John Donne Journal,
Vol. 4, no. 1 (1985)

Crashaw and the Feminine Animus: Patterns of Self-Sacrifice in Two of His Devotional Poems

Maureen Sabine

While fellow seventeenth-century poets were searching for ways to face the fearful character of their age, Crashaw appears immune to anxiety, absorbed as he is in his private devotions to the Mother and Child. Twentieth-century critics have been hard on Crashaw for his poetic failure to engage in the great public struggles of his times, to be a poet militant or, in effect, more of a man, and have treated his defection to the continent and Baroque Catholicism as though it were artistic cowardice. Even Crashaw's most sympathetic critics betray their unease with his verse by describing this poet as "un-English" in temperament, "foreign" in sensibility, and "alien" in spirit.[1]

Recent scholarship has begun a reassessment, demonstrating that Crashaw's poetic devotions were not deviant but a reflection of the fervid religion practiced by Protestant and Catholic believers alike, in England and on the continent. Yet while scholars have broadened our understanding of the diverse influences that may be traced in his work,[2] the feeling still lingers that Crashaw is different, not like other male poets of his day—that he is "feminine."[3]

If the term "feminine" indicated a special poetic interest in women and their feelings, there would be no case to answer. However, the term is often employed insidiously to imply that Crashaw suffered from an incurable sickness of the spirit which fatally weakened the power of his art. In a lively discussion of the devotional stances of the seventeenth century, Anthony Low considers why "feminine" should be applied to Crashaw as a term of disparagement. He speculates that the fathers of modern criticism like Eliot and Leavis may have related more readily as men to Donne than Crashaw. Donne's poetry projects bold and assertive attitudes with which male critics can identify while Crashaw

encourages a more receptive and pliant mood, traditionally acceptable to women, but resented by men whose reaction is a profound aversion to the sentiments of his poetry.[4]

It has not escaped some critics that Crashaw deliberately creates powerful conflicts of feeling in his poetry. Patrick Grant argues that Crashaw emphasizes the conflict between the physical world and the spiritual life in order to shock his readers into an awareness of the ugliness of existence without Christian meaning.[5] R. V. Young, adopting a rather different approach but affirming Crashaw's shock tactics, believes that the poet graphically describes the Christian mysteries so as to illustrate their "radical and shocking transformation of every aspect of day-to-day life."[6] The distaste which some readers feel for the feminine or infantile features of his poetry too often closes any further, meaningful inquiry. Yet it can demonstrate Crashaw's skill at provoking strong and unsettling reactions which will stir the reader from a narrow, sexually biased definition of self and force a revaluation of identity and a rebeholding of God who is the source of identity for all—man, woman and child. Such a sacrifice of identity can, however, be not only difficult but painful; and for this reason literary scholars may be evasive about their own feelings when they analyze Crashaw's verse. Few are prepared to ask how a poet with so gentle, so outwardly ineffectual a temperament should arouse such violent responses. Yet without a self-examination akin to the soul-searching that takes place in the poetry itself, the reader may never understand why Crashaw attaches such importance to self-sacrifice. What is called for is a response to his verse which does more than dismiss his religious fervor as the work either of an effeminate sensibility or a febrile personality stunted by a child-like dependence on mother figures. Those critics who are anxious to find a "literary home for England's poetic outcast,"[7] comb the Continent for sources but overlook the fact that the longing for home was a ruling passion for Crashaw, a source of both his suffering and his creative inspiration as we can see from the meager attachments that shaped his life.

The poet's early loss of mother and stepmother, his reaction against his father's harsh brand of Puritanism, and his devotion as an adult to a succession of not always well-chosen spiritual "mothers" and to conservative religion provide a point of departure for more profitable critical speculation than the perfunctory suggestion of his inadequacy. They chart a poignant record of chronic insecurity, need, and quest which indicates that Crashaw was

troubled by the same sense of deprivation and searching for the same reassurances as other English poets of his day. Indeed, the longing for home is deeply embedded as a pastoral response in his poetry. However, what distinguishes Crashaw from fellow poets and often bewilders or repels contemporary readers is that he strove to quiet commonly held fears and to ward off the unhappiness traditionally associated with the loss of home by reflections upon the Virgin Mother adoring her Child. They occupy the cherished place in his devotional verse that ordinary women and children are customarily ordained to have in the home; and they inject artless sincerity into poetry which is sometimes regarded as too technically brilliant to carry religious conviction.

In this essay, I wish to examine Crashaw's poetic attempt to recover felicity and discover wholeness of self by focusing on his rather remarkable interest in women and their concerns. This is most evident in the devotional poems which honor the Virgin as a loving, human mother to her Child. Crashaw's feminine sympathies distinguish him from other contemplative poets like Traherne, Herbert and Vaughan with whom he is usually compared and found wanting. In contrast, Crashaw makes women a chief subject of his religious verse. Moreover, as shown through a close study of the first version of the "Hymn in the Holy Nativity" and the English epigram "Quaerit Jesum Suum Maria," Crashaw's veneration of the Virgin in whom all women can "applaud [their] happy selves" ("O Gloriosa Domina," l. 28, p. 197)[8] actively promoted both his faith and his poetry. She endowed his faith with a promise and his poetry with a purpose which to judge from his tremulous character he would not, in all likelihood, have found on his own. In Her, not in his poetry as has been suggested,[9] Crashaw found an asylum which he could regard as his spiritual home and as a sanctuary for his creative life.

Readers have long noted Crashaw's fervent attachment to Mary and extravagant dissemination of mother and child images in his verse but continue to devalue these as a retreat "into the phantasmagoric world of baroque Catholic spirituality and the poetic role of infant."[10] Far from being extravagances, these images concretized the poet's faith. When examined at play in the "Hymn" and "Quaerit Jesum," they can be shown firstly to secure and then to liberate Crashaw's most fundamental spiritual longings, leading him through the fire of his consuming love for the Virgin to a union with God who illumines identity and also reduces it to ashes. As a poet, Crashaw poured much of his energy into these

images, effectively expended himself as he evolved them, sacrificing the better part of his life to his devotional art and possibly draining himself of the reserves necessary for more sustained poetic achievement. When he speaks of his verse as his "owne best sacrifice" ("Hymn," l. 88, p. 84) to the Mother and Child, he is referring, without resentment, to the personal cost of writing poetry of such intensity as his.

Yet some time shortly before his death and in the aftermath of the sublimation of self that is attempted in these two poems, Crashaw went on to compose a superior version of the "Hymn" which appeared in 1648 and a definitive revision which was published posthumously in 1652. The "growing sense of form" and the controlled power of the images that Kerby Neill perceives in these successive revisions[11] indicate that the self-immolation which Crashaw undergoes in the first version of the "Hymn" and in "Quaerit Jesum" does not leave him "dead to world and self,"[12] but more fully alive than he ever had been before. Like a child who has grown up and put away the things of a child, Crashaw eventually does away with the stanza which shows the physical bonding of the Mother and her newborn Son. But because he eliminates this stanza, it does not follow that he severed his own emotional bond to the Mother and Child. Rather, he has mastered a more exalted stage of spiritual development and it is through his sympathy for women and the medium of Mary that he is empowered to make this transition, as we shall now see in more detail.

