" allows Herbert to employ, as do Donne and Crashaw, a poetics of assertion, a poetics held up throughout his works.

"The Church-Floor" is marked by a didacticism that is characteristic of Herbert's prayerful, yet dominating tone. Even as he acknowledges his impotence before God, Herbert maintains his role as poetic teacher, and as a unique, innovative, and independent poetic genius. The beginning of the poem marks the dominant role:

> Mark you the floor? That square and speckled stone,
> Which looks so firm and strong,
> Is *Patience*
> (ll. 1-3)

Similar to Donne in "The Flea," where the reader is also compelled to "mark" whatever object is being described within the poem, Herbert asserts control of the direction of the poem, and speaks not in a personal, speculative tone, but from an assertive, educational stance. For Herbert, unlike Donne, poetry is not a space for personalized meditation or for the venting of individual social and religious quandaries. Poem after poem of *The Temple* asserts not only a rejection of the submissive stance so strongly present in the sixteenth century, but of the personal ego-driven works of Donne as well. Herbert rejects both submission and a fascination with the self as religious seeker. Like a true temple, Herbert's collection addresses a community of religious seekers, and asserts itself as pastor, with authority issued from a personal relationship with God. His speaker is far more confident in

the reciprocity of this relationship than the "religious seeker" found in Donne's religious poetry.

Herbert's rejection of submission, however, may not arise clearly from some readings of the poems, especially those that emphasize the poet's dedication to and utter dependence on God. Yet, the stance of reverence so apparent in Herbert's verse does not allow for the wavering cruelty of a Petrarchan lady, nor the disfavor of a monarch. As in the case of Crashaw (and serving as Crashaw's teacher in this sense), the lover of God emerging in the poetry is a lover who knows his longing will be satisfied. For instance, "The Dedication," which begins *The Temple,* reveals a tone rebellious to courtly discourse:

> Lord, my first fruits present themselves to thee;
> Yet not mine neither: for from thee they came,
> And must return. Accept of them and me,
> And make us strive, who shall sing best thy name.
> Turn their eyes hither, who shall make a gain:
> Theirs, who shall hurt themselves or me, refrain.

The humility of these lines is well performed, as well as is the claim of an external locus of poetic creation, a game well known to Sidney and Spenser. Yet here, Herbert establishes for himself the terms of his poetic dialogue with God. The autonomy of his poetry (poems which are capable of "presenting themselves" to God) is in many ways the autonomy of God's will expressed through the poet. Herbert is playing the Petrarchan game of praising himself for being inspired by another, but when the "other" becomes God rather than a courtly lady, the specifics of the game are irreversibly altered: the poet serves as a privileged instrument for God's voice, not as the delusional doting poet of a courtly lady. The relationship between the beloved and the poet obviously changes in Herbert's poetry, as does the poet's relationship to the outside reader, who, rather than feel pity for the poet,

is intended to follow the moral instructions within the poem. This self-assured stance privileges the role of the poet, freeing him from the constraints of Petrarchan discourse.

Herbert's instructional tone intensifies as *The Temple* continues. "Perirrhanterium," the poem opening "The Church-Porch," is nothing if not didactic, self-assured as the poem is in its moral value and authority. The very opening lines enhance Herbert's role as a moral authority:

> Thou, whose sweet youth and early hopes enhance
> Thy rate and price, and mark thee for a treasure;
> Harken unto a Verser, who may chance
> Rhyme thee to good, and make a bait of pleasure.
> A verse may find him, who a sermon flies,
> And turn delight into a sacrifice.
> (ll. 1-6)

The poet, then, is made part of the divine mission, part of the attempt to "catechize," in Fish's terms, the reader. The moral seeking and anxiety of Donne's persona in "Satyre III" is abandoned in this poem for a preaching, pastoral voice, a voice that will be sustained, even in lyrics exploring submission to God.

