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Crashaw's Gallantries

David Reid

Crashaw's "The Flaming Heart" takes the form, as Lorraine Roberts observes, of advice to a painter, a type of poem going back ultimately to Anacreon.[1] We are not concerned here with the political instructions to painters, which in English began with Waller's celebration of the Duke of York's naval battle with the Dutch in 1665 and the derisive imitations of it, most famously Marvell's "Last Instructions to a Painter." We are concerned rather with a light erotic sort of poem.

In the tenth of the Anacreonta, the poet instructs a painter how to paint the woman of his fancy:

> And o're all her Limbs at last
> A loose purple mantle cast,
> But so ordered that the eye
> Some part naked may descry,
> An Essay by which the rest
> That lies hidden may be ghest.

When Thomas Stanley, whose translation this is, translated the next poem, also instructions to a painter but this time to paint a beautiful boy, he heterosexualized it.[2] An edition of Cowley's translations of Anacreon, supplemented by those of Francis Willis, Thomas Wood and John Oldham, has versions of both poems, the second, as in the original, celebrating the love of the boy Bathyllus. Both these sets of

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[1]"The 'Trvewit' of Crashaw's Poetry," *The Wit of Seventeenth Century Poetry*, ed. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Columbia and London: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1995), p. 175.

[2]"The Picture," XXVIII, and "Another," XXIX: *Poems* (London, 1651); the heterosexualizing is not remarked on in the scholarly notes appended.

translations came out after the first edition of "The Flaming Heart."[3] Curiously, the simple and agreeable Anacreontic recipe does not, among so many poems in the first half of the Seventeenth Century treating pictures of the beloved, seem to have been much followed. Herrick, who wrote several Anacreontic poems and who flaunted Anacreontic attitudes, wrote in his "To the Painter, to draw him a Picture" ill-natured instructions for drawing a caricature of a man he hated. For Crashaw's poem, the only forerunner in English that I have been able to find is Carew's "To the Painter"; perhaps it is Crashaw's model.

If Crashaw is indebted to Carew, it is not for specific details of phrasing or rhyme or figure, for borrowings such as A. F. Allison found in Crashaw's "Ode on a Prayer-book" from Carew's "The Rapture,"[4] but rather a general approach to the painting of a love-cynosure.

Unlike the Anacreontic poet, who commands the painter to give him back the image of his mind, both Carew and Crashaw remonstrate with the painter for not doing justice to his sitter. And neither Carew nor Crashaw speak as the lover of the woman they say has been injured by her portrait but rather as ardent admirers of one who has chosen another object for her love. With Carew, one gathers that she is someone about to make the right sort of marriage and, with Crashaw, she is St. Teresa, whose feelings are all for God. With both poets, admiration finds expression in extravagant courtly compliment. Each scorns the painter to outdo him in flattering description and, for each, the scorning is a courtly game of praise for the woman.

By way of illustration, we might consider what they have to say about blushes. Carew takes issue with his painter:

> In stead of that same rosie die,
> You should have drawne out modestie,

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[3]"His Mistresse Picture," XXV, and "Bathyllus," XXVI, *Anacreon done into English out of the original Greek,* by Abraham Cowley and S. B. (Oxford, 1683). S. B. talks of the translations supplementary to Cowley's as having been done by himself. The poems in question have been translated by Wood or Willis.

[4]"Some Influences in Crashaw's Poem, 'On a Prayer Booke sent to Mrs M. R.,'" *RES* 13 (1947): 40-41.

> Whose beauty sits enthroned there,
> And learne to looke and blush at her. ("To the Painter," ll. 17-20)[5]

The intention of this turn is not really to wither the painter as rival adorer, but to celebrate the woman's virtue; Carew's indignation, or aggression, is meant to be pretty too. One at least of Crashaw's turns on blushes resembles this in remonstrating with the painter:

> But had thy pale-fac't purple took
> Fire from the burning cheeks of that bright Booke
> Thou would'st on her have heap't up all
> That could be found SERAPHICALL.
> ("The Flaming Heart," ll. 27-30)[6]

Crashaw, like Carew, is scorning the painter to praise the object of his painting. But the blush here is not the blush of shame but the blush of ardor, "celestial rosy red, love's proper hue," such as was supposed to color the faces of the seraphim. Crashaw's uninspired painter should have taken his colors for Teresa from the burning love of her book. Later in the poem, blushes are blushes of shame. In Crashaw's poem, there are not just two rival admirers of the woman, the poet and the painter, but two rival lovers of God, the saint and the seraph, both appearing in a picture that must represent St. Teresa's famous Transverberation. It is the seraph here, not the painter, who is put to the blush by the woman. The seraph should wear the veil, not the nun:

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

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[5]All quotations from Carew are taken from *The Poems of Thomas Carew with his Masque "Coelum Britannicum,"* ed. Rhodes Dunlap (Oxford: Clarendon, 1949).

