THE SCRIPTURAL TEXTURE OF HENRY VAUGHAN'S *SILEX SCINTILLANS*:

THE POETICS, POLITICS AND THEOLOGY OF INTERTEXTUALITY

by

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the poetic, political and theological implications of the

scriptural texture of Henry Vaughan's *Silex Scintillans*. It argues that Vaughan embeds

his lyrical word in the Word to fashion aesthetic, spiritual and social relations within a

poetic frame. It begins by situating Vaughan's intertextual compositional habit both in

the humanist practice of "writing in quotation" and in the politics of biblicism in early-

modern England. It then addresses Vaughan's creative re-visioning of his biblical

borrowings to constitute the authorial self as prodigal son, spirit-filled apostle, suffering

prophet and holy priest-poet and to associate his poetry with the alchemical Word. The

study subsequently traces material, structural and conceptual intertextuality in *Silex*

Scintillans to discover the way in which biblical language, forms and concepts are

refracted through Vaughan's conceptual order and life context. It hopes ultimately to

demonstrate that *Silex Scintillans* fashions and is fashioned by, interprets and is

interpreted by, Scripture.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother Marion Henderson, my late father Rev. James

Campbell Henderson, my husband Russell Nelson, my son Caleb Nelson, my sisters

Juliet Henderson and Sharon Alker, my brother Chris Henderson, my brother-in-law Alan

Alker, and my mentor and friend Sheila Roberts. Were it not for the compassion, wisdom

and patience of these individuals, I could neither have undertaken nor completed this

study.

". . . Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest."

   -Psalm 55:6

"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

   -Isaiah 40:31

"The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills."

   -The Song of Solomon 2:8.

". . . come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD."

   -Isaiah 2:5

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Introduction

"A good stealer is *ipso facto* a good inventor."

-Marianne Moore. Moore Archive (1250/1.118)

"inter-text. Using and repeating my own and others

earlier texts. Pulling the old poems thru the new,

making the old lines a thread thru the eye of

the words I am sewing. Sound and sense.

The eeriness."

-Erin More, "The Acts." *Furious* (85)

I.   **Citational Practices in Early Modern England**

Silex Scintillans has often been read as a product of bibliogenesis. a belief most

clearly formulated by Frank Kermode who first defined Henry Vaughan as a "bookish

poet" of "predominately literary inspiration" (*The Private Imagery* 206.225).[1] In his

unpublished dissertation. Thomas Calhoun characterized Vaughan's aesthetic style as a

kind of parody: "We see the man reading in a wide variety of books, finding words and

phrases. . . .As craftsman, Vaughan's major effort was to link, or assimilate, his 'bright

encomiums' on a continuous 'line'" (*Poetics* 210). In his monograph on *Silex Scintillans*,

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[1] While I agree with Kermode's assessment of Vaughan as a "bookish poet." I reject his conclusion that Vaughan was a poet "who, for a few years, achieved a remarkable mental condition in which much thought. reading. and conversation coalesced to form a unique corpus of homogeneous poetic material. available whenever some external stimulus called it into creative action for the development of any suitable theme in poetry" (*The Private Imagery* 225). Vaughan's poetry is not homogeneous. nor can his complex compositional practice be adequately described in the detached language of stimulus and response.

Calhoun explores Vaughan's "unusual reliance upon prior texts" in his production of a

mosaic synthesis (*Henry Vaughan* 67,74). He celebrates the linguistic freedom of

Vaughan's allusive poetics: "Old voices echo in Vaughan's poetic rooms. Their language

has been disjoined from prior contexts, rendered in new combinations, assimilated, and

perhaps hidden, yet their lines are discoverable and other voices inevitably will be

listened to as parts of Vaughan's" (*Henry Vaughan* 73). Jonathan Post has described the

intertextuality of *Silex Scintillans* as Vaughan's "extended conversation with his 'dear

friend' George Herbert" grounded in the "commitment to following so ardently and

assiduously one man alone," although he later argues for greater polyvalency when he

examines the manner in which "Vaughan interpolates . . . different voices into his verse"

(*Henry Vaughan* 1982, xxi, 75, 164). In the most recent book-length study of Vaughan,

Stevie Davies provides a psychoanalytical explanation for Vaughan's insertion of foreign

bodies into his work. Commenting on the relation between Vaughan's "To Amoret" and

John Donne's "Valediction: forbidding mourning," Davies remarks:

> It is curious to the point of absurdity that so brazen a plagiarism, which is
>
> little more than a rearrangement of the original key-words . . . should
>
> advertise itself as a discourse on the incomparability of the sagacious
>
> poet's kind of love. And yet this perversity goes to the centre of
>
> something very deep in Vaughan: his need to twin another identity in order
>
> to be himself. (64-65)[2]

Even those critics who perceive much of Vaughan's inspiration as experiential rather than

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[2] Davies bases her theory on the fact that Henry had a twin brother, Thomas.

textual include chapters on hermetic texts, Scripture and the Book of Nature prior to

undertaking the examination of the poems themselves, suggesting that the poems cannot

be properly understood outside the realm of prior texts or pre-texts.[3]

The bookish nature of *Silex Sctinillans* has led scholars to afford much attention to

Vaughan's citational practices, leading some to accuse him of the "shabbiness of

plagiarism" (Kermode. *The Private Imagery* 208). despite the well-known humanist

defence of a textually-grounded epistemology rather than an experiential one: "Learning

teacheth more in one year than experience in twenty" writes Roger Ascham. re-phrasing

Erasmus's warning "that experience is the common schoolhouse of fools and ill men;

men of wit and honesty be otherwise instructed" (*The Schoolmaster* 51). It is true enough

that the likes of Ben Jonson protested the "fox-like thefts" of plagiarism: "And some. by

cunning protestation against all reading, and false venditation of their own naturals. think

to divert the sagacity of their readers from themselves. and cool the scent of their own

fox-like thefts; when yet they are so rank, as a man may find whole pages together

usurped from one author" (*Timber* 541-42).[4] Jonson's claim that "Truth lies open to all"

through experience rather than through "the observations of the ancients" mirrors the

Cartesian and Baconian rejection of "superinducing and grafting of new things on old"

(Jonson 525; Bacon 51). Francis Bacon insisted that the advancement of scientific

knowledge requires that a "fresh start (*instauratio*) must be made, beginning from the

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[3] See for example E.C. Pettet's *Of Paradise and Light*. A pre-text is defined in intertextual theory as "any previous work that a writer assumes as a necessary framework for his work" (Ryken 19).

[4] Jonson's claim is itself embedded in a work fabricated from fragments of prior texts.

very foundations, unless we want to go round for ever in a circle, making trifling, almost contemptible progress" (51).   The epistemology of experience was, however, far more characteristic of late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century thought, and is most succinctly articulated by John Locke who tends to polarize published opinion and truth:

> Not that I want a due respect to other men's opinions: but, after all, the
> greatest reverence is due to truth: and I hope it will not be thought
> arrogance to say, that perhaps we should make greater progress in the
> discovery of rational and contemplative knowledge, if we sought it in the
> fountain, *in the consideration of things themselves*: and made use rather of
> our own thoughts than other men's to find it. (1.3.24)

Like most of his contemporaries, Vaughan's literary productions reflect a textual epistemology, a belief that truth is textual, learned through books rather than experience, a theory he espouses in his preface to his translation of *Hermetical Physic*: "For my owne part, I honour the truth where ever I find it, whether in an old, or a new Booke . . ." (*Works* 548).[5] His citational practices in his prose work indicate a preference for both classical and patristic writers ranging from Boethius to Anselm.[6]

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[5] All references to Vaughan's prose works will be taken from L.C. Martin's *The Works of Henry Vaughan*, abbreviated here as *Works*.

[6] In *Like Angels from a Cloud*, Horton Davies notes a similar discursive practice in the sixteenth and seventeenth-century sermons of the metaphysical preachers, revealing in one instance the extensive, complex, and illuminating referencing in Bishop Henry King's eleven sermons entitled *An Exposition Upon the Lords Prayer*:

> In over 360 pages he has 160 citations from the Greek and Latin fathers (58 from
> Augustine, 15 from Ambrose, 12 from Chrysostom, and 10 from Aquinas), 8 from
> Reformed divines, and 49 references to Roman Catholic commentators and
> apologists (15 from Hales, 13 from Biel, and 3 from Bellarmine). Classical authors
> are referred to 25 times (Seneca 6 times, and Plutarch twice), and there are also

In *Framing Authority*, Mary Thomas Crane posits that the discursive practice

within which humanists like Vaughan wrote promoted the gathering of sayings

encountered during reading and the preservation of such "notable fragments" through

reinscription. She characterizes these twin discursive practices of "gathering" and

"framing" as a means to self-authorization: that is, in collecting, assimilating and

deploying textual fragments from authoritative texts, the writer became the embodiment

of accumulated wisdom. Such accumulated wisdom could translate into linguistic capital

in the marketplace, to use the terms of Pierre Bourdieu, capital which would grant the

writer an opportunity to ascend the ladder of upward mobility. The act of reading and

writing, therefore, was for the humanist an act of extraction and re-deployment for the

purpose of improving the social or economic status of the author.

Confirming Crane's conclusion, Timothy Hampton reminds us that in the

Renaissance art was, to a large extent, understood as imitation, an aesthetic theory in

which the parts were more significant than the whole: "If venerable texts are to be

fragmented and eventually transformed by the process of rewriting, it becomes visibly

less necessary to regard them as closed and authoritative wholes (4). Narrative sequence

or the text as *gestalt* is of less interest than the compilation of parts of different wholes,

represented by the popular commonplace book of the time. The commonplace book, as

Ann Moss has demonstrated, was the embodiment of "writing in quotation." In the early-

modern classroom, "reading without production was always considered an incomplete

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references to Erasmus, Rabbi Jehuda, and the Qu'ran. Thus we have a grand total
of 245 citations or references, amounting to an average of 22 per sermon.
Moreover this is not untypical of the metaphysical preachers. (51-52)

process" (50). The interpretive schemata employed by the early-modern student

involved "unpicking and reconstituting" texts. Reading involved "shifting and

categorizing the matter of texts studied" while writing required the student to "draw on

matter stored in commonplace books" in the production of his or her own compositions.

The common-place book was "a treasure-house not only of matter, but of words from

which quotations, aphorisms, examples, parallels, synonyms, epithets, and figures of all

sorts could be taken and inserted into one's own work in order to dilate and vary it and

make it a magnificent and impressive thing . . ."(Moss 53). These practices of

memorizing and juxtaposing quotations resulted in the intertextual disposition of much

Renaissance verse; the literary text became a site of dynamic "interplay of literary

allusions and an array of linguistic reminiscences" and the author became a master of

book collecting, "sorting, selecting all the finest materials to paint a picture in a hundred

colours, of which he alone was master" (Moss 55,56) Paradoxically, to gather, arrange,

and frame allusions was to generate an original poetic voice. In a culture in which verbal

echoes flourished, where to know and speak the "other" was normative, Vaughan's

allusive poetics is a means to locate himself and his art within the "the corpus of received

wisdom" (Moss 57).

While scholars, as I have noted, accepted *Silex Scintillans* as an intertextual work,

the greatest critical energy has been devoted to exploring Vaughan's allusions to

Herbert's *The Temple* and the *Hermetica*.[7] Though the scriptural texture of *Silex*

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[7] For the most recent discussion of Vaughan, Herbert and the Hermetica see Jonathan Nauman's article, *Herbert the Hermetist: Vaughan's Reading of the Temple.*

Scintillans has not been completely ignored, no systematic examination of the intersection of biblical and poetic has been published to date. Those essays or chapters in books that address the Bible in Vaughan's sacred verse, however, do intimate significant aspects of the scriptural allusiveness of *Silex Scintillans* and should be considered briefly here.

II.   Literature Review

Examining the forces which impress themselves on *Silex Scintillans*, M.M. Mahood detected an unprecedented relationship between Vaughan's poetry and the Bible:

> By far, the largest of Vaughan's English debts is to the Authorized
>
> Version. Probably there is no poet of the period whose work reveals a
>
> more intimate knowledge of the Bible. This is a sweeping claim to make
>
> for any writer in a century when men got the whole of the Scriptures by
>
> heart; but Vaughan, I feel, had a deeper and finer knowledge of them than
>
> even Bunyan attained. (7)

Such a profession invites its claimant to produce evidence of its veracity; this, however, is not forthcoming. The manner in which Vaughan inserts the biblical into the poetic in a "singular" fashion remains unexamined. The reader is further mystified by Mahood's de-politicized language of devotion that divorces the scriptural texture of *Silex Scintillans* from its cultural context. Mahood cannot conceive of a Vaughan who would treat Scripture as "the chief ammunition-dump of the book-war" as did his contemporaries, though the politics of Vaughan's scriptural allusions are transparent in many of his lyrics (8). She writes: Vaughan "never searched the Scriptures for the wherewithal to confute

his opponents" but rather "lived the text," surrendering "his sensibility as a poet to the Authorised Version with a wholehearted abandonment which would have been impossible to such poet-priests as Donne and Herbert" (8). That *Silex Scintillans* might record Vaughan's receptivity to biblical penetration in a way unimaginable in the works of Donne and Herbert is surely a remark which cries out for further study, but it is, again, presented as self-evident, a strategy commonplace in dicta of scholars that followed.

Such is certainly the case in *Of Paradise and Light*. Despite E.C. Pettet's promising assertion that "no book of seventeenth-century poetry bears more obvious signs of the impress of the Authorized Version of the Bible than *Silex Scintillans*," we are left for the most part with a descriptive account of an assortment of biblical allusions; all but a few are dismissed as "straightforward illustrations" and verbal borrowings (34). Such a conclusion is hardly unexpected as his theoretical framework is that of traditional source criticism which affords little interest in anything beyond the identification of an originating work. Pettet's attempt to consider all forms of Vaughan's biblical borrowings in a single chapter results in little more than an arbitrary presentation of a few allusions in several poems of unsubstantiated representative value. One need only invoke Alan Rudrum's single article *Liberation of the Creatures*, a work that explores the complicated political subtext of Vaughan's understanding of Romans 8:19, to challenge Pettet's conclusion that Vaughan "usually manipulates his borrowings in a simple, straightforward, and deliberate manner"(40).

Pettet's tendency to dismiss or avoid the complexity of the intersection(s) of Scripture and *Silex Scintillans* mirrors that of his predecessor Ross Garner, whose *Henry*

Vaughan: Experience and Tradition whetted the appetite of those with a scholarly interest

in the biblical nature of *Silex Scintillans* only to leave them with little means of

sustenance. Early in his monograph, Garner writes, for example: "Ishmael embodies for

Vaughan the reciprocal attitudes of rejection of this world and longing for the next. Paul's

rigorism and the Psalmist's thirst. . . .But that is all very complicated" (21). Too

complicated, it would seem, for further analysis, as little more is said of the "attitudes" of

either Paul or David in Durr's subsequent exposition on the Augustinian temper and

NeoPlatonic longings of Vaughan.

R.A. Durr's book-length study, *On the Mystical Poetry of Henry Vaughan*, does

little to advance our knowledge of the intersection of the biblical and the poetic in *Silex*

Scintillans. In his defence, this is surely not the intent of his work as he is more

interested in the mystical than the scriptural. The biblical is only introduced into Durr's

criticism when it is located as a source of a particular mystical motif in a meditative

poem. In Durr's estimation, the biblical becomes, as it were, a pool of metaphors that

Vaughan wades through in search of figures that mediate his mysticism, a conclusion

shared by Louis L. Martz in his account of the stages of mysticism in *Silex Scintillans* in

The Paradise Within. Martz suggests that the meaning of *Silex Scintillans* — its

Augustinian mysticism — is fostered by the collocation of the biblical, the natural and

the Herbertian: "the rich and curious complex of the Biblical and the natural" merge with

Herbert and the Self to beget "a living harmony" (13-14).

Calhoun also envisions Scripture in *Silex Scintillans* in terms of the mystical. In

an attempt to explain the difference between Vaughan's reading of Scripture and

Herbert's, Calhoun writes:

> But Vaughan's own poem "H. Scriptures" suggests that he read the Bible
>
> in a different way -- that he read in the Bible rather than through it, in
>
> search of a secret Word, a revelation, a key to the mysteries and secrets of
>
> heaven and his God. . . .Rather than the Scripture-like pattern of 'dispersed
>
> unity' which so moved Herbert, one finds in *Silex Scintillans* more
>
> continuous patterns based on the model of a man who reads the Scriptures
>
> and reacts to them intensely. Vaughan reads the Bible not theologically or
>
> historically but 'mystically.' (*Poetics* 81-82)

To de-theologize and de-historicize mystical exegesis is, in and of itself, suspect; to make

such a claim about the difference in Vaughan's and Herbert's interpretive practice

without textual evidence must be faulted, for the term "mystical" is invoked by Calhoun

to mystify, to conceal rather than reveal, opening the door to speculation only to bar it

shut. Concerned to prove the essential unity of Vaughan's devotional verse, Calhoun

makes no further reference to the biblical hermeneutic of *Silex Scintillans*.

Writing a decade after Calhoun, Kenneth Friedenreich in like manner

acknowledges the influence of the scriptural on *Silex Scintillans*: "One readily can see

looking at *Silex Scintillans* that Vaughan often bases individual lyrics on specific

passages from the Bible. Likewise, he borrows images directly from the Bible or alludes

to them" (34). Friedenreich detects Vaughan's originality despite his tendency to borrow:

"It reveals Vaughan at his most original, borrowing from Scripture not solely to enrich

meaning, but as a starting point for personal interpretation of what the passages mean to

him . . ." (36). Friedenreich asserts that Vaughan renews the biblical, permitting it to

expand its horizon of meaning far beyond what he labels the "literal." However, he treats

the biblical "influence" on the aesthetics of Vaughan in five pages, discussing briefly

three poems from *Silex Scintillans* and one from *Olar Iscanus*. The desire to produce a

comprehensive criticism that examines all aspects of Vaughan's poetry and prose

prevents him from drawing conclusions about the intersection of the biblical and poetic.