The lyric sections of *The Temple* are diverse explorations of the devout life, and of the role of the poet within a Protestant Christian literary system. Herbert's own sense of his role within the literary system was, clearly, one in opposition to the aesthetics of the sixteenth century:

> My God, a verse is not a crown,
> No point of honour, or gay suit,
> No hawk, or banquet, or renown,
> Nor a good sword, nor yet a lute:
>
> It cannot vault, or dance, or play;
> It never was in *France* or *Spain*;
> Nor can it entertain the day
> With a great stable or demesne:

It is no office, art, or news,
Nor the Exchange, or busy Hall;
But it is that which while I use
I am with thee, and *Most take all.*
("The Quiddity")

The poems that sought offices, the panegyrics praising Queen Elizabeth or King James, and the attempts to challenge continental verse forms are all challenged in this slim lyric. The direct tone of the poem is one full of a righteous sense of purpose. Significant in these lines is the rebellion against "office, art, or news" as the purpose of poetry. The rejection of "office" is a direct link to the poetry of courtly flattery prevalent during Elizabeth's reign. Herbert rejects the economic purposes of poetry in the sixteenth and part of the seventeenth century, the same purposes unveiled by Marotti, in favor of a religious purpose. He at once establishes himself within the new fashion of literary taste and rebels against the dominant poetic styles of the previous generation of poets. He is able to maintain relevance within the literary fashions of his day, while rejecting the submissive stance. This doubled response becomes clearer as the reader enters the lyrical structure of Herbert's "temple."

As we have seen in Sidney's work, and as true in Spenser and others, the beginning of a sequence of poems is an essential tool in establishing the tone, coherence, and authority of a collection of lyrics. *The Temple* begins with the "Perirrhanterium" and with the shorter poem "Superliminare," a poem which urges the reader to enter into a unique spiritual union with the poems, and therefore, God:

Thou, whom the former precepts have
Sprinkled and taught, how to behave
Thyself in church; approach, and taste
The church's mystical repast.

Avoid profaneness; come not here;

Nothing but holy, pure, and clear,
Or that which groaneth to be so,
May at his peril further go.

This poem is strikingly didactic, almost pedantic in its mission to chide the profane and invite in the clean. The poem's attack on the "former precepts" of the Church identifies Herbert as an opponent to Catholicism, whereas the importance placed on the "mystical repast" would seem a strong endorsement of the Eucharist. However, the poem, placed at the beginning of the large "The Church" section of the collection, toes an ambiguous line between the actual sacrament and the poems' serving as sacrament. The emphasis of "come not here" marks the collection in real architectural space, further blurring the lines between elevating church doctrine and elevating the spiritual potency of one's poems. The *superliminare*, the marked entryway to a church, is both a meditation on a church institution and an assertion of the collection as a spiritual body, capable of "catechizing" the reader.

To view *The Temple* as an architectural concept established in the mind of the reader is to assert the control that the architect, Herbert, has over the construction of the poetic project. Every poet is in control, to varying extents, of his or her art, and yet, Herbert plays none of the courtly games seen in his predecessors. He does not pose as a courtier writing out the features of his love. To be sure, God replaces the courtly lady in Herbert's brand of anti/post-petrarchism, but notions of God, and the ways to reach Him, were far more in debate during the Renaissance than were the ways to impress a courtly figure. Early modern theological divisions of the time left ample room for debate, interpretation, and compromise, making the decisions over how to reach God, and who had the authority to teach the way, very much an individualized struggle, even in a state ruled by a religious and political head of state. Herbert's way to the divine is part of his own genius,

compromise, and art, and his directions to those who would follow assert his role as poet/ catechist in the religious and poetic game of theological influence.

If the reader has not quite understood this mission by the time they read "Superliminare" then "The Altar," the poem beginning "The Church" sequence, secures that understanding. The poem is Herbert's request for benediction of his poetry, a request to transubstantiate words into sacrifice:

A broken ALTAR, Lord, thy servant rears,
Made of a heart, and cemented with tears:
Whose parts are as thy hand did frame;
No work man's tool hath touched the same.
A HEART alone
Is such a stone,
As nothing but
Thy pow'r doth cut.
Wherefore each part
Of my hard heart
Meets in this frame,
To praise thy name:
That if I chance to hold my peace,
These stones to praise thee may not cease.
O let thy blessed SACRIFICE be mine,
And sanctify this ALTAR to be thine.

