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The "wine of love": Viticulture in the Poetry of Richard Crashaw[1]

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In 1944, Anita O'Day, a young "girl singer," a term eventually supplanted by "female vocalist," joined the Gene Krupa orchestra. Having been a jazz singer in various clubs in Chicago, she teamed up with Krupa and trumpeter Roy Eldridge to create the hit single *Let Me Off Uptown*. During an eleven-month stint in 1944 with Stan Kenton and his orchestra, O'Day was catapulted to prominence by her rendition of *And Her Tears Flowed Like Wine*, a million-selling hit. Launched into stardom, she became the forerunner of the Cool School of jazz vocalists. Unlike other female vocalists attired in evening gowns, O'Day wore a band jacket, shirt, trousers, and tie. Her unorthodox sartorial appearance accorded with other extraordinary aspects of her life. O'Day contended, for instance, that her uvula was sliced off by a physician during a tonsillectomy, so that she could not sustain long tones. Instead, she broke up extended tones into a series of eighth and sixteenth notes to sing syllabically—for example, by repeating, not prolonging the "ah" in "love," which becomes "la-ah-ah-ah-ah-ve." O'Day, as well, had a life-changing experience at fifteen years of age when Jesus appeared to her and inquired, in effect, what she planned to do in the world. She

[1]I express gratitude to Professor Frederick Newberry, my colleague at Duquesne University, for his very helpful recommendations concerning an earlier draft of the present essay.

replied that more than anything, she wished to "sing." Jesus approved of her aspiration, an experience recounted in her autobiography, *High Times, Hard Times* (1981).[2]

However unusual it may seem, such a career is the secular counterpart of a profoundly spiritual life. The excision of her uvula, communing with Jesus, distinctive attire, the determined pursuit of a vocation, the forerunner if not foundress of a movement that attracted female jazz vocalists, intense weeping and sobbing in life that were simulated at times in song when her notes were short and repetitive, and an autobiography—these and other features converge to suggest that O'Day and certain female saints and mystics are on opposite sides of the same coin. There is no better example than St. Teresa of Avila whose life is the spiritual counterpart of O'Day's: the stigmata, mystical visions, the vocation of a cloistered religious with distinctive attire, the foundress of the Discalced Carmelites, a weeper, and autobiographer. But the greatest resemblance between O'Day and St. Teresa is the "wine of love," both literally and metaphorically a description of their flowing tears, the very image embodied in the title of O'Day's million-selling hit.

The image of tears flowing like wine distinguishes the poetry of Richard Crashaw, who uses the phrase "strong wine of love" to describe the weeping of St. Teresa. The link of tears and wine in Crashaw's poetry is not a new topic. Indeed, numerous commentators have approached the topic from multiple perspectives, emphasizing liturgy, sacramental celebration, Greek and Roman analogues, Christian theology, Catholic doctrine, mysticism and spirituality, Baroque sensibility, gender construction, and the like. While not challenging any of the foregoing perspectives or the interpretations issuing from them, I have chosen to emphasize what has received marginal attention—

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[2]For bio-data on Anita O'Day, see http://www.mrlucky.com/songbirds/html/aug99/9908_o'day.html (1 June 2004); http://www.iridiumjazzclub.com/bio.php?id=92 (1 June 2004).

viticulture in the poetry of Crashaw, not merely in his works centering on St. Teresa but also in his other verse. By viticulture, I mean grape-growing, harvesting, and wine-making, not only the actual processes but also their metaphorical significance. By viticulture, I also mean the body, color, aroma, and taste of wines; the particular characteristics of several well-known Spanish and Italian wines of the seventeenth century, such as Sack or Sherry, Falernian, Massic or Massican, and Lachryma Christi (the tears of Christ), all of which Crashaw may have imbibed especially in his years on the Continent; so-called "tears of wine" that form at and below the brim on the inside of a drinking glass or goblet; additives such as salt water that temper overly sweet wine or ameliorate strong wine; and lachrymatories, particularly glass ones, often shaped like teardrops, hearts, or wine decanters with bulbous bodies and long and slender necks, all of which were used to hold not only tears but also wine, and even to commingle tears and wine.

