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From "Lively" Art to "Glitt'ring Expressions": Crashaw's Initial Reception Reconsidered

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In his 17 December 1710 letter to Henry Cromwell, Alexander Pope offered what modern scholars have described as the first extensive, though misguided, critical assessment of Crashaw's poetry.[1] The letter appears to have accompanied a volume of Crashaw's verse Pope sent to Cromwell for his perusal. In it, Pope explains how to read the poetry by instructing his friend in what he considers its merits and deficiencies. His main contention is that Crashaw's poetry presents merely a pretty surface, behind which there is little to be found: "All that regards Design, Form, Fable, (which is the Soul of Poetry) all that concerns exactness, or consent of parts, (which is the Body) will probably be wanting; only pretty conceptions, fine metaphors, glitt'ring expressions, and something of a neat cast of Verse, (which are properly the dress, gems, or loose ornaments of Poetry) may be found in these verses."[2] In the rhetorical terminology of the period, he finds Crashaw's poetry deficient in its invention ("Design, Form, Fable") and disposition

[1]As Austin Warren remarks, "Pope was the first critic to give more than passing mention to Crashaw" ("The Reputation of Crashaw in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Studies in Philology* 31 [1934]: 389–393).

[2]*The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, vol. 1: 1704–1718, edited by George Sherburn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), pp. 109–110. More than a month earlier, on 11 November, Pope included in another letter to Cromwell four lines from "Musicks Duell" as a "very remarkable" translation of Strada's Latin poem. Pope sent the volume and the 17 December letter as part of an ongoing conversation about style, versification, and Latin translations.

("consent of parts"), but occasionally worthwhile in its elocution, those "pretty conceptions, fine metaphors," and "glitt'ring expressions" that provide the apparel of poetry. Even though Pope thought enough of Crashaw to be occasionally influenced by him, few greater insults could be lobbed at a seventeenth-century poet than to dismiss his work as mere elocution, or versifying.[3]

That Pope misread Crashaw's poetry is obvious from the above quotation alone. By assuming Crashaw wrote as an ingenious gentleman versifier, and not as an authentic poet concerned with communicating to readers the experience of religious truths, Pope leant credence to what would become throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries one of the most enduring misconceptions about the poetry: its oft-described anti-intellectual character. Of course, the anti-intellectual charge cannot stand up to scrutiny, as numerous scholars have shown.[4] Less obvious, however, is how dramatically Pope's letter departed from the reports of earlier commentators, who were almost unanimous in their praise of Crashaw's ability to *move* readers.[5] Whereas Pope valued Crashaw's

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[3]The subject of Pope's borrowings from Crashaw was popular in the eighteenth century. See Warren, pp. 393–4.

[4]Lorraine M. Roberts, to cite one fairly recent example, demonstrates that Crashaw's poems present more than merely surface and are in fact carefully structured around core ideas: Crashaw "is one of the most intellectual of poets, whose exercise of wit functions on the level of wisdom as well as that of cleverness. Crashaw's methods of revision and his art of fusing a variety of traditions at one time—emblematic, liturgical, classical, meditative—demonstrate that his wit was exercised not just on surface features such as images and rhetorical devices but on structural features such as concept and form as well in order to highlight the major subject and theme of almost all his sacred poetry—the Incarnation and its meaning in human history." See "The 'Truewit' of Crashaw's Poetry," *The Wit of Seventeenth-Century Poetry*, ed. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1995), p. 174.

[5]As Lorraine M. and John R. Roberts note, in "Crashavian Criticism: A Brief Interpretive History" (*New Perspectives on the Life and Art of Richard*

knack for turning an occasional phrase or crafting a "fine" metaphor, *seventeenth*-century commentators consistently alluded to Crashaw's manipulation of the passions of readers, an activity presupposing, not dismissing, sophisticated rational design. Many sought to emulate it. These early commentaries on Crashaw, though scant and often cryptic, nevertheless are revealing when approached within the context of then contemporary discussions of affective rhetoric. A careful examination of their terminology reveals a different, and closer, relationship between reason and affect in Crashaw's poetry than that acknowledged by eighteenth-century writers who did not esteem it as favorably. Changes in critical terminology, particularly surrounding the word "lively," explain why Crashaw began to lose his fame as a wit during this time—why the fortunes of taste caused his "lively" art to devolve into mere "glitt'ring expressions." These changes also illuminate why the misjudgments so common in the poet's critical heritage began to hover around his poetry like so many gadflies.

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From 1637 to 1691, three writers—Richard Holdsworth, Henry Belasyse, and John Dunton—listed Crashaw as one of the finest English poets.[6] While the habit of list-making, then as now, tends to have limited objective value, the lists of these three writers are

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Crashaw, Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1990, p. 1), the most puzzling exception was William Prynne, whose 1653 characterization of Crashaw's verse as bitter raillery is surely also the "most unenlightened" critical comment on Crashaw in the seventeenth century. In his edition of *The Poems, English, Latin, and Greek, of Richard Crashaw*, L. C. Martin prints Prynne's comments on pages xxxv–xxxvi.

[6]See John R. Roberts, *Richard Crashaw: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism, 1632–1980* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1985), pp. 7–25, for annotated citations of all known seventeenth-century references to Crashaw. I am, for the moment, excluding writers such as David Lloyd, Edward Phillips, and William Winstanley whose biographical dictionaries implicitly rank Crashaw as a notable poet through their inclusion of him.

richly suggestive in their implications about how Crashaw's verse was originally received. Although they appeared in slightly different contexts (two served as recommended reading lists for students or young graduate readers, and the other, as part of a writer's account of worthy things English), they agreed in their estimation of Crashaw's ability to produce an affective reaction in readers. Holdsworth, Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, from 1637 to 1639, recommended Crashaw's *Epigrammatum Sacrorum Liber* in his "Directions for a Student in the Universitie," which he composed during the first year of his mastership.[7] He groups them with "Herbert's Poems" in a list of *Studia Leviora* for students who "come to the University not with intention to make Scholarship their profession, but only to get such learning as may serve for delight and ornament" and those for whom a lack of rhetorical knowledge "would speake a defect in breeding rather then Scholarship."[8] Holdsworth's list of lighter study is somewhat eclectic: it focuses mainly on prose works, especially essays, histories, and psychological and philosophical works, and features only a handful of poets. Along with Herbert and Crashaw, he lists George Sandys's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, John Owen's epigrams, George Buchanan's poems, and the characters of Sir Thomas Overbury and John Earle. He excludes the dramatists, including Shakespeare and Jonson, and he ignores Donne and other prominent lyricists. Moreover, he provides no explanation for his choices; the list is merely a list.

Yet if we examine Holdsworth's list in the context of his educational program, this early reference to Crashaw reveals more than simply evidence for the popularity of the epigrams, at least in Cambridge, so soon after their publication in 1634. Ostensibly, Holdsworth chose poets who exemplified the standards of the eloquence the rest of his educational program sought to instill.

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[7]Roberts, ibid., p. 9.

[8]Harris Francis Fletcher, *The Intellectual Development of John Milton*, vol. 2, Appendix II (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1961), pp. 647–648.