This concrete poem invokes God to bless the "stones" of his "temple," the poems of his collection. Herbert plays the role of the humble builder, a role marked by both privileged and unprivileged status. On the one hand, his works are nothing without God's blessing; on the other hand, not all poets get to cut and set the stones of God's altar, and Herbert implicitly praises his role as the builder of God's stones and temple. Submission is both upheld and challenged.

Herbert's definition of empowered submission is shown in his poem entitled "Submission," in which the poet chooses to submit to God out of a profound trust in the poetic and spiritual gain the submissive act will award him:

But that thou art my wisdom, Lord,
And both mine eyes are thine,
My mind would be extremely stirred

For missing my design.

Were it not better to bestow
Some place and power on me?
Then should thy praises with me grow,
And share in my degree.

But when I thus dispute and grieve,
I do resume my sight,
And pilf'ring what I once did give,
Disseise thee of thy right.

How know I, if thou shouldst me raise,
That I should then raise thee?
Perhaps great places and thy praise
Do not so well agree.

Wherefore unto my gift I stand;
I will no more advise:
Only do thou lend me a hand,
Since thou hast both mine eyes.

The gentle, stable rhyme scheme of the poem creates a sentimental tone. The discourse between the poet and God is marked by a unique trust, an assured journey towards the truth. The poet, once again, claims a close and inspirational link to God ("But thou art my wisdom") combined with an acknowledgement of his complete dependence ("I will no more advise"). Herbert creates a persona that plays into a discourse of modest devotion, all the while imagining for himself the role of God's chosen craftsman. Submitting to God's will is not done solely out of deference for His omnipotence, but out of the search for a spiritual reward, for the title "God's laureate."

It is in his sense of being an elect poet of the divine that Herbert rebels against the mode of poetry that praised individual "wit." Wit was necessary for courtly poets to gain attention from monarchs, beloved ladies, and other courtiers. Wit was not necessary for Herbert, a poet driven to impress God and to uphold his own theological beliefs. His condemnation of "witty" poets includes attacks on the major poets of the Henrician and Elizabethan age, as well as the monarch of wit himself, John Donne. One major assault on the greatest of witty poets, Sir Thomas Wyatt, comes in the poem "Easter":

Awake, my lute, and struggle for thy part

With all thy art.
The cross taught all wood to resound his name,
Who bore the same.
His stretched sinews taught all strings, what key
Is best to celebrate this most high day,
(ll. 7-12)

The lines are in dialogue with these lines by Wyatt:

My lute awake, perform the last
Labour, that thou and I shall waste,
And end that I have now begun:
And when this song is sung and past,
My lute! Be still, for I have done
As to be heard where ear is none;
As lead to grave in marble stone;
My song may pierce her heart as soon.
Should we then sigh, or sing, or moan?
(ll. 1-9)

Wyatt's poem is a celebration, though melancholy, of the artistic consequences of unrequited love, a pose known well by European Petrarchists. The pose of the poet is one of intense submission, a poet longing to have an effect on his love even if it is only during his very final song to her. He ends baffled, trying to anticipate the proper response, whether to sigh (the symbolic action of the longing lover), sing (the action of praise and celebration), or moan (the action of lament). There is no certainty, only the mild consolation of the chance to win the lover's attention. Herbert's lines reject those of his Petrarchist ancestor at almost every level. He continues his celebrated use of concrete poetry in constructing lines which themselves resemble a lute, and turns the poetic experience from one of sad partnership (Wyatt and his lute) to one of moral instruction. Herbert seeks to fine-tune his poetic instrument, not for the profane goal of winning a lady's favor, but for praising God, the original purpose of Herbert's lute. A clear *ars poetica* arises from the poem. Lovers' faces, or even the self, are not the right origins of poetic inspiration. God is:

Consort both heart and lute, and twist a song
Pleasant and long:
Or since all music is but three parts vied
And multiplied;
O let thy blessed Spirit bear a part,
And make up our defects with his sweet art.
(ll. 13-18)

The poem challenges the distance between legitimate feeling (the heart) and the action of creating art (the lute). The games of wit and metaphor, so prevalent in poetry of Herbert's generation and before, seem based in a mere manipulative egotism. When Sidney's muse orders him to "look in thy heart and write," he is being encouraged to write based on his own needs and feelings. Contrastingly, the music that Herbert urges, indeed teaches, the poet to make is one based solely out of God's teachings. Herbert's assertion that "all music is but three parts vied" suggests that all music is the spirit of the divine, the three parts of the trinity, enhanced through legitimate feelings and poetic skill. Skill, however, remains important, as does Herbert's sense of himself as poetic teacher and master craftsman of praise. Courtliness may not end, but it expands, to sing only to the throne of God.

To sing solely to God, however, would demand the sort of asceticism and monasticism that Herbert's life and socio-political world could not accommodate (to say nothing of Herbert's own ambition). The socio-political world of his time demanded a delicate and diplomatic approach to religious discussion. The "laudable ambition" which Walton ascribes to Herbert is present in many of his poems. I am interested here, mainly, in his poem "The British Church." The poem shows, more than many others, Herbert's sense of his religion as a British Protestant. At the time of writing his poetry, King James I had risen to the throne, and his Scottish roots, influenced by the work of Scots reformer John Knox, encouraged explorations of Calvinistic theology, a theology that urged simplicity in liturgy, a sense of helplessness before the will of God, and subjection to predestination of the elect. This established King James as a brave new religious

thinker and influence, able to change the direction of the English Protestant Church.

Herbert was, however, also working in an age and culture with a great sense of its own history and development. The developing arc of British Protestantism had seen many waves. In the Henrician court, the doctrines of Catholic theology were sustained, though with the King as head of the Anglo-Catholic church. During the reign of Edward VI, *The Book of Common Prayer* began to establish liturgical realities independent of Catholic Europe, and oppression of Catholics reached a zenith when the Prayer Book rebellion, a violent rebellion against the new prayer guide, was crushed. The rise of Mary I saw a Roman Catholic backlash. The ascension to the throne of Elizabeth saw the rise of compromise: outward conformity was ordered and inward, silent dissent allowed. After the publication of Calvin's *Les institutes de la religion chrétienne* (1536), the Genevan brand of the reformed church became a fashionable, and fascinating, addition to the Protestant movement. Though the first English edition of the institutes was published in 1561, the Latin and French editions had been well known since the 1530s and 1540s. By the later years of Elizabeth's reign debates about the extent to which the British Church should conform to Geneva were familiar, especially among such cultural celebrities as Sir Philip Sidney, Fulke Greville, and King James, then King James VI of Scotland. Herbert's age was one heavily in dialogue with Calvinism and its potential role in the future of England's church.

A poem like "The British Church," then, was being composed in a culture where near-Roman theology and liturgy were competing with radical Genevan reforms. Trying to justify his own High Anglican ideals, ideals nurtured, like Crashaw's, at Little Gidding with Nicholas Ferrar, and in an effort to encourage the church to remain moderate, somewhere between High and Low, Rome and Geneva, Herbert composed these lines:

> I joy, dear Mother, when I view
> Thy perfect lineaments, and hue
> Both sweet and bright.
> Beauty in thee takes up her place,
> And dates her letters from thy face,

When she doth write.