I

"Hymn in the Holy Nativity" (1646)

The primitive needs of the Mother and Child exert a powerful hold over the imagination of the poet and draw him on a pastoral journey of return to those first moments of dawning awareness when, like David the Psalmist, he thinks of his soul as an infant quieted at his mother's breast (Psalm 131). The emotional insecurity and deprivation that are an underlying feature of Crashaw's personal history help to explain why this poet should instinctively feel that the home and the formative bond between the Mother and Child were the fount of all that was important to man in his spiritual course through life. Indeed as the circumstances of his own life darkened, Crashaw felt an even greater compulsion to make Mary's role as mother the focus of special veneration in his poetry as we shall see more readily from the earlier as opposed to later versions of the Nativity Hymn.

It is evident from the devotional Latin epigrams to Mary which he composed between 1632-35 while a scholar at Pembroke that as he came to maturity and for the ten or so year period before the publication of the first "Hymn," Crashaw was already at work on a distinctive "Mariolatry"[13] which was to dominate his poetry and constitute the core not only of his creative life but of his feminine orientated faith. Mary's view of Christ as her Son first and foremost shaped the perspective of his devotional poetry and made him sensitive as contemplative poet to the satisfaction which Mary experienced being a woman through the act of feeding her Child. Indeed, her satisfaction is much more evident than that of her Son who, being God as well as man, does not want with such physical intensity as his human mother, a point which Crashaw will later drive home in "Quaerit Jesum."

The part which Counter-Reformation modes of worship played in resolving Crashaw on his course of sentimental piety has been examined at length, but often without appreciation of the courage which such an inexpedient undertaking of faith involved for this naturally timid poet. Certainly the prevailing religious climate in England did not give the poet much encouragement. The puritan investigators who condemned Crashaw's veneration of the Blessed Mother, harried the "chaplaine of the virgine myld" ("Crashawe the Anagramme," l. 38, p. 653), and dislodged him from his most lengthy encounter with earthly felicity as curate of St. Mary's near Peterhouse,[14] were the spiritual kinsmen of earlier Elizabethan legislators and statesmen hostile not only to pleasure and poetry but to women.

Sixteenth-century Humanistic Protestanism was responsible for forming enduring attitudes of misogyny. These prevail well into Crashaw's time as we can see from the ambivalent regard which Donne has towards women, instinctively liking and needing their company but intellectually wary of this natural enjoyment as a betrayal of higher callings and obligations. Unlike Donne, Crashaw makes no self-conscious effort to conceal or justify his partiality for women. However, his stance was a delicate one, for his admiration of women was brought into focus by his devotion to Mary. Yet Protestants were affronted by her traditional role as compassionate, maternal intercessor and made her glorification a chief target of derision.[15] The enraged diatribe of Crashaw's own father against the Sacred Motherhood and the puritan desecration of the chapel of St. Mary's demonstrate that the veneration of Mary continued to incite violent controversy in the seventeenth century.

Crashaw's decision to exalt Mary's maternal role in his poetry brings us face to face with the mystery of a voice raised in passionate, and one is tempted to say, reckless disregard of Protestant orthodoxy. The voice projected in his poetry conveys both personal vulnerability and resolution, emotional extravagance and self-chastisement, ingenious delight in the world and indifference to its customs. Its strange, resulting tone exasperates or indeed eludes critics altogether; but it only seems strange or foreign because of its unconventional synthesis of attributes and attitudes that have traditionally distinguished men from women, the masculine from the feminine consciousness.

Thus, Crashaw's open, unforced admiration for Mary's feminine qualities and activities in the "Hymn" reflects a special affinity with women that is not an end in itself but a means of achieving a fuller, more integrated concept of what it is to be human. His veneration for Mary naturally justified and intensified his unique regard for the feminine spirit. Moreover, it convinced him that the attributes which grace Mary in motherhood—beauty, virtue, faith and love—are conferred as a spiritual legacy of the Incarnation to an impoverished world largely shaped by the vision of narrow-minded men. In periods of iconoclasm such as Crashaw himself endured, these qualities survive only in the privacy of home, prayer-life, and sometimes poetry. The guardians of this inner life are self-effacing men and women whose stay on earth the world might well judge as "trivial and frivolous and futile."[16]

Crashaw's special devotion to the Mother and Child also accords with his view of the Incarnation as a mystery which sanctions celebration of life and not the aversion to the created world which has tragically been misconstrued as Christian self-denial. This conviction has important consequences for his poetic development. His eventual visualization of God's relation to man as "LOVE's architecture" (l. 47, p. 81) in the final version of the "Hymn" will not come to him through revulsion for the body or escape from sensual experience. On the contrary, this earlier "Hymn" clearly shows that this poet finds his mystic way back to God by giving explicit expression to the physical intimacy that must have existed between the Virgin and Child and which is no different in kind from that of mothers and infants the world over. Indeed, it is the ordinary mother's tenderness that guides Crashaw to depict the nursing scene with such delicate and unreserved charm.

Anthony Low has suggested that the critical aversion to this scene reflects an altogether modern embarrassment or constraint on

the subject of nursing, particularly in public.[17] It also probably stems from a deeply rooted reluctance to consider the biological implications of life for women.[18] Crashaw himself felt no such constraint and will make the parts of Mary's body the subject of a kind of spiritual blazon in "Quaerit Jesum." Here in the "Hymn," however, he gives chief poetic attention to Mary's milk-laden breasts which he describes in typically uninhibited manner as prodigious fountains which "warme[s] in the one, coole[s] in the other" (l. 64). His reverence is focused on the nursing breasts but extends to the whole phenomenon of child-bearing, reflecting his admiration for the biological efficiency of the woman's body. In this and other poems where he contemplated the blessed parturition, Crashaw could never fully overcome his amazement of a God who compressed the infinite sum of his divinity into the narrow confines of a Virgin Womb, nor his feeling that birth itself was a mystery almost as great as the Incarnation. He thus exclaimed of Mary in the sacred Latin poem, "Deus sub utero virginis" (ll. 5-6, p. 263):

> Quanta uteri, Regina, tui reverentia tecum est,
> *Dum jacet hic, coelo sub breviore, Deus!*

A Baroque interplay of consternation and fascination can also be detected here as he dwells upon Mary's delivery and contemplates the holy paradox of a mother not only giving birth to a Son mightier than herself, but giving birth to a Son who is the Father of us all. "Ille, uterus matris quem tenet, ille pater" (l. 2, p. 263). As we shall see, this is a mystery of no small importance to the final resolution of "Quaerit Jesum."