Of late, Stevie Davies's work on Henry Vaughan re-introduces the importance of

the biblical. In a creative, psychoanalytic reading typical of Davies, she writes:

> For Vaughan the New Testament is a book with miraculous properties: a
>
> Hand reaches from its pages to guide the reader up the steep slopes of a
>
> landscape which seems to unscroll from Scripture like a map; finally a
>
> Dove, the Holy Spirit, flies out of the Testament and carries the pilgrim on
>
> her wings. The Reformation had taken as its source the personal reading
>
> of the vernacular Bible. Vaughan as its son did not stand empty-handed at
>
> the closed door of the church: he held the Book as a personal message in
>
> his right hand. He pondered and studied its meanings in the passionate
>
> privacy of his heart, like a letter from a far-away loved-one. (22)

We find in Mahood, Pettet, Durr, Martz, Calhoun, Friedenreich and Davies a recognition

of the centrality of Scriptures in the poetry of *Silex Scintillans*. Each work addresses

either the biblical uniqueness of Vaughan's poetry in terms of a somehow singular

"mystical," "experiential" quality or identifies the Bible as a textual "source" or "origin"

which permits the reader to apprehend Vaughan's corpus. Davies, however, moves

beyond her literary predecessors in her brief reference to biblical exegesis as a measure of

political resistance: "Reading the Bible and meditating its meanings hence became a

subversive political activity in the safe house at Newton. . . .Scripture becomes a radical

instrument of political resistance, a millenarian survivor's manual" (156-57). The critical

studies undertaken by these scholars, however, concerned themselves not with the

relation between Scripture and *Silex Scintillans* per se, bur rather see Scripture as either

incidental to Vaughan's aesthetics or one in a series of strategies of self-expression.

These critics, therefore, are not particularly interested in determining the nature of *Silex*

Scintillans as intertext with the Scripture as pre-text, and their claims on the biblical

quality of Vaughan's devotional verse, therefore, suggest a need for some coherent

formulation and scrutiny.

Other Vaughan scholars, however, have attempted to move beyond

acknowledgment or unverified claim. In a 1966 article on Vaughan's allusive technique,

Leland H. Chambers challenges the conclusions of Pettet in his insistence on the cryptic

intricacy of Vaughan's references to biblical sources, positing the need to look beyond the

superficial verbal parallels and take into consideration the "entire scriptural context which

is carefully, but obliquely brought to bear on the development of the poem's meaning"

(387). Chambers insists that it is Vaughan's ability to subtly manipulate and transform

the rich and complex biblical tradition that makes his poetry innovative and powerful.

His article makes some attempt to address, although not in these terms, Vaughan's

technique of biblical allusion as a metonymic and metaphoric device to generate a

particular type of religious meaning. "The Night," however, is the only poem read in this

light and Chambers's reading of allusion, like Mahood's, divorces the figure from the context in which Vaughan's poetic meaning was produced; in a typical new critical move, Chambers denies any political function for Vaughan's allusive technique, an approach vilified in recent years with the rise of New Historicism in early-modern studies.

Shortly after the publication of Chambers's article, Robert Duvall wrote a remarkably insightful, if brief, article on the function of biblical allusions in *Silex Scintillans*. Duvall rejects Pettet's reading of biblical allusions in Vaughan's poetry as "straightforward illustrations," contending that "a close reading shows that Biblical allusion appears in *Silex Scintillans*, Part I (1650) and Part II (1655), not merely as ornament nor even as external inspiration, but as an integral aspect of Vaughan's religious poetics" (13). Duvall's introductory consideration of biblical allusions, images, references, borrowings, figures and emblems attempts to consider the manner in which Vaughan shapes these "into his own vision, his concept of Eden, his desire for personal and general moral order, and his quest for harmony with God" (13). Duvall illuminates a poetic horizon that blends the biblical and the poetic, a fusion that extends beyond the discourse of "borrowing"; the biblical is integral to Vaughan's production of meaning in that Vaughan "discovers the Book of God's Word as a necessary, integral part of apprehending, focusing, ordering, and expressing his own religious experience . . ." (19). For the second time in Vaughan criticism, the attempt is made to articulate a poetics of biblical allusion that introduces into the discussion questions of biblical intertextuality, the production of meaning and the politics of biblical allusion, but the seven-page article can merely hint at Vaughan's citational practices.

Such notions addressed by Duvall re-surfaced in Barbara Lewalski's *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric*. She attempts to chart the entire landscape of the biblical in the poetic, to locate within early-modern devotional poetry the genres, languages, symbolism and doctrine of Scripture. Like Northrop Frye, Lewalski attempts to find coherence and unity within a great many religious lyrics of the seventeenth century. She locates, therefore, a doctrinal and spiritual consensus regarding the priority and centrality of scripture that overarches "the Anglican-Puritan divide." Such an approach has the benefit of producing generalized claims regarding the perception of the biblical in seventeenth-century England. She summarizes the tendency of early-modern poets: to read Scripture in the "present tense," applying it to the self and the world in which they lived, to regard the Bible as an aesthetic source of literary tropes, to use the biblical idiom as a medium of expression, and so forth.

While one can hardly argue against biblicism in early-modern England, and its aesthetic influence, we might be wary of Lewalski's creation of a normative scriptural category within which all "Protestant" poets write. Richard Strier's recent criticism of "totalizing interpretive strategies" might be suitably applied to the generalizing impulse that lies behind *Protestant Poetics*, for Lewalski often blurs the particular to foreground structure, sacrificing the "deeply satisfying and humanizing pleasure" that "all texts, or all texts from a particular period or of a particular kind, do not always mean or do the same thing" (Strier, *Resistant Structures* 4).[8]

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[8] Ironically, Strier's earlier book *Love Known: Theology and Experience in George Herbert's Poetry* begins with a hypothesis that appears "totalizing": "This book argues for the centrality of a single doctrine to George Herbert's poetry and theology: the doctrine of justification by faith" (xi).

A student of Northrop Frye, despite her disclaimer to the contrary, Lewalski

participates in the application of "the law of coherence" as a "heuristic rule, a procedural

obligation, almost a moral constraint of research" (Foucault, *The Archaeology of*

Knowledge 149). Where Frye discovers in literature the remnants of biblical mythological

structures, Lewalski uncovers structural forms, governing symbols, "overarching

consensus." The Bible is an originating source of form, image, theology, aesthetics

which governs the expressive potential of the poet. This is not to misread Lewalski's

attention to detail, for she finds a certain degree of divergence within the structural

principle she applies to the poetic works of Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, Traherne and

Edwards; but she finds, to appropriate Michel Foucault's words, "an ideal, continuous,

smooth text that runs beneath the multiplicity . . .and resolves them in the calm unity of

coherent thought" (*Archaeology of Knowledge* 155). Such a theoretical framework is

apparent in her reading of *Silex Scintillans* within which she locates an "impressive unity"

as a whole despite its generic affinities with a miscellany (318). Examining the biblical

quality of *Silex Scintillans*, Lewalski effaces the inherent complexity, ambiguity and

diversity of the poems in Part I of *Silex Scintillans* when she concludes that the collection

presents "the earlier stages of the speaker's experience as a Christian pilgrim"; Part II is

similarly configured as the celebration of "the settled condition of the mature,

experienced Christian well advanced in the path of sanctification, whose eyes and desires

are firmly fixed upon heavenly things" (319,322). In such a light, *Silex Scintillans*

becomes a carefully unified volume bound together by an "intricate texture of biblical

allusion, echo, quotation, and paraphrase rendered in personal, experiential terms" (351).

Such a totalizing approach to *Silex Scintillans* as a volume is also adopted by

Calhoun who finds the speaker in Part I of *Silex Scintillans* dwelling on "immanence,"

and in Part II "transcendence" (*Poetics*). Bacon's words of caution seems applicable to

both critics:

> The human understanding, once it has adopted opinions, either because
>
> they were already accepted and believed, or because it likes them, draws
>
> everything else to support and agree with them. And though it may meet a
>
> greater number and weight of contrary instances, it will, with great and
>
> harmful prejudice, ignore or condemn or exclude them by introducing
>
> some distinction, in order that the authority of those earlier assumptions
>
> may remain intact and unharmed. (57)

Having said this, Lewalski does offer invaluable insights in her consideration of

the intersection of *Silex Scintillans* and Scripture. She finds that Vaughan does in fact

incorporate "biblical language into his poetry more extensively and more directly than

Herbert" creating "a poetic universe for the speaker in which biblical and actual

landscape are wholly interfused" (106). Only on one occasion, however, does Lewalski

attempt to describe in any detail the manner in which Vaughan constitutes his poetic

voice through the biblical voice:

> Rather, the speaker defines himself in relation to several biblical
>
> metaphors and types, and his poetic voice plays off against the scripture
>
> quotations incorporated into his poems as headnotes and postscripts. The

poet's voice, responding to, or elaborating upon, or reinterpreted by, such

texts is seen to engage them in a kind of dialogue. The effect is again that

of a medley of voices, but with the poet squaring his own voice with the

terms of that authoritative biblical voice which so often frames his poems.

(247)

Lewalski, however, makes no attempt to expand on such a suggestive comment about the

intersection of the biblical voice and poetic voice.

The most recent work that attempts to delineate the "enormous scope and scale"

of the biblical influence on *Silex Scintillans* is Noel K. Thomas's *Henry Vaughan: Poet of*

Revelation (13). Finding that "the contribution of the Bible to *Silex Scintillans* is

absolutely massive," as is demonstrated in Rudrum's annotated edition of Vaughan's

poetry. Thomas undertakes a somewhat piecemeal analysis of biblical allusions in *Silex*

Scintillans (13). While he begins with a political analysis of several biblical allusions, he

quickly moves to biblical references that reflect Vaughan's interest in childhood and

innocence, the call to righteousness in biblical prophecy, and apocalyptic restoration.[9]

Inasmuch as he moves from paradisal innocence to apocalyptic re-birth, Thomas follows

the structuralism of Calhoun and Lewalski, plotting the biblical references in *Silex*

Scintillans on a temporal axis from beginning to end. Such an approach, as I shall show

in Chapter 5, is not without validity, but it once again effaces the complexity and

centripetal power of the biblical allusions in *Silex Scintillans*. Unfortunately, references

are scarce in Thomas's work, more the exception than the rule. Intuition, for the most

---

[9] Thomas does address the political overtones of these three biblical themes.

part, seems to guide his reading of the scriptural nature of Vaughan's poetry, a feature

that Rudrum has noted in the review of his work:

> The other cause of Thomas's weakness in pressing his own argument for a
>
> political reading of Vaughan is that he shows extraordinarily little
>
> awareness of the body of Vaughan criticism, which is not so huge in bulk
>
> as to preclude the possibility of reasonable mastery on the part of someone
>
> aspiring to write a book on Vaughan's major verse. (*On Vaughan*
>
> *Criticism* 14)

His ideas, therefore, have not yet been introduced into recent Vaughan scholarship.

However, where relevant, I hope to address his approach to the biblical poetics of Henry

Vaughan to determine its usefulness as an interpretive tool.

In my approach to intertextuality in *Silex Scintillans*, I will draw upon these

assorted fragments of scholarly research on the biblical texture of *Silex Scintillans*. I will

not, however, adopt only one of these critical frameworks as each on its own tends to

distort the complexity of the dialogical relationship between *Silex Scintillans* and

Scripture. My early efforts to analyze intertextuality in *Silex Scintillans* through a single

theoretical lens — structuralist, psychoanalytic and new historicist — bore little fruit and

tended to reduce and distort the beauty and depth of Vaughan's poetic vision.

III. Theoretical Approach

It is a daunting task to address *Silex Scintillans* as an intertext, in view of the

volume of recently published work on intertextuality. In general, three basic approaches

to intertextuality have emerged: the language-based approach; the author based approach

and the reader-based approach. Each "camp" of intertextual scholars takes a different

view of. and employs a different vocabulary for, the study of textual intersections. As

Hans-Peter Mai points out, the only consensus in intertextual scholarship is that "in one

artistic text there coexist. more or less visibly, several other texts" (47).[10]

Many post-modernists reject authorial control of a work and adopt a language-

based approach to an intertext. Roland Barthes explores the text as a space upon which

writings are blended, though he is unconcerned with the one who blends:

> We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single
>
> 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-
>
> dimensional space in which a variety of writings. none of them original,
>
> blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the
>
> innumerable centres of culture . . . the writer can only imitate a gesture that
>
> is always anterior. never original. His only power is to mix writings. to
>
> counter the ones with the others. . . . (170)

Like Barthes. Jacques Derrida describes the text as: "a differential network. a fabric of

traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces"

(1979, 83-84). The iterability or referentiality of language is what concerns Derrida. not

the one who duplicates or repeats language. Derek Wood succinctly exposes the

ideology that underlies the post-modern distaste for author-based intertextual studies:

"Many have found offensive the treatment of the text as the property of the author. who

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[10] In *Approaches to Poetry: Some Aspects of Textuality. Intertextuality and Intermediality*, Mai effectively outlines the distinction between a radical post-structuralist view of intertextuality and a more conservative one.

thus. like a colonial imperialist lays claim to the structures of meaning that others see as the common property of humanity" (193).

In *The Pleasures of Reading in an Ideological Age*, Robert Alter, unlike Barthes and Derrida, directs his attention to authorial intentionality behind the intertext. He is interested in "a writer's active. purposeful use of antecedent texts" (112). Like the French intertextualists, Alter accepts that all literature engages in a dialogue with its predecessors, the "whole history of poetry" constituting "a chain of answers to the first texts" (*Pleasures* 114). However. unlike Barthes. Alter argues that the literary deployment of a particular set of allusions is exploited by an author who elects to activate an earlier text, thereby selectively embedding portions of the antecedent text into "the new system of meaning and aesthetic value of his own text" (*Pleasures* 114-16).

The author-based approach to intertextuality asserted by Alter conceives of the author as an agent, consciously operating within a material reality. Such a view is defended by Wood in his studies on the intertextuality of *Samson Agonistes*. Wood laments the fact that "intertextual theorists recently have shown little interest in the text's author." for he demonstrates in his reading of Milton's work that "the activity of the encoder can be plotted, and that sometimes it deserves and rewards scrutiny" (194). Wood concedes that while we should avoid the Romantic idealization of the author, we have much to gain by examining "the writer as text-manipulator" as "every act of selection - of genre, sentence, word - by the author implies an act of criticism." (193-94). Wood points out that even Barthes attributes to the author the role of "mixer," thereby assigning the author a creative role. So too does the post-modernist Linda Hutcheon

admit that "*someone* obviously had to place those strategies in the text" (qtd in Wood, 194).[11]

Wood, therefore, does not question the veracity of Barthes's statement, but holds that it is possible both to accept Derrida's premise that all language involves quotation *and* to examine the fashion in which particular authors cite prior texts in order to create "meaning." In his study of quotation in modern poetry, Leonard Diepeveen likewise insists that while he does not disagree with Derrida, he redirects his approach to citation "so that illimitable meaning is not the whole story of citation": "I look not at how meanings are limitless, but at how writers attempt to control meaning" (5).

In *The Scriptural Texture of Henry Vaughan's Silex Scintillans*, I recognize authorial agency, for I believe that Vaughan deploys quotations and allusions in an active, purposeful fashion. However, I understand Vaughan's agency in terms of the subject positions he assumes in discourse. As Catherine Belsey explains, the author, or the writing subject, displaces himself "across a range of discourses," and therefore grasps himself and his relations with the world from a range of positions (65). In *The Scriptural Texture of Silex Scintillans*, I envision Vaughan as a writing subject who locates himself in biblical discourse in order to apprehend himself and the world. More specifically, I envision Vaughan as rhetorically transmitting others' words within a particular spiritual and socio-political environment. For as Mikhail Bakhtin has aptly argued, anything we

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[11] Brian Vickers "counter-statement" to the post-modern assertion that language is a "self-contained system, an abstract model that can be studied purely in its own terms" begins with the notion that "language is *used* by human beings for a remarkably wide range of purposes" and, citing Simon Blackburn, that "a speaker 'uses the language' to 'put himself into various relations with the world'" (*Appropriating Shakespeare* 49).

communicate is determined by the "broader context of the whole complex *social situation*

in which the utterance emerges" (*Freudianism* 41). I recognize, therefore, that Vaughan

as textual producer is himself the product of the discourse, ideology and social relations

within which he operates, "that the contents of [his] consciousness are socially produced"

(Williams 193).

I do, however, also embrace text-based and reader-based approaches in my study

of intertextuality in *Silex Scintillans* where they serve to clarify Vaughan's poetics. In

order to describe the intertextual disposition of *Silex Scintillans*, I find myself more often

than not turning to the formalists, in particular to Gerard Genette, Heinrich F. Plett and

Udo J. Hebel, rather than to the post-structuralists. The formalists, typically experts in

poetics rather than philosophy, offer a student of intertextuality a precise vocabulary with

which to describe textual intersections. At other times, I turn my attention to the

perceptive function of the reader who must negotiate the quotations and allusions in

Vaughan's verse. I explore the complexity involved in the reader's simultaneous

activation of two or more texts in attempts to form intertextual patterns (Ben-Porat 107-

08).[12] Though the intertextual disposition of *Silex Scintillans* will be seen to constrain the

interpretation of the reader, it also opens up the poems to a centrifugal hermeneutic,

which prevents interpretive closure.

In sum, I wish to avoid any totalizing approach to intertextuality. I wish to focus

on Vaughan's poetry and refer to intertextual theory where it elucidates his work. At

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[12] For a brief, but technical, account of intertextual processing, see Susanne Holthuis, "Intertextuality and Meaning Constitution: An Approach to the Comprehension of Intertextual Poetry."

various times. I will focus on citation as a rhetorical device, citation as a text-inherent quality, and citation as a trope which requires an active reader. This broad theoretical outlook underpins my systematic analysis of the ways in which the Bible and *Silex Scintillans* intersect.

My examination of the manifestation of Scripture in *Silex Scintillans* will be systematic but cannot be comprehensive. In *Spelling the Word: George Herbert and the Bible*, Chana Bloch is compelled by the nature of the subject to select those biblical features of Herbert's verse she believes most useful to the reader of *The Temple*. This process of selection is also manifest in Christopher Hill's *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution*, a work in which several popular biblical metaphors in early-modern literature represent the manner in which the Bible served contemporary politics. I do likewise, bringing to the foreground aspects of the Scriptural in *Silex Scintillans* that I hope will enable the reader to understand Vaughan's complex interweaving of voices.

I shall begin my study by situating Vaughan in the biblical culture in which he wrote. I shall pay particular attention to the authority and politics of Scripture in seventeenth-century England. In Chapter 2, "The Scriptural Aesthetics of *Silex Scintillans*," I shall examine the prefatory apparatus of both editions of *Silex Scintillans* to determine the way in which Vaughan authorizes himself and values his text through scriptural references. Vaughan's self-authorization and textual valuation strategies will be linked to his biblical identity and his identification of his poetic word and the Word.