Sandys's translation of Ovid and the two books of characters make sense in light of Holdsworth's emphases elsewhere, in that they not only serve as examples of poetic rhetoric but also offer character studies of different personality types, thereby broadening the reader's knowledge of human behavior in much the same way as a faculty psychology treatise.[9] While it could be argued that Herbert's and Crashaw's poems were thought to fulfill a similar dual function, a better explanation—one suggesting his own attitude toward sacred rhetoric—can be found in the master's choice of textbooks. For the afternoons of the third year of study, Holdsworth requires students to pour over the Jesuit Nicolas Caussin's *De eloquentia sacra et humana*, first published in 1619 and in its third edition in 1630. This sprawling work, which exceeded 1,000 pages by its last edition, gave readers a thorough grounding in rhetoric as it was practiced in the early seventeenth century; it also argued that profane eloquence was inferior to its sacred counterpart.[10] In the first chapter, Caussin situates eloquence within a system of correspondences that includes God and the human mind. "The mind is the image of God," he writes,

> God is the mind; eloquence is divine. As God is in the world, and the mind is in the body, so eloquence is in civil life. God has been separated from any mortal materiality; the mind is entirely spirit; eloquence is the bright offspring of a special mind. God sees all things, nor is He seen; the mind discerns all things, nor is it discerned; eloquence takes possession of all things, nor does anything really take possession of it. God flows into things with the speed of wings; the mind does so on the wings of love; but all the power of persuasion is carried by the emotions as by a vehicle, and it penetrates and permeates the breast. (qtd. in Rebhorn, pp. 276–77)

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[9]The same list also mentions Edward Reynolds's *A Treatise of the Passions and the Faculties of the Soule of Man*, but since this work was not published until 1640, it most likely was added to Holdsworth's *Directions* after their original composition, unless Holdsworth had access to this treatise in manuscript.

[10]Wayne C. Rebhorn, *Renaissance Debates on Rhetoric* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), p. 273.

Caussin's alignment of God, the mind, and eloquence elevates the latter by giving it a function within the divine cosmic scheme. Because it can reach the souls of auditors/readers and work affective changes therein, eloquence makes possible civil life and so should be used to advance the causes of justice and virtue in the world, in accordance with God's designs. Stated thus, it becomes a kind of obligation for the true Christian.

The necessity for learning about eloquence becomes clearer later in Caussin's treatise, when in Book VIII ("On the Emotions"), he elaborates on his earlier claim that the "power of persuasion" "penetrates and permeates the breast." The trained orator, he asserts, "who has a certain portion of divinity and is an excellent image of God's wondrous sovereign power, is carried by the emotions as by the winds and is accustomed to arouse them in the minds of his auditors" (p. 283). Through the medium of words, he can transfer the emotional content of his rhetoric into the souls of those who hear (or read) it. He "knows how to relax and tighten up on the reins of the emotions, as if they were winds." He can establish a kind of hegemony within his audience and sway opinions and behavior. For this reason, the "empire of the orator's eloquence, which rules over the emotions, is the greatest," he writes,

> for it holds men together in society, allures their minds, impels their wills to go wherever it wishes and to come back from wherever it wishes, offers help to suppliants, lifts up those who have been struck down, offers safety to the accused, liberates men from dangers, in sum, establishes a certain gentle tyranny within the hearts of men. (pp. 276-77)

These impressive claims were commonplaces within the discourse of early modern rhetoric. Holdsworth seems to have accepted them *in toto*. One of his reasons for assigning Caussin's treatise is that it "teacheth the nature of mens passions & affections, how to raise & move them, & how to allay quiet [sic] & change them: a knowledge necessarie not only in writing, sett speeches & letters,

but allso in common discourse, & dealings with men; if not to make use of it your self, at least to discover it in other men that you be not at any time abused and over reach'd by it."[11] He wanted to make sure his students were well-prepared. Because it is so powerful—it "takes possession of all things," while nothing can "really take possession of it"—eloquence must be a part of one's humanistic learning, if not for its own divine virtues, then to inoculate innocents against its misuse. Caussin's claims cast Holdsworth's *Studia Leviora* in a more serious light. Given that this list was intended for students unwilling or unable to undergo the full, rigorous course of study, one can suppose Holdsworth selected carefully. He must have chosen the works he thought best exemplified the lessons of his curriculum. Herbert and Crashaw are the only English religious lyricists included: he must have thought their poetry embodied the affective power Caussin describes, or else he would not have listed them.

The second list, that of Henry Belasyse twenty-three years later, does not require extensive unpacking, though it, too, suggests its author considered Crashaw more than simply an ingenious versifier. In "An English Traveler's First Curiousity: or The Knowledge of his owne Countrey" (April 1657), Belasyse groups Crashaw with Sidney, Shakespeare, Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, Donne, Bacon, Randolph, and Cleveland as the "good witts in England."[12] Belasyse's use of the word "wit" connotes more than simply stylistic grace of a certain type. "Historically," as Lorraine M. Roberts explains, "the term *wit* narrowed in meaning, especially in relation to the metaphysical poets; it became, generally speaking, equated with the term *conceit*, and not with the more encompassing faculty of mental powers of understanding and wisdom."[13] Belasyse's reference appeared before this shift in

[11]Fletcher, pp. 643–644.

[12]Roberts, *Richard Crashaw: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism, 1632–1980*, p. 16.

[13]"The 'Truewit' of Crashaw's Poetry," p. 173.

meaning took hold in the early eighteenth century. In the middle decades of the seventeenth century, educated readers who employed "wit" as a critical term—Dryden, for example—believed it described a *range* of mental dispositions, from the "highest to almost the lowest capabilities and expressions of the human mind."[14] For example, in his "Account" of *Annus Mirabilis, the Year of Wonders* (1667), Dryden distinguishes between the "wit of the poet" and "wit written" to make the point that true wit is *not* simply verbal ingenuity for the sake of amusement: "'Tis not the jerk or sting of an epigram, nor the seeming contradiction of a poor antithesis (the delight of an ill-judging audience in a play of rhyme), nor the jingle of a more poor paronomasia; neither is it so much the morality of a grave sentence affected by Lucan, but more sparingly used by Virgil; but it is some lively and apt description, dressed in such colours of speech that it sets before your eyes the absent object as perfectly and more delightfully than nature."[15] In this quotation, true "wit written" is the product of an imagination capable of rendering worlds that are energetic ("lively") and verisimilar ("apt") enough to engage the imaginations of readers. When readers consent to the fictions presented to them, the verbal renderings responsible for this engagement can be said to be as perfect as nature (because the fiction entrances the reader's imagination) and more delightful than nature (because the fiction arouses the reader's passions).[16] Belasyse, I would argue, implies a

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[14]H. James Jensen, *A Glossary of John Dryden's Critical Terms* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1969), p. 123.

[15]*Of Dramatic Poesy and Other Critical Essays*, vol. 1, ed. George Watson (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1962), p. 98.

[16]Dryden also believed that some approaches to lyric genres more readily leant themselves to imaginative engagement than others. Thus, in his famous comparison of Donne and the Earl of Dorset, his patron, he finds the former's approach to love poetry too cerebral (Donne "perplexes the minds of the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy, when he should engage their hearts"). He faults Cowley for following Donne's manner in the *Mistress* but interestingly, believes Cowley's *Pindariques* succeed in reaching head and heart, which is why

like definition of "wit" in his grouping of Crashaw with other literary luminaries, several of whom—the dramatists—made their livings by engaging the imaginations and passions of audiences. Granted, theatrical performance benefits from the presence of actors and the experience of the stage (costumes, props, sets, etc.); yet most of the writers on Belasyse's list rely on energetic language that "sets before" the eyes events, objects, people, and passions.