In "The Teare," perhaps a preliminary version of "The Weeper" or a selection of stanzas removed from the final draft of the longer poem, Crashaw, while describing a tear shed by Mary Magdalene, devotes six verses to viticulture:

> Such the Maiden Gemme
> By the wanton Spring put on,
> Peeps from her Parent stemme,
> And blushes on the manly Sun:
> This watry Blossome of thy Eyne
> Ripe, will make the richer Wine. (25-30)[3]

The poet refers here to a grape vine or stem in its initial growth at springtime. Both the moisture and the sunlight collaborate to

[3]Crashaw's poetry is cited from *The Complete Poetry of Richard Crashaw*, ed. George Walton Williams (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1974). Stanzas and lines are cited parenthetically. Many of Crashaw's sacred poems in Latin appear in two versions in English translation. Williams's edition prints the Latin texts and English translations on facing pages.

produce a floral blossom on the stem, a prelude to the appearance of the grapes, which will ripen and yield a harvest to make the wine. The teardrop on the stem interacts with the sun: accepting the warmth from above, yielding to the sun's rays, and blushing in anticipation of the ripening process after which grapes will issue from the blossoms. Because of its moist convex surface, the eye itself resembles a large teardrop whose mirror-like reflection of the blossom signifies the transposition of the flower onto Magdalene herself or, in effect, its issuance from her. If one pursues the figurative language, the spherical eye through the process of ripening will be transformed from flower to fruit, so that tears will eventually flow like wine. In other words, the gradual reddening of Magdalene's eyes because of her briny tears parallels the ripening process of grapes. Magdalene, therefore, contributes to the changeover from blossom to berry, for she herself becomes the site of viticulture in the poem.

Furthermore, the figurative language of sexuality—"Maiden," "wanton Spring," "Parent stemme," "manly Sun"—highlights male and female interaction in propagation. In this case, though, the propagation presumably occurs in a cultivated vine, not a wild one. Since male and female vines cannot propagate on their own, for each needs the other to produce fruit, only cultivated vines developed by hybridization are hermaphroditic and self-fertilizing, with every vine bearing fruit. The process to which I refer begins with the selection of parent stems, precisely the language of Crashaw's poem. Each parent is selected because of the traits that it will impart to its seedlings. Hybridization produces hermaphroditic flowers containing both male and female parts. The male parts are the stamens, each composed of a pollen-bearing anther and supporting filament. Usually five such anthers surround the ovary of the flower. As the anther ripens, it sheds pollen, which, whether wind-blown or hand-brushed by a breeder, comes into contact with the female parts of the flower. Each grain of pollen grows a tubule by which sperm cells move towards the ovary. Other female parts of the flower—the stigma and the

style—facilitate the movement of the pollen or sperm cells to the egg cell in the ovary. An embryo or new seedling plant results from this fertilization; eventually, the entire ovary grows to become the grape berry, whose seeds lie inside the fruit.[4] In light of the floral biology of grapevines and the genetics recounted above, Magdalene in the viticulture of "The Teare" is gendered as male and female after the manner of a cultivated hermaphroditic flower and grape vine. In other words, her flow of tears is likened to the very effective and efficient propagation and use of grapes, a procedure that accounts for the largest harvest and most bountiful outpouring of wine.