In the "Hymn," Mary's easy birth inspires a joyful sense of artistic release more exalted than, but akin to, the fervent energy which Elizabethans felt both beautiful women and the love poetry which celebrated them had the power to arouse.[19] Crashaw undoubtedly drew his erotic imagery from the language of Catholic mysticism. However, the resemblance of the shepherds' ardor to that of a worshipful swain and the likeness of the Christ Child's eyes to those of a Petrarchan lady,[20] suggest that he did not believe it irreverent to make use of the language of secular love poetry as well. After all, if he celebrates the Incarnation as an act assuring man that human and divine life are interlocked, then so are sacred and profane expressions of love.

Later in "Quaerit Jesum," Crashaw would meditate upon the thought of Mary living her life alone, devoid of both human and

divine love because devoid of her Son and God. Though she is happily ignorant of her fate in the "Hymn," the poet himself could never forget that Mary is already becoming *Sancta Maria Dolorum*[21] at the joyous moment of motherhood.

> Gaudia parturientis erat semel ille parenti
> Quotidie gemitus parturientis erat.
> ("In partum B. Virg. non difficilem," ll. 5-6, p. 265)

His appreciation of the above paradox dignifies the unregarded sacrifices of self that women are called upon to make in motherhood.[22] However, his "Hymn" does not only call for sacrifice. It calls for man to "welcome" into his own spiritual life the outwardly immaterial but emotionally substantial blessings of home—the tenderness, simple joys and gaiety which pervade the "Hymn." In effect, Crashaw calls the reader to a paradoxical fullness of life which involves reward and sacrifice, austerity and delight in the world, and a receptivity to attributes which are not exclusively identified with man, woman, or child but the common possession of the whole human family.

> Come wee Shepheards who have seene
> Dayes King deposed by Nights Queene.
> Come lift we up our lofty song,
> To wake the Sun that sleeps too long.
>
> Hee in this our generall joy,
> Slept, and dreampt of no such thing
> While we found out the fair-ey'd Boy,
> and kist the Cradle of our King;
> Tell him hee rises now too late,
> To shew us ought worth looking at.
>
> Tell him wee now can shew him more
> Then hee e're shewd to mortall sight,
> Then hee himselfe e're saw before,
> Which to be seene needs not his light:
> Tell him *Tityrus* where th'hast been,
> Tell him *Thyrsis* what th'hast seen.
>
> Gloomy Night embrac't the place
> Where the noble Infant lay:
> The Babe lookt up, and shew'd his face,
> In spight of Darknesse it was Day.

It was thy Day, Sweet, and did rise,
Not from the East, but from thy eyes.

Winter chid the world, and sent
    The angry North to wage his warres:
The North forgot his fierce intent,
    And left perfumes, in stead of scarres:
By those sweet Eyes persuasive Powers,
Where he meant frosts, he scattered Flowers.

We saw thee in thy Balmy Nest,
    Bright Dawne of our *Eternall Day*;
Wee saw thine Eyes break from the East,
    And chase the trembling shades away:
Wee saw thee (and wee blest the sight)
Wee saw thee by thine owne sweet Light.
(sts. 1-6, ll. 1-34)

In these first, stirring stanzas when the shepherds join voices in "lofty song" (l. 3), Crashaw is concerned to show the Infant bringing the fullness of his incarnate life to a world which has fallen into darkness and deep division. The conceit of the Infant Eyes, so dominant a feature of the first half of the Hymn, breaks into resplendent life when the "Babe lookt up, and shew'd his face" (l. 19). The poet depicts the Infant eyes captivating the shepherds with their dazzling beauty in order to suggest how the Child has won the hearts of man as the Petrarchan lady once did. This is not to say that he wishes to disparage romantic love or discredit the influence which desirable women have always exerted over men. However, taking his cue from Mary's passionate regard for her own Son and the engrossed attention which quite ordinary women give to their children, he proposes that the Babe gives more profound and lasting meaning than is possible in erotic love to lives that lack fulfillment, even in sexual union.

Crashaw traces the path of Christian life, one that is continually retraced in his own poems, through the significations that he assigns to the Child's eyes. Their fair light has the power to bring the soul the illumination, peace, and balm that have traditionally been mystical metaphors for piety and felicity.[23] However, their "weeping" at a later, crucial stage in the "Hymn" (l. 66) foreshadows the suffering inseparable for this poet from the joys of the Christian life.

The intriguing difference between the "Hymns" of 1646 and 1648-52 is that in the two later versions, the Infant Eyes compel attention through the entire poem;[24] but in the earlier version, the Infant hides his dazzling eyes in the ninth stanza when he nestles his head against the bosom of his Mother.

I saw the curl'd drops, soft and slow
    Come hovering o're the places head,
Offring their whitest sheets of snow,
    To furnish the faire Infants Bed.
Forebeare (said I) be not too bold,
Your fleece is white, but 'tis too cold.

I saw th'officious Angels bring,
    The downe that their soft brests did strow,
For well they now can spare their wings,
    When Heaven it selfe lyes here below.
Faire Youth (said I) be not too rough,
Thy Downe though soft's not soft enough.

The Babe no sooner 'gan to seeke,
    Where to lay his lovely head,
But streight his eyes advis'd his Cheeke,
    'Twixt Mothers Brests to goe to bed.
Sweet choise (said I) no way but so,
Not to lye cold, yet sleepe in snow.
(st. 7-9, ll. 35-52)

The question which must be asked is why Crashaw should adumbrate the images of light and divinity halfway through the earlier "Hymn," even though the Eyes are crucial to the spiritual transfiguration that takes place in the last stanza of both versions? What we already know of the poet himself and what he divulges in the remainder of the "Hymn" indicate that he felt the need to describe the Infant's human dependence on the comforts of his Mother and the home she made for him. The stanzas that follow thus emphasize warm, reassuring, and what may seem to readers now accustomed to relative affluence as insipid pleasures—like clean linen, a comfortable bed and a soft, maternal presence. Yet they have particular, poignant importance for a poet whom Thomas Car depicted in a prefactory poem to *Carmen Deo Nostro* as follows:

He seekes no downes, no sheetes, his bed's still made.
If he can finde a chaire or stoole, he's layd,
When day peepes in, he quittes his restlesse rest.
And still poore soule, before he's up he's dres't.
(ll. 31-34, p. 653)

This is moving, firsthand testimony that Crashaw knew personally what it was to be "very shiftless,"[25] on the run, with no fixed shelter over his head.

The touchingly familiar images in stanzas 7-9 of the "Hymn" are contrasted with a world which is cold, uninviting and potentially hostile to the most vulnerable of its inhabitants. It is difficult to understand how critics conversant with lines like these or Crashaw's life can speak of his poetry as insulated from suffering, from the pain of the Cross.[26] The hardships he endured during his lonely years of search and exile on the continent between 1643-46 must have intensified his nostalgic longing for home; and he had little to sustain him other than his devotion to Mary and to his "mothers," Queen Henrietta Maria and the Countess of Denbigh.

These travails would still have been fresh in his mind when he published this first version of the "Hymn" in 1646. This was also the year in which he made the move from Paris to his final resting place in Italy. The allegorical likeness between his transient state and that of the Mother and Child fleeing from Bethlehem to Egypt before they can return home to Nazareth must have consoled him. Even more, it must have strengthened that fervent sympathy for the defenseless state of the Mother and Child which Crashaw displayed even in the Latin epigrams that he composed when only an undergraduate at Cambridge between 1631-35.