The word "lively" becomes one of the most important seventeenth-century critical terms for describing Crashaw's poetry, if not always directly, then through implication. In "An Essay upon all sorts of Learning" (1691), which contains the longest list of Crashaw's shared company with other celebrated Renaissance writers, John Dunton expressly uses the word to affirm the importance of verisimilar representations that stir readers' souls.[17] Dunton ranks Crashaw in the same company as Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, Drayton, Donne, Suckling, Cowley, Davenant, Otway, Lee, Behn, Phillips, and Dryden as the English poets most worthy of emulation.[18] Because his list appears as an addendum to an account of the nature of poetry, his expectations about the power of verse are clear. From the arrival of the first poet in ancient times (Orpheus), Dunton argues, poetry has functioned as a "kind of Painting" that represents the mind and the "Body too, and all the Actions of Human Life, as well as all the beauties of Nature, in a Lively Description" (p. xii). Because poetry has an inherent "influence on the Minds of Men," it became an agent of civility in barbarous ages past.

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they "are undoubtedly the best of [Cowley's] poems, and the most correct" (ibid., vol. 2, p. 76).

[17] *The Young Student's Library. CONTAINING EXTRACTS and ABRIDGEMENTS of the Most Valuable Books Printed in England, and in the Forreign Journals, FROM THE Year Sixty Five, to This Time* (*LONDON*, Printed for *Iohn Dunton*, at the *Raven* in the *Poultry*, 1691), pp. xii–xiii.

[18] Ibid., p. xiii.

Two critics appear to have influenced Dunton's thinking about these matters, Dryden and Thomas Rhymer, the leading English rules critic of the Restoration. Dunton directs readers interested in understanding "our English way of Writing" to Dryden's prefaces and *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668) and Rhymer's translations of Rapin's literary criticism. The word "lively" figures prominently in the work of both critics, as my earlier reference to Dryden illustrates. In *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, Dryden provides his most complete explication of the term as part of the argument between Neander and Lisideius over the merits of Elizabethan and Stuart drama in reference to more recent French plays that obey the three unities more stringently. Lisideius argues that liveliness (the quality of being lifelike, or verisimilitude) consists in a rigorous adherence to the unities; meanwhile, Neander counters that rhetorical *enargeia* (the realistic portrayal of life), while important, is not as important as rhetorical *energia*, which H. James Jensen glosses as the "feeling of reality that comes from the energy of life."[19] Neander concedes that the best English plays, with their jumps in time and space and their more complex subplots and counterplots, are less faithful to the rules than French plays; but the French aesthetic legalism renders a verisimilar beauty that cannot reach as great a range of passions as the plays of his native England. The "beauties of the French poesy," he says, are "indeed the beauties of a statue, but not of a man, because not animated with the soul of poesy, which is imitation of humour and passions; and this Lisideius himself, or any other, however biased to their party, cannot but acknowledge, if he will either compare the humours of our comedies, or the characters of our serious plays, with theirs."[20] This energy of life, Neander argues, is necessary for a play to

[19] *Signs and Meaning in Eighteenth-Century Art: Epistemology, Rhetoric, Painting, Poesy, Music, Dramatic Performance, and G. F. Handel* (Series XX: Fine Arts, vol. 33, New York: Peter Lang, 1997), p. 38. See Jensen's discussion, pp. 38–41, for more on this debate.

[20] *Of Dramatic Poesy and Other Critical Essays*, ed. George Watson (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1962), I:56.

engage the passions of audience members. By representing passions onstage, plays can raise passions in those who watch them, an idea as old as Aristotle and one in line with Caussin's remarks about the power of eloquence more generally. Neander distinguishes himself by introducing a "new meaning for *lively*, arguing that lively art secondarily appears lifelike to the senses (*enargeia*), and primarily has within it the energy (*energia*) of life."[21] Even so, he nonetheless considers both ideas necessary components for art to succeed.

Rhymer also values the two senses of lively in his account of the transaction between poets and readers. In his translation of Rapin's *Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie* (1694), he writes that it is "only by the most lively *Figures* of *Eloquence* that all the *Emotions* of the *Soul* become fervent and passionate: *Nature* must be the onely Guide that can be propos'd in the use of these *Figures* and *Metaphors*, and must therefore be well understood, that it may be trac'd and follow'd without mistake."[22] Rhetorical tropes and figures must be energetic enough to engage the emotions and they must be derived from accurate perceptions of how emotions are manifested in "*Nature*." Rhymer contends that tragedy especially must be lively in these two senses, but so must the other genres as well. Poetry cannot succeed unless it delights readers, and so it "labours to move the Passions, all whose motions are delightful, because nothing is more sweet to the Soul than agitation" (p. 9). While "delight" may not be the principal end of poetry, passionate engagement is necessary for poetry to have any other impact on readers.

When Dunton uses the term "Lively Description," then, he means a kind of expression so lifelike and stirring it cannot help but influence the inward dispositions of those who read it. No

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[21] *Signs and Meaning*, p. 39.

[22] *Monsieur Rapin's Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of POESIE* (*LONDON*, Printed by *T. Warren*, for *H. Herringman*, and Sold by *Francis Saunders*, in the *Lower Walk* of the *New Exchange*, 1694), p. 49.

wonder he believes that poetry literally changed the world! It abetted the rise of civilization, he reasons, because in the hands of the early philosophers, it could be used to aid the rational powers of individuals, so that they could govern their passions and appetites more effectively.[23] Not every person who picked up a pen could harness this power, however. According to Dunton, only the most talented poets could work such profound effects on people. Consequently, he advises would-be poets to run their work past judicious friends before committing it to print. If these friends find the poetry mediocre, the poets should cease writing it; otherwise, they will "reap but Infamy, by exposing themselves, as ambitious of a thing they cou'd not attain, Mediocrity (as we have said) being intolerable in Poetry, however excusable in other affairs." Poets with talent must undergo rigorous training, like the kind Holdsworth recommended almost sixty years before: "To be a perfect Poet, a Man must be a general Scholler, skill'd both in the Tongues and Sciences, must be perfect in History and Moral Philosophy, the latter of which is absolutely necessary to give him an insight into the Nature of the Passions, to move which is his chief Aim and Business, nor can he draw a virtuous Character, unless he know what is the just Composition of it" (p. xiii). Once again, the emphasis falls on the necessity for poets to know how to represent human nature in such a way as to manipulate the passions of readers, the movement of which is their "chief Aim and Business."

Dunton's list of the best Latin and English poets showcases those talented men and women who succeeded in creating what he considered a lively art worthy of emulation. Interestingly, Crashaw's poetry not only seems to have exemplified the poetic virtues Dunton describes, but also for readers of *The Athenian Mercury* (1691-97) and *The Athenian Oracle* (1703), at least, it

[23]"An Essay upon all sorts of Learning," p. xii.

continued to do so for many years afterwards.[24] In 1710, the same year that Pope wrote his letter to Cromwell, Dunton's essay was reprinted with emendations in *A Supplement to the Athenian Oracle*.[25] W. G. Day reports that while the "remarks upon poetry remained substantially the same," the reading list of English exemplars was changed to reflect the changing tastes of the Athenian society.[26] Milton, Waller, Prior, and Addison were added to the list, while Drayton and Donne disappeared. Crashaw outlasted Donne. Day glosses the disappearance of Donne by printing a stanza that appeared in a poem published in the *Athenian Sport* in 1707: "Then steal from *Cowley*, or from *Done* / (Since none will miss 'em when they're gone) / Two hundred thousand Stanzas on Her Shoo-ty!" Although Cowley also is taken to task here, he remained on Dunton's 1710 list. We may never know for certain why, but it is tempting to speculate that one reason might have been a preference for the ode, a form Cowley and Crashaw admired and developed, and Donne avoided. Rapin, in Rhymer's translation, considers the ode to "have as much *nobleness*, *elevation*, and *transport* as the *Eclogue* has of simplicity and modesty."[27] By "*nobleness*," he means nobility of expression; by "*elevation*," he means a high subject matter ("*Praises* of the Gods" or the "*illustrious Actions* of *Great Men*"); and by "*transport*," he means the capacity to raise the higher passions of the soul, thereby

[24]As Kathleen Kemmerer notes, in "The Athenian Society" (The Penn State Archive for the Eighteenth Century, 29 December 2005, http://www.hn.psu.edu/faculty/kkemmerer/18th/periodicals/mercury/mercury.htm), twenty volumes of *The Athenian Mercury* were published during its six years of existence, while *The Athenian Oracle*, which reprinted selections from the Mercury, appeared in four volumes. The writers and publishers of both publications styled themselves as the Athenian Society.