[6]All quotations from Crashaw are taken from *The Complete Poetry of Richard Crashaw*, ed. George Walton Williams (Garden City, N. Y.: Anchor Books, 1970).

The "Seraphims" are the readers of Teresa's book, inflamed with the love of God. The notion of propagation through love may possibly have been suggested by Carew's final remarks that the best pictures of the woman he celebrates will be in her lover's heart and in their children.

A final point where the poems touch is religious adoration. The painting in Carew's poem is divine; the objection to it is just that the woman is more so (ll. 5-6). It is also an objection that in representing so many perfections the painting may stir up idolatry more than could be given to a saint if it were placed in a shrine, "And turn each wand'ring looker-on / Into a new Pygmalion" (ll. 41-42). Such conceits may have given Crashaw a hint as to how instructions to a painter might be turned to a religious purpose and are a reminder, at least, of how images (and books) kindle love.

"The Flaming Heart" appeared for the first time in the second edition of *Steps to the Temple* (1648) without the lines (85-108) that conclude the poem in *Carmen Deo Nostro* (1652). Whether these were omitted in 1648 (perhaps "because of some theological objection to the strong adulation of a saint"[7]) or added in 1652 is not known. Certainly the lines 93 to 108 make the poem. They lift it to a new level of devotional excitement and pass from the gallant and precious sprightliness of the earlier part to an ecstatic baroque prayer for self-immolation inspired by St. Teresa's example. It is a frequent criticism that the two parts of the poem do not fit together.[8] What have the

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[7]Louis Martz, *The Meditative Poem* (Garden City, N. Y.: Anchor Books, 1963), p. 545.

[8]Mario Praz, *The Flaming Heart* (Garden City, N. Y.: Anchor Books, 1958), p. 261, speaks of the last lines as an "ill-welded fragment." Austin Warren, *Richard Crashaw, a Study in Baroque Sensibility* (London: Faber, 1939), p. 141, speaks of the first 68 lines of the poem as a work of "unfired ingenuity," unlike the "impassioned and eloquent conclusion." George Williamson, *The Donne Tradition: A Study in English Poetry from Donne to the Death of Cowley* (New York, Noonday, 1958), pp. 120-21, talks of lines 85-108 as of another order of poetry from the earlier part, a view that implies the two parts do not match. Lorraine Roberts, however, argues for the coherence of the poem (p. 176): "the concluding litany of 'The Flaming Heart' is not an 'ill-welded fragment,' but a means to unite not only saint, poet, and reader, but all three with God. It paradoxically transforms the poem from hagiography to meditation and liturgy; it completes structure and theme." Her observations on how the

gallantry and preciosity of the first ninety four lines to do with the liturgical rapture of the last sixteen? Such criticisms miss, I believe, the way Crashaw's poetry works. I must concede that it is almost a matter of decorum that a certain degree of solemnity should go together with devotion and that Crashaw is almost alone in English poetry in uniting gallantry, preciosity and playfulness with a powerful and rapturous impulse to self-loss. But among the many strange compounds of his art, this is perhaps the master compound, the one we must take in if we are to appreciate his poetry.[9] Here the enormous superiority of Crashaw's instructions to a painter to Carew's makes it clear that even in the usually despised early part of the poem, we have to do with a remarkably assured talent, fully in command of the sources of its own inspiration. It is true that Carew's poem is not one of his best. But it is accomplished all the same in an agreeable, gentlemanly way. To overgo it in its own virtues of wit and aggressive vivacity with such *éclat*, as "The Flaming Heart" does, suggests that we are faced with more than religious trifling.

To begin with, Crashaw's voice is more emphatic and aggressive than Carew's. He is louder. He is more Cavalier. When Carew rallies his painter, his remonstrances to the fond man for his presumption are tinged with pity for his impossible ambition:

> Fond man that hop'st to catch that face
> With those false colours, whose short grace
> Serves but to show the lookers-on
> The faults of thy presumption. (ll. 1-4)

Crashaw is much more fiery in his assumed indignation:

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conclusion needs "to be seen in the context of the redrawn 'painting poem'" go about pulling the poem together in a different way from the one I attempt in my analysis.

