Fig. 1. *William Style of Langley*. Unknown artist, 1636

The Portrait of William Style
of Langley: Some Reflections

John Dixon Hunt

A striking seventeenth-century portrait at the Tate Gallery (Figure 1),[1] recently restored, is intriguing largely on account of the garden which—somewhat unusually for the date—dominates the righthand side of the canvas. When the portrait was written up in the Tate Gallery Catalogue of Acquisitions, much of its imagery was interpreted;[2] but some problems, notably ones to do with the meaning of that garden, still remain. This article seeks to set out those problems and suggest—not so much solutions but—perimeters for solutions, ultimately passing on the enigmas in the hope that others may throw additional light upon them.

The portrait is dated 1636 in the cartouche over the archway that gives upon the garden and hillside. By then William Style was 33 or 36.[3] He had been at Oxford, though leaving without a degree, and in November 1618 was admitted a student at the Inner Temple. His half-brother, Sir Humphrey Style, Bt., was gentleman of the privy chamber to James I and cup-bearer to Charles I, and it was upon the death in 1659 of Sir Humphrey without issue that William Style inherited the ancestral estate of Langley, near Beckenham in Kent.[4] These facts confirm what the sight of the portrait has always implied, that the garden is unlikely to be that of Langley, since Style would not have had himself painted showing property he did not then own. The imagery of garden and hillside, together with the other meaningful items, must therefore be part of some symbolic structure. It appears to be a portrait of the kind which the poet Lovelace would soon find outmoded by the new psychological portraiture of Lely:

> Not as of old, when . . .
> By *Hieroglyphicks* we could understand;
> . . . .
> . . . th' amazed world shall henceforth finde
> None but my *Lilly* ever drew a *Minde*.[5]

The difficulty is not that the mind of William Style is unilluminated by the painter—probably an anonymous Flemish artist—but that we cannot fully understand the *"Hieroglyphics."*

Some were elucidated by the Tate Gallery Catalogue. Style's coat of arms is set in the window, with the motto "vix ea nostra voco" (I scarcely call these things my own);[6] below the small open window are books and writing tools and his dancing-master's violin, which he was to leave with other musical instruments after his death in 1679 to a friend in the Inner Temple. With his cane he points towards an image of the world contained within a burning heart (Figure 2), surmounted with the inscription "Microcosmus Microcosmi non impletur Megacosmo"—the heart of man (microcosm of the microcosm) is not filled by the world (megacosm). The explanation which the Tate Gallery accordingly gave to this portrait was of a man who had undergone some religious conversion and was portrayed as turning his back upon worldly possessions (family inheritance, books, music, etc.) and declaring that the heart of man can be fulfilled or sated only by the Creator. Such an explanation seems to be substantiated by one of Style's miscellaneous publications, which appeared in London in 1640: a translation of the Latin devotional handbook by the Lutheran Johann Michael Dilherr, entitled *Contemplations, Sighes and Groanes of a Christian* (originally published in Jena, where Dilherr taught at the University, in 1634).[7] This small book's indifferent rhetoric urges the abandonment of worldly vanities for a thoroughly Christian life. It occasionally invokes the cliché—it seems little more—of the church as an orchard or garden;[8] and this is picked up, I would add, in the crude frontispiece (Figure 3)[9] which depicts a man in a garden. He utters a tag translated from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (VII.20-21), "I see better [things, but] I follow worse,"[10] as he gazes towards God in glory and thus disdains the things of the senses—perfumed flowers, food and drink, a lute—which are on a table beside him.