Ecce sed hos quoque nox et hyems clausere tenellos:
Et quis scit, quid nox quid meditetur hyems?
("In nocturnum et hyemale iter infantis
Domini," ll. 9-10, p. 283)

The various exigencies which Crashaw experienced from the time of his flight from Cambridge in 1643 up until his "fixing" in Italy as well as his life-long veneration of the Virgin help to explain the special importance which Mary assumes in his verse. Above all, she is a recognizable human mother who intercedes for man by reminding her Son, as she does in "Quaerit Jesum," of all she has done for him in the past. Not only here in the "Hymn," but in poems like "On the Blessed Virgins Bashfulnesse," "O Gloriosa

Domina" and especially "Quaerit Jesum," Crashaw comes to worship Christ through the medium of Mary. As we can see from a stanza omitted from the Hymn of 1652, if he is moved to worship the Christ Child, it is because he has seen the Child with the eyes of a woman, in point of fact, a doting Mother no different from countless others throughout time.

> Shee sings thy Teares asleepe, and dips
> Her kisses in thy weeping Eye,
> She spreads the red leaves of thy Lips,
> That in their Buds yet blushing lye.
> Shee 'gainst those Mother-Diamonds tryes
> The points of her young Eagles Eyes.
> (st. 12, ll. 65-70)

Kerby Neill suggests that the above stanza is too absorbed in a sentimental depiction of the relation between the Mother and Child and does not, as a result, fully develop the religious theme of the poem. He argues that the latest version of the "Hymn," through the elimination of this stanza, heightens the theological praise which is due firstly to the Christ Child and "through Him his Mother."[27] This does not mean, as Neill may infer, that the stanza was an extraneous component in the artistic development of the "Hymn." On the contrary, it was essential; for it represents a crucial phase in the poetic conversion from sentimental to mystical piety and makes the final version of the "Hymn" possible by being sacrificed, like so much else in Crashaw's poetry.

As I have already suggested, Crashaw saw his veneration for Mary as a means of coming closer to the Son. Even if in the more mature stages of his spiritual development, he did not poetically call on the Mother to intercede for him, his love for Mary, a love which he shared after all with Christ, enhanced his adoration of the Son. It may well be that Crashaw's spiritual needs underwent significant change between the time that the first and last versions of the "Hymn" were written.[28] In the time prior to his publication of the first "Hymn," the sentimental image of the Mother nurturing the Child was of special importance to Crashaw, as we can see from correspondence written from Holland in 1643, bemoaning his "exclusion and compleat excommunicacon from my gratious mother to whome I had so holy and happy adherence."[29] However, the definitive version was conceived between 1646-49 when Crashaw was at last secure in the arms of Holy Mother the Church

in Rome and eventually housed at Loreto, reputed to be the house in which the Virgin was born and reared.[30] The poet who longed poignantly for a home of his own may well have felt that he had finally found one and no longer needed to rely so heavily on the affective aid to faith which the comforting domestic picture of the Mother and Child in stanza 12 had earlier afforded him. As we have seen, the decision to sacrifice this stanza is also consistent with one of the most powerfully worked themes of his poetry.

However, closer inspection of this stanza suggests that it is not altogether the idyllic interlude that Neill and other critics have been too quick in their dismissals to imply. There are muted intimations of the suffering Mary and her Son will undergo at the Cross in the image of the Child's "weeping Eye" and his moist, rose-red lips. The two images forewarn the reader of the weeping, wounding, and bleeding that will occur during the Passion. They also evoke complex apocalyptic references to sacrificial love and loyalty, purification and absolution, and finally the mystical communion which for Dante was symbolized by the rose in the *Paradiso*.[31] Mary was also invoked as Mystical Rose in the Litany of Loreto. This demonstrates once more that Crashaw's love for Mary should not be seen as a detraction from his adoration of Christ. Mother and Child are so absorbed in one another that they are as one in their attributes and honors. The poet hopes to become one with God in the "Hymn" through a similar effacement and consecration of self.

As we can see, the image of the Mother and Child inspired some of Crashaw's most passionately conceived verse and fostered his poetic development. It was a development which, given the intensity of Crashaw's devotion to the Mother and Child, did not proceed evenly but through bursts of energy and flashes of illumination which correspond to the movements of the "Hymn" itself. His love for the Mother and Child also called forth a sensitivity, a profound sympathy with the feminine disposition, which distinguishes Crashaw from other seventeenth-century poets. His own emotional longings and the honor which Scripture accorded the newborn male probably made him aver strong ties between the mother and her child in the first place. His "Hymn" pays tribute to the mystery of this binding of flesh, to the importance which the family of man perceives in its smallest member though outwardly negligible, to those tender rituals which feature in the mother's nursing of her young. The close bond of the nursing mother and child was for Crashaw a sublime human expression of

the nourishing love between God and man, and he enshrined this love in his ceremonial homage to Mary as *Virgo Lactans*.

> Welcome, though not to Gold, nor Silke,
> To more than *Caesars* Birthright is.
> Two sister-Seas of virgins Milke,
> With many a rarely-temper'd kisse,
> That breathes at once both Maid and Mother,
> Warmes in the one, cooles in the other.
> (st. 11, ll. 59-64)

The nursing breasts are given what to modern taste may seem embarrassing prominence. Though Crashaw would later eliminate the ensuing stanza 12 in which Mary is depicted in the act of giving suck, his homage to the life-giving properties of the woman in stanza 11 remains a crucial feature of both the earlier and later "Hymn." For in the absence of a wet nurse—and Catholic noblewomen were being urged to emulate Mary in this respect[32]—the survival and well-being of the Child devolve entirely on the Mother. Certainly, the women readers whom Crashaw frequently addresses in his poetry and to whom sensually inspired worship was directed, would have approved the poetic elevation of a hitherto unrespected function. The contemporary female reader will also approve Crashaw's promotion of natural feeding and his whimsical perception of how large and full a mother's breasts must seem from an infant's vantage point.

The approval which once informed this stanza contrasts strikingly with the critical distaste it now incites, a distaste reflecting entrenched attitudes of men which have ramifications for women in the sense of shame they are made to feel about their own bodies and their perfectly natural biological processes. Crashaw, to his credit, does not present Mary as the hapless victim of her biology, even though the temptation to play the martyr to one's body is strong in many a woman, as we shall see from Mary's stance in "Quaerit Jesum." As a man, Crashaw beholds the biological complexity and efficiency of the female in the order of creation and ranks the Mother a marvel of life in her own right.

In the final stanza of the "Hymn," however, Crashaw points us in the same direction as Mary and the shepherds—to the Child who represents the central mystery of the poem and who exemplifies the miraculous nature of love.