In "The Weeper," Crashaw continues the references to viticulture in the following passage that describes Magdalene's tears:

> . . . Heaven will make a feast,
> Angels with their Bottles come;
> And draw from these full Eyes of thine,
> Their Masters water, their owne Wine. (st. 6, 1646 version)

This dual reference to water and wine hearkens back to the language of "The Teare" ("watry Blossome" and "richer Wine") while increasing our understanding of the interaction of sinful but repentant humankind and the Lord. Magdalene, who typifies the repentant sinner, offers her tears to Jesus. From her weeping, angels collect these tears in "Bottles" or "crystal violls" (namely, vials), the reading in the 1648 version. But the transformation of water to wine at the wedding in Cana, a miracle cited in John's Gospel, recurs in the wedding feast that celebrates the union of the Lord with the blessed soul of Magdalene in the hereafter. Whereas the tears are "watry" when shed by Magdalene or by another repentant sinner, they become the angels' "owne Wine." The same

[4]For grape-growing and grape-breeding, see http://www.plantideas.com/plants/ggrape.html (7 July 2004); http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/hort/faculty/reisch/breeding/crossing1.html (15 June 2004).

sentiment appears in a very brief poem by Robert Herrick, a couplet called "Upon Teares": "Teares, though th'are here below the sinners brine, / Above they are the Angels spiced wine."[5] In Crashaw's poem, the lachrymatories that collect the tears become, in effect, flagons because Jesus mixes his blood with the repentant sinner's tears to produce a tasteful wine, which the angels imbibe as guests rejoicing at the wedding feast of Jesus and the redeemed sinner. Undergirding this interpretation are the methods whereby vintners in earlier eras calibrated the taste of wine by introducing additives such as plain water to ameliorate strong wine, salt water to temper overly sweet wine or to add a spicy or pungent taste to it, and sugar or honey to sweeten bitter wine. In his poem, Crashaw adapts the biblical event at Cana (John. 2:1-12) to suggest that Jesus is a vintner whose miracle is not to transform water into wine but to blend the two ingredients—the one from Magdalene, the other from himself—to produce the finest-tasting wine. Indeed, when at Cana the wine steward at the wedding comments that the best wine has been saved till the end, that remark, whose implications Crashaw assimilates into his poem, glances eschatologically to the conjugal celebration of the Lord and the sanctified soul, precisely what "The Weeper" recounts.[6] In this

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[5] *The Complete Poetry of Robert Herrick*, ed. J. Max Patrick (New York: New York University Press, 1963).

[6] Mary Magdalen's weeping and its impact on later expressions of sorrow have elicited extensive commentary. See Marjory E. Lange, *Telling Tears in the English Renaissance* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), esp. pp. 147-155, focusing on Mary Magdalene, and pp. 222-244, which focus on Crashaw's poetry; Esther Schor, *Bearing the Dead: The British Culture of Mourning from the Enlightenment to Victoria* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Patricia Phillippy, *Women, Death and Literature in Post-Reformation England* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Sheila Page Bayne, *Tears and Weeping: An Aspect of Emotional Climate Reflected in Seventeenth-Century French Literature* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1981); Kay Carmichael, *Ceremony of Innocence: Tears, Power and Protest* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991); *Speaking Grief in English Literary Culture*, ed. Margo Swiss and David A. Kent (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2002).

manner, Magdalene, whose lament for Jesus will be transformed to joy at their heavenly reunion, typifies the eschatological desire of a blessed soul to be wedded to the Lord.

In "The Weeper," the same bottles contain tears and wine—that is, a vintner's blend of those two ingredients. In the seventeenth century, lachrymatories sometimes resembled wine flasks with bulbous bodies and long and slender necks. Or they were shaped like teardrops, hearts, and the like. A weeper collected the tears occasioned by the death of a loved one, thereafter placing the lachrymatories in the tomb as signs of grief. Annually, to commemorate the death, a weeper collected more tears, striving to equal previous outpourings in order to affirm that time did not lessen the intensity of grief. Anniversaries of the death, in other words, occasioned bountiful tears anew, at times blended with tears previously shed or mixed with wine and then imbibed in order to heighten emotion and stimulate weeping. Symbolism abounded in such funereal rites when, for instance, a weeper added tears to a bottle of sweet wine not only to adjust the taste but to suggest that the sweet memory of the deceased beloved is tempered by the brackish or bitter taste as one acknowledges his or her absence.[7]