Now the problem which presents itself most forcibly with all this is to determine the role of the garden in the portrait as well

Fig. 2. *William Style of Langley*, detail

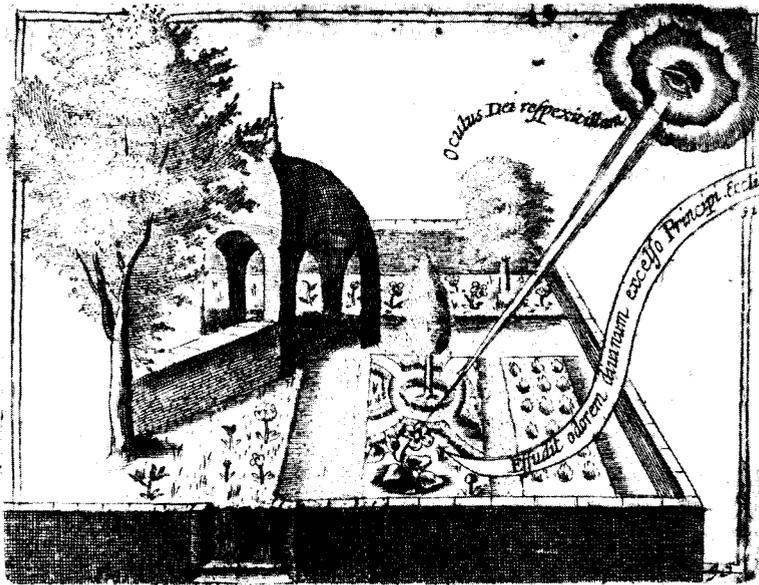Fig. 3. Frontispiece to J. M. Dilherr, *Contemplations, Sighes and Groanes of a Christian*, 1640

Fig. 4. *The Violet*. From H. A., *Partheneia Sacra*, 1633

Fig. 5. *Edward, Lord Russell*. Unknown artist, 1573

Fig. 6. Detail of title page, Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, 1632
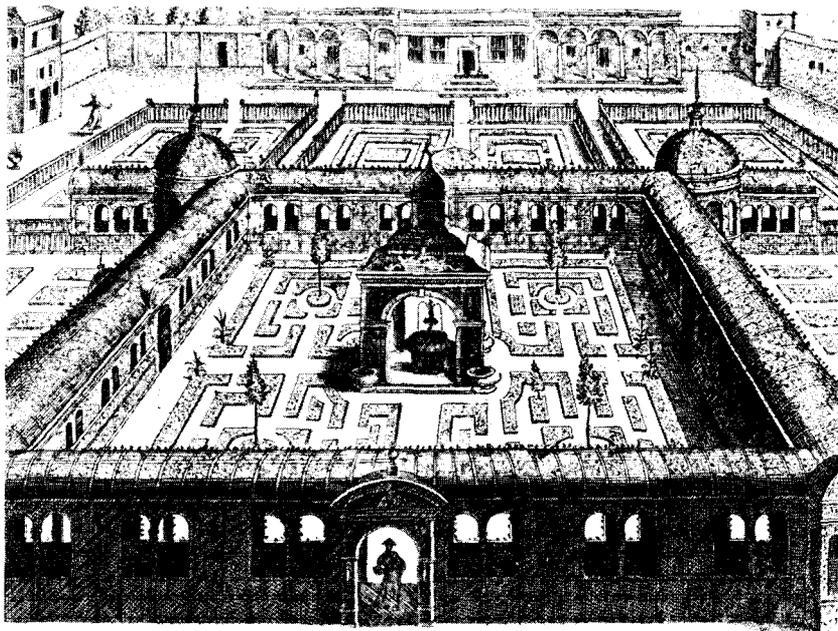
Fig. 7. From Jan Vredeman de Vries, *Hortorum . . . Formae*, 1583

as perhaps in the frontispiece to Style's translation, which certainly seems to echo the portrait of a few years before, though without the portrait's enigmatic tone. The Tate Gallery wrote of Style's "turn[ing] towards an archway which makes no architectural sense but presumably represents the way into the garden of the Church"; it then cited the well-known emblematic use of the garden in Henry Hawkins' *Partheneia Sacra* of 1633 "with its discourse on the garden as a marian *hortus conclusus* and a place for 'heavenlie Contemplations'"—as for example in the illustration of "The Violet" (Figure 4).[11] But is Style turning towards the garden? And are the garden and its surrounding landscape an emblem like that of Hawkins? Would not such an allusion imply that Style was Catholic or had become so, when all we know is that he lived and died to all appearances in conformity? What can we say about the garden's design in the portrait? And how does its representation jibe with other garden imagery in contemporary portraits? Clearly such queries are interconnected, and what answers there are will equally depend upon disentangling these items of cultural history. We are, *pace* Lovelace, rather in the field of *mentalité* than mind.