[25]W. G. Day, "The Athenian Society: Poets' Reputations 1692–1710," *Notes & Queries*, New Series, 18, No. 9 (September 1971): 329.

[26]Ibid., p. 329.

[27]*Monsieur Rapin's Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie*, p. 148.

ennobling it. All three virtues grace Crashaw's late odes, as well as the hymns.

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The earliest readers of the 1646 and 1648 editions of *Steps to the Temple* and of *Carmen Deo Nostro* affirm the assumptions of the list-makers about the nature of Crashaw's lively art. Consistently, they cite the ease with which Crashaw affects the soul of the devotionally minded reader. The "Preface to the Reader" of *Steps to the Temple* asserts such affective transport as a primary goal of the collection. The "Authors friend" begins by highlighting the capacity of the ensuing verse to ennoble and elevate the soul through careful tuning:

> They [the poems] shal lift thee Reader, some yards above the ground: and, as in *Pythagoras* Schoole, every temper was first tuned into a height by severall proportions of Musick; and spiritualiz'd for one of his weighty Lectures; So maist thou take a Poem hence, and tune thy soule by it, into a heavenly pitch; and thus refined and borne up upon the wings of meditation, in these Poems thou maist talke freely of God, and of that other state.[28]

From a seventeenth-century perspective, the above passage describes a more literal affective response than its hyperbolic suggestion of readerly levitation would seem to indicate. A Neoplatonic commonplace, the music metaphor presupposes the highly rational use of artistic materials to harmonize the passions

[28]All quotations from Crashaw's works come from *The Complete Poetry of Richard Crashaw*, edited by George Walton Williams (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1974). The identity of the Preface writer remains a mystery. Martin, following Warren (in *Richard Crashaw*), claims Joseph Beaumont is the likely candidate. Williams is more cautious, speculating either "one of Crashaw's Cambridge friends (Joseph Beaumont being the likeliest)" or "Crashaw's friend in Lincolnshire" (p. 650).

of the soul. Well-proportioned or "speculative" music, it was commonly believed, could instill order in the disquieted souls of those who heard it by imparting "a kind of mystical instruction or meaning that transcends passions and earthly existence."[29] To achieve this transcendental state (an internal elevation of passions and faculties), speculative music raises higher passions (love, awe, admiration, and the like) that inspire, rather than distract the rational faculties, the way violent passions (hate, fear, anger, etc.) would. This is what the Preface means by the "severall proportions of Musick" that "tuned into a height" "every temper" present in the school of Pythagoras: music brings the higher passions into ascendance to reinforce each individual's temper, a word that in Crashaw's time meant a combination of "mental balance or composure," bodily "constitution," and "character" or "quality."[30] As with this ancient music, readers who wish to influence their own tempers ("tune" their "soule[s]") "into a heavenly pitch" can read the poetry meditatively. The comment suggests, first, that the poems themselves were designed with such homeopathic tuning in mind, and second, that readers educated in early modern rhetoric were no strangers to the function of divine poetry as a kind of spiritual medication, a means of literally taking charge of their spiritual/psychological conditions.[31]

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[29]Jensen, *The Muse's Concord: Literature, Music, and the Visual Arts in the Baroque Age* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1976), p. 41. Quoting Thomas Morley's *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* (1597), Jensen explains that "speculative music 'is that kind of music which by mathematical helps, seeketh out the causes, properties, and natures of sounds by themselves, and compared with others proceeding no further, but content with only contemplation by the art. . . .' The instruction offered by speculative music is more abstract, inducing harmony in the soul of listeners through the harmony of the music itself."

[30]*OED*, senses 1.3, 2.4a and 4b, respectively.

[31]The influence of music on one's physiology also was understood in similar terms. According to Gretchen Ludke Finney, in *Musical Backgrounds for English Literature: 1580–1650* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1962), Merin

The Preface writer thus treats Crashaw's verse as a rhetorical (and therefore rational) art, an assumption further confirmed by his remark in the subsequent paragraph that St. Augustine and Crashaw both believed "every foot in a high-borne verse, might helpe to measure the soule into that better world." The attention to "every foot" signals an attentiveness to craft, coupled with a lofty intention. Both Augustine, the former teacher of rhetoric, and Crashaw, the Latin epigram prodigy, would have realized the considerable care a poet needs to control his language carefully enough to truly reconstitute the disposition of the souls of readers. As long as a belief in faculty psychology dominated Anglo-European culture, and as long as classically inspired rhetoric existed at the core of linguistic education, poets and readers spoke of the ennobling capacity of poetry, drama, and the other arts in similar terms.

The remarks of other readers in the 1640s and 50s confirm that Crashaw's lively art appears to have lived up to its promises. Several poets envy Crashaw's skill in moving the souls of readers. In *Psyche: Or Love's Mystery* (1648), Joseph Beaumont describes his friend Crashaw as a follower of St. Gregory of Nazianzen in the transformation of every earthly "*Muse* into a true *Urania*."[32] He

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Mersenne "(at a time when he was already leaning toward the new scientific approach to musical sound) commented in his *Harmonie universelle* (1636) on the utility of music for physicians" and Athanasius Kircher "transcribed, in notes of varying time value, rhythm, and pitch, fifteen kinds of pulse rhythm, knowledge of which could assist in both the diagnosis and the cure of disease" (pp. 38–9). See chapters two ("Music: A Book of Knowledge"), three ("Music and Ecstasy: A Religious Controversy"), and five ("Music: The Breath of Life").

[32]I quote from Alexander B. Grosart's edition of *The Complete Poems of Dr. Joseph Beaumont (1615-1699)* (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1967). In the original edition of *Psyche*, the reference to Crashaw appears in Canto IV, stanzas 94 and 95. Grosart uses the 1702 edition as his copy-text, and so the relevant stanzas of Canto IV are 107 and 108. Beaumont's reference to St. Gregory appears in stanza 106 of Grosart's edition (p. 68). For a more extended discussion of the "fitness of associating the names of Gregory and Crashaw," see

believes Crashaw "didst frame" his "polish'd *Temple Steps*" according to St. Gregory's "heart-attracting Pattern" (stanza 107). As one might guess, Beaumont's choice of words is important. "Heart-attracting" could mean two things that are not mutually exclusive. First, it could mean that Crashaw saw in St. Gregory an "illustrious precedent" of a devout person who consecrated his poetry to the service of God (St. Gregory himself is the "Pattern" that attracted Crashaw's heart).[33] Secondly, it also could mean that St. Gregory's poetry succeeds in "attracting," or winning over, the hearts of those who read it sympathetically. The notion of attraction carried significant weight in the psychological discourse of the period whenever writers raised the subject of the appetitive powers of the sensible soul. In brief, when confronted with beauty or things pleasurable, the appetites desired to spur the soul-body toward greater appreciation or possession of it. When confronted with ugliness or something harmful, they sought to distance the soul-body from it.[34] "Heart-attracting" refers to the former process, the arousal of sympathy between beautiful object (the art of sacred poetry and by extension, the divine truths it represents) and the person who perceives it. St. Gregory's poems epitomize "heart-attracting" sacred verse; Crashaw's poems follow this same "Pattern" so well, Beaumont says, they "[s]tand as the Ladder to [Crashaw's] mounting fame."