A fine aspect in fit array,
Neither too mean, nor yet too gay,
Shows who is best.
Outlandish looks may not compare:
For all they either painted are,
Or else undressed.
(ll. 1-12)

The poem is a panegyric to a Church that has reached perfection. He is able to attack the decorated shallowness of Rome's "painted" chapels, as well as the "undressed" austerity of Calvinist churches. Though this poem, once again, asserts Herbert's ability to recognize moral good and point state and church decisions in the right direction, it is a poem filled with the language of praise. Herbert's celebration of the church's virtue and beauty is a deliberate strategy, no doubt, that was designed to show poets, both living and dead, the entities and individuals truly deserving of praise. Unlike his two famous contemporaries, John Donne and Ben Jonson, though Herbert may show anxiety and frustration over his ability to describe divine truths and his own deep devotion, Herbert does not rally against a cruel lover, nor does he, as Jonson does, praise King James in verse. Herbert establishes a direct line between his poetry and God. This line, however, is intended for viewing by others, and its origin well known to be in Herbert's poetic efforts. The poems are intended to be examples, more than autobiographically inspired rants.

Herbert represented himself as a great poet working in a new aesthetic devoted to theological exploration. Writing poetry rather than prose was a significant choice. Herbert's choice to be a poet rather than theologian may seem obvious, but has often been left out of critical discussions. The decision to maintain a poetic career in the face of a culture where "theologi regnant" was a bold move against the cultural grain, as was his choice not to produce masques, pageants, or direct odes. Herbert's attack on the prevailing lyrical mode was his primary goal, and a goal which, ironically, sealed his fate as a master of the lyric and opponent of the submissive stance. There are many poems in *The Temple* that reveal Herbert's poetic ambition and ideals. I

will be focusing on "Vanity (II)," "Jordan (II)," and "The Quip."

"Vanity (II)" rejects submission to any external authority throughout. The poet's relationship to God is a partnership towards creating appropriate and reverent poetry. To this end, the poem attacks courtly emphasis on earthly pleasure (a strong component of the Elizabethan and, especially, the Jacobean court) mercilessly:

> Poor silly soul, whose hope and head lies low;
> Whose flat delights on earth do creep and grow:
> To whom the stars shine not so fair, as eyes;
> Nor solid work , as false embroideries;
> Hark and beware, lest what you now do measure
> And write for sweet, prove a most sour displeasure.
>
> O hear betimes, lest thy relenting
> May come too late!
> To purchase heaven for repenting,
> Is no hard rate.
> If souls be made of earthly mould,
> Let them love gold;
> If born on high,
> Let them unto their kindred fly:
> For they can never be at rest,
> Till they regain their ancient nest.
> Then silly soul take heed; for earthly joy
> Is but a bubble, and makes thee a boy.

The critique is not only of the courtier poets of his age and those before, but also a testament to the temptation towards profane poetry, the sort of poetry that established laureate-level careers. His soul "lies low" among the "flat delights" of earth, and is tricked into believing in the foolish hyperboles of courtly love: eyes being greater than stars, and shallow decoration better than solid work. The temptation to write in lusty, erotic terms was strong, especially as such themes were very popular in the coterie culture of the previous generation. In the Renaissance, as in the present, manhood was tied to sexual activity, and for poets interested in achieving the highest moral level possible libertine sexuality had to

be subjugated to the powers of prayerful celibacy and avoidance of lust. Herbert warns that "...earthly joy/ Is but a bubble, and makes thee a boy," defining manhood, and poetic power, as rooted in a connection to spiritual, rather than terrestrial, joy. A poetic theology is able to offer the reader a pleasurable reading experience and an important moral lesson that could lead to salvation.