Gardens appear in Tudor and Stuart portraits with either symbolic or descriptive force, occasionally with both. By the time of Style's portrait there was a body of portraiture which set subjects against a background of their possessions. There is the pair of Arundel portraits (Arundel Castle), where the Earl and Countess are clearly posed against parts of the famous Arundel sculpture and picture galleries and garden in London; behind Robert Peake's portrait of Henry, Prince of Wales (Metropolitan Museum of Art) is a tantalizing glimpse of some landscaping which he was undertaking at Richmond; and the Capel family are shown in a portrait—probably of exactly the same date as ours—with an extensive section of their grounds at Little Hadham (National Portrait Gallery); and there are other examples.[12] Doubtless, these gardens might have been construed as having some metaphorical meaning, but primarily they are there to indicate possessions, a physical rather than metaphysical attribute of the sitter.

As we have already noted, this does not seem to be the function of the garden in the Style portrait. It belongs, rather unfashionably at least in this detail, to another kind of image, the impresa—one of the best-known examples of which is the siting of a young boy

in a circular labyrinth, in the background of a portrait of Edward, Lord Russell (Figure 5).[13]   Another teasing, impresa-like portrait, where the garden clearly functions powerfully if enigmatically to signal meaning, is Hilliard's miniature of Henry Percy, Ninth Earl of Northumberland, lying on his side in the alley of a wooded garden, his book discarded behind him (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam).[14]   Here, perhaps, we are closer to the function of the Style garden as a privileged locus of meditation. A variation of this topos is provided by Isaac Oliver's well-known miniature portrait (Royal Collection) of a melancholy young man leaning against a tree which is emphatically outside a garden not unlike that in the Style portrait.[15]   A similar relationship of melancholy man and garden, though the garden layout is not the same, appears some thirty years later on the frontispiece of Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, beginning with the 1628 edition (Figure 6).[16]   Therefore, our portrait takes its place by 1636 in a substantial tradition of imagery which places sitters against garden backgrounds; the difficulty is to decide which of the many meanings of a garden is to be invoked here.

If we conclude that Style has turned his back on the garden, it could be explained as an example of both a social and luxurious environment which is aptly rejected along with other worldly ways. The garden that is represented is typical of, if not actually copied from, the mannerist designs popularized by Vredeman de Vries (Figure 7), whose pattern books had such an enormous influence in England from the late sixteenth century;[17] the garden behind Oliver's young man is clearly from the same source. Presumably, though by no means certainly, this could have imaged a modish, up-to-date garden design for the Flemish painter of the Style portrait in 1636. Sir Roy Strong captions his reproduction of this portrait with the words "The garden as an attribute of the Stuart gentleman virtuoso."[18]   There is no evidence, apart from this picture, that Style was a virtuoso: his writings other than the Dilherr translation are some law books and another translation, dedicated to Prince Charles in 1640, of a Spanish conduct book, *Galateo Espagnol, or The Spanish Gallant*: none of that points very strongly to virtuosity. Further, it is distinctly possible that the Vredeman de Vries type of garden would have been slightly "old hat" by 1636; one has only to think of Inigo Jones's garden

imagery in his masque designs and the Italianate structures appearing in English gardens before the Civil War—Wilton House, for example, or Moor Park[19]—to wonder whether the particular mode of garden behind Style is significant.