The other word that stands out in Beaumont's description is "polish'd" ("Witness those polish'd *Temple Steps*, which now /

Warren, "The Reputation of Crashaw in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," pp. 385–388.

[33]Warren, in "The Reputation of Crashaw in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," pp. 387–88, reads Beaumont's description in this way.

[34]Many writers, from ancient times through the Renaissance, describe the appetites in this fashion. Charles Le Brun, for example, writes that "when an object is represented to us as worth our regard, then are we induc'd to love it [i.e., direct the Will to it]; and when it is represented to us as bad or noxious, it excites our hatred and aversion" (*A Method To learn to DESIGN THE PASSIONS* [1698; trans. 1734], p. 16).

Stand as the Ladder to thy mounting fame"), further testimony of Crashaw's poetic craft. Not only can Crashaw's lively art attract the souls of readers to contemplation of the divine, Beaumont suggests, but also it exemplifies aesthetic perfection, which he considers a product of revision. In this area, he concedes his own inferiority: "Fair had my *Psyche* been," he writes, "had she at first / By thy judicious hand been drest and nurst" (stanza 108). These lines imply that he and Crashaw read each other's work and exchanged critical opinions when the two were together in Cambridge, and that the former valued the judiciousness of the latter. Beaumont seems aware of the emerging sprawl of his *Psyche*, already hundreds of stanzas long by its fourth canto, and wonders how it might have benefited if Crashaw had been around to act as nanny. Like the other writers under discussion, he considers Crashaw an exemplar both of affective persuasion and of literary craft necessary to produce it.

Three years later, in 1651, Clement Barksdale also touted Crashaw's ability to engender sympathy in readers through skillfully crafted verse. First published in *Nympha libethris, or the Cotswold Muse*, Barksdale's poem, like Holdsworth fourteen years previously, pairs Crashaw with Herbert as the two premier English religious lyricists:

> When into *Herbert's Temple* I ascend
> By *Crashaw's Steps*, I do *resolve* to *mend*
> My Lighter Verse, and my low notes to raise,
> And in high Accent sing my *Maker's* praise.
> Mean while these *sacred Poems* in my Sight
> I place, and *read*, that I may learn to *write.*

By now, Barksdale's vocabulary should be familiar: he speaks of *ascending* into Herbert's temple via "*Crashaw's Steps*"—that is, experiencing an elevation of noble passions as a result of reading both poets; he is inspired to "mend" his verse and "raise" his "low notes," which could mean an adoption of a higher subject matter (i.e. giving more weight to his "Lighter" verse) as well as an

intensification of his own rhetoric; and he reads both poets for instruction. He seeks the lively art that Crashaw and Herbert already practice.

Another, and perhaps more interesting seeker of Crashaw's lively art during this time was Edward Thimelby, whose comments on Crashaw, composed circa 1653, did not appear in print until 1813, as part of *Tixall Poetry*, a miscellaneous collection of poems culled by Arthur Clifford from the estate papers of the Aston family.[35] The collection is named after Tixall, the ancestral home of the Aston family, who were patrons of various seventeenth-century poets, including Drayton.[36] In his introductory notes, Clifford writes that Thimelby, who became a Catholic priest and "lived a considerable time in Rome, in the family of an eminent cardinal," also seems to have been "intimate" with Crashaw, among other poets (pp. xxvi–xxviii). His remarks about Crashaw appear in a set of three verse epistles addressed to "Mr. Normington" (pp. 37–42). N. W. Bawcutt, the first modern scholar to notice these verse epistles, confines his attention to the direct references to Crashaw in the second and third letters; but two other poems also bear upon Thimelby's critical response to Crashaw—one poem "On the Translation of the House of Loretto" and another on Mary Magdalene beholding Christ on the Cross. Both of these poems should be taken into account when considering the verse epistles because they are examples of a poet trying to emulate Crashaw's verse.

The second letter to Normington frames all five poems. Prior to referring to Crashaw, Thimelby makes fun of himself for writing his verse letters carelessly and chides other poets for trying to be ingenious when they have nothing important to say. He hates poets who "forge a golden verse of copper bitts, / Because tis gilt

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[35] *Tixall Poetry* (Edinburgh: Printed by James Ballantyne and Co. for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, London; and John Ballantyne and Co. Edinburgh).

[36] N. W. Bawcutt, "A Seventeenth-Century Allusion to Crashaw," *Notes & Queries* n.s. 9 (1962): 215–16.

with shining epithets" (I.11–12). By the second letter, he moves from satirizing inferior poets like John Gibbs to searching for true poetic models. He is most impressed with Crashaw:

> Such heaven-lyke musique tempers noblest rime,
> To moove still smoothly round, and never clime,
> Not barely keeping, but creating tyme.
> And thus our soft-pend Crashaw writes, above
> Thees toyling witts as much, in what should moove,
> As in the choice, and obiect of his love.
> And heare you see, sir, in a carelesse looke,
> I know a seazon'd verse, but would be tooke
> More for a skillfull carver then a cooke.
> Hence have I chose this scribbling liberty,
> Where every line's a verse, in spight of me,
> Your humble servant, Edward Thimelby.
> (I.25–36)

Not surprisingly, Thimelby praises Crashaw for his technical skill (his tempering of "noblest rime"), his noble choice of subject, and his ability to "moove" readers, a talent he finds wanting in other fashionable poets. He also admits his own poetic deficiencies: he can be a "skillful carver"—that is, he can use rhyme and meter—but cannot be taken for a "cooke," someone responsible for completing the poetic meal.

We gain a better understanding of Thimelby's meaning in the above lines when we examine two examples of his attempts to write skillful, moving verse—verse like Crashaw's. "On the Translation of the House of Loretto" (see Appendix) details the transportation (translation) of the Virgin's house to Loreto.[37] Clifford, in his notes

[37]See pp. 266–67 of *Tixall Poetry*. Although he does not expressly identify Edward Thimelby as the author of this poem, Clifford argues in his introduction that the majority of *Tixall Poetry* was written by three people: Herbert Aston, Gertrude Thimelby, and Edward Thimelby (p. xxviii). Edward, the only clergyman of the three, appears to have written the majority of religious poems in the collection. He is the only one to refer to Crashaw—indeed, he is

on the poem, is probably accurate in attributing its source of inspiration to Cowley's ode on Crashaw, specifically the lines "*Angels* (they say) brought the fam'ed *Chappel* there, / And bore the sacred Load in Triumph through the air" (43–44).[38] Thimelby's poem essentially unpacks these two lines, in much the same way that Crashaw in his epigrams seizes on a biblical verse and then fleshes out its significance. As Crashaw does so often, Thimelby focuses the reader's attention on the mystery of this translation, the incongruousness of an object touched by divinity nevertheless enmeshed in the profane world. The style of the poem is readily apparent in the opening lines:

> When the misterious chamber first did move
> From Jewry vales into the aire above,
> A quire of angels held it downe,
> Or to the highest heavens 't had flowne.
> Gabriell led on before,
> Towards the Hesperian shore,
> Whence west winds breathed in their face,
> Not to resist, but to embrace. (1–8)

The use of personification to emphasize the paradoxical behavior of inanimate objects and natural forces (the house that defies gravity, the wind that gives no resistance) resembles Crashaw's similar usage in the Nativity Ode, where the "angry North" forgets "his feirce Intent" (25–6), or the "sheets of snow" that rush to "furnish the fair INFANT'S bed" (54–5). A few lines later in the poem, the speaker describes the flying house as "immensity contracted," thus echoing one of Crashaw's favorite topoi. On the

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the only one of the three to have associated with Crashaw in Rome, as Clifford suggests—and the poem clearly attempts to follow Crashaw's manner. Moreover, Clifford identifies him as the author of "The Expostulation of St. Mary Magdalen," the other poem indebted to Crashaw's verse.