As this whole project has sought to prove, the source from which a poet claims to draw his inspiration is an important indicator of what literary strategies are in use as well as what audience is anticipated. Whereas poets like Sidney, Spenser, or Shakespeare rally on about the difficulties of finding poetic inspiration suitable to please their courtly lovers, Herbert is satisfied with the methods he has found to praise his subject, God. Though he has made mistakes earlier, the joy of finding the right method is explored in "Jordan (II)":

> When first my lines of heav'nly joys made mention
> Such was their lustre, they did so excel,
> That I sought out quaint words, and trim invention;
> My thoughts began to burnish, sprout, and swell,
> Curling with metaphors a plain intention,
> Decking the sense, as if it were to sell.
> (ll. 1-6)

The question of how rightly to describe the joys of heaven plagues the poet, who at first cannot seem to find appropriate language. His first attempt is to turn to "curling with metaphors a plain intention," a symbol for artifice and the flourishes of courtly amatory verse. The cheap, insincere strategies to impress are mocked through their economic undertones in the accusation that they are constructed "as if it were to sell." The flattering dialogue of courtly ambition and the submissive stance tied to it are thoroughly rejected.

Herbert solves the problem of describing the joys of heaven through "copying" what exists in love:

As flames do work and wind, when they ascend,
So did I weave my self into the sense.
But while I bustled, I might hear a friend
Whisper, *How wide is all this long pretence!*
There is in love a sweetness ready penned:
Copy out only that, and save expense.
(ll.13-18)

Herbert's poet works hard to describe the ineffable, trying to ascend in his poetry towards heaven. Yet, a clear distinction in the poem arises between the poet's delusions of ascension and true ascension. The poetics of artifice, the hallmark of earlier poetry, allows him to "weave [him] self into the sense," but in the end his efforts are mere "bustle." The true way to write about the divine is to write only about love, and to leave out "all this long pretence" of artifice. Herbert attacks submission and the artificial pose it demands.

Finally, one of Herbert's most whimsical poems about the temptations of the earth is "The Quip," a poem which rejects each of the temptations offered by secular verse, listing them in greater detail than many of his poems:

The merry world did on a day
With his train-bands and mates agree
To meet together, where I lay,
And all in sport to jeer at me.

First, Beauty crept into a rose,
Which when I plucked not, Sir, said she,
Tell me, I pray, Whose hands are those?
But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Then Money came, and chinking still,
What tune is this poor man? Said he:
I heard in Music you had skill.
But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Then came brave Glory puffing by
In silks that whistled, who but he?
He scarce allowed me half an eye.
But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Then came quick Wit and Conversation,
And he would needs a comfort be,
And, to be short, make an oration.
But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Yet when the hour of thy design
To answer these fine things shall come;
Speak not at large, say, I am thine:
And then they have their answer home.

The most striking aspect of this poem is the locus of the poet as outside of the "merry world." The asceticism that Herbert claims is, of course, a hyperbolic strategy, yet, it shows a strong, satirical separation from the courtly focuses of many poets. Beauty, Money, Glory, and Wit and Conversation, the typical, and somewhat stereotypical, hallmarks of the courtly poet and courtier, are lampooned in favor of a simple trust in the power of God.

Once again, Herbert establishes his poetic voice and authority in his closeness to a God who would claim "I am thine," a claim that did not come so easily for Donne, and certainly not as easily for the secular poets of the sixteenth century. Caught between the bookends of Southwell and Crashaw, Herbert represents a radical shift towards a new aesthetic dependent upon a complete trust in God. The self-indulgent, witty verse that dominated the sixteenth century and leaked into the seventeenth in the work of Donne, Jonson, and others begins to see its end in Herbert, paving the way for Vaughan, Milton, and many others. Though the lyrics can be prayed, and are often used as such in Anglican prayer services, Herbert's voice emerges strong: a catechizing, and yet strongly poetic, force.

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Conclusion: Beyond Submission: The Poetry of Henry Vaughan and John Milton

> Weep no more, woeful shepherds weep no more,
> For Lycidas your sorrow is not dead,
> Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor,
> So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
> And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
> And tricks his beams, and with new spangled ore,
> Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
> So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
> Through the dear might of him that walked the waves:
> Where other groves, and other steams along,
> With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
> And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
> In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
> *~John Milton, from Lycidas*

This project has sought to trace the development of a poetics of assertion, poetry free from the submissive courtliness of Petrarchism. The arc has taken us from court to collar, yet clearly does not end there. As the politics of patronage began to break down in the seventeenth-century; the rise of the individual poetic voice began to dominate the literary scene. A culture rewarding a poet-genius rather than a flattering courtier began to emerge, reshaping poetic personae for centuries to come.