Perhaps there is a further clue in the ruins which rise above the Style garden. These seem a *capriccio*, yet give prominence to a round classical temple which resembles the so-called Sybil's Temple at Tivoli, a much admired and engraved item of classical architecture.[20] Its role in the hieroglyphic message of the Style portrait would presumably have to be as a representation of the classical world and, especially, of pagan religion. This therefore suits a Style who has undergone some religious conversion, if he is indeed turning away from the landscape. If on the other hand, he turns towards it, as the Tate Gallery believes, then it either functions as another instance of his virtuoso stance or as a pagan temple which is both ruined and outside the privileged enclosure of the Christian *hortus conclusus*. Clearly, we are forced to accept the multiplicity of meanings which a garden might signal. Even in conjunction with the more explicit words, which somewhat unfashionably too are inscribed on the painted surface, the garden's meaning is ambiguous.

Furthermore, the world within a flaming heart may have quite contrary meanings. It is an emblem which the Tate Catalogue concludes "could have been inspired" by Peter Heylyn's *Microcosmus. A little description of the Great World* (1621), since Heylyn and Style overlapped at Oxford and the former was "a high churchman and divine with counter-reformation sympathies." But consultation of Heylyn's gazetteer sheds little light, though its dedication to Prince Charles utters the commonplace that "The hearts of Princes are in a manner boundlesse, one world is not sufficient to terminate their desires." The logic of drawing the parallel with Heylyn is based largely upon the earlier invocation of Hawkins' Catholic emblem book, a clear Counter-Reformation document. But what if we register that the world within a heart was a favorite image of the notorious radical sect, the Family of Love,[21] which flourished despite official opposition in the last years of Elizabeth and under James, explicitly excluded from religious toleration? They were satirized by Middleton's play *The Family of Love*, printed in 1608. Their leader, Hendrik Niclaes, invokes the device in his *Prophetie of the Spirit of Love*, in the

Nowe goeth the Judgment ouer
the Worlde: Now becometh the
Prince of this Woulde caſt-out.
Iohn. 12.

Now is the Saluation/ the Pow﹣
er / and the Kingdom, becom our
Gods: and the Might his Chriſt﹣
es. Apo. 12.

Fig. 8. From Hendrik Niclaes, *The Prophetie of the Spirit of Love*, 1574

English translation of 1574 (Figure 8).[22]   Now there is no clear
reason to explain the world within a heart as a reference to the
Family of Love; but its accompanying words could be made, in
fact, to echo a central tenet of the Family that every person could
realize divinity in himself, like Niclaes the "Godded man." If this
could be so, we have then to decide whether the inscribed words
speak Style's mind or alternatively articulate a meaning of world
and heart which is rejected along with the pleasures of books,
music, gardens and antiquity. If the latter, then Style had indeed
converted, shifting his allegiance from a radical protestant cult to a
Catholic or high Anglican position.

On the other hand, there is an Anglican example of the world
within a *flaming* heart, on the title page of Francis Quarles' popular
Emblemes of 1635, engraved by William Marshall, where the
syllables tri-ni-tas appear at the heart's three corners (Figure 9).[23]
The idea was anticipated in poetic form in Quarles' *Divine Fancies*
of 1632:

> On the insatiableness of Mans heart.
>
> This *Globe* of earth ha's not the pow'r to fill
> The *Heart* of Man, but it desiers still:
> By him that seekes, the Cause is easly found;
> The Heart's *Triangular*; The Earth is *Round*;
> He may be full; but, never to the brim
> Be fill'd with *Earth*, till earth be fill'd with him.[24]

Interestingly, Quarles' *Emblemes* also contain a shortened version
of Style's Latin motto "vix ea nostra voco"—a few pages after this
title page, in an engraving (again by Marshall) that accompanies
the "Invocation" placed at the start of the poet's "First Booke"
(Figure 10).[25]   Here a female figure representing the soul reclines
at left, scorning riches and Cupid, while at right hang a garland and
a coat of arms, above which is the inscription "Vix ea nostra." The
allusion, it should be noted, is to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (XIII.141),
a passage disdaining family name and inheritance.[26] The similarity
of these Christian applications of Ovid in Style's portrait and in
the title page of his later translation of Dilherr must have been
deliberate. But can we assume that, in the portrait, the idea of
combining this one Ovid passage on inheritance with the motif of

Fig. 9. Title page from Francis Quarles, *Emblemes*, 1635

Majora Canamus

Vix ea nostra

Finchingfeild

Dum Cælum aspicio, Solum despicio.
Will: marshall scul:

Fig. 10.   From Quarles, *Emblemes*, 1635

the world in a flaming heart came from Quarles' first illustration and title page, and reflects his high Anglican views?