To thee meeke Majesty, soft King
Of simple Graces, and sweet Loves,
Each of us his Lamb will bring,
Each his payre of silver Doves,
At last, in fire of thy faire Eyes,
Wee'l burne, our owne best sacrifice.
(st. 15, ll. 83-88)

A correspondent miracle of faith is demanded of us; for Crashaw's Child does not come to earth like the God of power and might in Milton's Nativity Ode. He is a "soft King of simple Graces, and sweet Loves," embodying qualities of domesticity and peace at a time when men were in love with war.

Then as now, "the prizes of our society are reserved for outer, not inner, achievements."[33] Public rejection or failure is an occupational hazard for any poet. Yet a poet such as Crashaw believed in qualities which set him painfully apart from an age which asked public heroism of a man. Meekness, softness, sweetness, and innocence characterize Crashaw's poetic voice but were not qualities which the world would reckon marks of a successful or valiant man. Crashaw's life, outwardly at least, reads as an abysmal chronicle of failure and weakness, underscored by the public achievements of more "successful" poets like Donne, Marvell, and even Milton.

The triumphant close of the Nativity Hymn suggests that the poet himself did not see his life as a failure but as a sacrifice, joyfully made with the nonchalant gallantry of the little man, to preserve from harm the Mother and Child and the home they exemplify to the world. Crashaw's personal history poignantly illustrates how home life is often the first, tragic casualty of strife and that men have great need of family in times of trouble. His poem speaks for those unexceptional and unhonored men, women, and children who recognize that the qualities kept alive in the home are necessary to public peace as well as peace of mind. As I suggested at the beginning of this essay, these domestic qualities bind Crashaw in spirit and sympathy with the Mother and Child. In identifying with them, he sacrifices that narrow, gender definition of self and is freed to journey towards the God who reveals yet another face to Mary in "Quaerit Jesum."

II
"Quaerit Jesum Suum Maria"

In the elegaic poem "Quaerit Jesum,"[34] Crashaw turns from the joyful mystery which Mary experiences as Mother at the Nativity to the third of the seven sorrows that she experiences as *Mater Sancta Dolorum*—Christ's disappearance in the temple. Crashaw expects us to journey in understanding with Mary from the birth to this first "loss" of her Child. He wishes us to remember with Mary the physical pleasures of motherhood in order that we will know her heartache seeing her Child grow up.

The poem dramatizes a turning point of psychological moment not simply for Mary, one feels, but for Crashaw as well. We saw in the Nativity Hymn that the figure of the nursing mother fed his poetic imagination. Just as Counter-Reformation women were encouraged to think of themselves as mothers nursing the Infant Jesus, so did Crashaw regard himself as a son drawing his sustenance from Mary's bosom, tasting the very source of life where he trusted lay the succor for his own cares. He is impelled by a desire more profound than "infantile wish-fulfillment,"[35] for milk has ancient associations with wisdom, renewal, and happiness.[36] Deprived of the consoling image of the nurturing Mother and all that she embodies for him of the spiritual life, Crashaw would have felt deprived of all felicity.

As a consequence, no poet was better able than Crashaw to articulate the anxiety of a woman who, having made her Child the focus of her whole life, must now face estrangement. For as we have repeatedly seen, the sacred motherhood of Mary engendered Crashaw's most deeply felt poetry, and without it he must have feared that his verse would be barren of meaning and feeling as Mary fears that her life has become barren of purpose in "Quaerit Jesum." In order to inject pathos into Mary's psychological crisis and in order to involve us more immediately in her sorrow, Crashaw depicts her as a tragic protagonist. He chose as his dramatic subject a Scriptural incident which touched the heart of his devotion for Mary and which perturbed the security he had found in adoration of the Mother and Child. His poem palpitates with feeling for Mary's suffering and with an agitation that seems as much the poet's as his poetic subject's. For the woman who addresses us in "Quaerit Jesum" is the *femina sola*, not the nursing mother. That deep contentment which emanated from the Nativity Hymn is "gone," Mary repeats with increasing distress through the first fourteen lines of the poem:

And is he gone, whom these armes held but now?
Their hope, their vow?
Did ever greife, and joy in one poore heart
Soe soone change part?
Hee's gone. the fair'st flower, that e're bosome drest,
My soules sweet rest.
My joyes, and hee are gone; my greife, and I
Alone must ly.
Hee's gone. not leaving with me, till he come,
One smile at home.
Oh come then. bring thy mother her lost joy:
Oh come, sweet boy.
Make hast, and come, or e're my griefe, and I
Make hast, and dy.
Peace, heart! the heavens are angry. all their sphaeres
Rivall thy tears.
I was mistaken, some faire sphaere, or other
Was thy blest mother.
What, but the fairest heaven, could owne the birth
Of soe faire earth?
Yet sure thou did'st lodge heere. this wombe of mine
Was once call'd thine.
Oft have these armes thy cradle envied,
Beguil'd thy bed.
Oft to thy easy eares hath this shrill tongue
Trembled, and sung.
Oft have I wrapt thy slumbers in soft aires,
And stroak't thy cares.
Oft hath this hand those silken casements kept,
While their sunnes slept.
Oft have my hungry kisses made thine eyes
Too early rise.
Oft have I spoild my kisses daintiest diet,
To spare thy quiet.
Oft from this breast to thine my love-tost heart
Hath leapt, to part.
Oft my lost soule have I bin glad to seeke
On thy soft cheek.
Oft have these armes (alas!) show'd to these eyes
Their now lost joyes.
Dawne then to me, thou morne of mine owne day,

And lett heaven stay.
Oh, would'st thou heere still fixe thy faire abode,
My bosome God:
What hinders, but my bosome still might be
Thy heaven to thee?

On one level, Mary's sorrow is no mystery to us but a sorrow ordained to all women by Time. However, Mary has been called to an exceptional fate though she does not accept it until the close of "Quaerit Jesum." For much of the poem, she broods upon the satisfaction involved in bearing and nursing her Son and is understandably reluctant to end the sweet reverie of her human motherhood. Mary's reminiscences, which commence about line twenty-two, project us back into the sentimental world of the Nativity Hymn where the Mother was depicted cradling, crooning, caressing, and suckling her Child. As we have seen, it is a world where Crashaw himself felt at home. He was thus able to convey Mary's shock of sudden severance from this world as she realizes that the disappearance of her Son portends losses unbearable to any loving mother.

Scripture treats Christ's disappearance in the temple as a symbolic act in which he asserts his independence from his human parents and absolute obedience to his Heavenly Father (Luke 2:48-50). Characteristically, Crashaw looks at this crucial event in Christ's life, not from the masculine but from the feminine, not from the divine but from the human point of view. It nonetheless comes as a surprise to see him departing from the traditional image of Mary as Mother meek and mild and ascribing to her such spiritual disorders as desolation, confusion, insecurity, and desperation. As we know from correspondence written in exile and his poetic admonishment "To the Countess of Denbigh," these reflected Crashaw's own spiritual tribulations. In this way and even at the risk of being unfaithful in his devotion to the serene Virgin, he bares the soul of a woman who is undergoing internal changes which are as disturbing as, and akin to, the climacteric. Of course, Mary is still of child-bearing age at the time that her Son disappears in the temple. But in consenting to become a Virgin Mother, Mary has tacitly undertaken to be fertile once and once only in her life. Such a climacteric, if we may employ this term broadly to define a profoundly disturbing life crisis, is more difficult for Mary to accept because it is not the natural but the supernatural consequence of the Annunciation and thrust unexpectedly upon her with

her Son's symbolic but biologically premature repudiation of his childhood.