[38]See p. 394. I quote from "On the Death of Mr. Crashaw," *The Poems of Abraham Cowley*, ed. A. R. Waller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905), pp. 48–49.

whole, the poem comes across as an imitation of Crashaw's manner, and, although it cannot sustain the length of one of Crashaw's odes, it succeeds in communicating the speaker's enthusiasm for divine mystery, an enthusiasm most of Crashaw's poetic speakers share.

The same cannot be said of another of Thimelby's attempts to write like Crashaw. Indeed, the best gloss on "The Expostulation of St. Magdalen" (see Appendix) is Thimelby's own words in the third verse epistle: "You know," he informs Normington, "temtation once brought me too in, / To faigne a teare or two of Magdalen, / But she, a sinner once, forgave the sin" (III.22–4).[39] "Faigne" is an appropriate word choice, in that his poem on Magdalene's complaint seems forced and mechanical and lacks the genuineness found in Crashaw's more obviously devotional poem. That it is an attempt to follow Crashaw's "The Weeper" is fairly obvious: its stanza is a variation on Crashaw's, with the same rhyme scheme (ababcc); it highlights Crashavian parallels between significant fluids (i.e., lines 11 and 12: "In powring precious oyle on thyne, / That thou shouldst showre more precious blood on myne ?"); and it attempts to make vivid the spiritual significance of the Magdalene's tears through a series of metaphors (stanzas five and six). Thimelby tries to be innovative by choosing a different moment in Mary Magdalene's story of repentance: rather than describe the outflow of tears, the poem treats the moment before they burst forth as she gazes at Christ crucified. She wrestles with a sense of loss in an accusatory tone ("Is this the happy mistery / I blindly wrought upon thy head ?" [9-10]) and has not yet experienced contrition, the inner state for which she longs.

Despite the innovation of positing a Mary Magdalene momentarily incapable of shedding tears, however, Thimelby's overall invention is much less daring than Crashaw's. The narrator

[39]We can be more certain of Thimelby's authorship of this poem: "It seems pretty clear," Clifford writes, "that the writer of these stanzas was Edward Thimelby" (327).

of "The Weeper" immediately sets the tearful Magdalene before the reader's eyes and becomes the master interpreter of the mystery of repentant weeping through a series of metaphors (tears as stars, cream, pearls, dew, blossoms, streams, showers, floods, fires, baths, "weeping motions," "compendious oceans," silver, beads, "tinct," "bright brothers," and temporal markers).[40] After the first comparison of tears with stars, each of the subsequent metaphors emerges from a wittily contrived association with the image before it. The rapid, often surprising imagistic shifts communicate the mystery and marvel the speaker sees in the Magdalene's sorrow. Human doubt is not the center of the story; rather, the mysterious properties of tears dominate. Crashaw ends the compendium of conceits by switching points of view: the narrator asks the tears, "whither hast you then?" And the tears, as eloquent as he is, respond with two stanzas shunning both natural beauties and earthly symbols of wealth and royalty ("crown'd Heads are toyes" [stanza xxxi, 5]) in favor of a suppliant position on Christ's feet. Crashaw's use of imagery is dynamic, surprising, energetic, and lively.

By contrast, Thimelby's poem is less daring and energetic, both in overall situation and in imagery. His attempt to place the reader on the scene is more overt and less immediately engaging. Furthermore, Thimelby seldom attempts to sustain his comparisons or build bridges between them the way Crashaw does. Moreover, he is less precise in his imagery. When, for example, he writes, "Oh stop that ocean of blood, / And turn my rocky brest into a flood," his image of the "rocky brest" turned "flood" is difficult to conceptualize as an image and as a devotional idea: how would *stopping* the blood flowing from Christ's body cause the hardness of her heart to melt into a flood? Crashaw's poem, meanwhile, possesses much greater clarity throughout. As R. V. Young explains, typically Crashaw's "conceits and images, even at

[40]Throughout this discussion, I refer to the 1648/1652 version of "The Weeper," as printed in the Williams edition.

their most extravagant, rarely lose sight of a concrete scene or action of some sort."[41] Even if we encounter difficulty visualizing, say, the image of the "two faithfull fountaines" following the lamb "where're he strayes / Among the Galilean mountaines" ("The Weeper," stanza xix), at least the idea of a superabundance of repentance attending Christ's every movement is clear. Small wonder, then, that Thimelby found fault with his own poem, given his admiration for Crashaw's.

Most likely Thimelby's own mixed attempts to write sacred verse capable of moving readers inform his second direct reference to Crashaw in the third verse-epistle to Normington:

> I'm yet a libertine in verse, and write
> Both what the spirit and the flesh indite,
> Nor can be yet our Crashaws convertite.
> Methinkes your misticall poetik straine,
> Does not so sanctify a poet's veine,
> As make divinity itself prophaine. (III.1–6)

Thimelby is honest enough with himself to realize his inability to recreate the liveliness that he and others in the 1640s and 50s valued in Crashaw's art. Rather than compete with it, he concludes at the end of the verse letter, he "shall rather cheuse" "Poetik sin, then faigned sanctity" (41–2). Crashaw's art, for him, is too sophisticated to emulate.

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So why did opinions about Crashaw's poetry change so significantly in the early years of the eighteenth century? Some clues toward an answer may be found in the later seventeenth-century biographical accounts. As we have seen, during the years when Crashaw's collections first appeared and immediately

[41] *Richard Crashaw and the Spanish Golden Age* (Yale Studies in English, 191, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 7.

thereafter, readers tend to admire Crashaw for his affective persuasion and for the rationality necessary to pull it off. They treat Crashaw as a poetic maker, fully in control of his art and its effects. Indeed, they admire him enough to see in him a model for poetic making. The lives, however, gradually begin to focus less on Crashaw the *rhetor* and more on Crashaw the devotional subject. The change becomes noticeable in the vocabulary with which these writers describe the act of composition.