[9]Almost alone among commentators on Crashaw's poetry, Peter Schwenger's discussion in "Crashaw's Perspectivist Metaphor," *Comparative Literature* 28 (1976): 65-74, helps to make sense of Crashaw's playfulness. Robert Ellrodt, in his magisterial *L'inspiration personelle et l'esprit du temps chez les Poètes Métaphysiques Anglais*, 2, 379, remarks wrongly, I believe, that there is no humor in Crashaw's religious verse.

> Painter, what didst thou understand
> To put her dart into his hand!
> See, even the yeares and size of him
> Showes this the mother SERAPHIM.
> This is the mistresse flame; and duteous he
> Her happy fire-works, here, comes down to see.
> O most poor-spirited of men!
> Had thy cold Pencil kissed her PEN
> Thou couldst not so unkindly err
> To show us This faint shade for HER.
> Why man, this speakes pure mortall frame;
> And mockes with Female FROST love's manly flame.
> One would suspect thou meant'st to paint
> Some weak, inferiour, woman saint. (ll. 13-26)

There is nothing in Carew to equal this surge of expostulation from the opening query or exclamation wondering at the poet's obtuseness, this backed by the command to see what is quite evident, through two further contemptuous apostrophes ("O most poor-spirited of men!", "Why man") to the hugely ironic scorn of the last couplet.

Nor is it just in overwhelming the painter that Crashaw's voice comes over more strongly. The whole argument of his poem, with its turns and returns, moves with a fine confident impulse. Carew, for all his skill in turning his thoughts, is, we feel, stringing together a succession of witty points. Rather self-betrayingly, he introduces one of them with "Besides"—another turn has come into his mind. In spite of its charm, the effect is rather labored. Crashaw is more concentrated on his given and more continuous in his flow. Having thoroughly shamed his painter, he concludes, "Give HIM the vail, give her the dart" (l. 42). The next two sections take this command apart, the first beginning with "Give Him the vail," the second with "Give her the DART." That clear and balanced design itself lends impetus. After that we come to the grand turn of the poem, beginning not with "Besides" ("and another thing") but with "But" (l. 59), which introduces a reversal of all that he has said so far. He concedes his "humble song" may not change "praescription" and "proud wrong" (ll. 61-62); the custom of representing St. Teresa as a mere mortal nun and the angel as the shining one may prevail, and if that is so, then "Leave HER alone THE FLAMING HEART" (l. 68). There follows as

Crashaw approaches the swirling delirium of the close, not the clearly structured pattern of the paragraphs beginning with "Give," but a more deliquescent cluster of half-rhymes: "leave," "love," "live," "leaves."

There are other repetitions that pattern, emphasize and drive forward. There is, for example, the repeated pattern in the lines that begin the "Give" series and those that begin the "Leave" one:

> Give HIM the vail, give her the dart
> Give Him the vail; that he may cover . . .,
>
> Leave HER alone THE FLAMING HEART.
> Leave her that; and thou shalt leave her . . . .

In both, the new paragraph begins with the first word of the preceding line and the repetition is accentuated by the similarity of the rhyme words, "dart" / "HEART," "cover" / "leave her," particularly the feminine rhyme words. A similar effect of emphatic patterning is the repetition of the oxymoronic "wise": "wise mistake" (l. 8), "all ye wise and well-peirc't hearts" (l. 49), "Let . . . wise soules be / The love-slain witnesses" (ll. 83-84). There is an obvious crescendo here, from the first, almost jocular, introduction of wise folly, through the wisdom of being inflamed by St. Teresa to the final wisdom of divine love-death. These are two examples of patterning in the large design of the poem. On the small scale too, the repetitions and exchanges of such binary oppositions as hearts and darts, wounds and weapons, life and death occur with increasing density as the poem accelerates. This at once expresses a growing abandonment to Teresan love and elaborates a closed rhetorical scheme. Over its much greater span THE FLAMING HEART is as highly wrought as Crashaw's epigrams. It is both precious and dithyrambic, artificial and ecstatic.