Clearly, we are creating difficulties rather than resolving them. Yet the exercise is a useful object lesson in the slippery ways of iconology, especially the tricky inarticulateness of visual imagery left to its own devices. I write "left to its own devices"; but in fact the imagery of garden and pagan remains *is* situated in a context where words are also used, though not (it must be confessed) with absolute clarity. Above all we are uncertain of the interrelationships of verbal and visual imagery, and the invocation of emblems and emblematic transactions between word and image may in fact limit our proceedings. For words and images cooperate in emblems; they explain, they generalize, making available some universal history or morality. But there is another Renaissance tradition of verbal/visual "cooperation," namely the impresa, which Michael Leslie has recently urged us to distinguish from emblem.[27] Imagery in emblem and impresa may be the same, but its function is quite different. In impresas the two languages establish a more problematical relationship, and only when we have penetrated their deliberately gnomic codes can we understand their collaboration; furthermore, they deliver private meanings, especially the inner secrets of noble souls, the *segreto dell'anima nostra*; their composition was accordingly a gentlemanly activity.

It seems apt therefore to look at the Style portrait as an impresa type; even the elegant gesture of the sitter's cane towards the emblem in the bottom righthand corner of the picture space suggests the disdain with which a virtuoso of the impresa treated the rival mode. As impresa, the portrait uses emblematic language, which in a different context would have general appeal and meaning, with deliberately teasing effect. Even the straightforward meaning of the sitter's heraldic motto is somehow preempted by the context, while the setting, the garden and classical ruins especially, and the device upon the floor speak in riddling tongues. William Drummond of Hawthornden wrote warmly of the impresa's difficulty, celebrating what Leslie has called "its play of incomplete utterances and implied dialogue between constituent parts."[28] Modern criticism has perhaps shunned this delight in enigma because it is, far more than emblem, too elusive; the impresa eludes interpretation, and critics are in the business of delivering interpretations.

On this occasion, however, I shall refrain from delivering one. In his portrait William Style of Langley confronts us with a piercing glance, he requires our strict attention, he even lectures us with his cane and would seem to signal something by his chosen position within a house, loggia and garden. But the meanings of this calculated impresa still escape us. The portrait differs from earlier examples, like that of Lord Edward Russell (Figure 5 above), only in that the riddling inset garden has now become a plausibly realistic setting: Style has entered the inset which now inhabits the whole picture space; the only unrealistic intrusion into that space is the flaming heart, which is left somewhat awkwardly floating like a close encounter of another kind.

If we are to enter into the mystery of this impresa portrait, we must confront its various problems, which quite possibly may have been deliberately chosen to hint at some religious experience only to a very select few or even just to William Style himself. Almost everything depends upon how we assess Style's position in the portrait vis-à-vis the garden and landscape and their various possible meanings. It is not evident to me that he is "turn[ing] towards" the garden; spatially the black and white marbled arcade where he stands gives, like a loggia,[29] upon the garden and therefore he is rather more connected with than disassociated from it. But if the intention had been to signal his withdrawal from the garden, then contemporary images, like those in Oliver's miniature or Burton's frontispiece, would have provided more emphatic ways of communicating Style's disdain for the garden. Furthermore, it is important to realize what a range of associations and meanings a garden could have had in the seventeenth century,[30] making it prime imagery for the gnomic utterance of impresa: it could stand not only for virtuoso-ship as a museum or theater of man's science or as an arena for social intercourse or, if we think of Jones's contemporary masques like *Coelum Britannicum*, for absolutist political order, but as a locus for any number of spiritual states. Hawkins's *Partheneia Sacra* annexes the enclosed garden for its Catholic propaganda purposes, but it had afforded many other meanings to contemporaries. George Wither's *Emblemes* of 1635, the year before the portrait, uses the garden as an image of patience[31] —it takes time to cultivate a fine garden; Wither's motto ("Things, to their best perfection come, / Not all at once; but, some and some") could be made to gloss the Roman ruins, imagery