With his Baroque flair for the theatrical, Crashaw converts Mary's crisis into a spiritual melodrama and one in which not only the salvation but the very sanity of the heroine hangs in the balance: "Make hast, and come, or e're my griefe, and I / Make hast, and dy" (ll. 17-18). Sensational remarks such as this punctuate "Quaerit Jesum" and both express and feed the emotional hysteria which grips the Mother. However, they do more than reflect the Baroque capacity to invent elaborate spiritual torture for itself. Unbeknownst to Mary, her recollections do not simply torment but shrive her soul for mystical union with her Son.

Mary's reverie upon her human motherhood with Christ excites religious ecstasy. Indeed, as we can see from lines like "Oft have my hungry kisses made thine eyes / Too early rise" (ll. 35-36) or "Oft from this breast to thine my love-tost heart / Hath leapt" (ll. 39-40), Mary's love for her Son is now charged in recollection with an eroticism which was absent from the tranquil picture of the Nativity. Her passionate longing is, for Crashaw, the perfectly innocent expression of the need for a more mature, more consummate relationship with Christ which the physical bond between mother and child foreshadows. Mary's yearning bears striking resemblance to that of the holy women who sigh in the Baroque emblem books:

> O sweet Jesu, I knew not that thy kisses were so sweet, nor thy society so delectable, nor thy attentions so vertuous; For when I have thee, I am cleane; when I touch thee, I am chast; when I receive thee, I am a Virgin.[37]

If we consider the uninhibited eroticism of this prayer, why should Crashaw's taste be judged particularly questionable, when he does no more than reflect the sensibility of his age?[38] It was an age given to powerful outbursts of feeling, and nowhere did passions run higher than on the subject of religion. Indeed, religion was often a matter of life or death; and in "Quaerit Jesum," Mary must "die" a mystical death to the sensual life she had with her Child. She must undergo a surrender of self more turbulent than the involuntary spasms of labor, than madness, or sexual ecstasy, in order that the Son may be felt, not in her womb or at her breast, but in her soul. Mary's climacteric thus becomes the crucible for a

favorite mystical truth. "There is not only *fructus ventris*, there is *partus mentis*, the mind conceives as well as the womb."[39]

Crashaw's personal inclination was to linger indefinitely over the idyll of the Mother nursing her Child. In this, he once again showed his extraordinary percipience towards women. He understood and conveys in his poem the conflicting emotions which mothers experience when their children threaten to leave the nest. He viewed with compassion the strategems which women employ to forestall this event—which is to make a martyrdom of their motherhood with the unwelcome reminders to the child of the suffering involved in bearing them and the sacrifices in rearing them. But the sacrifice the Mother is called to in this poem must be made voluntarily and unconditionally like the carefree offering of self at the end of the Nativity Hymn.

For this reason, Crashaw makes a forcible effort to wrench not only his own thoughts but those of Mary away from her Child and the rich mystery of motherhood. In the final lines of the poem, he shows that Mary has, in the words of Paul to the Galatians (IV:20-21), gone through the pain of giving birth to Christ over again in the spirit. As the human mother of Christ, Mary knew God as the quickening life in her womb. Given his emotional make-up and ingrained awe of the gestating woman, Crashaw understood why Mary would find it difficult to accept that her spiritual union with Christ was more intimate than her involvement with him in pregnancy, birth, and nursing. In the end, he partially capitulates to the woman's strength of feeling and comforts Mary with the assurance that while Christ outgrows his human childhood, he will never completely forego his need for his Mother. This spiritual insight, like so many others in Crashaw's poems, is grounded in his prosaic human observation that whatever his age, an individual is always a child to his mother.

At the close of "Quaerit Jesum," Mary triumphantly reaffirms her role as nurturing mother. "What hinders, but my bosome still might be / Thy heaven to thee." One cannot help but feel that it was profoundly consoling for Crashaw to demonstrate that Christ still craved the comfort of Mary's bosom. What is more, Christ's disappearance in the temple had broken the exclusive bond between mother and child; and enabled Mary to see herself as Mother to all men, and all men to see themselves as her spiritual sons, a view of no small importance to Crashaw.

Even in sketching the new mystical relationship that is born to Mary out of her sorrow and out of Christ's greater maturity,

Crashaw does not abandon the nursing Mother and Child as his constructive models of love. He plays with the possible permutations in the relationship, employing mystical paradox to present Mary both as universal Mother and as a dependent drawing her strength from the Bosom of a God who is her Parent as well as her Son. Many readers become obsessed by what they perceive to be the sexual and incestuous undercurrents of such an analogy and substantiate this reading by quoting the celebrated line in the sacred epigram "Blessed be the Paps" where "the Mother then must suck the Son" (l. 4, p. 14). But this did not bother anyone familiar with Scripture, for it was customary to praise the nourishing breast of God as the epitome of *caritas* and to describe man, by comparison, as a child craving love. Indeed, in his pious work on the life of Mary, Stafford pictures the Virgin gazing at Christ in the cradle and beholding "herselfe a Mother deliver'd of her Parent."[40] It did not bother Crashaw, above all, because of his belief that the sensible bond between the mother and child was the blueprint for "LOVE's architecture" (l. 47, p. 81), as he would call Mary's privileged union with God in the revised "Hymn."

Crashaw's spiritual journey leads to that God who is described in the later "Hymn" as the "Phaenix [who] builds the Phaenix' Nest" (l. 46). In Him the individual must die to the distinctions of age, sex, and station that divide him from the rest of the human family. In the first version of the "Hymn," the poet already understood something of the communion mystery that is asked of him. Speaking through the shepherds, he consents at the end of the poem to a willing sacrifice of what the world might narrowly interpret as his manliness. Inspired by the Mother and Child and by that endearing stanza of their human need for one another which is eliminated in the final "Hymn," Crashaw discovers an awareness deep within himself of those qualities which they possess and now quicken mysteriously to poetic life in him—tenderness, meekness, sweetness, and innocence. These attributes form no conventional part of a man's make-up and continue to be almost exclusively associated with women and children, the weakest members of society with whom Crashaw has been derisively compared.