In "The Politics of Paraphrase," I shall turn my attention to the most allusive of

Vaughan's verse: his three psalm paraphrases. "Psalm 65," "Psalm 104," and "Psalm 121." I do so in order to explore the way in which Vaughan speaks alongside a single biblical model to achieve a poetic voice. Though these lyrics are frequently overlooked in Vaughan criticism, I shall argue that they are important as they permit us to witness the subtlety with which Vaughan weaves his philosophy and politics into the biblical text.

In "Glorious Assimilations," I consider Vaughan's gathering and framing of biblical and other textual fragments in his verse. I shall address the manner in which Vaughan fashions his poetic voice through this art of assemblage. The tension in Vaughan's verse between transformative and non-transformative imitation, quotation and allusion, will be seen to have political origins and his poetic technique will be shown to produce highly dialogic, evocative poems.

Having considered "material intertextuality" in *Silex Scintillans*, I shall turn to "structural intertextuality" in Vaughan's poetry.[13] That is, I shall explore the way in which Vaughan absorbs biblical structures into his verse. In particular, I shall consider the degree to which the biblical meta-narrative is embedded or resisted in individual poems, lyric clusters, and the collection as a unit. Vaughan's complex treatment of biblical structures in his verse will be shown to reflect his particular perception of the world and the politics of his age.

In the final chapter, "The Biblical Theology of *Silex Scintillans*, I wish to consider Vaughan's response to the conceptual content of Scripture. Specifically, I shall explore

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[13] Material intertextuality involves an author's repetition of the signs (words, figures, images) or linear features of an antecedent text. Structural intertextuality involves an author's repetition of non-linear, structural or formal properties of the antecedent text.

the absorption and transformation of biblical theology in Vaughan's poetry,

contextualizing his beliefs with reference to reformation and early-modern poets,

philosophers and theologians. In so doing, I hope to establish the biblical foundations of

his world view.

Chapter 1

The Authority and Politics of Scripture in Early-Modern England

"For a man speaks more or less wisely to the extent that he has

become more or less proficient in the Holy Scriptures."

-Augustine *On Christian Doctrine* (122).

"Thy word is all, if we could spell."

-George Herbert, "The Flower" (166, l.21).

To appreciate fully the intersection of the poetic and biblical in *Silex Scintillans*,

we must consider, if only briefly, the broader social context of the Bible in early-modern

England. Contextual considerations allow us to appreciate better the nature and function

of intertextuality in Vaughan's verse. I will consider the authority of Scripture, the

politics of biblical exegesis, and the anxiety surrounding eisegesis during the Civil Wars

and Interregnum.[1] In so doing, I hope to generate a background against which to interpret

or de-code the Scriptural presence in *Silex Scintillans*.

As Hill demonstrates in *The English Bible*, "by the mid-seventeenth century

English men and women had experienced a quarter of a millennium of emphasis on the

sovereignty of the Scriptures as the unique source of divine wisdom on all subjects" (18).

In the majority of texts written during this period, Scripture is conceived as an

---

[1] Eisegesis is to read into, or to impose on, a biblical passage the meaning one wishes to find in it.

"authoritative discourse" in the Bakhtinian sense:

> The authoritative word demands that we acknowledge it, that we make
> it our own; it binds us, quite independent of any power it might have to
> persuade us internally; we encounter it with its authority already fused to
> it. The authoritative word is located in a distanced zone, organically
> connected with a past that is felt to be hierarchically higher. . . .Its
> authority was already *acknowledged* in the past. It is a *prior* discourse. It
> is therefore not a question of choosing it from among other possible
> discourses that are its equal. . . .Its language is a special (as it were,
> hieratic) language. (*The Dialogic Imagination* 78)

Such is certainly the understanding of Vaughan and most of his contemporaries regardless

of religious or political leanings.[2] In *Leviathan* (1651), Thomas Hobbes envisions the

Bible as the Signified against which all signs must be measured:

> we have no sign left, whereby to acknowledge the pretended
> Revelations, or Inspirations of any private man; nor obligation to give ear

---

[2]There were some early-modern thinkers who doubted the veracity and reliability of Scriptures as the measure of truth, a fact evidenced in several essays entitled "On Atheism" in the period, as well as in theological pamphlets which responded to the repudiation of Scriptural authority. John Goodwin's pamphlet, *The Divine Authority of the Scriptures Asserted*, was issued in response to "Anti-Scripturalists" who deny biblical authority, reject Scripture's descent from God, and thereby cause the "exauthorization of the Scriptures" (22,21). His tract is conceived of as "a Vindication of the Divine Authority of the Scriptures" which presents a "Demonstration of the finger of God in the Scriptures" for the benefit of those who have "lost the sight of God in the Scriptures" (26,25,21). In *Gangræna*, a catalogue of heresies, Thomas Edwards also unearths "heretical" beliefs about the authorship and validity of the Bible. Some, he writes, believe that "the Scriptures are a dead letter, and no more to be credited then the writings of men, not divine, but humane intervention." Others hold that "the Scriptures are unsufficient and uncertain" and are "not an infallible foundation of faith" (18). By the mid-seventeenth century, however, most English men and women appear to accept the Bible as "the point of absolute, unwavering contact between God and man" (Greenblatt 111).

to any Doctrine, farther than it is conformable to the Holy Scriptures . . .

and from which, by wise and learned interpretation, and carefull

ratiocination, all rules and precepts necessary to the knowledge of our duty

both to God and man . . . may easily be deduced. (3.32.259)

Scripture consisted not merely of words, pretended revelations of private men; it was, as

Vaughan writes, "God in the *voice*" ("Holy Scriptures" 198, 1.8). Francis Roberts explains

in *Clavis Bibliorum* (1648): "*The Author inventing and inditing the Holy Scriptures is*

God blessed for ever, Father, Sonne and Holy Ghost: *all Scripture is divinely inspired.*

Hence called the *Oracles of God; The word of Christ.* And the *Saying of the Holy Ghost"*

(14). As Nicholas Byfeild wrote in *Directions for the private reading of the Scriptures*

(1648), to read the Scriptures is to "be guided by the very finger of God" (2-3).

Since God authored the Bible, both He and his Word were described in the same

terms. The Word, like God, was conceived as all-sufficient and immutable, as Roberts

claims in his panegyric to Scripture: "*The Sacred Scripture is the* Book of life, *whose*

Original is eternall, whose essence is incorporeall, whose knowledge is life, whose

writing is indelible, whose inspect is desirable, whose Doctrine is easie, whose

knowledge is sweet, whose depth is unsearchable, whose words are innumerable; and

onely one word: All" (20).[3] The principle of *sola scriptura* implied in Roberts's rhetoric

is more transparent in the plain language of Nathaniel Ingelo who exhorts: "*Let us be*

content with the Scriptures, (i.e.) let us be satisfied with what God hath not only esteemed

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[3] Roberts notes that he cites Augustine in these lines. He provides the following bibliographical details: "*Hug. de Arc. Noc.*"

enough, but also proportioned to us as a very *bountiful allowance*. These are *perfect and plain*, we need no more" (150). The Bible was perceived as the ultimate source of all knowledge and "truth(s)" as Hill sets forth in his account of the biblical culture of seventeenth-century England (*The English Bible* 20-31)

Though all truths could be extrapolated from the Truth, such Truth could only be discovered when the Word was "digested" or internalized by the believer, when each line was, as Vaughan puts it, engraved into the "hard heart" of the reader who could then "plead in groans" of the "Lord's penning" ("Holy Scriptures" *Complete Poems* 198, ll.9-11).[4] To ensure such internalization of the Word, biblical language became the medium through which children formed their identity. Lucy Hutchinson recalls memorizing sermons from the age of four, repeating the scripturally saturated homilies of the preacher (14), while Vaughan writes of learning to read by way of the "book of God!":

> Thou wert the first put in my hand,
>
> When yet I could not understand,
>
> And daily didst my young eyes lead
>
> To letters, till I learned to read. ("To the Holy Bible" 310, ll.5-8)

The developing child discovered the Self and Other through biblical idiom. Scripture, then, was not merely a source from which the early-modern writer could draw; the writer was composed in part by Scripture and could not divorce the Self from the Word of God. Peter S. Hawkins writes of Dante that he was most likely "writing out of a fund of

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[4] All further references to Vaughan's poetic works will be taken from Alan Rudrum's *Henry Vaughan: The Complete Poems*, abbreviated here as *Complete Poems*.

scriptural metaphor and narrative so deeply assimilated as to be second nature - more a

mother tongue than a foreign language deliberately acquired" (121). The same might be

said of many writers in early-modern England, not the least of whom is Vaughan.

I.   The Political Instability of Biblicism

Given the massive cultural "investment of power in the book," Scripture became a

source of authorization and legitimization, the language and form through which

experience was defined (Greenblatt 76). As the site of uncontested authority, however,

Scripture, ironically, became the site for contested meanings — ideologically-based

interpretations masquerading as unabashed truth. Though Scripture offers a "guaranteed

access to a truth that lies beyond individual or social construction, beyond doubt or

rebellion," such truth was used for the purpose of rebellion as Parliamentarians hurled

biblical allusions as the weapons of the ideological state apparatus, just as defeated

Royalists saturated their rhetoric of defeat in biblical texts on worldly vanity and

innocence oppressed (Greenblatt 111). Witness John Milton embracing biblicism to

authorize his liturgical views: "But let them chaunt while they will of prerogatives, we

shall tell them of Scripture; of custom, we of Scripture; of Acts and Statutes, stil of

Scripture, till . . . the mighty weaknes of the Gospel throw down the weak mightines of

mans reasoning" (MCPW 1:827). All factions indeed "tended to look on the Bible as the

chief ammunition-dump of the book-war," or an arsenal, for Scripture provided the nation

with a language to express private and public allegiances and anxieties (Mahood 8).[5]

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[5] "Private" and "public" are of course not distinct categories, for as Jean Bethke Elshtain has
argued, "the terms public and private . . . are evanescent notions" (4).

Despite the deeply entrenched authorization of Scripture as the Word of God. I cannot

accept Bakhtin's conclusion that Scripture as an authoritative word permits "no play . . .

with its borders, no gradual and flexible transitions, no spontaneously creative stylizing

variants on it" (*Dialogic Imagination* 78). Bakhtin would have us believe that

authoritative discourse does not permit "a free appropriation and assimilation of the

word," that it is an *a priori* homogenous mass imposed on the voice of the other (78).

The biblical scholar and literary critic Stephen Prickett challenges Bakhtin's conclusion

that both "Bible and epic . . . share a presumption of authority, a claim to absolute

language" citing readings of Scripture by Alter and Auerbach which confirm that: "it is

arguably the biblical tradition that is the more complex and variedly 'heteroglot'" (*Words*

and The Word 210). In fact, it is this very polyvalency of Scripture that fostered the fear

of eisegesis. of which much is written in the seventeenth century by both Royalist and

Parliamentarian alike. The Leveller William Walwyn feared that Scripture served as a

discursive space upon which deceivers would spin a web of deceit: "The Poyson of Asps

is under that wicked mans tongue. with which he laboureth alwais to poyson Scripture,

(mixing it figuratively) in his discourse to corrupt. sinister, and unworthy ends" (151).

Those ends were mostly of an economic nature for Walwyn who refers to the industry of

sermons and commentaries in the language of "purchase", "exchange" and "economics"

(320-26). This cultural anxiety regarding the conscious misprision of Scripture re-

surfaces throughout early-modern publications. Goodwin admonishes his readers to resist

the temptations of eisegesis: "Thus I recommend you to God, and to that word of his

grace which he speaketh in the Scriptures, both unto you, and to the world, and which is

able (so you pervert it not with mysticall and forged interpretations, thus making it to become your own, in stead of his)" ("The Epistle Dedicatory" n.p.). In *Clavis Bibliorum*, Roberts resounds a similar warning to his readers: "*read* them [the Scriptures] with a *godly trembling* for feare least with the spider these should suck poison out of their sweet flowers, and *wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction, as they that are unstable and unlearned*" (7). In *Vindiciæ Literarum* (1654), Thomas Hall defines the heretic as he who "doth not take the sense which Scripture yields, but imposeth his sense upon it: he is ready to interpret that for Gods will, which is most suitable to his own. *Psalm 50.21.* these like the spider, turn all to poison" (82). Despite its authority, the pages of Scripture contained an unstable sign system encoded by the wicked to disenfranchise the true servants of God or embraced by the godly to expose the sins of the immoral. Not surprisingly, a clear understanding of the difference between exegesis and eisegesis circulated in the publications on biblical hermeneutics, which is nicely summed up by Hall: "We must not do (as many doe in our daies) who bring the Scripture in subjection to their opinions, conceits and practices, when they should humbly and readily conform their opinions and practices to the Scripture" (83). Vaughan echoes such an anxiety in *The Day of Judgment* (II) when he laments,

> The forgeries, which impious wit
>
> And power force on Holy Writ,
>
> With all detestable designs
>
> That may dishonour those pure lines. (299-300, II.35-38)

Biblical allusions were perceived in the seventeenth century, therefore, to carry

interpretive views. To re-write the biblical was potentially to re-invest it with meaning not coincident with the "divine sense" of Scriptures. Religious pretenders were seen to manipulate the letter of the biblical text for their own ends, whether political or private. Jürgen Habermas's axiom that "interpretative acts . . . are defined by power relationships and structures of interest," therefore, would not have been a concept wholly disputed in seventeenth-century England (Hampton 17).

Early-modern exegetes, theologians and politicians attempted to delimit biblical meaning and thereby prevent eisegesis. A transcendent meaning of Scripture which could not be tampered with was sought, philological-grammatical and historical exegesis was implemented, and an Authorized Version, a "correct translation" of the Word, was published.

In this first case, we find divines from various political camps speaking of the sense or "soul of the Scriptures" (Chappel 86). "The Scripture lies not in the naked words, or letters" wrote Hall, "but in the true sense and scope of the words, there lies the life and soule of the Scripture . . . not the bare words, but the meaning of the law is the Law" (77).[6] In *The Perfection, Authority, and Credibility of the Scriptures* (1659), Ingelo claims that "the *Scriptures* are not so much the *words*, as the *sense*" (161). Roberts

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[6] Catholic exegetes applied the Quadriga to the Bible to derive the four senses of Scripture. Reformers were greatly concerned about this hermeneutic as it suggested that biblical verses could have more than one meaning. Though Tyndale, for example, recognized several "senses" in Scripture, he reduced them as did all Reformers to the literal: the literal sense "is the root and ground of all . . . the anchor that never faileth . . . the Scripture useth proverbs, similitudes, riddles, or allegories, as all other speeches do; but that which the proverb, similitude, riddles, or allegories, as all other speeches do; but that which the proverb, similitude, riddle, or allegory signifieth, is ever the literal sense, which thou must seek out diligently" (339-40). As I discuss later, in practice Protestant exegetes still tend to differentiate between the "word" and the "sense."

describes the difference between the sense and words of Scripture (thing and word in the Augustinian paradigm) as the "*Inward* and *Outward*" form of Scripture (20). While the outward form of Scripture (the words) is a mixture of plain and easy and dark and difficult. the inward form is "*that accurate conformity of the things laid down in Scripture to that infallible and eternall truth of Gods own understanding that indited and revealed them*" (20). The inward form conforms to divine understanding and is "*all Light without any darknesse at all*; all *Truth*, without the least errour" (20). The Spirit of God, he continues. will assist in the discernment of "the true sense and meaning of the Scriptures," when we empty our selves to permit the indwelling of the spirit: "Empty vessels are most receptive; so are selfe-emptying mindes" (27.29). All prejudice must be removed which "as a coloured glasse. presents every thing like it self"; if we do not "utterly deny our selves" we shall cause a "deadly misunderstanding of Scripture" (Chappel 75.117). The pneumatic interpretation of the Word. Roberts believes, will produce an "*accurate Concord and Harmony of the Holy Scriptures*" and any "*Discord* is in our mindes rather then in Gods word" (37-38). So too does the Royalist divine Jeremy Taylor assure his reader that we can "separate truth from error, popular opinions from substantial truths" through the application of a pneumatic hermeneutic, for he reminds his readers that the truth of the Word will be achieved through God's "secret assistances and spiritual thoughts and holy motions" (*Whole Works* 3:165).

Others tried to delimit the meanings of Scripture through a more "rational" approach. Theologians attempted to contain the text through grammatical analysis. A philological-grammatical and historical approach to Scripture was developed which was held to be

capable of rendering the literal meaning or sense of the biblical texts. Biblical exegetes

like Hugh Grotius, an Arminian theologian who resided for some time in England,

provided a phrase by phrase exposition of Scripture through reference to original

languages, historical "facts," and patristic writings. Grotius insisted that he did not rely

"on private and personal interpretation" in his explication of a passage, but "upon the

universal and perpetual consensus" of "the centuries and the nations" (qtd. in Freiday 54).

"Private" expounding of Scripture, therefore, was condemned. Tradition, rather than the

Spirit would lead the exegete to the "sense" of Scripture.

Finally, in order to prevent sedition, James I authorized a new translation of the

Scriptures. The Authorized Version, wrote the translators to the reader, was not

"corrupted" like its predecessors. It would not include "notes very partiall, untrue.

seditious, and savouring too much, of daungerous, and trayterous conceites" (*The Holy*

Bible xvii; William Barlow 47).[7] As Andrew Barnaby and Joan Wry point out. James I

hoped that uniformity would prevent readers from using the Word to undermine the

monarchy. James I and subsequently Charles I were less concerned with theology than

politics, but as religion in the early-modern period provided "the primary language of

analysis" for almost every subject matter, theological exegesis could not be rendered

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[7] In *Dangerous Errors in Several Late Printed Bibles* (1659), William Kilburne provides an
entertaining account of textual corruptions in Bibles. He recalls, for example, one biblical translation in
which the word "corruption" replaced the word "conception" in Ruth 4.13. "The Lord gave her corruption"
(5). He then mentions that a "Gentleman of Eminence" "observed above 6000. faults" in some "late printed
Bibles" (14). Printers were often harshly penalized for errors in editions of the Bible and the Book of
Common Prayer. On this point, Kilburne notes: "You may well remember that the zeal & care of the late
Bishops (especially of reverend and learned Doctor *Usher*) was such, that for the omission in one
impression of the *Common-prayer* of the *Negative* word (*Not*) in the seventh commandment, the printer
was fined 2000. or 3000[1] (5)

distinct from that of politics (Shuger 6).