Henry Vaughan and John Milton both engaged in a poetics of assertion, and both inherited their assertive poetics from Herbert. Both championed political causes in their poetry, Vaughan a staunch Anglican and Milton the world's ambassador for Puritanism. Yet their most striking poetry did not coincide with their political and religious success. Vaughan's major collection *Silex Scintillans* (1650) was published after the execution of Charles I and the Puritan takeover and Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) was published after the Restoration. The juxtaposition between the prime of their poetic genius and the end of their political power demanded a powerful and completely un-submissive voice.

Vaughan (1621-1695) was well known, even in his lifetime, as being an important "student" of Herbert. The poems themselves "give overwhelming evidence of discipleship" (Lewalski 317). Herbert's rejection of submission, his strong, confident salvation-seeking voice, would have been an inspiration to Vaughan. Yet, Vaughan is not a simple imitator. His collection traces out the course of salvation, as does *The Temple*, but in different ways than Herbert. Lewalski elaborates: "Both Herbert and Vaughan trace the Protestant paradigm of salvation in their respective volumes, but in doing so reveal some striking differences in religious sensibility. Though Vaughan has a few liturgical or ecclesiastical poems...and though he agonized about the plight of the church under the Puritans...his religious imagination is not stimulated by the things of the Church, as Herbert's is" (318). Vaughan's inspiration comes from "God's word and works" (318).

Though Lewalski usefully identifies Vaughan's preference for nature and God's direct word as a way of reaching back to biblical history, a more socio-political reading would also consider how such a strategy would allow for an individual voice to arise outside of the confines of a national Church opposed to Vaughan's views. By going directly to God, Vaughan ensures that the Puritans are taken out of power as a source of inspiration and spiritual direction. Consider Vaughan's version of "The British Church," which strongly opposes the religious status quo of his day:

> Ah! He is fled!
> And while these here their *mists*, and *shadows* hatch,
> My glorious head
> Doth on those hills of Mirrhe, and Incense watch.
> Haste, hast my dear,
> The Souldiers here
> Cast in their lots again,
> That seamlesse coat
> The Jews touch'd not,

These dare divide, and stain.

2.
O get thee wings!
Or if yet (until these clouds depart,
And the day springs,)
Thou think'st it good to tarry where thou art,
Write in thy bookes
My ravish'd looks
Slain flock, and pillag'd fleeces,
And hast thee so
As a young Roe
Upon the mounts of spices.

O Rosa Campi! O lilium Convallium! Quomodò nunc facta es pabulum Aprorum!

The poem laments the spread of evil in the world, and the banishment to the hills of the true Anglican church of England. England has seen sin rise up again, and the spiritual progress started by Christ has regressed. Vaughan's poet urges the church to return again and "write in thy bookes / My ravish'd looks / Slain flock, and pillag'd fleeces." The begging for consideration is evidence of a Petrarchan pose, and yet, the confidence with which Vaughan begs for the church's protection blurs the normal Petrarchan lines. The poet is, indeed, begging for favor from a saving force that is distant, in true Petrarchan form, yet, the Church stays away not out of a lover's coyness, but out of a legitimate defeat, a defeat that even Vaughan's praise cannot articulate away. Herbert's praise of the British Church came at a time when the Church was beginning to forge theological roots and become the dominant church of its day. By 1650, however, Vaughan must be more of a savior than a child. Herbert's rejection of submission quickly becomes adapted into a tool of socio-political rebellion, the rallying cry from someone on the losing side of seventeenth century British religious conflict. Vaughan's appeal to the church is not as a helpless devotee,

though his stance would seem to indicate this, but rather of a wise advisor, appealing to the Church to do what it best not only for its people, but for its own survival.