"Quaerit Jesum" shows that Crashaw did not wish to deny that feminine sensibility which "shew'd [its] face" (l. 19, p. 78), following the example of the Christ Child's revelation of self to the shepherds, at the end of the Nativity Hymn. On the contrary, he discovered through the open acknowledgement of this character trait

a more profound qualification to sympathize with women and understand their needs. Few poets of this time, engrossed as they were in the eloquent "I" of male self-importance, could have identified so completely with Mary in her life crisis as a mother or sensed her terror of losing her richest years as a woman. Crashaw, of course, had an exquisite appreciation of Mary's crisis, because with his natural affinity for women and the poetic flowering of his feminine spirit, he must have feared an artistic infertility analogous to the Virgin's. His reluctance to abandon his deep attachment for women as role models is evident from the conclusion of "Quaerit Jesum." Mary reluctantly accepts that her physical motherhood to Jesus is ended, but is consoled by the thought, close to the heart of Crashaw, that she will be given wider powers as a spiritual Mother to all men.

The last stage of Crashaw's spiritual journey in search of a whole and indivisible self led him to Rome where he was taken up with the revision of the Nativity Hymn. The poetic superiority of the "Hymn," finally composed sometime before Crashaw's death in 1649, to the "Hymn" of 1646 is generally accepted. The theological argument is stronger and "loftyer" (l. 3), with the addition of the famous stanza in which the Christ Child becomes the "MIGHTY BABE":

> Proud world, said I; cease your contest
> And let the MIGHTY BABE alone.
> The Phaenix builds the Phaenix' nest.
> LOVE's architecture is his own.
> The BABE whose birth embraves this morn,
> Made his own bed e're he was born.
> (st. 8, ll. 44-49)

Gone is that charming stanza of domestic bliss to be found in the earlier "Hymn" in which the Mother is absorbed in the physical infancy of her Son, oblivious to the complicated, menacing world that lies outside the realm of the nest.[41]

In the conclusive "Hymn," Crashaw tempered that intensely personal depiction of the Mother and Child which was a keynote of the earlier version and indeed the keynote of his earlier life as curate of St. Mary's. Dwelling in Rome, at the very heart of *Ecclesia*, he speaks with a new power and certainty which is not born out of worldly success and accomplishment but out of adversity and disappointment.

Christ, the martyrs, and the extraordinary individuals like Saint Teresa, whom Crashaw extols in his poetry, may eagerly embrace their Cross and tread the path of suffering. Yet the poet spoke for everyman when he described himself as a "weak soul" of no exceptional faith, courage, or resolve. As we can see from the "little contenfull kingdom"[42] he inhabited at Peterhouse, Crashaw was just as reluctant as the next man to forfeit the uneventful life of small pleasures and unimposing or unsung achievements until he was absolutely compelled to do so by the forces of history. However, the poems that we have discussed regard self-sacrifice as an integral part of the Christian life. In asserting this conviction, Crashaw is not paying lip service to the Act of Atonement which constitutes the core of the Christian faith. He is contemplating the application of this mystery to the suffering in his own life, suffering which, as he perceived with the humility and greatness of the pastoralist, goes unnoted in the lives of ordinary men and women. If great faith and great poetry were regarded then, and even now, as gifts of God, it was Crashaw's experience that such gifts were not bestowed on man in order that he might dwell in a state of complacency. Making a leap of faith with the Incarnate God who

> Left his Father's Court, and came
> Lightly as a Lambent Flame,
> Leaping upon the Hills, to be
> The Humble King of You and Me
> ("To the Countess of Denbigh,"
> ll. 69-72, p. 151),

Crashaw ventures all that is most dear to him to win all.

Working through the theme of self-sacrifice recurrent in both the earlier "Hymn" and "Quaerit Jesum," he deletes the stanza glorifying Mary's human motherhood which so eloquently corresponded to his emotional needs and which was once an indispensible, affective aid to faith. The goal of spiritual transcendence exacts greater refinement of faith. The final stages of mystical union require man to be sublimated in the fiery love of the "Phaenix"; for Crashaw, this meant being prepared to burn the nest, with all that it implied poetically of the nursing Mother, her Child, and their life together in the home.

In this act of ultimate sacrifice, however, Crashaw does not turn away from Mary: "LOVE's architecture is his own."[43] Mary is the face that most resembles Christ, as Dante saw in the *Paradiso* (32:

85-86) and as Crashaw affirms when he constructs this reflexive line of immaculate clarity. Mary's face elucidated the farthest reaches of Crashaw's past, but he remained largely indifferent to the future as he was to worldly hope of advancement. As he approached death, however, the poet sounds a new note of expectation in his "Hymn"; and having completed his reflections on Mary, this "weak soul" plucks up the courage to contemplate God full in the face, as he could not have done at an earlier stage in his spiritual development when he first wrote his "Hymn." What Crashaw eventually perceived must be judged by the transfigured expressions of Mary and the shepherds as they behold the Child and by their rapturous disregard of anything that separates them from their God. They show readers of divided mind that, in the words of Christ Himself, "whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and my sister and my mother" (Mark 3:34-35). They promise troubled spirits a transformation of self in which, as Paul told the Galatians (3 :28), "there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

University of Hong Kong

Notes

1 Critics regard Crashaw as something of an odd fish. He is described as "un-English" by George Walton Williams, ed., *The Complete Poetry of Richard Crashaw* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday-Anchor, 1970), p. xv; "European" and "foreign" by R. V. Young, *Richard Crashaw and the Spanish Golden Age* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1982), pp. 1, 8; "alien" by Marc F. Bertonasco, *Crashaw and the Baroque* (University: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1971), p. 52; and "Baroque" by Rene Wellek, "The Concept of Baroque in Literary Scholarship," *Concepts of Criticism* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1963), p. 87. The prevailing impression is one of general critical distrust as evident from the terse summary of charges by Anthony Low, *Love's Architecture: Devotional Modes in Seventeenth-Century English Poetry* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1978), p. 116.

2 Bertonasco leads the way insisting that "those to whom he [Crashaw] appears, at worst, foreign-hearted and alien and, at best, a member of a small group of Anglo-Catholics quite unrepresentative of the religious temper of seventeenth-century England, will rid themselves of this erroneous but almost universal impression only by steeping themselves in the devotional literature of the time" (pp. 52-53). Young argues at length for the influence of the *siglo de oro* or Spanish Golden Age culture on Crashaw and, in particular, its mystical saints Teresa and Juan de la Cruz and its religious poets Lope de Vega and Luis de Gongora. Crashaw might have had access to them through his travels on the continent or through English libraries known to contain Spanish works. Betronasco believes that Crashaw's religious views, especially his lack of concern for self, were influenced by St. Francis de Sales (pp. 43-93). Leah Sinanoglou Marcus, *Childhood and Cultural Despair: A Theme and Variations in Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1978), pp. 142-43, believes that Crashaw may have had contact with the French Oratorians through Queen Henrietta Maria and the Countess of Denbigh, but concedes that St. Teresa and St. Francis de Sales were instrumental in making a kind of religious childishness generally popular in England (pp. 60-84). Patrick Grant, *Images and Ideas of the English Renaissance* (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1979),

pp. 94-128, believes that Crashaw was influenced by the Counter-Reformation branch of the Franciscans, the Capuchins, who had close links with England as well as the continent.