Despite all attempts to contain the Word, to delimit its "meaning," thereby preventing

heresy and sedition, James Holstun notes that "spiritism" dominated the religious

landscape in mid-seventeenth-century England and encouraged readers to invest Scripture

with private meanings (*Pamphlet Wars* 82). Readers of all persuasions sought to

understand themselves vis-a-vis the biblical text as revealed by the Spirit. The existential

encounter between the biblical text ("the Dove's spotless nest" as Vaughan calls it in

"Holy Scriptures") and its interpreter was of far greater import than the grammatical

meaning of each scriptural word. Vaughan, like Taylor, describes this encounter with the

Word in mystical terms. In "To the Holy Bible," Vaughan speaks of the living Word

which rayed itself into his soul, a union which permits him to enjoy "The secret favours

of the Dove", who with his "mild art of love" quickens him (311, ll.20-21,28,23).

Certainly, Vaughan does not place the Spirit above the Scriptures as did many radicals of

his time. Yet he describes his reading of Scripture in "private," erotic, pneumatic terms.

As Hill has said, "the Bible is one thing in a stable society, with an accepted

machinery for controlling its interpretation," but quite another in a world turned upside

down by civil war (*The English Bible* 5). A pneumatic hermeneutic in a civil-war

landscape led to an interpretive explosion. The language of devotion, as Post writes,

became the language of debate; hence biblical language was inextricably linked with

political language ("Henry Vaughan" 257). The Bible was undoubtedly, as Hill notes, an

"armoury from which all parties selected weapons to meet their needs" though all claimed

that it was their political and ecclesiastical enemies who engaged in eisegesis while they

asserted the "true sense" of Scripture (*The English Bible* 6).

II. **Spelling the Word**

From this brief overview of biblical authority and biblical exegesis in seventeenth-century England, it is possible to determine several reasons for Vaughan's pronounced scripturalization of his poetry and poetic theory. First Vaughan recognized with Augustine that "a man speaks more or less wisely to the extent that he has become more or less proficient in the Holy Scriptures" (*On Christian Doctrine* 122). To write sacred hymns "wisely," to produce "hagiography," as he christens his poetry, requires the immersion of his poetic word in the biblical Word. While God is "*a fortiori* beyond words," that is beyond the human word, "the linguistic idiom of the Bible" is "*kerygma*, proclamation," the Word which speaks the sacred and the numinous (Frye, *The Great Code* 28-29). Vaughan conceives of the "*Word*" as "the key that opens to all mysteries," and he believes with Herbert that he must learn to spell the Word if he is to experience and express the numinous ("Holy Scriptures" 198, ll.7-8). Biblical language, therefore, is the means by which Vaughan apprehends the self, society, nature and the divine.

Second, Vaughan draws upon the Word to authorize and legitimate his poetic representation. In an age of biblicism, Scripture was the means to sanction his verse. Biblical quotations serve as guarantors of the poetic voice, and in quoting scripture, Vaughan himself comes to have authority. Through intertextuality, he is seen to manage his cultural inheritance, to build his text on the foundations of the master text (Alter, *Pleasures* 116).

Third, in citing Scripture, Vaughan appeals to "a literary and cultural background

which" he "shares with his public and to which he can appeal with full confidence that it will be understood" (Meyer 18). That is, the Bible was, as Hawkins notes, "the universal 'language' of Christian culture" which "constituted a vast and complex symbolic network that was intelligible, on whatever level, to all classes of society" (120). Vaughan was aware that a single word of Scripture could convey to the reader complex messages which, according to Hill, "are lost on a godless age" (*The English Bible* 49).

Finally, Vaughan immerses his poems in the Word to invest scriptural texts with Royalist sentiment. Vaughan would have been confronted with the scriptural rhetoric of an emergent Parliamentarian culture which spoke the biblical "to express political and ultimately revolutionary opposition to Charles I's government, and to maintain morale during the civil war" (Hill *The English Bible* 39). To speak through biblical idiom, then, would serve not only to validate the authenticity of his verse, but would provide Vaughan with the means to politicize indirectly his poetry, thereby combating the ideological state apparatus implemented by Oliver Cromwell. He "lodges a royalist counterclaim" on a book central to "puritan religious and political culture" (Zwicker 28).[8] Vaughan's biblical quotations and allusions, therefore, must be read as dialogic signifiers deeply embedded in social and political controversy.[9]

Caution, however, must be employed in "de-coding" Vaughan's biblical allusions to

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[8] I borrow the terms ideological and repressive state apparatus from Louis Althusser who, as Catherine Belsey explains, differentiates the Repressive State Apparatus which "works by force" (e.g. the army, the police) from Ideological State Apparatuses which are those institutions whose existence "enable people to work within the existing social formation" (e.g. the educational system, the arts etc.)(58).

[9] Vaughan's experience might be labeled, according to Paul Ilie's theory of exile, a "crisis of inner exile" - specifically, his crisis of identity in relation to culture conflict (6).

unveil political missives. The dangers of a hermeneutic of suspicion in the reading of

Silex Scintillans is manifest in the debatable political sub-texts frequently found by Chris

Fitter. Fitter finds subliminal processes of military projection: the buried flower becomes

the recusant or hidden Cavalier, the speaker's surprise at Christ's morning light contains a

subtext of Vaughan's surprise at Puritan intruders who come to arrest the Royalists. I do

not argue that "the bones and blood of war and military occupation" are not inscribed in

Vaughan's poetry, but to interpret the word "fall" in "The Water-fall" as symbolic of the

fall of Charles I is to divorce a sign from its linguistic environment (2). To read *Silex*

Scintillans as Fitter does is to analyze "theological discourse in order to find the

"materialist and political kernel within . . . the religious nut" as does Frederic Jameson in

Religion and Ideology (Shuger 6). Nevertheless. Hill and Lois Potter direct our attention

to many works in which early-modern writers convey political messages through

Scriptural references in a kind of double-speak.

Therefore, we must read the intersections of Scripture and *Silex Scintillans* as

Vaughan's attempt to constitute both a theology and politics, to configure spiritual

relations and social relations within a poetic frame. As Shuger explains, "Religion is . . .

not *simply* politics in disguise, a set of beliefs that represent and legitimate the social

order by grounding it in the absolute. . . .Religious belief is 'about' God and the soul as it

is 'about' the socio-political order" (6). In our haste to discover the politics of the

biblical in *Silex Scintillans*, we should not ignore Vaughan's spiritual self-fashioning, his

apprehension of the self in relation to the divine. In the remainder of this work, I hope to

balance the spiritual and the political aspects of the Scriptural texture of *Silex Scintillans*.

Chapter 2

Prefatory Matters: The Scriptural Aesthetics of *Silex Scintillans*

> "The main issue for the paratext is not to 'look nice'
>
> around the text but rather to ensure for the text
>
> a destiny consistent with the author's purpose."
>
> -Genette. *Paratexts* (407)

Having situated *Silex Scintillans* in the biblical culture of early-modern England. I

now wish to address the way in which Vaughan fashions himself, his text, and his reader

through biblical borrowings. In order to examine Vaughan's biblical poetics, we must

turn to the apparatus that fronts both editions of *Silex Scintillans*: "The Author's Emblem

(Of Himself)" and accompanying poem that preface the 1650 edition; and the "Author's

Preface," the collage of biblical quotations, "The Dedication" and the pilcrowed poem

"Vain wits and eyes" that front the 1655 edition.

I do not examine the prefatory matter for biographical purposes. Much has been,

and continues to be, written on the authenticity of Vaughan's conversion as described in

the *Preface* to the 1655 edition. Biographical archeology, while of great interest, can

hardly verify or falsify the spiritual conversion of the historical Vaughan and since the

"death of the author" any attempts to comment on the spiritual state of an author could

well be dismissed as critically naive.[1] Given the tendency of many Vaughan scholars to

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[1] In the fourth chapter of *Henry Vaughan: The Unfolding Vision*, Post offers a succinct history of the debate on Vaughan's "conversion." While I do not read Vaughan's front matter as an autobiographical outpouring, for a defense of the validity and utility of authorial biography as an interpretive tool see, Sean

read the prefatory matter as autobiography, current critical approaches might lead to the dismissal of the apparatus that frames *Silex Scintillans*. To neglect the paratextual, however, would be unfortunate as Vaughan, in accordance with early modern tradition, employs the prefatory genre to explain the genesis of the text, and to control the response of his readership. This prefatory matter is the visual and verbal landscape in which Vaughan defines the authorial self, the text as a cultural artifact, and the recipient of the text. We need to engage with the prefatory matter of both editions of *Silex Scintillans*, therefore, if we wish to enter the realm of the self-conscious, scriptural poetics propounded by Vaughan.

I wish in the argument which follows to demonstrate that, in his prefatory matter, Vaughan relies largely on Scripture to authorize himself and validate his poetry. In terms of self-authorization, Vaughan adopts the Pauline model of authorship and applies biblical texts in order to fashion himself as prodigal son, spirit-filled apostle, suffering prophet, and holy priest-poet. To assign value to his poetry, Vaughan distances himself from both the "Puritan" poetics of inspiration and the Royalist poetics of wit through the rejection of the "idle word" (Matt. 12:36, Eph. 4:29) and associates his words instead with the *hagiographa*. Further, Vaughan draws an analogy between his poetic word and the Word in order to suggest that his poems, like Scripture, can "convert" the reader. In sum, *Silex Scintillans* will be seen as a work in which Scripture functions to legitimize and license, politicize and publicize both Vaughan as an author and his literary production.

Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author* and H.L. Hix, *Morte D'Author: An Autopsy*.

I.   The Prefatory Genre: Self-Authorization in Classical and Biblical Models

There are two prefatorial traditions that broadly influence the way in which

Vaughan authorizes his literary persona in the apparatus that fronts both editions of *Silex*

Scintillans, that of authorial self-negation and that of authorial self-promotion.

According to classical and by extension renaissance rhetorical theory, the prefatory

apparatus should be subsumed under *captatio benevolentiae*, a technique by which the

author places great value on the text without assigning great value to himself. [2]

Quintilian argued that authorial self-abnegation was a necessary correlative of textual

appreciation in the public sphere: "For men have a natural prejudice in favour of those

who are struggling against difficulties, and a scrupulous judge is always specially ready to

listen to an advocate whom he does not suspect to have designs on his integrity"

(*Institutionis Oratoriae* 4.1.9). So too Cicero posited in *De Inventione* that "we shall win

goodwill from our own person if we refer to our own acts and services without

arrogance" (1.16.22). The value and veracity of the work was grounded in the ability of

the author to eschew self-promotion and self-interest, a task which was made possible

through the application of the humility topos in the prefatory sections of his spoken or

written text.   We know that Vaughan was familiar with this authorial strategy from his

comments on the writings of Paulinus: "But passe we now to his *Episcopall* dignity. In

his own Workes we have not one line that mentions this Ecclesiastical honour, nor any

other passage of his life, that might but seem to conduce to his own glory. They breath

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[2] a currying of favour.

nothing but humility, nothing but self-deniall and dedignation" (*Works* 367).[3]

Vaughan. however, would also have been well aware of the prefatory self-authorization strategies of early- modern Protestant writers, who rejected the self-negation of their classical counterparts. According to Kevin Dunn, the Protestant preface writer imitated the biblical self-presentation of Paul and tended to assert the Christian self. However. while Dunn locates the rhetoric of self-commendation in Paul's epistles, Bruce Malina and Jerome Neyrey find in the Pauline epistles a more paradoxical prefatorial rhetoric rooted in two classical genres: encomium ("speech of praise") and forensic oratory. Classical rhetoricians had advocated as noted above the necessity of eschewing self-promotion in forensic oratory. In praising another, however. the classical encomium demands a well-rounded portrait in which one recounts the exceptional origin and birth (*eugeneia*). nurture and training (*anastrophe*), and the accomplishments (*epitedeumata*) and deeds (*praxeis*) of the praised. a portrait often concluded by comparing the subject of praise to those less outstanding (*synkrisis*). Vaughan was clearly familiar with the encomium as he follows encomiastic guidelines in his self-presentation in "Ad Posteros," a poem which prefaces *Olor Iscanus* (1651). In "Ad Posteros," Vaughan begins by preparing his reader for the self-praise so antithetical to the modesty topos of classical rhetoric: "Behold. Posterity, who I was and what kind of man. lest tomorrow belittle the glory of today" (63). Vaughan follows with a description of: his origin and birth near the river Usk in Wales (*eugeneia*); his nurture and education at

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[3] All further references to Vaughan's prose works will be taken from L.C. Martin's *The Works of Henry Vaughan*, abbreviated here as *Works*.

the hands of Herbert. "a man most excellent in learning" (*anastrophe*): his refusal to engage in deeds against his conscience or soul in a time of religious schism and raging afflictions (*praxeis*); and his indirect comparison with those of less moral propriety than he (*synkrisis*) (63-64).

Malina and Neyrey convincingly argue that Paul fuses both of these classical genres in his epistolary self-presentation; and so, in Paul's letters, the rhetoric of self-assertion confronts the rhetoric of self-abnegation. This leads Michael Grant to describe Paul as unstable in his self-representations; and indeed Paul often moves between self-acclamation and self-annihilation in the same chapter. Consider, for example, Paul's declaration that the Corinthians are his workmanship, "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?" (1 Cor. 9:1) which is followed by a denial of self-interest. "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Cor. 9:16). In Galatians, we find a similar pattern. Paul authorizes his speech by describing his unique calling, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood . . . " (Gal. 1:15-16), and then shortly thereafter emphasizes his utter removal of self, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20). Paul's simultaneous negation and embracement of self would appear to echo the biblical maxim of Jesus: "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth

his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 10:39). For Paul, the self exists mystically apart from, yet within, Christ.

Paul's strategies of self-authorization are therefore paradoxical. On the one hand, he grounds his authority in his being "set apart" by God through a unique and personal transformation on the road to Damascus. Paul's sin as a persecutor of the church, his former life (Gal. 1:13), is re-interpreted as a necessary stage in his journey to preach Christ among the Gentiles. Called by God, filled with the Spirit, Paul can speak as the agent of the divine. On the other hand, Paul's authorization requires the death of self and the mystical indwelling of Christ. In a classical vein, Paul removes all claims to self-interest by asserting that it is Christ who speaks through him. He further argues that his assertion of self is, in fact, personal suffering in the service of public good. Paul assures his audience that they need not fear his self-elevation, for his authority is somehow mitigated by his bodily martyrdom: "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure" (2 Cor. 12:7). This account of his ongoing suffering, and his allusions to the unjust criticisms of the Corinthians might aptly be labeled, in the words of Dunn, "the rhetoric of martyrdom, a rhetoric in which *showing*, the exhibition of the "personal," establishes the speaker's public credentials" (38). Paul shortly advises the Corinthians that his suffering is endured for the well-being of others: "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved. . . .we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved for your edifying" (2 Cor. 12:15,19).

II. Vaughan's Paradoxical Strategies of Self-Authorization

While it is relatively simple to describe Vaughan's encomiastic self-presentation

in "Ad Posteros," we find no such simple formula in *Silex Scintillans*. Like Paul,

Vaughan operates within a paradoxical field of authorizing strategies. Vaughan relies on a

hermeneutic of suspicion when he fashions himself, but at the same time he advances

himself as a worthy delegate of divine discourse. It is within this broader spectrum of

self-negation and self-authorization that Vaughan employs a series of self-authorizing

strategies which, for the most part, stem from his encounter with Scripture.

A. Authorial Self-Abnegation

One might expect to unveil in *Silex Scintillans* the authorial self-suspicion or self-

abnegation common to early modern religious prose. The self or subjectivity in early

modern literature was not perceived as an "innocent bystander simply caught between the

forces of heaven and worldliness" but was "itself the primary antagonist to God" (Paden

70).[4] Throughout his devotional lyrics. Vaughan certainly registers a distaste for human

subjectivity in its capacity (through fallen language) to distract us from God. Humanity.

in much of Vaughan's devotional verse, is shown to have an innate propensity for

distraction and dispersal. Unable to remain steadfast, human beings are incapable of

engaging in an uninterrupted relationship with God, and so the speaker in "Man," for

example, expresses distress at humanity's fluctuation:

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[4] While conceptualizing the self as infected and diseased was more pronounced in the writings of "Puritans," most early-modern English theologians would have adhered to John Calvin's dictum that we should "rid our selves of all selfe-trust" (qtd. in Paden 70).

Man hath still either toys, or care,

He hath no root, nor to one place is tied,

But ever restless and irregular

About this earth doth run and ride,

He knows he hath a home, but scarce knows where,

He says it is so far

That he hath quite forgot how to go there. (239-40, II.15-21)

In "The Tempest," human consciousness causes man to be distracted by things both external and internal, for the speaker exclaims: "How is man parcelled out! How every hour / Shows him himself, or something he should see!" (220, II.1-2). Either directed outward to worldly *tinsel* or inward towards his foaming thoughts, man remains tied to the world of the material, metaphorically hugging the dust of which he is composed. The realm of the divine is drowned out by the noise of the *"dragon's voice"* ("The Constellation" 231, I.43) or by the noise of his own mental musings. Human cogitation is enacted for the reader in the first eighty-eight lines of "Misery"; we watch as the speaker's *"spilt thoughts,"* the *"vomits"* of his *"heart"* (234, II.13,20), and worldly excess cause the expulsion of God from his thoughts; and, despite an experience of God's calming presence, he returns to the instability of his former self. Human consciousness, the human voice, embedded in language rather than instinct, permits us to wander from the divine and effects our spiritual annihilation.[5]

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[5] This distrust of the human voice would account for Vaughan's praise of the non-verbal objectivity of nature which operates within a sign system of "signatures" outside the bounds of language. The speaker of *And do they so?* valorizes the spiritual steadfastness of natural objects and expresses a

Such a view of the destructive potential of the human subject could lead Vaughan to deny his authorship of *Silex Scintillans* much as Paul insists upon Christ's authorship of his epistles. In the prefatorial matter of the 1655 edition, we do find a transference of authorship to God At the beginning of the second stanza of "The Dedication," Vaughan incorporates a fragment of Christ's words on the cross: "It is finished" (John 19:30). Vaughan's exclamation "'tis finished" suggests that the completion of his devotional poems is analogous to the sacrificial work of Christ, perhaps a highly suspect, self-serving analogy. Vaughan enmeshes through this scriptural allusion the poetic and the salvific, his word and the Word. However, immediately after this apparent elevation of self, the speaker reassigns creative ownership:

> No, nor can I say, this is mine,
>
> For dearest Jesus, 'tis all thine.
>
> . . . .
>
> I nothing have to give to thee,
>
> But this thy own gift, given to me:" (145-46, ll.21-22, ll.43-44)

Earlier in the poem, the speaker assigns himself a scribal rather than a creative function; he is a copier rather than a generator of text:

> Dear Lord, tis finished! and now he
>
> That copied it, presents it thee.
>
> 'Twas thine first, and to thee returns,

---

desire to efface his own subjectivity, while the natural objects in "The Tempest" and "The Morning Watch" enjoy an unmediated, instinctual experience of God, a "busy commerce."