John Milton, caught in a situation to Vaughan's, sought in his great epic to justify the failure of his political and religious party. Perhaps responding to this, Milton claims religious authority throughout his epic. The didacticism of these early lines identifies Milton as a key divine and poetic authority, a genius working directly under God. A stance he undoubtedly learned from Herbert and Crashaw[14]:

> ...I thence
> Invoke thy aid to my advent'rous song,
> That with no middle flight intends to soar
> Above th'Aonian mount, while it pursues
> Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
> And chiefly thou O Spirit, that dost prefer
> Before all temples th'upright heart and pure,
> Instruct me, for thou know'st; thou from the first
> Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread
> Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyss
> And mad'st in pregnant: what in me is dark
> Illumine, what is low raise and support;
> That to the highth of this great argument
> I may assert Eternal Providence,
> And justify the ways of God to men.
> (I: 12-26)

Milton's request to be able to "assert Eternal Providence, / And justify the ways of God to men" is shockingly self-assured. Milton acknowledges that the inspiring "Spirit...[prefers]/ Before all temples th'upright heart and pure." and then asks: "Instruct me." Even as he acknowledges his need for divine inspiration, he believes that he is the appropriate vessel for the divine lesson the epic will seek to convey.

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[14] Crashaw's influence on Milton's *Paradise Lost* is especially poignant. Crashaw's long poem "Sospetto d'Herode" greatly influenced Milton's characterization of Satan,

Seeing himself as, perhaps, one of the last remaining cultural voices of Puritanism, Milton questions human knowledge, asserting himself as the teacher of how humanity should think:

> To whom thus also th'angel last replied:
> "This having learnt, thou hast attained the sum
> Of wisdom; hope no higher, though all the stars
> Thou knew'st by name, and all th'ethereal powers,
> All secrets of the deep, all nature's works,
> Or works of God in heav'n, air, earth, or sea,
> And all the riches of this world enjoy'dst,
> And all the rule, one empire; only add
> Deeds to thy knowledge answerable, add faith,
> Add virtue, patience temperance, add love,
> By name to come called charity, the soul
> Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loath
> To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
> A paradise within thee, happier far.
> (XII: 574-587)

Milton goes beyond imagining himself the architect of God's temple, as Herbert did, but actually takes on the voice of the Archangel Michael, not to mention the voice of God Himself in other parts of the epic. He creates a spiritual world and actually writes the script of divine discourse all in the name of spreading and asserting the value of his religious and political vision.

The variety of those who come under the "collar" umbrella in this project were no less varied than those under that of the "collar" as this conclusion seeks to prove. The progression is one towards complete poetic and spiritual authority. In Herbert, submission is rejected and the role of a poetic catechist assumed. Herbert is able to suggest meditative paths to God and to teach humanity how to overcome its own sinfulness. In Vaughan, submission is rejected and the role of divine protector of the truth assumed. In Milton, submission is completely rejected and the role of a poetic God

assumed. The relationship that Milton claims is seemingly direct with the divine. Claiming divine inspiration is the ultimate rejection of submission, and the ultimate praise of the power of creative genius.

The individual poet, seeking to flatter no one except his or her own beliefs and agendas, is very much the poet archetype with which we are accustomed today. The ability of the poet to create spiritual and artistic reality, free from the pressures of a patron or a coterie's courtly (or un-courtly) expectations, allowed for poets to practice their craft free from the poetics-of-compliment. The satirical poetry of Pope and Swift in the eighteenth-century, the individualized romantic poetry of Wordsworth and Keats in the nineteenth-century, and the modernist experiments of Eliot, Pound, and others would hardly be possible without the initial turn away from courtliness begun in Donne. Donne's independent turn from court to collar set into motion experiments with poetic personae that went well beyond poetic responses to the seventeenth-century's religious strife. The autonomy of his voice, the true monarchy of his wit, and the personal nature of his poetry inspired poet's to work more for their own agendas than the agendas of patrons, courtiers, and monarchs. The legacy of this shift was felt strongly then, in Vaughan, Milton, and others, and is still felt today.

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