of an earlier and less perfect religious and cultural civilization, in the Style portrait. In short, the garden in our picture confronts us, as other gardens would Andrew Marvell, with its problematic meanings: except that the mute poesie of the anonymous Flemish artist does not abide our question. But what we can, I think, be more sure of is that when Style came to obtain a frontispiece for his translation of Dilherr's *Contemplations* four years after his portrait was painted, he chose, aptly for an utterance or publication in the public domain, the far more accessible language of emblem.

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Notes

[1] Reproduced by permission of the Tate Gallery, London (as is the frontispiece to this volume).

[2] I am indebted to Elizabeth Einberg of the Tate Gallery for sending me her entry on the Style portrait in *The Tate Gallery, Illustrated Catalogue of Acquisitions 1978-80* (London, 1981), pp. 4-6, from which all otherwise unnoted references come. I have depended much upon her pioneering researches. I am also grateful to Richard Peterson for several suggestions of improvements to my argument.

[3] There is a brief entry on William Style in the *DNB*, and a more extensive account of the family in Edward Hasted, *History & Topographical Survey of the County of Kent* (1778), I, 85-86.

[4] The Local Study section of the Bromley Library kindly supplied me with some materials on Langley Park as well as some information on William Style's life and burial; none of it, unfortunately, seems to bear upon the problems of the portrait.

[5] "To my Worthy Friend Mr. Peter Lilly . . . ," ll. 21, 24, 31-32; in *The Poems of Richard Lovelace*, ed. C. H. Wilkinson (Oxford, 1953), p. 57. On some of the expectations of contemporary portraiture, see Claire Pace, "'Delineated Lives': Themes and variations in seventeenth-century poems about portraits," forthcoming in *Word & Image. A Journal of verbal/visual enquiry* 2 (1986).

[6] On the source of the Latin (not identified in the Tate Catalogue) see below.

[7] *Contemplationes et suspira nominis christiani* (Jena, 1634).

[8] Tate Catalogue, pp. 5-6.

[9] Reproduced by permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[10] "Video meliora . . . / deteriora sequor"; Loeb ed., *Metamorphoses*, tr. F. J. Miller, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1977).

[11] H. A. (Henry Hawkins), *Partheneia Sacra* ([Rouen,] 1633), p. 45 (British Library).

[12] The Arundel and Capel portraits are illustrated in Sir Roy Strong, *The Renaissance Garden in England* (London, 1979), pls. 112, 113, 117; for these and that of Henry see my own forthcoming study, *Garden and Grove: The Italian Renaissance Garden in the English Imagination 1600-1750* (London, 1986). Other portraits with garden backgrounds or settings are illustrated in Strong, *Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford, 1963), pl. XI, and his *Tudor and Jacobean Portraits*, 2 vols. (London, 1969), II, pls. 14, 388, 409.

13 Unknown artist, 1573; reproduced by permission of the Marquess of Tavistock and the Trustees of the Bedford Estates. (For a copy in the National Portrait Gallery see Strong, *Tudor and Jacobean Portraits*, I, 269-70, II, pl. 530.) The Virgilian motto "Fata viam invenient" (the fates will find a way), from *Aeneid* III.95 and X.113, also accompanies an illustration of a labyrinth in Claude Paradin, *Devises Heroïques* (Lyons, 1551 and later eds.) and in Nicholas Reusner, *Emblemata partim ethica et physica . . .* (Frankfurt, 1581), Bk. III, no. 37, adding Theseus, Ariadne, and the minotaur (for Reusner see A. Henkel and A. Schöne, eds., *Emblemata* [Stuttgart, 1967], pp. 1200-01, with other examples of figures shown in labyrinths).