From thee it shined, though here it burns;" (145, 11.15-18)

The suggestion that Christ is the author of *Silex Scintillans* would account for the biblical

texture of his poems; as God inscribes the poetry through Vaughan as amanuensis, he

might well speak in biblical idiom. Authorship, then, would involve the re-inscription of

God's word, the removal of the Self's word and the insertion of God's voice. As

Jonathan Goldberg suggests, this notion of the author might be seen in terms of the Self

and the Other, the Self being subsumed in the Other, and the poet's "silence" would be

seen as a means to achieve the truly "poetic." This reminds me of Augustine's

Confessions in which the Self's silence results in transcendence:

> Suppose . . . that the tumult of a man's flesh were to cease and all that his
>
> thoughts can conceive, of earth, of water, and of air, should no longer
>
> speak to him; suppose that the heavens and even his own soul were silent
>
> . . . Suppose . . . they fell silent and he alone should speak to us, not
>
> through them but in his own voice . . . the voice of the one whom we love
>
> in all these created things. . . .would not this be what we are to understand
>
> by the words *Come and share the joy of your Lord*? (198)

This idea of the silent poet through whom God speaks, of authorship as reception, is how

Goldberg describes the poetic self of George Herbert in *The Temple*:

> The subject's words are not his own. God's writing — the subject's
>
> words — supply the desire; they supplement it; supplanting it, they
>
> maintain it. Voice . . . is the representation of God writing, a (dis)owning
>
> which locates both God and the subject in a text that is always in

quotation marks. . . .Graphic displacement of voice, a final recording of

the otherness 'at every word,' in every word. (102-03)

Goldberg finds in *The Temple* the "thematization of divestment of self and authorship,"

and one cannot deny that Vaughan, like Herbert, revels in the "graphic convention of

assigning words elsewhere," of writing "in quotation" (107,111). The authorization of

Silex Scintillans then would lie not in the authority of the author but in God's production

of, or intervention in, the text, a divine act evidenced in the scriptural texture of the

poems. Such a view of authorship would be governed by a contemporary understanding

of biblical authorship (in which there are amanuenses not authors) and by the Pauline

conception of the indwelling of Christ, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live;

yet not I, but Christ liveth in me . . ." (Gal. 2:20).

While Helen Wilcox concurs with Goldberg inasmuch as she acknowledges that

God is invoked as an author of the seventeenth-century religious lyric, she describes

such authorship in terms of a cooperative model of authorship ("authorial cooperation")

rather than a divine model of authorship in which the writer is no more than a medium:

"writer, text, reader, and God," in her opinion, are seen to write the "true hymn"

together ("Curious Frame" 24-25). Such an exegesis of Galatians 2:20 is also possible

and may more sufficiently address the paradox that Paul lives and Christ lives in him as

both Self and Christ cooperate as interfused entities. John Wall believes that the

seventeenth- century poets operate in "the midst of a theology of poetic functioning that

stresses the agency of Christ in the public effectiveness of didactic poetry," yet he does

not suggest that this view of poetry in any way necessitates the removal of authorial

voice or agency (271). What we previously interpreted as Vaughan's removal of Self in

"The Dedication" might more readily reflect an image of mutuality or reciprocity in the

act of poetic creation, as the last stanza would support the image of interdependence or

cooperation in the generation of his verse rather than the subordination or silencing of

one party: "I nothing have to give to thee, / But this thy own gift, given to me:" (146,

II.43-44).[6]

Wilcox's conception of seventeenth-century authorship also seems more valid

than Goldberg's in terms of Vaughan's prefatory matter in both editions of *Silex*

Scintillans; for in these pages, we witness neither an authorial renunciation nor removal

of self. In fact, much of the prefatory apparatus is filled with biblical citations which

mythologize Vaughan who willingly participates with the divine in the production of his

text. Rhetorical modesty, for the most part, is abandoned.

B.   **Authorial Self-Assertion**

1.   1650 Prefatory Matter: "Authoris (de se) Emblema"

We might begin our examination of self-assertion in the doubling strategy that

Vaughan employs in the title of his prefatory Latin poem "Authoris (de se) Emblema" or

"The Author's Emblem (Of Himself)," present only in the 1650 edition. The

---

[6]We find a similar vision of mutual authorship in the stilted poetry of Christopher Harvey who writes in "The Dedication" to *The Synagogue* (1640):

> Lord, my first-fruits should have been sent to Thee;
>   For Thou, the tree
> That bare them, only lentest unto me.
>
> But while I had the use, the fruit was mine;
>   Not so divine,
> As that I dare presume to call it Thine." (7, II.1-6)

parenthesized words "(de se)" suggest that Vaughan both authors and glosses himself. To produce an authorial persona. Vaughan actively immerses himself in the mosaic of biblical texts from Ezekiel 36:26, Exodus 17:6, 2 Corinthians 6:9. The parenthetical "of himself" calls for a revision of our interpretation of Vaughan's strategies of self-denial. For though he relies on Scripture to define his spiritual translation from flint to flesh, Vaughan "himself" is undeniably the agent of such a definition. It is he who reads himself into Scripture not Scripture who reads and re-writes him. At the same time. Vaughan confirms in this prefatory poem that it is God who generates the re-formed self in spite of the speaker's fallen will. God who transmutes the author into flesh. The emblem on the title page depicts through metonymy God as the agent of the self's transformation. and the self in the visual icon would appear to be the passive recipient of such violent metamorphosis.

Whether we conceive of the author as active agent or passive recipient, we do not find the complete removal or rejection of self in either case as a strategy of self-authorization. What Vaughan does desire is to locate his authority in the moment of transformation or con-version, which he defines in public. biblical discourse. We are exposed to the authorial "I" in the moment of his translation, as understood through Ezekiel's account of the heart of stone recast as the heart of flesh: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh" (36:26). Vaughan's authority, in this instance, is achieved through a dynamic self-portrait of reformation not unlike that

autonomy and agency achieved through the Puritan genre of spiritual autobiography:[7]

Janet E. Halley argues that this authorial conversion in "Authoris (de se) Emblema"

should be characterized as "private" identifying it with Puritan and especially radical or

"spiritualist" self-configuration (61). However, Vaughan's recourse to biblical typology

by way of reference to the rock of Horeb ensures that his conversion or transmutation is

inscribed as a public or communal experience, for in his self-description we find that the

authorial "I" merges into the collective identity of "your people." More specifically, the

re-formation of the authorial heart is located in the collective sacramental moment of

communion, for the "springing rocks" (Exod. 17:6), of which he is a correlative type,

were commonly understood by the apostle Paul. Patristic writers and Reformist exegetes

as a type of "the sacramental recapitulation of Christ's act of propitiation when the true

rock was split open to provide the living waters of the sacraments" (Donald Dickson

125).[8] In *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin glosses the rock or Horeb in terms

of sacramental typology: "This will appear more clearly from the example of a similar

sacrament. The water gushing from the rock in the desert (Ex. 17:6) was for the fathers a

token and sign of the same thing as wine represents for us in the Supper. For Paul teaches

that they drank the same spiritual drink (1 Cor. 10:4)" (*Institutes* 2:1377). The moment

of authorial conversion as described in "Authoris (de se) Emblema," therefore, is a public

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[7] Throughout my analysis of *Silex Scintillans*, Vaughan will be seen to appropriate and modify the literary modes and spiritual language of his political enemies as a means to assume symbolic power.

[8] This typological interpretation is biblically based. Paul presents Christ as the antitype of the rock of Horeb: "And did all drink the same spiritual drink (for they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ (1 Cor. 10:4)." In the annotations of the Geneva Bible, the sacramental association with the springing rock is made transparent in the gloss on "rock": "That is, signified Christ as all Sacraments do."

experience in which the individual and communal are interfused; hence, Vaughan's self-reference involves his movement between the singularity of the first person and the plurality of the third, "your people."[9] In *The Fountain of Living Waters*, Dickson refers us to iconography of the three-faced heart of flint emblem to convince of the public nature of authorial transformation: "The engraving itself thus suggests that this experience is not simply the author's, but one that all must share" (127). Vaughan's authority lies in his scriptural, public identity that is not unique but shared by God's people. There is no private visual or verbal language in the emblem and Latin poem: his self-portrait is composed of an image and text steeped in the visual and verbal landscape of the Old Testament with its stony hearts (Ezek. 36:26) and gushing rocks (Exod. 17:6).

Having identified the authorial self with these public, communal Old Testament types of transformation, Vaughan concludes his authorial portrait in the 1650 edition with an identification with the New Testament antitype of rebirth in Christ, in which self-annihilation and self-generation happily coexist: "*moriendo, revixi.*" "by dying I live again" (2 Cor. 6:9). Within the author of *Silex Scintillans*, therefore, the biblical narrative is compressed; he presents himself as having experienced transformation and re-birth in Old Testament and New Testament terms and in him the testaments interpenetrate. Citing Ian Donaldson, Potter remarks that the authorial "I," in the intertextual writer, "often has a plural sense; the writer cannot honestly separate his individual voice from

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[9] In Rudrum's edition, both *tuorum* (1.5) and *populi* (1.14) are translated "your people" while Martz translates *tuorum* "your own" and *populi* "your people." Despite these differences, note that *"tuorum"* is the genitive plural, indicating that Vaughan sees himself within a communal or plural context.

those of the authors who, inevitably, have become a part of him" (122). In weaving an

authorial identity from biblical texts Vaughan constitutes a plural, public "I," and it is his

reformed, biblical Self which provides him with the authority to speak.

2.   1655 Prefatory Matter: "To the Reader"

In the prefatory matter which fronts the 1655 edition of *Silex Scintillans* many

Vaughan scholars find a more coherent conversion narrative which mirrors the Puritan

mode of self-authorization through private self-examination. That is to say, many see the

prefatory matter of the 1655 edition as an extension of the image of conversion that

dominates the front matter of the 1650 edition. It is often remarked that the prefatory

apparatus of the 1655 edition expresses autobiographical retrospection as Vaughan

recounts his past spiritual/literary follies.[10] Genette has argued, in fact, that in delayed

prefaces, an author often "sets about retracing the origin and vicissitudes of his literary

vocation . . ." (*Paratexts* 248). Like Paul, Vaughan does feel compelled to write of his

former life (Gal. 1:13); he admits that he has languished of a poetic sickness in his

generation of idle verse. We can, of course, locate in the account of his former and

present life a biblical allusion to the Pauline conversion narrative or the parabolic

Prodigal Son.[11] Like many of his predecessors, Vaughan relies on the biblical pattern of

rebellion, guilt, and repentance to constitute his authorial identity (Helgerson): "And

here, because I would prevent a just *censure* by my free *confession*, I must remember, that

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[10] Vaughan's literary folly is seen as a consequence of his spiritual folly.

[11] It should be kept in mind that the parable of the prodigal son as a narrative structure through which to examine one's redemption was not particularly "Puritan." Vaughan's Welsh contemporary, the Royalist Rowland Watkyns, wrote the poem "The Prodigal Son," a lyric in which the speaker enacts his spiritual transformation (*Flamma Sine Fumo*, 1660, 81-82).

I my self have for many years together, languished of this very *sickness*; and it is no long time since I have recovered . . ." (14). However, though there are elements of a Pauline conversion narrative in the "Author's Preface" in the sense of Vaughan's reference to his spiritual sickness and recovery, I cannot accept Halley's claim that in it Vaughan presents a "completed conversion narrative" (51). Only a few sentences in the "Author's Preface" are dedicated to Vaughan's recovery from spiritual disease and his conversion (spiritual or literary), and these sentences are offered in a defensive vein in light of his previous secular publications. Such references to his publication history can hardly be equated with the self-abnegation found in, say, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, in which John Bunyan characterizes himself in the language of self-loathing:

> As for my own natural life . . . it was my delight to be taken captive by the Devil *at his will*, 2 Tim.2.26. being filled with all unrighteousness: the which did also so strongly work. and put forth itself, both in my heart and life, and that from a childe, that I had but few Equals . . . both for cursing, swearing, lying and blaspheming the holy Name of God. (5-6)

"For Bunyan," according to Vera J. Camden, "conversion is not a point in time but a process which took years" (819-20) during which time, Ebner argues, he "portrayed the psychology of self-deception, of sudden self-consciousness, or moral sensitivity, or despair, alienation, obsession and indecision" (60). In Vaughan's autobiographical portrait we find no trace of psychological despair or self-suspicion. In the brief moment in which he addresses his "*greatest follies*" Vaughan feels compelled to add that those verses which were published "are interlined with many virtuous, and some pious

mixtures" (140). To be sure Vaughan insists that he does not intend to present "an

apology" for his less than sacred verse: however, before declaring his guilt in verse and

being, Vaughan does provide the very apology he shortly denies. I find myself agreeing

with Post's assertion that Vaughan's prefatorial comments are at times self-aggrandizing,

his transformation "a little fortuitous and self-congratulatory" (*Henry Vaughan* 73).

However, Vaughan does, in part, rely on the Pauline or prodigal narrative of conversion

to authorize his poetic production.

Vaughan, however, does not only self-authorize by applying a Pauline conversion

narrative to himself, but also in identifying the source of his conversion — the priest,

"Mr. *George Herbert*," an ecclesiastical man of "practic piety."[12] Herbert, more often

than not, was praised by Royalists during the Civil War and Interregnum. Potter has

argued that the likes of Donne and Herbert were "most frequently quoted after 1642 . . .

for the sake of their association with the Church of England" (115), and reminds us that

in the funeral sermon on the Countess of Suffolk (d.1649), "her chaplain declared that she

had been able to complete almost any poem by George Herbert after hearing the opening

lines" (116).[13] Though Parliamentarians did write panegyrics to Herbert, he is indeed

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[12] Some scholars see Vaughan's debt to Herbert as poetic, while others perceive it as a spiritual transaction. Of late, Stevie Davies has characterized the debt in psycho-analytic terms: "It was and had to be, of course, a textual love . . . The younger poet, whose identity had always been an *ad hoc* improvisation of other people's singing voices (none of which had been quite right for him) found a convincing self-identification in Herbert because his voice spoke to and of something deep in his own psyche. This imprinting belonged both to the work and the life"(94). I believe that all three forces (literary, spiritual and psychological) may be at work though the latter two are difficult to verify. However, in examining the front matter, I am more interested in the political implications of Vaughan's association with Herbert.

[13] It is ironic, then, that Herbert's *The Country Parson* was refused a licence by the Laudian censor in the late 1630s as Daniel W. Doerksen reminds us (*Conforming to the Word*, 31). See also Doerksen's 'Too Good for Those Times': Politics and the Publication of George Herbert's *The Country Parson.*" Wilcox finds it noteworthy that Herbert "appealed so profoundly across so wide a spectrum." She concludes that the "devotional poets of the English Revolution of all persuasions" found "safety" in the

most frequently cited, after the onset of the Civil War, as a symbol of the British Church

before its perceived desecration by the enemies of William Laud and Charles I.[14]   Shortly

after claiming to be the poetic progeny of Herbert in the "Author's Preface," Vaughan

expresses a desire to function as an agent of the Church: "I have begged leave to

communicate this my poor *talent* to the *Church*. under the *protection* and *conduct* of her

glorious Head: who (if he will vouchsafe to *own* it, and *go along* with it) can make it as

useful now in the *public*, as it has been to me in *private*" (142).   Vaughan's reference to

Herbert as his spiritual and poetic father, in conjunction with his reference to the

ecclesiastical establishment, might be read as his attempt to constitute himself as an

agent, or delegate, of a particular disenfranchised ecclesiastical community; that is,

through such allusions, Vaughan may be indirectly presenting himself as an authorized

representative of a residual Royalist-"Anglican"culture in the face of an emergent

Parliamentarian- "Puritan" structure of power. Vaughan, in this reading, offers himself, in

the absence of the priest, as a vehicle through which banned ecclesiastical rituals are

enacted. Pierre Bourdieu would suggest that in making such ecclesiastical connections,

Vaughan gains "access to the legitimate instruments of expression, and therefore the

participation in the authority of the institution" (109) for

> the power of words is nothing other than the *delegated power* of the

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"achieved language for conversation with God" that Herbert offers ("Exploring the Language" 80-81).

[14] That Vaughan read Herbert politically is apparent in his reference to Herbert in "Man in Darkness, Or, A Discourse of Death" included in *The Mount of Olives*: "We have had many blessed Patterns of a holy life in the *Brittish Church*, though now trodden under foot, and branded with the title of *Antichristian*. I shall propose but * one to you, the most obedient *Son* that ever his *Mother* had and yet a most glorious true *Saint* and *Seer*." (186). To the left of the asterisk Vaughan writes in a marginal note: "* Mr. *George Herbert* of blessed memory; See his incomparable prophetick Poems, and particularly these, *Church- music, Church-rents, and schisms, The Church Militant*" (186).

spokesperson, and his speech -- that is the substance of his discourse and

inseparably, his way of speaking -- is no more than a testimony, and one

among others, of the *guarantee of delegation* which is vested in him. (107)

Therefore, it might be argued, in Bourdieu's terms, that Vaughan presents himself

through allusion and association as a legitimate vehicle of ecclesiastical truth, that he

does not "act in his own name and on his own authority, but in his capacity as a delegate"

(115). James D. Simmonds concludes that Vaughan indeed assumes "the role of poet-

priest" in order to fill "the gap left by the proscription of Anglican preachers"; he sees

himself, according to Simmonds, "as a vessel of God's spirit, an agent for communicating

to others, in a time of the direst need, 'those heavenly *refreshments*, which descend'"

(*Masques* 40).