References to viticulture likewise abound in one of Crashaw's poems on St. Teresa of Avila. Called "An Apologie for the foregoing Hymne," this poem, a sequel to "A Hymne to Sainte Teresa," heralds sack or sherry as "strong wine of love," which will cause the drinker's soul to "swell" (30-31). In the early 1400s, sherry became a fortified wine, with brandy as an alcohol-additive,

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[7]For biblical reference to lachrymatories, see Psalm 56.8: "Put thou my tears into thy bottle." For commentary on this verse, see C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: An Expository and Devotional Commentary on the Psalms*, Volume III, Psalms 53-78 (Baker Book House: Grand Rapids, MI, 1977), p. 39. For the use of lachrymatories, see http://www.lachrymatory.com/History.htm (7 July 2004); http://store.yahoo.com/tearcatcher/tearbothis.html (7 July 2004); T. Bright, *A Treatise of Melancholie, reproduced from the 1586 edition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940); and citations in note 5 above.

a practice continued through later centuries and an explanation presumably for the following verse in Crashaw's poem: "[b]owles full of richer blood then blush of grape" (33). Fortified by the brandy additive so that the alcoholic content of the mixture approximates 20%, which is very high for wine, sherry invigorates or enriches the blood more than an unfortified wine, whose lower alcoholic content derives from fermented grapes alone. Though brandy too is the product of fermented grapes, the liquid is then distilled. After the liquid is heated, the alcohol, which has a lower boiling point than water, becomes vaporized. Thereafter, it is condensed into a distillate of potent spirits and added to sherry. High alcoholic content induces more rapid inebriation, a reference in the poem perhaps to the ecstatic or trance-like state of St. Teresa after her soul separated from her body. Like St. Teresa whose soul mystically ascended heavenward, others who emulate her will be sublimated through a contemplative experience likened to inebriation. This kind of inebriation will transport souls into a fully spiritual realm inhabited only by angels and the godhead while the bodies remain behind as if in a stupor or dormant state:

> Drink till we prove more, not lesse, then men,
> And turn not beasts, but Angels. (35-36)

Heavenward, the wine imbibed will be superior to any on earth, so that the speaker, who imagines his own ascent, expresses the following prayer:

> . . . Let the king
> Me ever into these his cellars bring
> Where flowes such wine as we can have on none
> But HIM who trod the wine-presse all alone:
> Wine of youth, life, and sweet Deaths of love;
> Wine of immortall mixture; which can prove
> It's Tincture from the rosy nectar. (37-43)

In these references to viticulture, Crashaw likens the Lord to a vintner, whose own three stages of life—youth, adulthood, and suffering and death—correspond to aging wine. In addition to being the winemaker, the Lord is also the cluster of grapes at the Circumcision, the Passion, and the Crucifixion, each episode producing more, and more mature, wine than the preceding one. These three wines become in the heavenly realm an "immortal mixture," a process that Crashaw analogizes to an inveterate method of blending sherry. Called the *solera* method, the first-drawn sherry is "laid down" in a cask; and in the next year, a sherry tasting like it is placed in a cask above. Some sherry is removed from the lower cask and placed in the upper one, and some from the upper is transferred to the lower. Later casks are stacked atop the first two, thereby creating a series called a *criadera*. By cascading, which involves interchanging among the several casks, blending of newer and older sherries continues.[8] By the word "tincture," Crashaw refers to the essential principle or quintessence of a "mixture."[9] At times, "tincture" in a solution is called an elixir, whose counterpart in winemaking occurs when various sherries, having been blended by cascading, participate in a veritable (al)chemical reaction that produces a spirituous essence, the compound of the active principles of each wine. The resultant spirituous essence will "prove / It's tincture from the rosy nectar." Accordingly, the blended sherry in Crashaw's poem becomes a metaphor of the trifold bloodshed of Jesus: as a youth, an adult, and a dying man. The soul that has ascended heavenward imbibes

[8]For a study of sherry as wine that is fortified and aged by intermixing with other sherries, see http://wine.about.com/library/types/ bl_sherry.htm (3 June 2004). For the distillation of brandy and its storage in oaken casks, see http://www.geocities.com/Paris/1265/cspirits.html (13 October 2004); http://www.tastings.com/spirits/brandy.html (13 October 2004); http://www.geocities.com/bargk/brandyProduction.html (13 October 2004); http://www.tasteoftx.com/ spirits/brandy.html (13 October 2004).