3 Mario Praz, *The Flaming Heart: Essays on Crashaw, Machiavelli and Other Studies of the Relations between Italian and English Literature* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday-Anchor, 1958), p. 258, was influential in branding Crashaw as a morbid and feminine sensibility. Subsequent critics continued to employ "feminine" as a term of criticism, if not of insult. See Bertonasco, p. 119, on "readers who label Crashaw exotic, alien, feminine, or psychotic."

4 Low, pp. 137-38.

5 *Images and Ideas*, p. 95.

6 *Crashaw and the Spanish Golden Age*, p. 25.

7 *Crashaw and the Spanish Golden Age*, p. 12.

8 Crashaw is quoted throughout from the Williams edition. See above, n. 1.

9 Marcus, p. 97.

10 Marcus, p. 139.

11 "Structure and Symbol in Crashaw's 'Hymn in the Nativity,." *PMLA*, 63 (1948), 101. Both the 1648 and 1652 editions of the "Hymn" are regarded as superior to the Hymn of 1646. Williams conflates the 1648-52 editions and compares this culminating version with the earlier work of 1646. However, it is important to bear in mind that while most key changes have been by 1648, the line "LOVE's architecture is his own" does not appear and stanza 12 is not eliminated until the 1652 edition. Neill argues that even though these changes are made posthumously by Crashaw's close friend, Thomas Car, they are "still in keeping with the wishes of the poet" (n. 4, p. 101).

12 Marcus, p. 142.

13 See George Walton Williams, "Crashaw's Epigrams on the Young Christ in the Temple," *Seventeenth-Century News*, 39 (1981), 7-8.

14 Crashaw entered Cambridge in 1631 and, although most biographers lay emphasis on the happiness he found after he received his B.A. and took up residence as a fellow at Peterhouse in 1635, there seems little doubt that he enjoyed over a decade of peace and contentment at Cambridge until his flight in early 1643.

15 Richard Helgerson, *The Elizabethan Prodigals* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1976), pp. 36-37.

16 Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London: Quartet, 1978), p. 186.

17 *Love's Architecture*, p. 157.

18 Warner, pp. 202-05.

19 Helgerson, p. 130.

20 Young, p. 41.

21 See Anthony Stafford, *The Femall Glory* (London, 1635), p. 176, who says of Mary, "a fatalle sadnesse haunted her from the birth of her onely Sonne to his burialle."

22 The sacrifices that women are called upon to make in motherhood are often cited now as evidence of the demeaning and unrewarding nature of the domestic life and its private values. Warner, pp. 183-91, has passionate though questionable views on this subject which derive, I believe, from a rather narrow definition of achievement and fulfillment. A woman who spends her prime years in the home may well be asked to defer, and even forsake, certain worldly expectations of success. But Gail Sheehy, in *Passages: Predictable Crises of Adult Life* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1976), has shown just how hollow this worldly success can be for men. They pursue conventional patterns of materialistic achievement but in their desire for advancement must sometimes sacrifice the emotional satisfactions which women receive in the home. If and when they perceive the importance of the family life to their self-fulfillment, it can, ironically, be too late; for the children are almost grown up and ready to leave home.

23 Frances A. Yates, *Astraea. The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 35.

24 Neill, p. 104.

25 Antonia Fraser, *King Charles II* (n.p.: Macdonald Contact, 1980), p. 48.

26 Marcus, pp. 149-50, is particularly harsh in her judgment of Crashaw, despite her recognition of the personal difficulties he encountered through his short life.

27 "Structure and Symbol in Crashaw's 'Hymn in the Holy Nativity,'" pp. 111-13.

28 Ruth C. Wallerstein, *Richard Crashaw: A Study in Style and Poetic Development* University of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature, No. 37 (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1935), p. 52, suggests that Crashaw could have completed the first draft of his poem as early as 1637 while still at Cambridge.

29 L. C. Martin, ed., *The Poems English Latin and Greek of Richard Crashaw*, 2nd ed. (Oxford ; Clarendon, 1957), pp. xxvii-xxxi.

30 The legend which purports that the *Sancta Casa* was transported to Loreto by ministering angels may strike the reader as far-fetched, to say the least, but no more so than Crashaw's equally legendary description of the Magdalene's tears in "The Weeper" as "two walking baths; two weeping motions; / Portable, and compendious oceans" (ll. 113-14). Loreto was also sacred to Mary Magdalene, patroness of the Capuchins who are thought to have influenced Crashaw considerably (Grant, p. 95). So Crashaw's links with Loreto are intellectually as well as emotionally strong.

31 On this point see Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1979), pp. 243-44.

32 The famous seventeenth-century educator, John Amos Comenius, encouraged the practice of wet-nursing in his popular book of child care, *The School of Infancy: An Essay on the Education of Youth During Their First Six Years*, ed. Daniel Benham (London, 1858).

33 Sheehy, p. 19.

34 The dating of "Quaerit Jesum" is highly problematic. The last four lines of this poem are a direct translation of the Latin epigram of the same name beginning "Ah, redeas miserae." Sister Maris Stella Milhaupt, *The Latin Epigrams of Richard Crashaw* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1963), gives January 8, 1632, as the date the Latin Epigram was composed. George Walton Williams, "Crashaw's Epigrams," p. 8, shows conclusively that the English version must date from 1635 or later; but when is open to question, as it was found in the Tanner Ms. and attributed to Crashaw on the basis of initialling in the manuscript. L. C. Martin (p. lviii) believes that the Tanner poems belong to Crashaw's Cambridge years which stretch up until 1643. "Quaerit Jesum" could then have been written at any time from 1635 to 1643. As we have seen, Wallerstein thinks that Crashaw originally composed the "Hymn" as early as 1637. This means that the "Hymn" and "Quaerit Jesum" could well have been drafted in the same formative period when Crashaw was working out the fundamental beliefs that would underpin the more mature stages of his spiritual and poetic development, and indeed would support him through the hardships experienced closer to the time of publication in 1646.

35 Marcus, p. 146.

36 Warner, p. 194.

37 Pseudo-Bonaventure, *Emblems and Hieroglyphikes* (London, 1635), emblem ix.

38 Cf. Low, pp. 156-57.

39 Lancelot Andrewes, *The Complete Works*, ed. J. P. Wilson and James Bliss (Oxford: John H. Parker, 1841-54), IV, 1616.

40 *The Femall Glory*, p. 145.

41 Critics have unfairly cited stanzas such as this to demonstrate Crashaw's narrow poetic terms of reference, his indifference to historical or social change. Marcus (p. 140) asserts that "most of his lyrics are completely cut off from history, from all passage of time, from human society, from learning—dead to the world, in short." Grant, however, shows that while Crashaw's ahistorical tendency may be a deficiency to a modern reader, it is, in fact, another neo-Medieval quality that he shares with his great and most compatible predecessor, Spenser.

42 Martin, p. xxix.

43 Neill remarks that this line read as "LOVE's architecture is all one" in the 1648 edition "but the change in the 1652 text points the whole stanza to the climax, the Virgin Mary who is the only created thing worthy to receive Him [Christ]" (p. 106).