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This paradox of Crashaw's art, that he at once works with deliberate effects of a sophisticated aesthete and gives expression to ecstatic and unbounded feeling is not so hard to grasp. Something analogous can be found in Swinburne's poetry, and the title of Robert

Torsten Petersson's book, *The Art of Ecstasy*[10], neatly brings together the two apparently contradictory aspects of Crashaw's art. But Crashaw's artistic sophistication, his experiments with unusual combinations, is of another order from the artifices of Carew's well-turned verses. The exquisiteness of Carew's song, "Aske me no more," is unambitious. He does not go beyond what may be expected of a courtier. The wonder is that within the limits of a gentleman who wrote with ease he produces something so fine.[11] But although "The Flaming Heart" exuberantly shoots beyond the decorum and the limits of cavalier versing, Crashaw adapts its gallant tone and outdoes it until the last lines of "The Flaming Heart" modulate into something different. And it is the gallantry more than the artifice of Crashaw's style that is hard to reconcile with devotional rapture. Crashaw's playful absurdity is more high-spirited than Carew's. Carew expostulates,

> Can such coarse varnish ere be sed
> To imitate her white and red?
> This may do else-where, in *Spaine,*
> Among those faces died in graine;
> So you may thrive, and what you doe,
> Prove the best picture of the two. (ll. 25-30)

This is neatly derisive, the derision driven home by alliteration in the last line. But it cannot equal the high spirits of Crashaw's attack on his painter: if the painter had been truly inspired by St. Teresa's book, he would have heaped on her, rather than on the angel,

> all
> That could be found SERAPHICALL;
> What e'er this youth of fire weares fair,
> Rosy fingers, radiant hair,
> Glowing cheekes, and glistering wings,

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[10]*The Art of Ecstasy: Teresa, Bernini, and Crashaw* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1970).

[11]Suckling says in "A Session of the Poets" that Carew's "Muse was hard bound, and th'issue of's brain / Was seldom brought forth but with trouble and pain." Some at least of his pains must have been spent on achieving easiness.

All those fair and flagrant things,
But before all, that fiery DART
Had fill'd the Hand of this great HEART. (ll. 29-36)

Crashaw means something sober enough: St. Teresa is a more powerful inspirer of heavenly love than the seraph represented with the dart of love in his hand. But the elegance of the verse is almost as foppish as the attributes of the youth of fire with its alliteration, with its deliciously mannered expression, not to mention the half rhyme and alliteration, of "Whate'er this youth of fire weares fair" and with above all the wonderful metonymic preposterousness of the concluding line.

There are, in fact, various ways in which the gallant style works, not against, but together with Crashaw's devotional feeling. In "The Flaming Heart," Crashaw, like Carew, plays the part of an admirer of a lover. What fires him is St. Teresa's love for another, God. Crashaw is not exactly a lover of Teresa herself but seeks extinction in a shared ardor, which has been kindled in him by her. A similarly oblique direction of desire between himself and a woman comes into a number of his poems, into "To [Mrs M. R.] Councel Concerning her Choise," "On Mr G. Herberts booke, The Temple," "Ode on a Prayer-book" and "Letter to the Countess of Denbigh." In these poems he is not fired by a magnificent erotic example, but rather acts as God's courtier to woo the woman for God. For God, that is, not for himself, and yet in the wooing he is himself aroused. So for example in one of the poems in which he enters a lady's chamber, "On Mr G. Herberts booke, The Temple," he insinuates himself into her mind, first by Petrarchan flattery:

Know you faire, on what you looke?
Divinest love lyes in this booke:
Expecting fire from your eyes,
To kindle this his sacrifice. (ll. 1-4)

He aims to arouse desire in her by awakening a consciousness that she is desirable and at the same time to kindle his own desire. His final lines wind himself into the flame of devotion they hope to kindle, mixing the language of profane and of religious love:

> And though *Herberts* name doe owe
> These devotions, fairest; know
> That while I lay them on the shrine
> Of your white hand, they are mine. (ll. 15-18)

In "Ode on a Prayer-book," Crashaw's language of mediator between God and the woman addressed borders on bad taste. Its final promise sounds as if Crashaw were pimping for God:

> she shal discover
> What joy, what blisse,
> How many Heav'ns at once it is
> To have her God become her LOVER. (ll. 122-24)

But in the "Letter to the Countess of Denbigh" the gallantry and the rallying of the Countess on her dithering over conversion to Rome manages the language of courtship with tact and human warmth. To conventional taste the blending of devotional and erotic feeling is one of the embarrassments of Crashaw's art. But in all these poems written to women, Crashaw places himself in a complex scheme of desire. The form his gallantry takes at once involves him in sexual feeling and turns it towards a religious object. It is not just that sexual feeling is made a metaphor for love of God but that it is deflected upward by the slant relation of wooer to the woman. From the start, Crashaw's gallantry is part of the upward movement, the etherializing impulse of the poems. A conversation, which is not merely carnal but worldly, has been appropriated for love talk of a court not of this world.