[9]See "tincture" (n) in *OED*, 6.a-b; 7; also "tincture" (v) in *OED*, 1. See also "wine" in *OED*, esp. 5, "spirit(s) of wine."

of this "immortal mixture," available only in the supernal realm and to souls purged of their mortal presences. Like an ambrosial drink, also called "nectar," this "immortal mixture" is rosy because of the commingled bloods of Jesus.[10] In the framework of Crashaw's poem on St. Teresa, "rosy," according to its several meanings in the seventeenth century, suggests a gradient of hues that ranges from red to dark crimson, which applies to the aging process of a flower and to the ripening of certain fruits: reddish gold, reddish amber, reddish brown.[11] These same colors, to be sure, describe various sherries, or a sherry in the process of aging, or a mixture of differently aged sherries achieved by the cascading method.

By referring to viticulture, Crashaw elaborates on his suggestion of the commingled bloods of Jesus across three stages of life. In his poems on the Circumcision, Crashaw emphasizes that the bloodshed of the Christ child is newly drawn. "On the blood of the Lord's circumcision" ("In sanguinem circumcisionis Dominicæ"), which comments on Luke 2:21, portrays the blood as "new wine" ("musta bibendi") and as a wine "so sweet" ("tam suave") in contrast to other vintages (2, 6). "On the Circumcision" ("In circumcisionem"), another work on the same biblical text, portrays the Christ child as one who "draws from a new jar wine scarcely [ready]" ("Excitat è dolio vix dum bene musta recenti") and who "calls wild passions into youthful limbs" ("rudes furias in nova membra vocat") (11-12). The sweet taste of the new wine may result from premature withdrawal from the vessel. In such circumstances the taste approximates the sweetness of grapes before fermentation and aging have fully occurred. Nevertheless, the reference to "wild passions" induced in "youthful limbs" suggests that the wine, not having yet fully aged, has sufficient alcoholic content to intensify the emotions of young drinkers who imbibe it though they lack sophistication to identify the taste as deficient. But the viticulture in the two poems on the

[10]See "nectar" in *OED*, 2.a.; 2.c.

[11]See "rosy" in *OED*, 6.

Circumcision refers not only to the Christ child but also to his tormentors. "On the Circumcision," therefore, dramatizes a youthful Jesus whose early experience with bloodshed anticipates his later Passion. In this light, the "wild passions" are impulses of the tormentors of Jesus, whose collective violence toward him approximates that of a Dionysian frenzy. Whether called Dionysius or Bacchus, the god of wine is savaged like a stalk of grapes being pressed by inebriated revelers.[12] Self-sacrificial on behalf of their respective cultures, the god of wine and his Christian counterpart, Jesus, energize and endure the "wild passions" that they arouse in others. At the Circumcision, therefore, the Christ child with "youthful limbs" suffers proleptically from the "wild passions" overtaking tormentors who will beset him as an adult.