However, I must underscore here that Vaughan remains consistently ambiguous

with regard to the specific community which he represents. In his reference to the Church

and its Head which he wishes to "*own*" and "*go along*" with his "poor talent," we are

unsure whether he refers to the Church universal and Christ or whether he addresses a

specific British Church and Prince Charles.[15] Vaughan never makes transparent his role

as an Anglican apologist nor does he make any direct claim that his is a poetics of

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[15] Noel Thomas argues that Vaughan's prefatory comments regarding the Church and its Head entail "a very thinly veiled declaration of his real allegiance and interest." He continues, "Indeed, even his reference to Herbert may be intended to underline his political allegiance. George Herbert was an Anglican priest who represented the traditional values and fundamental principles of Anglicanism" (136). As noted in the footnote below, I argue that these allusions to Herbert and the Church are too ambiguous to be designated a thinly veiled declaration of allegiance.

"Anglican survivalism" as Wall and Claude J. Summers purport.[16] He would appear to

eschew any clear identification with any religious or political body in this prefatory

matter, though his allusion to the primitive Christian writer Prudentius and the mythical

first-century bishop Hierotheus is a strategy not unexpected in a member of the political

rearguard, in this instance a disenfranchised Royalist: indeed, we find a similar elevation

of the primitive and saintly in the preface of Richard Crashaw's *Steps to the Temple*:

> *Reader, we stile his Sacred Poems,* Stepps to the Temple, *and aptly, for in*
>
> *the Temple of God, under his wing, he led his life, in St.* Maries *Church*
>
> *neere St.* Peter's *Colledge: There he lodged under* Tertullian's *roofe of*
>
> *Angels: There he made his nest more gladly then* David's *Swallow neere*
>
> *the house of God: where like a primitive Saint, he offered more prayers in*
>
> *the night, then others usually offer in the day.* (78)

Regardless of the specific ecclesiastical body which he hopes to represent.

Vaughan, nevertheless, constitutes himself in both prophetic and apostolic terms as one

capable of serving as an agent of the Church. He authorizes himself specifically through

fragmentary echoes of the discourse of Old Testament prophecy, New Testament

apostolic baptism and the Pauline rhetoric of suffering. An image of Vaughan as prophet

is generated by his collocation of biblical texts at the conclusion of the "Author's

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[16] Summers argues that we can characterize Vaughan's poetry as that of "Anglican survivalism" in the face of "the Parliamentarian despoliation of his beloved Church" by interpreting it through the filter of his political commentary in *The Mount of Olives* (64-65). While there are references in Vaughan's prose to the destructive nature of Parliamentarian rule and the closing of the Church, there is no unambiguous reference to the destruction of Anglicanism in the preface to *Silex Scintillans*. My discussion of Vaughan's theological eclecticism in the final chapter of this work will suggest the danger of assigning Vaughan the label "Anglicanism" as we need to differentiate the political and doctrinal meanings of this term.

Preface."[17] Here Vaughan creates for himself a "psalm" composed out of tissues of the

prophetic voices of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jonah and David.[18] In this "psalm" we find that

Vaughan speaks with the plural "I" as he did in "Authoris (de se) Emblema," speaking at

once in his own voice and in the voice of the biblical "other." In his biblical quotations

of Isaiah 38 and 48, Jeremiah 17 and Jonah 2, Vaughan figures himself both he who must

be transformed by the word of the prophet and the prophet himself. In his treatment of

Isaiah 38 (vv.10-11,17-20). Vaughan alludes to the biblical story of Hezekiah, quoting the

king's hymn. In Isaiah's prophesy of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery, Vaughan finds a

situational parallel to his near death experience and remarkable restoration to life as

recounted in the last paragraph in the "Author's Preface."[19] In his citation of Jeremiah

17, Isaiah 48, and Jonah 2, Vaughan figures himself not merely as the subject matter of

prophecy, but as the afflicted prophet in a corrupt and threatening public landscape. Of

the second verse Vaughan recites in his "psalm," Jeremiah 17:14, the annotations to the

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[17] Vaughan, however, certainly does not present himself as a prophet in the same way that Milton does. While Milton presents himself as a man "chosen" by God to be a public spokesman, Vaughan's fashioning of himself as a public agent is far more subtle.

[18] See Isaiah 38, Jonah 2, Jeremiah 17, Psalms 5, 42 and 43. In the twentieth century, we tend not to think of David as prophetic. However, there was a long tradition of describing David as a prophetic figure. In his work, *Prophetic Song*, Michael P. Kuczynski explains: "In the long commentary tradition that influenced David iconography, the Psalmist's role as model poet depends on his preeminence as prophet. *Propheta* is the most common Latin epithet applied to David; and when the phrase "the prophet" appears in Middle English not followed by a proper name, it is understood to denote David, in the same way "the apostle" is understood to denote St. Paul. Applied to David, *propheta* means in the first instance "inspired poet" and identifies the Psalmist as chief among God's spokesmen, the greatest of Old Testament authors" (6-7).

[19] The liturgy for December 12th and 13th called for the reading of Isaiah 37 - 40 at the Morning and Evening Prayer as a hymn of victory over illness and a hymn of thanksgiving. Kate Gartner Frost advises that during John Donne's time it was a passage used for self-examination and in preparation for sacramental confession. In his twenty-second "Devotion," Donne compared his own recovery from illness to that of Hezekiah's. Frost advises that Hezekiah was also a figure of the reformed monarch: "The figure of Hezekiah seems to have been a standard one for English churchmen to apply to their monarch" (49).

Geneva Bible state: "He desireth God to preserve him that he fall not into tentation [sic]

considering the great contempt of Gods worde, & the multitude that fall from God" (314).

Jeremiah is compelled to witness publicly of the Lord's judgment despite persecution:

"Thus said the Lord unto me: Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people,

whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of

Jerusalem" (17:19). In his repeated references to the prophet Jonah, Vaughan constitutes

himself as a type of Jonah trapped in the belly of the great fish shortly before he is

vomited out on dry land: "But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I

will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord." (2:9). Again, Vaughan figures

himself as a prophet, but in this instance an unwilling prophet, compelled to confront the

people of Ninevah with their sinfulness.

In adopting prophetic and psalmodic language in this prefatory "psalm," Vaughan

attempts to meet the conditions which define legitimate use of authorized discourse in

that he makes himself known and recognized as being able to produce this particular class

of prophetic discourse. In addition, given that these collated tissues of biblical texts are

frequently taken from passages on political oppression and disobedience to God (Ps. 5,

Isa. 48, Jon.). Vaughan's "psalm" may be read as a political text in which he, like Jonah,

must impart to the populace an account of their wrongdoings and call for national

repentance.[20] However, at the same time, this "psalm" appears as a private text in which

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[20] In "Discourse IX of Repentance," the Royalist theologian Jeremy Taylor interprets the book of Jonah as a call for national "conversion" or "amendment of life": "But there is a repentance which is called 'conversion,' or 'amendment of life,' a repentance productive of holy fruits, such as the Baptist and our blessed Saviour preached such as Himself also propounded in the example of the Ninevites: they 'repented at the preaching of Jonah,' that is 'they fasted, they covered them in sackcloth, they cried mightily unto God, yea, they turned every one from his evil way, and from the violence that was in their hands': and this

Vaughan celebrates his deliverance from illness and despair. In this prefatory "psalm,"

therefore, we see again the fusion of the public and private identity of the author.

Vaughan does not create an authorial experience of affliction and restoration in private,

domestic language, but thrusts himself into the public world of prophecy, in which he

becomes delivered king and suffering prophet alike. Like Jonah and Jeremiah, his voice

is one which utters a call for public repentance just as he, like Jonah and Jeremiah, prays

for spiritual health and physical deliverance in more personal terms (Jer. 17; Jon. 2).

As in the case of the "Authoris (de se)Emblema," Vaughan does not only locate

his authority in Old Testament types in the prefatory matter of the 1655 edition. He

identifies himself, indirectly, with the spirit-filled apostles through an allusion to their

ecstatic infilling at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) in the prefatory untitled poem "Vain wits and

eyes." In this poem, Vaughan identifies himself as the recipient of a divine outpouring,

as an appointed "priest" while he associates fellow poets of idle wit with the need for

repentance alone when he writes, "Praise him, who dealt his gifts so free / In tears to you,

in fire to me" (147, ll.11-12).[21] I interpret such references to "holy fire" and "fire" in this

compact lyric as allusions to the fire which descended upon the apostles in Acts: "And

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was it that appeased God in that instance; 'God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and
God repented of the evil, and did it not'" (*Whole Works* 2:374). Vaughan would have understood the
public and political implications of the book of Jonah.
[21] Vaughan once again refers to Acts 2 in his poems on Pentecost, "White Sunday":
Those flames which on the Apostles rushed
At this great feast, and in a tyre
Of cloven tongues their heads all brushed,
And crowned them with prophetic fire. (247, ll.5-8)
Such lines suggest that Vaughan associates the infilling of the Holy Spirit with prophecy. Further in "The
Dedication" of the 1655 edition, Vaughan refers to "The *Candle* shining on some heads" suggesting that he
is perhaps amongst those enlightened.

suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind. and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (2:2-4). This, of course, is a disputable interpretation; in the annotations to his edition of Vaughan's poetry, Rudrum interprets the second reference to "fire" as "perhaps [Vaughan] fusing the ideas of suffering and poetic inspiration" (529). Rudrum's note is suggestive of the very rhetoric of suffering frequently employed by Vaughan and might cause us to recall that Vaughan refers to the refiner's fire of Malachi 3:2. a favorite verse of his. However, when we remember the emblem of the 1650 edition in which the author describes the moment of illumination through the image of the spark (suffering being a necessary correlative of the scintillating light), Vaughan may well equate the poetic spark which generates hagiographic verse and the holy fire which enabled the apostles to utters the words of the Holy Ghost, particularly when Vaughan differentiates his baptism of fire from the baptism of water ("tears") of the vain wits.[22] In the annotations to the Geneva Bible, the descent of the Holy Ghost on the apostles in the form of fire declared "the vertue, and force that shulde be in them" and so Vaughan too may ascribe to himself such apostolic virtue and force (55).

Vaughan's success as an author of sacred verse is further bolstered by his reference to his suffering private body, a rhetoric he once again borrows from St. Paul.

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[22] Vaughan may refer to the baptism by fire of Matthew 3:2 where John the Baptist states: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."

Dunn has argued that Paul locates his apostolic authority in his body, his mystified thorn

in the flesh: "By making public a nonetheless privatized body, Paul forges a link between

autobiography and authority, providing himself with the distinguishing marks of the

martyr" (39). Dunn insists that it is the shadowy nature of the thorn that "serves as an

ethical proof" of Paul's worthiness for office as it is "a private affliction suffered for the

sake of a public ministry" (40). In the last two paragraphs of "The Author's Preface,"

Vaughan. like Paul, feels compelled to appeal to the authorial suffering body and cryptic

private self as a source of authority:

> In the *perusal* of it [the poems], you will (peradventure) observe some
>
> *passages,* whose *history* or *reason* may seem something *remote*; but were
>
> they brought *nearer,* and plainly exposed to your view, (though that
>
> (perhaps) might quiet your *curiosity*) yet would it not conduce much to
>
> your greater *advantage.* . . .By the last *poems* in the book (were not that
>
> *mistake* here prevented) you would judge all to be *fatherless,* and the
>
> *edition* posthume; for (indeed) *I was nigh unto death,* and am still at no
>
> great distance from it. . . .But *the God of the spirits of all flesh,* hath
>
> granted me a further use of *mine,* than I did look for in the *body*; and when
>
> I expected, and had (by his assistance) prepared for a *message of death,*
>
> then did he *answer* me with *life*; (142-43)

Vaughan, wielding the rhetoric of the suffering flesh, becomes the proper subject of

hagiography — a term he uses to describe his verse. In fact, Vaughan underscores the

rhetoric of suffering in the frontispiece to the 1655 edition where he replaces the emblem

with an allusion to Job: "Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night? Who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?" (35:10,11). Such allusions to Job may reflect a grieving royalism, as Charles I[23] had identified himself with Job in *Eikon Basilike* (1649):

> For myself, I do not think that I can want anything which providential necessity is pleased to take from me in order to my people's tranquillity and God's glory, Whose protection is sufficient for me; and He is able by His being with me abundantly to compensate to me, as He did to Job, whatever honor, power, or liberty the Chaldeans, the Sabeans, or the devil himself can deprive me of. (Knachel 50)

Whether or not Vaughan is alluding to Royalist suffering in general, he, like Paul, would appear to make public his private bodily suffering in the attempt to authorize himself as an ecclesiastical agent in the "Author's Preface." So we see in the 1655 edition of *Silex Scintillans* a reliance on a prophetic and apostolic public self as well as a Pauline private self, just as we discovered the fusion of the public and the private in "Authoris (de se) Emblema" in the 1650 edition when Vaughan described personal transformation in terms of the Old Testament Israelites and New Testament believer.

III.   **Authorizing the Text: *Silex Scintillans* as Hagiography**

Vaughan employs Scripture not only to fashion himself as an authorized poet in the prefatory matter of *Silex Scintillans*, but also to place a high value on his literary

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[23] Or at least Dr. John Gauden associated Charles I with the suffering Job. For a discussion on the history and authorship of *Eikon Basilike* see Philip A. Knachel's "Introduction" to her edition of *Eikon Basilike* (xi-xxxii).

production. Though the poems themselves as a sacred creation are of little concern in the

front matter of the 1650 edition. Vaughan turns to Scripture in the later preface to present

his text as holy verse or hagiography. The "later preface," according to Genette, must

fulfill the function of compensation for something lacking, must make up "for a missing

statement of intent" in response to "the first reactions of the first public and the

critics"(*Paratexts* 239-40). Derrida claims that prefaces, multiplied from edition to

edition, "obey an occasional necessity," but we can hardly discover the necessity without

reference to biographical speculation (*Dissemination* 17).[24] We may presume, however,

that Vaughan felt compelled to change his prefatorial apparatus because it was somehow

insufficient for his purpose, and it would certainly be appropriate to consider the

possibility that such a change was rooted in concerns of a political nature.[25] For as

Zwicker has demonstrated, during the Civil War and Interregnum, the language of the

preface is no longer fundamentally aesthetic. The preface was the stage upon which art

and politics, "the muses and statecraft, were apprehended" (25). In the case of *Silex*

Scintillans, it is clear that the purpose of the later prefatory matter is not to radically

modify Vaughan's constitution of the authorial self for I have argued for the relative

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[24] We need not read this "necessity" in spiritual terms but may consider the possible material motivations behind such "necessity," for as Dunn reminds us "authorship provides value to the textual commodity" thereby granting a currency to the text.

[25] Calhoun would have us believe that Vaughan removed the emblem from the 1655 edition of his collection because "it no longer projected an accurate visual concept of himself" (*Henry Vaughan* 223). He believes this shifting self-concept can be explained by Vaughan's change of signet emblems as evidenced in two endorsed letters of 1662 and 1693 (*Henry Vaughan* 220-25). While I can accept that Vaughan no longer wished the emblem to represent the authorial self, recourse to the signet of 1662 or later to interpret his self-presentation in the 1655 edition of *Silex Scintillans* seems futile. I could more convincingly speculate that Vaughan removed the emblem because of an atmosphere of iconoclasm in the mid-seventeenth century.

consistency of authorial self-presentation across editions. However, one cannot deny a substantial shift in mood in the two prefaces. Martz argues that the 1655 preface is "crabbed and contentious" and "strikes a tone quite out of line with the dominant mode of poems in the 1650 volume" (*The Paradise Within* 4).

The greatest change in the prefatorial matter of the 1655 edition is its inclusion of a vituperative attack of those who pen witty verse, and it is presumably these attacks that Martz finds "crabbed and contentious." Genette has discovered that in later or delayed prefaces, authors frequently describe the genesis of the text and indicate its sources (*Paratexts* 251). In his preface to the 1655 edition, Vaughan indeed authorizes himself by forswearing a particular origin and source. We find in the later front matter Vaughan's divergence, through reference to Scripture and Herbert, from the Royalist poetics of wit with which he previously identified as a source of his poetics in his secular verse. This is an odd move on Vaughan's part as he praises inordinately the poetry of wit in *Olor Iscanus* published four years earlier. In "Upon the Poems and Plays of the Ever Memorable Mr. William Cartwright," Vaughan associates Cartwright's royalism with his witty poetics:

> That *wit* in *Cartwright* at her *zenith* was,
>
> *Arts, fancy, language*, all *convened* in thee,
>
> With those *grand miracles* which *deify*
>
> . . . .
>
> Thou art the *man*, whom great *Charles* so expressed!
>
> (89, ll.12-14, 40)

So too. Vaughan addresses the poet Katherine Philips as "witty, fair one" ("To the Most

Excellently Accomplished Mrs. K. Philips, 95, l.1). Further. Vaughan heralded the

poetics of wit in "To Sir William Davenant, Upon His Gondibert," for he determined that

William Davenant's recourse to "wit" had rendered poetry palatable.

Wit was the battle cry of the Royalist poet: "the politics of religious inspiration

and the aesthetics of . . . piety" espoused by Puritans were, according to Hobbes. infected

with a "spirit of *Cruelty*" which caused "*Discord*," "*Fraud*," "*Tumult*" and

"*Controversie*" (Zwicker 2: "Hobbes's Answer" 48). Zwicker has argued that Davenant

degrades "visionary poetics" and devalues "revelation as an instance of political and

social radicalism" and elevates in its stead the Royalist poetics of wit, grounded in reason.

order and dexterity of thought, as an alternative literary model (21).

Vaughan appropriates the Puritan voice in his rejection of wit.[26] Like the Puritan

divines and pamphleteers. he attacks the poetics of wit through scriptural allusion.

Vaughan's prefatory rhetoric and Milton's renunciation of Cavalier poetics are strangely

similar. In *The Second Book of the Reason of Church-Government Urg'd Against*

Prelatry, Milton declares:

> And what a benefit this would be to our youth and gentry may be soon
>
> guest by what we know of the corruption and bane which they suck in
>
> dayly from the writings and interludes of libidinous and ignorant
>
> Poetasters, who, having scars ever heard of that which is the main

---

[26] In 1912. Edward Bliss Reed noted this apparent discrepancy between Vaughan as a political Royalist and an apparently emotional Puritan: "It is believed that Vaughan fought in the Royal army, but at heart he is a Puritan" (288).

consistence of a true poem, the choice of such persons as they ought to introduce, and what is morall and decent to each one, doe for the most part lap up vitious principles in sweet pils to be swallow'd down, and make the tast of vertuous documents harsh and sowr (MCPW 1:818).