It is not just the poet who acts as go-between in these poems addressed to women. In "The Flaming Heart," the "Ode on a Prayer-book" and "On Mr G. Herberts booke, The Temple," a book (like a love letter) plays a part in the erotic workings of the poems. In "On Mr G. Herberts booke, The Temple," Herbert's *The Temple* is proffered as (like St. Teresa's *Life*) a love offering within the peculiar scheme of the love triangle I have just described. It inflames to love only as it meets with the loving glance of its reader's eyes. The dazzle of the Petrarchan mistress's eyes that kindle love, though themselves unkindled, is changed into a sort of figure for reciprocity, in which the fire of the woman's love-glance meets the divine love in Herbert's book. Somewhere in the background too is the feeling that "the

wounded is the wounding heart": in the field of Crashavian love, unlike the Petrarchan one, the sight of a woman with eyes inflamed with the love of God is itself inflaming, and this becomes part of the melting feeling of the poem so that Crashaw may adore his gentlewoman's white hand as a shrine at which he can offer his own devotions and blend into the flame of her prayer. In the process of this exchange, the book itself becomes by a conceit an angel of prayer: "When your hands unty these strings, / Thinke you have an Angell by th'wings" (ll. 5-6). The strings are the ribbons that tie the wings or hard covers of the book. The angel of Herbert's book will waft the prayers the book inspires in its recipient upward, glad

> To wait upon each morning sigh.
> To flutter in the balmy aire,
> Of your well perfumed prayer. (ll. 8-10)

The balmy breath of the Petrarchan mistress is transfused into the sweet smell of an acceptable sacrifice of prayer in God's nostrils and the spirit of Herbert's book is transposed into a sort of celestial canoodling.

The transposition of the book in "Ode on a Prayer-book" is not so interesting. If the young gentlewoman takes the prayer book that Crashaw gives her to heart, it will be "Close couch't in [her] white bosom" (l. 17). Crashaw elaborates a bit on this metonymic transfer of book to bosom but quickly moves on to other things. It is in "The Flaming Heart" that he attempts his most elaborate reductions of devotional ardor to the page. The painter he addresses is the engraver of the representation of St. Teresa prefixed to her *Life*. And the *Life* is itself the inspirational life of the heart that Crashaw adjures to do what it is already doing in a mighty conflagration: "Live in these conquering leaves; live all the same; / And walk through all tongues one triumphant FLAME." The book's leaves conquer with a startling incongruity in such slight things. There may be a metaphorical suggestion, equally incongruous but not unpleasing, of the leaves of a tree, which is taken up later when the *Life* becomes a grove in which St. Teresa's "scatter'd shafts of light . . . play / Among the leaves of thy larg Books of day" (l. 87-88). In the leaves of this book translated into all languages, Teresan love is to spread its inspiration throughout the world. But this is a tame translation of the magnificent absurdity of

line 78 ("And walk through all tongues one triumphant FLAME"), where through incongruous metonymic and metaphoric unions, St. Teresa's heart walks, and not only walks but walks through tongues, and not only walks through tongues but does so as a flame. At this point the highly artificial absurdities that we have noticed earlier begin to take on the characteristics of the sublime unions of contraries and giddy synaesthesia that characterize the peroration to the poem. Crashaw is still smiling but he is being carried away and behind his playfulness is the scene of Pentecost when there appeared to the Apostles "cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, each of them" (Acts, 2). At this point, Crashaw's play with the book has become visionary. At the end of the poem, the book has become a means to self-extinction: "Let me so read thy life, that I / Unto all life of mine may dy" (ll. 107-8). The life is of course not just St. Teresa's book, but the exemplary life it contains and the spiritual life at its heart.