In "On the Circumcision," Crashaw anticipates that "at some time later" ("Olim") Jesus "will try the mature showers [of blood]" ("maturos ultrò conabitur imbres") and "dare a strong complete death" ("Robustum audebit tunc, solidumque mori") (37-38). While the language and syntax may describe death as strong and complete, a more likely interpretation involves transferred epithets whereby Jesus, who has inured himself to the progressively torturous suffering, is strong and complete, or completely fortitudinous. At the same time, "Robustum" connotes the strength of an oak, whose wood is used to make sherry casks. These same butts are eventually used as the very casks in which brandy is matured. The same containers—first used for sherry, and later for brandy—signify the fortified blend of the two beverages and their issuance from Jesus. The same figurative language glances, in turn, toward "On the day of the Master's Passion" ("In die Passionis Dominicæ"), which focuses on the adulthood of Jesus and his death, the later two stages of bloodshed. In fact, Crashaw

[12]See *Hugh Johnson's Story of Wine* (London: Mitchell Beazley, 1989), Chapter 5, "Drinking the God" (pp. 47-58), for detailed accounts of the feasts of Dionysus in Greece and their Bacchanalian counterparts in Rome.

interrelates the two poems—the one on the Circumcision, the other on the suffering and death of Jesus—to promote continuity of interpretation based on viticulture. If, as the former poem recounts, the blood of Jesus when drawn "from a new jar" is "scarcely [ready]" (11), the latter poem echoes the same language, which Jesus utters as a monologue on the day of his Passion: "I have / sweet wine in my jar" ("vinum / Est mihi dulce meo") (1-2). He adds: "I have what the parent grape produced on the / virginal vine sprout in chaste bunches—*not placed in the press*" ("Est mihi quod castis, *neque prelum passa*, racemes / Palmite virgineo protulit uva parens") (2-3, emphasis in the original). The sweet wine in "On the Circumcision" refers presumably to the taste of something premature, which is redolent with the fragrance and suffused with the flavor of grape berries not yet fully fermented nor blended with additives. "On the day of the Master's Passion" uses the term "sweet wine" to signify that the bloodshed by Jesus toward the end of his life will be his first experience in the winepress, for Crashaw's "On the Circumcision" indicates that the excision at infancy was the work of a pruning knife.

Adding significantly to the poems on the Circumcision, "On the day of the Master's Passion" adopts the language of viticulture, though purged of sexuality, to explain the origin of such extraordinary grapes, whose bunches had grown for more than thirty years without having been pressed. "Parent grape" and "virginal vine sprout" that produces "chaste bunches" not yet placed in the winepress describe the Annunciation at which the Lord interacts with Mary to beget the Christ child, whose mother retains her virginity and whose babe is conceived and born chastely. In his poem, Crashaw likens the mystery, miracle, and wonder of the chaste conception and virgin birth of Jesus to a marvelous occurrence in viticulture: a female vine not having interacted with a male counterpart still generates blossoms and berries. Crashaw implicitly contrasts these marvelous circumstances with the viticulture in "The Teare," the poem that stresses male and female interaction leading to hybridization and

resulting in very fruitful hermaphroditic blossoms and berries to which Mary Magdalene's tears are equated. Hermaphroditic sexuality in "The Teare" accounts for the abundance of Magdalene's tears, whereas the marvel of Christ in Crashaw's "On the day of the Master's Passion" derives from his virginal conception. As a vine that was generated without male sexual intervention, Jesus is likened to fruitful grapes that continue to grow and that, paradoxically, do age while still in their virginal state—that is, without having been pressed.

Typically, grapes are harvested and pressed, after which the must (or pressed grapes) ferments. Having fermented, the wine is bottled, after which it ages in a wine cellar. But the marvel of Jesus is more extraordinary and unnatural than anyone can surmise, for the aging takes place before the grapes are pressed, as if fermentation and aging were occurring simultaneously within the virginal grapes themselves. Furthermore, Jesus is analogous not only to grapes but also to the cask that houses them. This analogy in the poem plays out more particularly also, for the external anatomy of Jesus is likened to a grape skin and his insides to the pulp or fruit. Accordingly, "On the Day of the Master's Passion" states that the virginal wine "aged enough in thirty years" ("ter denis sat enim maturuit annis") (5). The broaching—"the spear drinks . . . from its cask" ("Tandem ecce è dolio præbibit hasta suo") (6)—releases the blood. Additionally, the release yields the following in the language of viticulture: "with what fragrance does that burning torrent steam!" ("quanto calet actus aromate torrens!") (7), and "a stinging odor rushes out like a heavenly breeze!" ("Acer ut hinc aurâ divite currit odor!") (7-8). Like a cask broached or a grape wondrously aged and fermented then pierced, the effervescence audibly escapes as a gas, like "steam," creating a pungent fragrance that also irritates one's eyes. Crashaw's poem is referring to the production of ethanol and carbon dioxide, which become heated because of the chemical reaction during fermentation. Not to be overlooked is the anatomical exactitude of Crashaw's poem, which recounts how broaching the cask or