Vaughan begins with a similar declaration of the insidious, disease-inducing nature of the poetics of wit at the inception of "The Author's Preface":

That this kingdom hath abounded with those ingenious persons, which in the late notion are termed *wits*, is too well known. Many of them having cast away all their fair portion of time, in no better employments, than a deliberate search, or excogitation of *idle words*, and a most vain, insatiable desire to be reputed *poets*; leaving behind them no other monument of those excellent abilities conferred upon them, but such as they may (with a predecessor of theirs) term *parricides*, and a soul-killing issue. (138)

Recently, in a discussion on wit in devotional poetry, Wilcox writes that "Henry Vaughan summed up the sense of wit as a transient and potentially dangerous distraction to the religious poet when he characterized the world, in his poem of that name, as a place tasting of "Wit's sour delights" and locates his alternative poetics in the biblical and mystical tradition ("No More Wit" 9-10,15). Indeed, biblical texts become the means by which Vaughan disassociates from such an aesthetic. The proverbial epigram of the foolish women is used by Vaughan as an analogy for the deformed wit: "for a good wit in a bad subject, is (as *Solomon* said of the *fair* and *foolish woman*) *Like a jewel of gold in a swine's snout*, Prov. xi 22." Vaughan once again invokes proverbial wisdom to

describe the consequence of the publication of "filthiness": "he that *prints* lewdness and

impieties, is that mad man in the *Proverbs*, who *casteth firebrands, arrows and death*"

(Prov. 26:18). Even more damning, in alluding to Matthew and Ephesians, Vaughan

translates the poetics of wit into corrupt communication, the "idle word," which shall be

punished on the day of judgment (Matt. 12:36, Eph. 4:29).[27]

I am not suggesting that Vaughan does not display wit in his poetry. Rather, I

posit that he relies on biblical texts to dissociate himself from the poetics of wit. The

controversy surrounding wit and religious literature in seventeenth-century England is

inscribed within Herbert's *A Priest to the Temple*, for therein wit and faith are constituted

as disparate qualities: "the character of his [the priest's] Sermon is Holiness; he is not

witty, or learned, or eloquent, but Holy" (233). However, Judith Dundas posits that "the

more imaginative religious poets knew the value of wit for the expression of their faith

and did not hesitate to use it" though she admits that "critics and poets with a narrower

understanding were, on the other hand, inclined to see wit as not only a breach of

decorum in religious poetry but as a sign of a lack of faith" (124). Some Royalist poets

recognized the need to mitigate the secular nature of wit by fusing a secular and divine

poetics thereby creating what Wilcox labels a "devotional wit" as "certain aspects of

seventeenth-century wit" was adapted to devotional writing ("No More Wit" 14-15). In

the Preface to his *Poems* (1656), Abraham Cowley argued for a fusion of wit and virtue:

"What can we imagine more proper for the ornaments of *Wit* or *Learning* in the story of

Deucalion, then in that of *Noah*? why will not the actions of *Sampson* afford as plentiful

---

[27] Vaughan refers to the "idle word" in his prose on two occasions.

matter as the *Labors* of *Hercules*?. . . .In brief, he who can write a *prophane Poem well*,

may write a *Divine one better*" (16.17). Cowley's Royalism led him to assimilate the

poetics of wit and piety thereby appropriating the biblicism assumed by the "inspired"

Puritan poets committed to "truth" and "faith."

In Vaughan's prefatory matter, however, there is no attempt to fuse these

politically alternative poetics. Vaughan transparently rejects the Royalist poetics of wit in

its entirety. However, he does, like Davenant, disavow a Puritan poetics of inspiration.

Both Vaughan and Davenant clearly attacked such an aesthetics. In *Preface to Gondibert*,

Davenant wrote:

> Yet to such painfull Poets some upbraid the want of extemporary fury, or
>
> rather *inspiration*, a dangerous word; which many have of late successfully
>
> us'd; and *inspiration* is a spirituall fitt, deriv'd from the ancient Ethnick
>
> Poets, who then, as they were Priests, were Statesmen too, and probably
>
> lov'd dominion; and as their well dissembling of inspiration begot them
>
> reverence then equal to that which was payd to Lawes, so these who now
>
> professe the same fury, may perhaps by such authentick example pretend
>
> authority over the people; It being not unreasonable to imagine, they rather
>
> imitate the *Greeke* Poets then the *Hebrew* Prophets, since the later were
>
> inspir'd for the use of others, and these, like the former, prophecy for
>
> themselves. (22)

I find in the Preface to Vaughan's *The Mount of Olives* (1651) a similar expression of

distaste for the "hysterics" of mystical inspiration though in this context he is concerned

with the prosaic of devotion:

> *I know the world abounds with these Manuals, and triumphs over them. It*
>
> *is not then their scarsity that call'd this forth, nor yet a desire to crosse the*
>
> *age, nor any in it. I envy not their frequent Extasies, and raptures to the*
>
> *third heaven; I onely wish them real, and that their actions did not tell the*
>
> *world, they are rapt into some other place.* (140)

In the "Author's Preface" to the 1655 edition, Vaughan refuses even to acknowledge the

poetics or politics of inspiration, making a passing reference to his political opponents in

parenthesis: "Divers persons of eminent piety and learning (I meddle not with the

seditious and *schismatical*), have, long before my time, taken notice of this *malady*; for

the complaint against vicious verse, even by peaceful and obedient spirits, is of some

antiquity in this Kingdom" (139). In this parenthetical dismissal of his political

opponents, Vaughan manages to re-ascribe their criticism to an "antique" source. In so

doing, Vaughan can reject the poetics of Cavalier wit without having to align himself

with the views of the seditious schismatic.

In place of a poetics of wit, divine wit, or inspiration, Vaughan creates for himself

a poetics of holy writing, or "hagiography." In using the term "hagiography," Vaughan

associates *Silex Scintillans* with the *hagiographa* which comprise the last of the three

great divisions of the Hebrew Scripture.[28] The *hagiographa*, which included the wisdom

---

[28] The *Hagiographa* are those books in the Hebrew Scriptures not included under the two
divisions of "the Law" and "the Prophets": Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations,
Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles (OED hagiographa *sb.pl.*). C. Hassell Bullock
explains that "the five books known as the Poetic Books [Job, Proverbs, Psalms, Song of Songs,
Ecclesiastes] are found in the third division of the Hebrew Bible, which is called the "Writings," or
Kethubim. The Greek language has given this division the title *Hagiographa*" [lit. "sacred writings"] (20).

of Proverbs, the lyrical laments of David and the pastoral allegory of the Songs of Solomon, were considered liturgical, "for each book was read at an important Jewish festival, a practice that continues to this day" (Bullock 20). In an allusion to Herbert's "A true Hymne," Vaughan characterizes each of his lyrics a "true hymn." It is significant in his account of his holy writing, or hymnody, that Vaughan denies an interest in poetics. What is of import to Vaughan, and to Herbert in "A true Hymne" and the Jordan poems is not so much the substance of the verse but the character of the author. In "A true Hymne" Herbert underscores that the style or content of the verse is less significant than the author's soul:

> The finenesse which a hymne or psalme affords,
>
> Is, when the soul unto the lines accords.

> He who craves all the minde,
>
> And all the soul, and strength, and time,
>
> If the words onely rhyme,
>
> Justly complains, that somewhat is behinde
>
> To make his verse, or write a hymne in kinde.

> Whereas if th' heart be moved,
>
> Although the verse be somewhat scant,
>
> God does supplie the want. (168, ll.9-18)

In his vision of a divine poetics, Vaughan asserts that he is unconcerned with verse or

fashion. for his attention is directed to the "true. practic piety" of the author and the

"force" of his verse.[29] Such a strategy, John R. Knott writes, is employed frequently by

Puritan writers who refused "to give undue attention to formal or stylistic considerations"

as to do so would suggest a lack of concern for textual substance and might render the

authorial motive suspect (6). However, "Anglican" divines also questioned self-

conscious artistic agendas in religious literature; Daniel Featley, chaplain to Charles I.

praised devotional literature that "shew[ed] most affection and least affectation of art, wit,

or language" (108). Vaughan's apparent indifference to versifying, therefore, serves the

same function as authorial denial of self-interest. In aiming "for perfection and true

holiness" and in locating the source of his poetics in a "true. practic piety" rather than in

"a common spirit . . . which takes the pen in hand, out of no other consideration, than to

be seen in print." Vaughan does not only achieve textual value-enhancement, but also

ennobles the author (*Complete Poems*, 142).

Vaughan further increases the religious authenticity of author and text by placing

both within an eschatological context through biblical allusion: "but he that desires to

excel in this kind of hagiography, or holy writing, must strive (by all means) for

perfection and true holiness, that a *door may be opened to him in heaven*, Rev. 4:1, and

then he will be able to write (with Hierotheus and holy Herbert) *A true Hymn*." Vaughan

transports himself in these lines from mundane thoughts on versification and wit to the

---

[29] Here Vaughan adheres to the classical conception of the unity of thought and speech. Following the Ciceronian model, Petrarch had spoken of the need for the author to reflect the text: "[To] speak seriously, austerely, judiciously and, most importantly, uniformly . . . our desires [must] first order themselves" (qtd. in Vickers, *Recovery of Rhetoric* 30).

world of salvation and damnation, for those who refuse to engage in his poetics and "dash

Scriptures and the sacred Relatives of God with their impious conceits" (141) are

relegated to the nether regions: "whence follows this undeniable inference, that the

corrupting of many, being a contrary work, the recompense must be so too: and then I

know nothing reserved for them, but the blackness of darkness for ever: from which (O

God!) deliver all penitent and reformed spirits!" (141) Simmonds has argued that

Vaughan merely places classical imperatives in a Christian context in these passages.

Immersed in classical rhetoric, Vaughan, according to Simmonds, believed "that the end

of poetry lies not in the reflective satisfaction of the writer or a coterie but in its effect on

a wider public" (*Masques* 29). In *Silex Scintillans*, Simmonds find a natural extension of

this conception of poetics into the "explicitly Christian context of personal salvation"

(33). Given this continuity, Simmonds concludes that Vaughan "does not change the

basic pattern of relationships between writer, poem, and reader" throughout his literary

career (33).

I find Simmonds's conclusion somewhat spurious. In the preface to *Poems with

the Tenth Satire of Juvenal Englished*, Vaughan presents himself as a writer who enters a

discursive landscape soiled with "*the drudgery of dirty* intelligence" to offer the "*refined*"

reader a poetic "flame, *bright only in its own* innocence" (31). The authorial self leaves a

life of dignified leisure and ventures into the business of poetry to entertain those who

wish to "*out-wing these dull times*" (31). We have seen in the prefatory rhetoric of "Ad

Posteros" (which fronts *Olor Iscanus*) that Vaughan presents himself as a social and

political innocent who has "never desecrated what is holy with hideous violence" (64).

His only reference to his poetry is to claim that the wise who read his poems "should

depart satisfied" (64). The relation between poet and reader in *Poems* (1646) is one based

on innocent entertainment, while the poet in *Olor Iscanus* presents himself transmitting

wisdom to the reader. In the prefatory rhetoric of *Silex Scintillans*, the relation between

poet and reader involves the spiritual transformation of both, as will be analyzed at length

below. This transformation is not described as a cognitive experience in which the reader

achieves wisdom per se, but is a sacred experience in which the author, like a priest,

serves as an intermediary between the reader and divine providence through the

inscription of a poetic text. In his fusion of poetic and homiletic discourse in the prefatory

matter of *Silex Scintillans*, Vaughan skillfully elevates the authorial self as generator of

"true holiness" and values the forthcoming text as "holy writing." Vaughan locates

himself and his poems within a soteriological framework and participates in the salvation

of souls rather than in the improvement of the reader's mind.

It is clear that Vaughan's vision of his hagiographic verse is achieved through the

art of scriptural and poetic allusion, through textual transfusions of Herbert (ecclesiastical

tradition) and the Word. Vaughan's "tries" his poetics through biblical proof texts (Dan.

12:3; Rev. 4:1) to verify his aesthetics, and locates his poetics within an ecclesiastical

tradition by alluding to Herbert. In sanctioning his poetics through a fusion of scripture

and tradition, Vaughan challenges Milton's claims that Laudians exalt tradition at the

expense of Scripture.[30] Vaughan's poetic appeal to antiquity and the Word, his

---

[30] Recall that in *The Reason of Church-Government* (1641), Milton aligns Scripture and the
Puritan reformers and by contrast, equates Laudian doctrine with an unbiblical tradition:
        But let them chaunt while they will of prerogatives, we shall tell them of Scripture; of

immersion in the language of Scripture and tradition, challenges such a Puritan

construction of "a simple contest between Scripture and tradition" (Knott, 107).

Vaughan's allusive techniques permit him to re-appropriate biblical authority and to

consolidate such with the authority of tradition in its primitive and recent forms as

represented metonymically by Prudentius, Hierotheus and the "holy Herbert."

IV.   The Alchemical Text and the Translated Reader

Vaughan further enhances the value of *Silex Scintillans* by interpreting his poetic

collection in accordance with the biblical notion of the Word as a performative utterance.

Devotional poetry like Scripture itself is viewed by Vaughan as transactional, the value of

the poetic lying in "the oncoming world of conduct and action," and Simmonds rightly

describes Vaughan as one who "saw poetry as a public institution, not as an instrument of

private satisfaction" (Bruns, 240; *Masques* 23). Vaughan insists in the preface of the

1655 edition of *Silex Scintillans* that his is a prophetic, social, performative aesthetics

rather than a nostalgic, reflexive, private one.

Vaughan would have perceived the Word as a living force which changes the

reader, a view shared by the biblical Hebrews and Christians alike. Raymond-Jean

Frontain writes that "the Hebrew *davar* signifies both word and event: Yahweh spoke the

world into existence in Genesis just as the Word becomes flesh in the Jesus of John's

Gospel. Once spoken a word — whether in blessing or in curse — cannot be recalled, as

Isaac reminds Esau (Gen. 27:32-41)" (17).   This conception of word as act is

---

custom, we of Scripture; of Acts and Statutes, stil of Scripture, til the quick and pearcing
word enter to the dividing of their souls, & the mighty weaknes of the Gospel throw
down the weak mightines of mans reasoning. (MCPW 1:826)

encountered in Reformation and Post-Reformation biblical hermeneutics. According to

Martin Luther, "Scripture is not understood, unless it is brought home, that is,

experienced" (qtd. in Bruns 147). The reader is not so much a productive agent

(interpreter) acting on the text, but one who listens and responds, who reads with the ear

and is overtaken and possessed by the text, and indeed transformed by it. Scripture

inscribes itself upon the heart of one who reads; it is a living text which performs on the

soul of the reader (Bruns 148 ff.). Luther had argued for a mystical exegesis: that one

should experience the text and be transformed by it. Such a vision of the alchemical

process of reading is evidenced in the *Directions for the private reading of the Scriptures*

(1648) in which Byfeild insists that the act of reading Scripture necessitates

transformation: *"Doe not Books resemble their Authours, as children their parents? And*

must not then of necessity Gods book have imprest upon it, a transcendent degree of

wisdome and purity, and that in such a manner, as to be most effectuall on the Readers to

transform them into the image of it?" ("The Preface" n.p.).

The tropological or moral sense of scripture - its relevance to the behaviour of the

reader - was of great significance to the Early Modern exegetes.[31] Byfeild understood the

scriptural word in this light: *"What book can be like the Scriptures, either for excellency*

or use, to make men wise or holy?" (n.p.). So too did Vaughan's contemporary Francis

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[31] The "moral sense" as compared to the literal, anagogical and allegorical. Though the Quadriga was a medieval interpretive instrument, and the literal sense was prioritized by Reformation and Early Modern theologians (who were moving towards the historical-critical method of exegesis), there remained a tendency to refer to the figurative senses of Scripture. For a discussion of the transformation of exegesis between the Middle Ages and Reformation see Alister McGrath, *The Intellectual Origins of the European Reformation*, 152-74. For a very interesting account of the evolution of exegesis from Luther to Heidegger see Gerald L. Bruns, *"Scriptura sui ipsius interpres*: Luther, Modernity, and the Foundations of Philosophical Hermeneutics," *Hermeneutics Ancient & Modern*, 139-58.

Roberts insist on the transformative power of the scriptural word: *"There are no bookes*

like these Books, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, and to make the man of

God absolute, and perfect unto every good worke" (6). Knott remarks that such a view of

the "dynamism of the Word . . . requiring a dynamic response from the individual" was

accepted by all political factions (11). In Vaughan's poem "To the Holy Bible," an

apostrophe to the Bible, the speaker elucidates the mystical ability of Scripture to silently

compel spiritual metamorphosis in the reader:

> Long reigned this vogue: and thou cast by
>
> With meek, dumb looks didst woo mine eye,
>
> And oft left open wouldst convey
>
> A sudden and most searching ray
>
> Into my soul, with whose quick touch,
>
> Refining still, I struggled much. (311, ll. 17-22)

Just as twentieth-century pragmatist Richard Rorty cannot imagine engaging with a text

without applying it, so Vaughan and many of his contemporaries cannot imagine a

"word" outside of application either for the purposes of evil or that of good. To Vaughan

each textual utterance executes an action; that is, to Vaughan texts are performatives.[32]

Such an opinion of texts did not only surface in religious circles. The Renaissance notion

of the text was one whereby authors sought to reactivate the past. Texts were public

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[32] According to J.L. Austin's speech act theory, performatives are utterances which perform an illocutionary act. Bourdieu agrees with Austin that utterances can perform but criticizes Austin's failure to recognize the socio-cultural context within which such illocutionary acts function.

artifacts, which affected the political sphere.[33]

In addressing the reader of his work, Vaughan is influenced by such an alchemical model of reading, for he claims that all poetic texts function in the life of the reader, corrupting or purifying during the reading process. The power of the human text to distort and to deceive is evidenced most poignantly in the front matter of the 1655 edition. In "The Author's Preface," Vaughan relies on an image of the inverted incarnation, the Word, and on two biblical allusions to the idle word (Matt. 12:36; Eph. 4:29) to communicate the destructive potential of language:[34] "He that writes idle books makes for himself another *body*, in which he always *lives*, and *sins* (after *death*), as *fast* and as *foul*, as he ever did in his *life*" (140). Like Christ, whose fleshly incarnation served to infuse life into the community, the idle words of the poet assume a demonic flesh through print or manuscript, and achieve power, not to give life, but to spiritually infect, subvert and degenerate the souls of others (141). Immersed in the language of refuse and excrement, their words, according to Vaughan, encode "oaths, horrid execrations, and a most gross and studied filthiness" and are viewed as the issue of a "dung-hill" (139, 141).