If we can call it a biography, Cowley's ode "On the Death of Mr. Crashaw" (1656) refers to Crashaw's personal piety ("His *Faith* perhaps in some nice Tenents might / Be wrong; his *Life*, I'm sure, was *in the right*" [55–6]). But in the final stanza, Cowley, like other writers in the 1650s, emphasizes his friend's *poetic* prowess: Crashaw is a "*Bard Triumphant*" who "like Elijah, mount[s] *Alive* the skies" and serves as an inspiration for Cowley's own "*Muse*" when learning of "things *Divine*" (59, 66, 69–74). Twelve years later, however, David Lloyd's biographical account ties Crashaw's poetic composition more directly to his personal piety, thereby suggesting the poetry is more expressive.[42] Lloyd describes how Crashaw's education, first at Charterhouse and then at Pembroke, along with a thorough grounding in the "Epistles and Gospels" of the New Testament, "were the ground" of Crashaw's "Divine Fancy," which enabled him to become "esteemed the other *Herbert* of our Church, for making Poetry, as Divine in its object, as in its Original" (p. 619). As we have seen, the comparison of Crashaw to Herbert was not new—both Holdsworth and Barksdale previously associated the two poets. Lloyd, however, more firmly attributes the quality of Crashaw's verse to his devotional practices: Crashaw fixed his wit "upon a

[42] *Memoires of the Lives, Actions, Sufferings & Deaths of Those Noble, Reverend, and Excellent Personages, That Suffered By Death, Sequestration, Decimation, Or Otherwise, for the Protestant Religion, And the great Principle thereof, Allegiance to their Soveraigne, In our late Interstine Wars, From the Year 1637, to the Year 1660 and from thence continued to 1666* (London: Printed for Samuel Speed, etc., 1668), pp. 618–19.

subject as noble as its nature, making his Verses not in his Study at *St-Peters-house*, but in his Devotions, wherein he spent many a night, at *St. Maries* Church; warbling his Hymns for *St. Ambroses* his Saints, under *Tertullians* Roof of Angels; having no other *Helicon*, than the *Jordan* of his eyes; nor *Parnassus*, than the *Sion* where dwelled his thoughts, that made the Muses Graces, and taught Poems to do what they did of old, propagate Religion, and not so much Charm as Inspire the Soul." The reference to inspiring the soul is consistent with the reports of earlier commentators, as is the suggestion of divine influence upon Crashaw's wit. More so than previous writers, though, Lloyd describes Crashaw's poetry as issuing from personal devotion. He warbles "his Hymns" "under *Tertullians* Roof of Angels," and the source of his inspiration is his own river of tears, the "*Jordan* of his eyes," that enables him to write of other devotional subjects. He can write about "The Weeper," Lloyd suggests, because he is a weeper himself. His poetry "Inspire[s]" the souls of readers because it is the product of authentic experience, and not necessarily the result of calculated rhetorical craft.

Undoubtedly, Crashaw's own devotional practices informed much of the poet's daily life, which is why even now, sixty-five years later, Warren's decision to conclude his pioneer study, *Richard Crashaw: A Study of Baroque Sensibility* (1939) with the image of Crashaw "praying and adoring" during a High Mass celebration still seems poignant and correct. And undoubtedly, in a book praising the "*Lives*," "*Actions*," and "*Sufferings*" of Anglicans during the English Civil War, Lloyd is at pains to underscore the spiritual purity of the devout. Yet Lloyd's shift from a poetic to a saintly exemplar suggests a slight alteration in reading the poems. To read a poem as a product of its author's piety is not necessarily the same as reading a poem to further one's own devotion. The former is a more passive form of reading than the latter. This point becomes clearer, perhaps, if we consider how it would apply to the other arts—painting, for example, or architecture. Renaissance viewers of Raphael's *The Transfiguration of Christ* (1517), for

example, would not have thought of the painter's piety as their first consideration; rather, they would have considered how the painting—through the direction of light, the placement of the ascending Christ in the top center, and the directive gazes of the figures on either side—captures both the mystery of Christ's apotheosis and the earthly contentiousness with which the figures below greet it. To think of Raphael himself would be to put aside the devotional impulse (i.e., to focus on Christ's divinity) the painting is designed to aid. The devotional qualities of the painting accord with the directions in the *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* for the usage of holy images to "set before the eyes of the faithful" God's miracles and other "salutary examples" so that the faithful "may give God thanks for those things, may fashion their own life and conduct in imitation of the saints and be moved to adore and love God and cultivate piety."[43] By the same token, visitors to St. Peter's Basilica were not supposed to be preoccupied with the religiosity of their builders; rather, they were meant to become absorbed in the spiritual implications of the space. By emphasizing Crashaw's piety so strongly, however, Lloyd draws attention away from the poetry and obscures its intention to move *readers* toward a devotional response.[44]

The shift toward a more expressive (and passive) view of Crashaw's poetry also can be seen in three other biographical entries, those by Edward Phillips, William Winstanley, and Anthony à Wood. Phillips, writing in 1675, describes Crashaw as a

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[43] *A Documentary History of Art*, vol. 2, ed. Elizabeth Gilmore Holt (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 64.

[44] The emphasis on readers is extremely important when considering Crashaw's poetry. Lorraine M. Roberts sees it as central to Crashaw's decisions regarding the voice of his narrators: "The impersonality of Crashaw's voice," she writes, "suits his intent of creating an everyman who can witness sacred events, be affected by their emotion and meaning, and engender that same response and significance in his reader." See "Crashaw's Sacred Voice: A Commerce of Contrary Powers," *New Perspectives on the Life and Art of Richard Crashaw*, ed. John R. Roberts (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1990), p. 78.

"Devout pourer forth of his Divine Raptures and Meditations, in smooth and Pathetic Verse."[45] Winstanley, writing in 1687, reproduces almost verbatim this summary: Crashaw is a "religious pourer forth of his divine Raptures and Meditations, in smooth and pathetick Verse."[46] In Renaissance English, the word "pathetic" meant both "exciting the passions or affections" in a "general sense" (*OED* sense 1a) and "[e]xpressing or arising from passion or strong emotion" or "passionate, earnest" (*OED* sense 2), meanings the *OED* considers obsolete in current usage. The use of the verb "to pour" in Phillips and Winstanley suggests the latter: the divine "Raptures and Meditations" that Crashaw pours "forth" appear to be his own and are not poetic and lively reconstructions of spiritually charged moments for the benefit of others. The poems come across as the expressions of Crashaw's own "passion or strong emotion." Phillips sees Crashaw's devotional practices as the central organizing principle of his life, in that Crashaw's "Religious solitude and love of a recluse life, which made him spend much of his time, and even lodge many nights under [Tertullian's] roof of Angels"—and not the dismantling of the Anglican Church by the Puritan forces in Parliament—caused him to turn to Roman Catholicism. By 1692, the time of Anthony à Wood's *Fasti Oxonienses*, the connection between Crashaw's private devotions and his public poetry would be so strong in some circles that à Wood could suggest Crashaw actually wrote the poems in Little St. Mary's during his nightly vigils: "There he made his nest more gladly than *Davids* swallow near the House of God, where like a

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[45] *Theatrum poetarum, or, A compleat collection of the poets especially the most eminent, of all ages, the antients distinguish't from the moderns in their several alphabets : with some observations and reflections upon many of them, particularly those of our own nation : together with a prefatory discourse of the poets and poetry in generall* (London: Printed for Charles Smith, 1675), p. 158.

[46] *The Lives Of the Most Famous English Poets*, ed. William Riley Parker (Gainesville, FL: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1963), p. 161. Winstanley places his entry on Crashaw (pp. 161–2) immediately after his entry on Herbert (pp. 160–1).

primitive Saint he offer'd more prayers in the night, than others usually offer in the day. There he pen'd the said Poems called *Steps to the Temple* for happy Souls to climb Heaven by."[47]

To varying degrees, while the Lives value Crashaw's own devotional life, their suppositions about the expressiveness of the verse separate the poetry from what earlier writers considered its original intention of moving other readers. The biographers no doubt understood that "Crashaw's imagery and his mode of expression are among the commonplaces of his age."[48] But because they read the poems strictly as the products of Crashaw's own devotions, they are not as interested as the earlier commentators in the sophistication with which it engages readers. They misread Crashaw's lively art by considering it apart from its rhetorical intention.[49] If by 1710, Crashaw was thought of in some circles more as a "pourer" of his own devotional sentiments than as a maker of verse lively enough to move readers in their contemplation of religious matters, then it should not be surprising that a writer lacking a devotional imagination, or one avoiding the topic of religion, would be more likely to ignore the intention of the verse in favor of its wordplay alone.[50] In both cases, misreading

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[47]Wood's comments originally appeared in volume II of *Athenae Oxonienses* (London: Printed for Tho. Bennet, 1692). I quote from the reprint in the Martin edition, pp. 417–18.