puncturing the external anatomy of Jesus by a spear must have resulted in the collapse of at least one lung, whose exhalation would have been heard by onlookers at the foot of the cross.

The issuance from the side of Jesus—in effect, the spume of his blood—is likened to "a heavenly breeze." The analogy derives its import from the two lines that follow:

> What rose so fresh flutters through Falernian glasses?
> What wines of Massica sparkle with such a star?
>
> ["Quæ rosa per cyathos volitat tam viva Falernos?
> Massica quæ tanto sydere via tremunt?" (9-10)]

These verses compare the issuance of Christ's blood to the flow of wine, its rosy color, and its motion or fluttering "through Falernian glasses," a reference to the prized vintages from the vineyards of Campania. For centuries, moreover, the same Campanian vineyards also grew the grapes for Massic or Massican wine, traditionally noted for its clarity and sparkle. By citing Falernian and Massican wine, Crashaw refers specifically to the Campanian vineyards at and near Mt. Vesuvius, which also produce the renowned vintage called Lachryma Christi or tears of Christ.[13] In fact, the three wines—Falernian, Massican, Lachryma Christi—issue from grapes in the same vineyards, grapes whose differences derive, in part, from their location on grapevines, whether they are

[13]Falernian and Massican wines and Lachryma Christi are among Italy's finest vintages. See H. Warner Allen, *A History of Wine: Great Vintage Wines from The Homeric Age to The Present Day* (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), esp. Chapter V, "Italia Oenotria" (pp. 103-115), which centers upon Falernian and Massican wines; *Hugh Johnson's Story of Wine*, esp. Chapter 6, "De Re Rustica" (pp. 59-74), which surveys Italian wines; *Frank Schoonmaker's Encyclopedia of Wine* (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1965), pp. 59, 189; *The Oxford Companion to Wine*, ed. Jancis Robinson (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 193; "Wine in the Ancient World" at http://itsa.ucsf.edu/~snlrc/encyclopaedia_romana/wine/wine.html (2 July 2004); http:// www.milioni.com/vini/ingd1/637.htm (5 July 2004).

up high or down low. That is to say, a vine that was elevated on a trellis or espalier produced, on the one hand, grapes on high that were more exposed to the sun and, on the other hand, grapes down low, closer to the soil, and shaded by the denser foliage.

Variations in the wine produced from different grapes (even from the same vine) become evident in the motion or fluttering of wine: first, when the wine is poured into a glass; afterwards, while the wine is swirled in the drinking glass, an activity that releases the bouquet and manifests the texture and body of the wine. Traditionally, moreover, a wine drinker will observe the inside of the glass where he or she will note the motion or fluttering of the wine, a phenomenon that results in the "tears" or "legs" of wine. First scientifically explained in 1855 in a paper by James Thomson, "On certain curious Motions observable at the Surfaces of Wine and other Alcoholic Liquors," this phenomenon results from capillarity or surface tension. Wine blends alcohol, chiefly ethanol, and water. When the wine is swirled in a glass, the ethanol evaporates more quickly than the water. Because the surface tension of ethanol is lower than that of water, there are forces generated between the alcohol and water. In a glass that is still, these forces lead to the circulation of liquid, what is called evaporative convection. And after a drinker swirls the contents, the glass acquires a film of wine, from which the ethanol evaporates. A resulting increase in surface tension forces more liquid upward. And at the brim, the liquid becomes too heavy to remain there against the downward pull of gravity so that the wine slowly slides downward, causing the appearance of "legs" or "tears." At times, the term "sheets" is used to describe wide "legs." Commentators argue that wine drinkers for millennia have observed motion or fluttering inside the glass, citing even Scripture (Proverbs 23:31) where attention is focused on how wine "moveth itself aright." Traditionally, wine drinkers cited motion or fluttering as an index that the wine is full-bodied and superior in quality, but the

scientific explanation suggests that wines with higher alcoholic content "move" more readily and rapidly.[14]