14 C. 1590-95; illustrated as the frontispiece to Strong, *Artists of the Tudor Court. The Portrait Miniature Rediscovered 1520-1620* (London, 1983).

15 C. 1590-95; illustrated in Strong, *Renaissance Garden*, pl. 21, and in color on the cover of his *Artists of the Tudor Court*.

16 Oxford, 1632; reproduced by permission of the Bodleian Library. (Not noted in the Tate Catalogue.) On this image of "Democritus Abderites," see Margery Corbett and R. W. Lightbown, *The Comely Frontispiece. The Emblematic Title-Page in England 1550-1660* (London, 1979), pp. 191-200.

17 Jan Vredeman de Vries, *Hortorum Viridariorumque . . . Formae* (Antwerp, 1583).

18 Strong, *Renaissance Garden*, pl. 141, pp. 218-19.

19 These are discussed and illustrated both in Strong, *Renaissance Garden* and in my own *Garden and Grove*.

20 See, e.g., G. B. Montano's view of 1624, reproduced in Paolo Portoghesi, *The Rome of Borromini*, tr. Barbara Luigia La Penta (New York, 1968), p. 6. What may be the same configuration of ruins can be seen in the background of Cornelis van Poelenburgh's *The Flight into Egypt* (1625/26; Centraal Museum, Utrecht), illustrated in Wolfgang Stechow, *Dutch Landscape Painting of the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1966), p. 149, fig. 290.

21 See Alastair Hamilton, *The Family of Love* (Cambridge, 1981). I am also obliged to a personal communication from Professor Hamilton which directed me to the works of Niclaes for the image of the world within a heart.

22 *The Prophetie of the Spirit of Love . . . Translated out of Base-almayne into English* ([Amsterdam?,] 1574), A 1 verso, facing Preface. Reproduced by permission of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

23 (London, 1635); reproduced by permission of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

24 *Divine Fancies* (London, 1632), Bk. I, no. 81, p. 40. See also Joseph Hall, *Meditations and Vowes*, Cent. I, 34 (*Works*, 1628, I, 6): "the heart of man is a short word, a small substance, scarce enough to give a Kite one meal, yet . . . so infinite in desire that the round Globe of the world cannot fill the three corners of it." Cited by K. J. Höltgen, *Francis Quarles* (Tübingen, 1978), p. 212 n. Cf. the title page designed by Richard Haydocke for Arthur Warwick, *Spare Minutes* (London, 1634), showing a flaming, winged heart above a world, and at top another heart with the encircling motto "Implet non Impletur" (reproduced in Höltgen, "Richard Haydocke, Translator, Engraver, Physician," *The Library*, 5th ser., 33 [1978], pl. VII; discussed p. 30).

25 *Emblemes* (1635), facing p. 1; reproduced by permission of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

26 On Quarles' illustration see Höltgen, *Quarles*, pp. 212-13, observing that "Vix ea nostra voco" was also Sidney's motto (see K. Duncan-Jones, "Sidney's Personal Imprese," *JWCI* 33 [1970], 321). In the illustration, the words "Majora Canamus" at left echo Virgil, *Eclogues* iv.1 ("let us sing a greater theme"); those below (which might be translated "When I behold heaven, I look down on my native soil") adapt the Latin motto on the title page of the emblem book *Typus Mundi* (Antwerp, 1627), "Quam sordet mihi terra, dum coelum adspicio!" (Höltgen, *Quarles*, fig. 4).

27   Michael Leslie, "The dialogue between bodies and souls: pictures and poesy in the English Renaissance," *Word & Image* 1 (1985), 16-30.

28   Leslie, "Dialogue," p. 25.

29   Loggias were an intriguing architectural item at this time: see my forthcoming book (above, note 12).

30   See, for instance, Stanley Stewart, *The Enclosed Garden: The Tradition and the Image in Seventeenth-Century Poetry* (Madison, Wis., 1966).

31   George Wither, *A Collection of Emblemes* (London, 1635), p. 107. See pp. 25, 35, 239 and 250 for other gardens.