[48]Robert M. Cooper, *An Essay on the Art of Richard Crashaw*, Salzburg Studies in English Literature, Elizabethan & Renaissance Studies, no. 102, edited by James Hogg (Institue für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1982), p. 71.

[49]Warren's description, in *Richard Crashaw*, of modern misinterpreters is apropos on this point: "With most modernists, and with many belated romantics, rhetoric—word and thing—has fallen into disrepute as, like 'ritual,' incompatible with sincerity. Rhetoric has been disposed of as 'mere,' oratory as 'empty'—as though it were impossible to say brilliantly what one utterly believes. In consequence, formal instruction in schemes and tropes has yielded place to exhortations inciting the self-expression of unformed selves" (p. 199).

[50]Warren, in "The Reputation of Crashaw in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," is probably right in his account of Pope's near complete

the verse begins by ignoring its supposed effects on sympathetic readers; in both cases, it results from a failure of the imagination to function in a certain way.

Pope's reaction to Crashaw is thus the flipside of the biographers', in that he "mistakes Crashaw's devout virtuosity for exhibitionism: he sees *le jongleur*, but not *le jongleur de Notre Dame*."[51] His relegation of Crashaw's verse to mere "glitt'ring expressions" amounts to a redefinition of the liveliness that the earlier writers treasured. Whereas Beaumont, Barksdale, Thimelby, and the rest found Crashaw's rendition of emotionally charged states verisimilar and energetic (the two senses of lively), Pope found the same portrayals too energetic to be believable—indecorous, in other words. For him, Crashaw's exclamations, apostrophes, and wide-ranging, quickly shifting images, though sometimes worthy of emulation, also become stylistic excesses. Thus, because he supposes Crashaw "writ fast, and set down what came uppermost"—that is, wrote carelessly—he directs Cromwell to "skim off the froth, and use the clear underneath" but also to avoid going "too deep" for fear of meeting "with a mouthful of dregs."[52] In specific terms, this means savoring the "pretty conceptions, fine metaphors," and "glitt'ring expressions" of stanzas 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, 20, and 23 of "The Weeper" but skipping over stanzas 2, 4, 6, 14, and 21 as "sublimely dull" (pp. 109–110).

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avoidance of the religious verse in his letter to Cromwell: "The reasons for the reticence were doubtless Pope's own distaste for the 'enthusiasm' of Catholic piety, so exuberantly displayed in Crashaw's poetry; his distaste for any religion which transgressed the bounds of 'philosophy' as conceived by an *honnête homme* and for a poetry expressive of such a religion; and his desire not to irritate his literary friends like Cromwell by unnecessary advertisement of his unpopular 'Papistry'" (p. 392). In the latter decades of the seventeenth century especially, more than a few writers and intellectuals react adversely to religious enthusiasm. As Jensen explains, citing Meric Casaubon's *Treatise Concerning Enthusiasm* (1655), the "brains" of "religious fanatics" "were thought to be cracked by the heat of their overly exercised fancies" (*The Muses' Concord*, p. 26).

[51]Warren, ibid., p. 391.

[52]*The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, p. 110.

"The remaining thoughts in that Poem might have been spared," Pope writes, "being either but repetitions, or very trivial and mean." The same poem that inspired Thimelby enough to write an imitation becomes, in Pope's eyes, merely a string of worthy lines mixed with quite a few bad, affected, or pretentious ones. He cannot see how meaningful the lively art of Crashaw once had been to writers interested in sacred parody and in the internal "transport" of the souls of readers. During the subsequent three and a half centuries, more than a few readers have found in Crashaw's poetry merely what they wished to find. In doing so, they have repeated Pope's mistake and suffered from a similar failure of the imagination.

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Appendix

The following two poems by Edward Thimelby were composed circa 1653 but were not published until 1813 in the miscellaneous collection, *Tixall Poetry*, edited by Arthur Clifford (Edinburgh: Printed by James Ballantyne and Co. for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, London; and John Ballantyne and Co. Edinburgh):

"On the Translation of the House of Loretto" (pp. 266–67)

When the misterious chamber first did move
From Jewry vales into the aire above,
A quire of angels held it downe,
Or to the highest heavens 't had flowne.
Gabriell led on before,
Towards the Hesperian shore,
Whence west winds breathed in their face,
Not to resist, but to embrace.
Ore his owne seas then Dedalus might descry
A labirinth itselfe of wonders fly ;
Rhodes' great Colossus durst not aske a stay,
For here imensity contracted lay.
The virgin mother's spouse's roome
At unchast Paphos would not come ;
Truth's selfe disclaim'd his seate
Should dwell in lying Crete.
Delos in vain look'd up with hope awhile ;
The flying house past ore the floating isle.
Unhappy eastern enations ! dayly thus
Suns rise with you, but alwaise make to us.
The never-erring chair is come
From your Antioch to our Rome ;
Poore Nazareth's sole blis

Now too translated is :
On fair Loretto's hill it stands,
Thither convey'd by angells hands ;
Where the same roofe, that in our father's age
A pilgrim was, is now a pilgrimage.

"The Expostulation of St. Mary Magdalen" (pp. 3–5)

As grief-enthraled Magdalen
Beheld him on the fatall tree,
Amaz'd she stood ; her spirit then
(Returned from passion's extasie)
With interrupting sighs she vents,
And brekes aloud into thees sad laments.—

Is this the goodly worke in me
You so commended as you fed ?
Is this the happy mistery
I blindly wrought upon thy head ?
In powring precious oyle on thyne,
That thou shouldst showre more precious blood on myne ?

Is this the peace thou gav'st my hart ?
Is this the victory I winne,
For cheusing thee, the better part ?
Is this the pardoning my sin ?
Did my eyes wash thy feet t'intice
Thy bleeding feet to wash my blood-shott eyes ?

Oh take thy blood and pardon back :
Restore the teares and sinnes I lost :
To me hell's dearer for thy sake,
Then heaven at so deare a cost :

Though my sight ran astray, is't meet
My wandring eyes should draw thy weeping feet ?

And have thees springs forgot to keepe
Their floodgates ope ? What mountain stopps
Their currents, that they dare not weepe
With thee ? Without thos corrall dropps,
Thees christall waves can be no sea ;
Without thees perles, that blood no Erithre.

But Thou, who with thy powrefull word
Couldst draine that Ruddy Ocean dry,
And bid the rock full brookes afford
In such a wildernesse as I ;
Oh stop that ocean of blood,
And turn my rocky brest into a flood.

Methinkes, in midst of all thy smart,
I heare thee cry thou thurst'st for me ;
Then (wounded hart) speke to this hart,
That's sick to death as well as thee ;
Speke to this hart, my soules Phisician,
And it will yield us waters of Contrition.

By this the tempest of her sighs
Had all her pregnant sorrow seas'd :
She clos'd her lypps, and op't her eyes ;
She wrung her hands, and beat her brest ;
She wayling tore her golden haires,
And spake the rest, more eloquent, in teares.