The book, like the lady's chamber, is an enclosed space in which Crashaw can generate his own peculiar intensities. The book and reading, like the chamber and Petrarchan literary conventions, allow him to perform various reductions and transferences of agency so that the page itself opens up as a sphere of religious operations. Perhaps even more important than any specific conceit involving reading is that Crashaw can make reading into conceits. In Crashaw's hands, the book allows all those reversals and alterations of the normal order of things that with him celebrate the divine. Just as in his "Hymn in the Holy Nativity," "Sommer in winter. Day in night" (l. 81) signals, in its suspension of the natural, the intrusion of the supernatural, so the artifice and playfulness of Crashaw's art is a sign that he is trying to transmit a divine action in the world.

It must be said that "The Flaming Heart" is a graduated performance. It modulates from light-hearted banter through extravagant celebration to the final prayer for love-death. In tonality, it moves in the opposite way to the way taken by "On the wounds of our crucified Lord," which begins with somber grotesqueness and ends with a tinkle of unearthly gaiety. Nevertheless, the play on the book is there at the end of "The Flaming Heart" as at the beginning and it is

still under the rule of paradox and topsy-turvydom with which it began:

> By all thy larg draughts of intellectuall day,
> And by thy thirst of love more large then they;
> By all thy brim-fill'd Bowles of feirce desire
> By thy last Morning's draught of liquid fire;
> . . .
> Leave nothing of my SELF in me. (ll. 97-106)

"Draughts of . . . day" involves synaesthetic confusion as does "liquid fire." The bowls she drinks are not filled with the slaking of desire but with desire itself; the more she drinks, the more her desire will be boundless.[12] The repeated heavy rhythmic strokes of the conclusion change the key of the feeling; the artifice and the absurdity have become intoxicated. But what is taking place is the apotheosis of the Carewesque gallant poem, with its artifices, points and turns, not the addition of something incongruous.

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It is not, perhaps, easy to take Crashaw's blend of playfulness, eroticizing and devotion, nor can it have been easy for some readers in the century of Carew and Rochester. Or rather, it is easy to be charmed and hard not to have disquieting second thoughts. There are some good reasons for hesitation. Crashaw's poetry has a very slight grasp of human experience. Unlike Milton, or Donne, or Herbert, his is not the religion of someone solidly grounded in the world. Donne prays, "From thinking us all soul, neglecting thus / Our mutual duties, Lord deliver us" ("A Litany," ll. 143-44). Mutual duties, or even the universal human resistance of an earthly self to the extinction of itself in God, are ignored by Crashaw in his strong appetite to melt into the divine. In the end one is unsure what to make of a poetry so humanly insubstantial in its motives.

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[12]From the context, it is clear that Crashaw is thinking of bowls of wine. If he is at the same time quibbling on "bowels," that will simply emphasize the drinker's paradox that St. Teresa quaffs what she is already filled with.

On the other hand, the reasons for being troubled by the perversity of Crashaw's art are less compelling. If Crashaw is not a great poet, he is an extraordinary artist. The more one examines his erotic expression of religious devotion, the more one is struck by the boldness of his art, the deliberate and radical reworking of the conventions of the poetry of human love and the transposition and astonishing elaboration of its stylistic mannerisms. Yvor Winters's downright criticism that Crashaw confused sexual orgasm with mystical union with God,[13] like all strictures that Crashaw's religious feeling can be accounted for as a pathological misdirection of human sexual feeling, is deflected, if not dismissed, as one observes the sophistication and thoroughness with which he applies himself as a religious aesthete to converting human sexual feeling into something rich and strange. More naive artists in Crashaw's vein, such as Crashaw's friend, Joseph Beaumont in his *Psyche,* or Edward Benlowes, Beaumont's admirer and imitator, in *Theophila,* though not without charms of their own, remain, perhaps to their credit, involved embarrassingly in the human sexual feelings they attempt to sublimate. Crashaw's alchemy, by its greater deliberateness and artificiality, manages to make something ascetic of its voluptuousness. Where he takes over the gallant conventions of Carew's "To the Painter," he alters and exaggerates their badinage. Where he takes over the language of hearts and darts, he accentuates its absurdity and preciosity. And with all this exaggeration and overgoing, he is a master of his effects and manages to convey with a disturbing diffusion of sense a transcending of the familiar stuff out of which he compounds his art.

University of Stirling

[13]Yvor Winters, *Forms of Discovery* (Denver: Swallow, 1967), pp. 91-93. See also R. V. Young's reply to such strictures in *Richard Crashaw and the Spanish Golden Age* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1982), pp. 86-88.