The Campanian wines in Crashaw's poem—cited as "*wine of love*" ("*Vinum . . . amoris*") (11, emphasis in the original)—threaten to "overcome" ("Vincor") (13) the speaker, who is "almost completely mingled with these aromas" ("istis totus propè misceor auris") (13). Like sherry, these Campanian wines at times were blended or in various ways adjusted by the vintner. Typically, these wines because of their strong alcoholic content manifested the motion or fluttering associated with "legs" or "tears," and before they were imbibed, water was added to dilute them. Crashaw, indeed, describes this very process in the last two verses of the poem:

> But why do I fear the great strength of invincible wine?
> See there is what cuts the strength of the wine, water.
>
> ["Sed quid ego invicti metuo bona robora vini?
> Ecce est, quæ validum diluit, unda, merum." (15-16)]

The strong wine is "cut" or diluted by a vintner's addition of water, making a more palatable blend, one that will not induce a soporific effect. Accordingly, Crashaw echoes his earlier adaptation of the miracle at Cana—in "The Weeper"—in which Jesus is the master

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[14]James Thomson's paper appeared in *Philosophical Magazine* 10 (1855), 330-333. Thomson's research was overlooked by researchers, who, instead, gave attention to later work in the 1870s on the topic of surface tension-driven convection by Carlo Marangoni. As a result, the phenomenon of "tears" or "legs" of wine is known as the Marangoni effect. For commentary on the "tears" or "legs" of wine, see Marcos Gugliotti, "Tears of Wine," *Journal of Chemical Education* 81, No. 1 (January 2004): 67; http://www.newscientist.com/lastword/article.jsp?is=lw663 (15 August 2004); "The Great Legs Debate" at http://www.wineeducation.com/legs.html (27 June 2004). For color illustrations of "tears" or "legs" of wine, see http://www-math.mit.edu/~bush/tears.html (7 July 2004); http://www. thewinemerchantinc.com/educational/LegsTears.html (5 July 2004). See "legs" (which includes "tears" and "sheets") at http://www.epicurious.com/drinking/wine_dictionary/search (11 June 2004).

vintner who calibrates the unique and compelling taste of the most palatable wine. At the same time, Crashaw alludes to the account of the Crucifixion in John's Gospel when a Roman soldier lances the side of Jesus "and immediately blood and water flowed out" (John 19:34). By such biblical allusion, Crashaw intensifies the irony of the word "invincible," which describes a level of strength that cannot be subdued. Only Jesus himself, the master vintner, can dilute successfully the strong wine by adding the right amount of water to it. In his solicitude for the speaker and, by implication, for all sinners who strive for regeneration, Jesus oversees the quintessential blend of purifying water and saving grace—the sacramental significance of the fluids that issue from his side at death.[15]

In sum, Crashaw's use of viticulture becomes an extended metaphor that encompasses the regeneration of the repentant sinner and the transcendent contemplation of the mystic. Viticulture also figures the redemptive act of Jesus that derives from the Crucifixion, which many commentators cite as the mystical origin of the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist. Finally, viticulture prefigures the eschatological nuptial union of the sanctified soul and the Lord in the afterlife, a celebration at which angels will rejoice by imbibing wine produced from the choicest grapes and blended by a master vintner.

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[15]Extensive commentary on the Eucharist within the Sacrifice of the Mass appears (under "Eucharist") in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05572c.htm).