Vaughan's understanding of his own poetry as a vehicle to lead readers to righteousness suggests that he believes his text, like Scripture, can effect spiritual transformation. Given his "true, practic piety," *Silex Scintillans* can transform the reader

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[33] Milton and Bacon assert such a textual theory in *Areopagitica* and *The Advancement of Learning* respectively.

[34] "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement?" (Matthew 12:36); "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29). In "Man in Darkness, or, A Discourse of Death" in *The Mount of Olives*, Vaughan alludes to the "idle word" of Matthew 12:36: "Remember that we must account for every idle *word*, much more for our *actions*" (188).

as Vaughan's proof text, Daniel 12:3, reveals: The *performance* [of divine poetry] is easy, and were it the most difficult in the world, the *reward* is so glorious, that it infinitely transcends it: for *they that turn many to righteousness, shall shine like the stars forever"* (141). His is an alchemical poetics capable of con-verting the reader, turning him or her from degradation to devotion. His holy verse is a "pneumatic text that inscribes itself in the reading subject" (Bruns, 169), and becomes almost "magical" in its ability to transmute its reader just as the philosopher's stone might transform brass into gold.[35] We might say, therefore, that *Silex Scintillans* is seen to share the rhetoric of *kerygma* or proclamation which Frye discusses in *The Great Code* as "a mode of rhetoric ... [which] is the vehicle of what is traditionally called revelation" which "combines poetic with magical influence" (29,216).

In his prefatory rhetoric, Vaughan supports this discourse of textual valuation in which his poems are presented as capable of engendering such a transformation in the reader. *Silex Scintillans*, that is, is able to transform the reader because Vaughan as author has embedded his identity and his poetry in scriptural and ecclesiastical discourse. His intertextual facility has allowed him to fashion himself as the converted prodigal, the inspirited apostle, the national prophet and the poetic priest, all of which ensure "that a *door may be opened to him in heaven"* (142). Further such allusive practices permit him to constitute *Silex Scintillans* as sacred, because it encodes words that demonstrate

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[35] Thomas Vaughan alludes to Daniel 12:4 on the title page of his hermetic treatise *Anthroposophia Theomagica* in support of his vision of the transformation of man after death (*Works* 47) while Henry Vaughan's allusion to Daniel 12:3 advances his vision of the transformation of the reader after engaging with his text.

"Spirit" and "Power" rather than "enticing words of man's wisdom" (1 Cor. 2:4).

Vaughan's intertextual prefatorial rhetoric. therefore, masks any material impulse which

might lead him to constitute himself and his literary production in such a way as to ensure

its success as textual commodity in the relations of production and consumption. For

Vaughan would assure the reader that his text should be granted currency only because of

its potential to spiritually translate both author and reader into a poetic holy of holies.

Chapter 3

The Politics of Paraphrase [1]

"But as an utterance (or part of an utterance) no one sentence.

even if it has only one word, can ever be repeated:

it is always a new utterance (even if it is a quotation)."

-Bakhtin, *The Problem of a Text* (108)

In turning to Vaughan's poetry, I wish to begin by considering the most

intertextual of his "sacred hymns" and the most critically ignored: "Psalm 65," "Psalm

104," and "Psalm 121."[2] In his three psalm paraphrases, Vaughan writes himself and his

culture into the Word, though he is all but hidden from view. While he encodes in these

psalms his vision of the natural, social and celestial worlds, one rarely finds in

discussions of *Silex Scintillans* more than a few lines on any of his paraphrases. In their

book-length studies on Vaughan, Durr, Simmonds, Rudrum, Thomas and Davies make

no mention of his metrical psalms. Post dedicates a paragraph to "Psalm 104" to

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[1] Though Vaughan's facility in Greek suggests he could read the Septuagint and though he may, like his brother, have been able to read the Hebrew Old Testament, the syntax and semantics of "Psalm 121," "Psalm 104," and "Psalm 65" suggest that he is not translating the biblical psalms from the Greek or Hebrew texts, both of which I consulted for the purposes of comparison. The style and semantics of his psalms suggest that he took the Authorized Version as his model. Though in *Henry Vaughan* Post refers to Vaughan's psalms as "translations" (using the term in its loosest sense to signify "any transformation, alteration or change, textual or otherwise" *OED* translation II.3) others have correctly termed them metrical renderings or verse renditions.

[2] Vaughan's Psalm paraphrases will be placed in quotation marks throughout this chapter while the biblical Psalms will not. Unless otherwise noted, the Authorized Version (*The Holy Bible: The Authorized King James Version of 1611 now reprinted with the Apocrypha*) will be cited, as this is the version paraphrased by Vaughan.

appreciate Vaughan's avoidance of "a methodical line-by-line treatment" of his source, and remarks in a footnote that "Vaughan's translations . . . certainly deserve more attention than the few glances so far given them by modern critics" (*Henry Vaughan* 90). However, though he senses that Vaughan's three metrical psalms "are superior to most attempts in the Renaissance," he makes no further mention of the poems. Pettet and Calhoun are more ambiguous in their cursory consideration of "Psalm 65," "Psalm 104" and "Psalm 121." Pettet remarks, "on the whole these three pieces are quite undistinguished, and some of the writing in them is very limp indeed" (47), while Calhoun intimates that Vaughan is guilty of banal duplication in his liturgical repetition of Psalms 65 and 121 when he dismisses them as "relatively strict renderings" (*Henry Vaughan* 70). However, Calhoun and Pettet, like Post, offer some praise, for the former finds in "Psalm 104" an "energetic involvement with Scripture characteristic of the Countess of Pembroke's paraphrases" (*Henry Vaughan* 70-71), and the latter unveils "one or two occasional felicities" in these metrical psalms which reveal Vaughan's "religious attitude and individual sensibility" (47).

Vaughan certainly engages in "sacramental imitation" in his paraphrases of Psalms 65, 104 and 121: he celebrates "an enshrined primary text" by frequently repeating the linearized properties, or signs, of the pretext (Greene 38). Vaughan is, no doubt, more conservative than Thomas Wyatt or the Countess of Pembroke in his attitude towards altering the substance of Scripture. Vaughan might well have said with Matthew Parker, who had translated the Psalter a century earlier,

Require not heere great difference,

In wordes so ofte the same:

Although to feel great violence,

I might not chaunge the name.

Conceyve in hart, no griefe to sore,

wordes olde, so ofte to vewe.

Thy gayne thereby is wrought the more,

though wordes be never newe. (1565, sig. B₃ᵛ.)

As is evident in "To Mr. M.L. Upon His Reduction of the Psalms into Method,"

Vaughan envisages a translator or paraphrast as one who imposes structure without

modifying substance, for when he praises Mr. M.L. he remarks "He [David] gave the

matter, you the *form* did give" (330, 1.17).

Nevertheless, I wish to demonstrate in this chapter that even these, the most

intertextual of Vaughan's lyrics, do not merely repeat the master text, suggesting the truth

of Genette's claim that "there is no such thing as an *innocent* transposition" for all forms

of imitation "in some way or another alter the meaning of its hypotext" (*Palimpsests*

294).[3] In fact, I hope to prove through an examination of his textual modifications that

Vaughan injects into these three psalms not only a "religious attitude and individual

sensibility," but in particular a Royalist sensibility. Specifically, I shall explore how the

vocabularies of hiddenness, veiled divinity, universal sentience, military invasion and

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[3] What Genette labels the "hypotext" others label the pre-text, borrowed text or antecedent text, that is to say, the text to which a poem alludes.

buried resistance, duty and sovereignty, and finally order restored encode in "Psalm 65,"

"Psalm 104" and "Psalm 121" the philosophy and politics of a poet whose conceptual

order is embedded in a culture of Royalist defeat. The connection between culture and

textual transmission, that is to say the very historicity of Vaughan's paraphrase, will be

highlighted over the course of this discussion.

Before turning to Vaughan's metrical psalms, I wish initially to establish the

politics of the Psalter in civil-war and interregnum England, and in Vaughan's literary

oeuvre. The role of the Psalter in worship was notably destabilized during the production

of *Silex Scintillans*; while the British Church was content to work with the popular

metrical Psalter of Thomas Sternhold and John Hopkins, the New England Puritans

published the Bay Psalm Book (1640). "The Preface" to the Bay Psalm Book compares

their most "genuine and edifying" translation to Sternhold and Hopkins's needless

"variations of the sense, and alterations of the sacred text" by way of "addition to the

words" and "detractions from the words" (*The Whole Book of Psalmes*). During the Civil

Wars, there was an attempt to displace the Old Version of the Psalter. Horton Davies

makes note of this politics of psalmody during the Civil Wars in his *Worship and*

Theology in England:

> Francis Rous's Psalter of 1641 was an attempt to meet the request of the
>
> Committee of Peers in their Report on Religion of 1640. . . .A second
>
> edition was ordered to be printed by the House of Commons in 1643. The
>
> Westminster *Directory* (1644) required that each literate person should
>
> have a Psalm book and Rous's third edition was ordered to be printed by

the Westminster Assembly of Divines, of which Rous was a lay member.

He was also a Member of Parliament and Speaker of the House of

Commons. (277-78)

For the Puritans, the Psalms were battle hymns; Cromwell's allusion to Psalm 117, "The

Lord of Hosts," in a battle cry shortly before rushing into combat was characteristic of

Puritan military rhetoric (Davies 270).[4] The Psalms also encoded, for the Puritan, anti-

papist rhetoric as Milton's note to Psalm 68 indicates: "If thou wouldest have Christ to

come conquer and beat down the Papists . . . use the 68 Psalm." A political weapon in

the hands of the Parliamentarians, various Psalms seemed "topically relevant" and

permitted the translator to "insert phrases of his own in the interests of 'clarification';

such clarification might contain theological or political ideas" (Hill *The English Bible*

351-62). Regicides relied on those psalms which specifically appeared to endorse the

slaying of kings. "Bind your kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron"

(Psalm 149:8) was a particular favourite.[5] The tyranny of Saul and David's resistance

also permitted Parliamentarians to locate in the Psalms a storehouse of anti-monarchical

propaganda.[6] Consider Milton's translation of Psalm 136, in which David forcefully

asserts "O let us his praises tell, / Who doth the wrathful tyrants quell. / . . . In bloody

battle he brought down/ Kings of prowess and renown" (ll.61-62).

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[4] For more information regarding the use of the Psalms in battle hymns during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries see William L. Holladay, *The Psalms Through Three Thousand Years*.

[5] Of this Psalm, Milton wrote in *Eikonoklastes* "To bind thir Kings in Chaines and thir Nobles with links of Iron" is "an honour belonging to his Saints" (MCPW, 3:598).

[6] For the relationship between Kind David and the monarch in Reformation England see John N. King, "Henry VIII as David: The King's Image and Reformation Politics," 78-92.

However, as Hill notes, not surprisingly the "propagandist use of the Psalms was not confined to Parliamentarians." Henry King's version of the Psalms, published in 1651, "amended the text in order to minimize criticism of kings, and to attack those who took the Engagement to be faithful to the Commonwealth" (qtd. in Hill *The English Bible* 360). The kingship of David, coupled with the monarchical psalms, often led authors to equate the Royalist cause with Psalmist sentiment.[7] Thomas Corns has effectively demonstrated that the Psalms were frequently invoked in *Eikon Basilike* in order to draw parallels between Charles I and both David and Christ.[8] In *Eikon Basilike* Psalm 118:21-2, for example, became the means to associate Charles (the alleged author) with Christ, the rejected corner stone: "*Though they curse, do Thou bless, and I shall be blessed; and made a blessing to my people. That the stone, which some builders refuse may become the headstone of the corner*" (Knachel 94). The Welsh Royalist author of *Gemitus Ecclesiæ Cambro-Britannicæ: Or, the Candle-sticks Removed, By the Ejectment of the Ministers of Wales* (1654) also established a parallel between the insults addressed to Welsh Royalist ministers by preacher-politician Vavasor Powell and those voiced by the critics of King David: "When wee call to minde King *Davids* enemies, whose Tongues were Speares and Arrowes, and Razors, and sharp Swords, as though their Mouthes had been an Armory or Magazine; This man [Powell] was not inferior to them for such Artillery, and was as free of them as they were . . ." (8). Translation of the Psalms,

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[7] Of this association, Thomas N. Corns has written: "David, above all, is God's anointed, a king whose divine sanction is manifest and reiterated. He, like Charles, experienced many vicissitudes, including both unpopularity and rebellion, yet God secured his eventual restitution. The pattern of allusion seems to suggest that God will also return the English monarch to his rightful place" (89).

[8] Christ as interpreted typologically by readers of the Psalms.

therefore, was a political act, as the translator frequently desired to locate this biblical book within either a Royalist or Parliamentarian conceptual order.

It has been suggested that *Silex Scintillans* is greatly indebted to this highly politicized Psalter. Eluned Brown was convinced that Vaughan shared Donne's "spiritual appetite" for the "*Psalms* of David"; of his poetry she claims that "direct quotation from the Psalms possibly predominates in Vaughan over other biblical echoes" (54). This is, in fact, not the case for references to Genesis, Revelation and Matthew far outweigh those to the Psalms.[9] Vaughan does, however, cite the Psalms more than any other biblical book in his prose work *The Mount of Olives*, which opens with a solicitation to the reader to emulate the nocturnal spirituality of the Psalmist: "When all the world is asleep, thou shouldst watch, weep and pray and propose unto thy self that *Practise* of the Psalmist, *I am weary of my groaning, every night wash I my bed, and water my Couch with my tears*"(143). The Psalmist is viewed as a spiritual model and his words are invoked in the *Mount of Olives* within the context of a threatened physical existence and thirst for spiritual guidance. The God who "never slumbrest nor sleepest" (145) is translated from the biblical landscape to the British countryside immersed in the bloodshed of Civil War. Vaughan's verbal resources in the face of religio-political persecution in *The Mount of Olives* are almost without exception found in the Psalms. The Psalms offer both a situational parallel (the persecuted believer) and a treasure-chest of semantic responses, articulated in a mantra-like fashion, to ward off one's enemies. A fragment of Psalm

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[9] Here I address only Vaughan's reproduction of linear textual features of the Psalms. I treat Vaughan's allusions to the structure of the Psalter in Chapter 5. I base my calculation of the numbers of quotations and allusions to each biblical book on Rudrum's edition of Vaughan's poetry.

84:2, *desire and longing for the Courts of the Lord,* serves to activate a parallel situation

through which the speaker expresses distress at his separation from the "reverend and

sacred buildings (however now vilified and shut up)" just as David *"driven forthe of his*

country" "desireth moste ardently to come againe to the Tabernacle of the Lord & the

assemblie of the Saints to praise God" ("Headnote" *Geneva Bible* 253).[10] A

psychological exile, the speaker of *The Mount of Olives* longs to enter into the Courts of

the most holy, but must find comfort in the repeated invocations of the Psalms, the staple

of his everyday language of resistance.   The supplicant's voice in Psalm 17:8, "So

receive thou me under the shadow of thy wings" and that in Psalm 70:1, "Haste thee. O

God, to deliver me, make haste to help me, O Lord" are re-uttered with such urgency by

the speaker of *The Mount of Olives* that one wonders if they were somehow invested with

a sacred power to protect the persecuted. Citation, in these instances, is the invocation of

a sacred language with a magical efficacy to cleanse and protect.

Vaughan conceives of the "magical efficacy" of the Psalms in *The Mount of*

Olives within a particular setting, that of highly ritualized worship. The performative

magic of the Psalmist's words is contained within a work structured like the devotional

manual of Archbishop John Cosin, bound up with Matins and Evensong, set prayers and

the Eucharist, that clearly challenge the false "frequent Extasies, and raptures to third

heavens" of self-styled Saints. Vaughan locates the Psalmist's plea, "Create in me a clean

heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10), within the ritualized

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[10] All further references to the Geneva Bible will be taken from: *The Geneva Bible: A facsimile of the 1560 edition.*

sacrament of the Lord's Table, the "great Feast" in which he might "eate and drink

salvation" (163). The words of the Psalmist become intricately connected with Laudian

sacramentalism. Such verbal borrowings from the Psalter in *The Mount of Olives*,

therefore, serve to authorize a highly politicized practice of worship.

Given the early-modern practice of reading and re-writing the Psalms in a partisan

fashion and given Vaughan's political construction of this biblical book in his devotional

prose, one might expect to find in *Silex Scintillans* a more pronounced political

dependence on the Psalms. This is not the case. With the exception of his three Psalm

translations, there are only twenty-three references to the Psalms in the one hundred and

thirty-two poems of *Silex Scintillans*.[11] In only three of these instances does Vaughan

allude to the Psalmist within a context of political turmoil. In "The Constellation," the

speaker re-imagines the ordered creation of Psalm 147:4, "He telleth the number of the

stars; he calleth them all by their names," to contrast such order with the fragmenting

brutality of schismatical "black self-will" which rends the "humble, holy nation" of

England. In a similar vein, the speaker in "Jacob's Pillow and Pillar" refers to Psalm

124:5, "Then the proud waters had gone over our soul," and Psalm 126:4 "Turn again our

captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south," to request of God that he no longer allow

the captivity of the elect and political rule by "heathens" (296, 1.29). In his final poem,

L'Envoy, Vaughan again relies on the voice of the Psalmist to produce an afflicted

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[11] In fact, only sixteen of these references are transparent, sharing substantial linear similarities with the biblical text (and hence might be designated quotations). The remaining seven are rather loosely worded allusions.

speaker confronted with the sword-like words of the political enemy.[12] In the last biblical

allusion of *Silex Scintillans* (1655), the speaker cries out in the voice of David (Psalm

126:4), "So shall we know in war and peace / Thy service to be our sole ease. / With

prostrate souls adoring thee, / Who turned our sad captivity!" ("L'Envoy" 313, ll.59-62).

Despite his ability to engage the political power of the Psalter in prose and verse,

Vaughan's psalm translations are not those typically associated with political debate.

When we turn to Vaughan's translations of Psalms 65, 104 and 121 we can decipher no

transparent political motive. These are not royal or monarchical psalms which extol

kingship nor are they historical psalms which explicitly address Israelite suffering at the

hands of a political enemy. And yet, if we read all three of Vaughan's psalm

translations, we discover the emergence of themes which surface throughout his work,

themes which embody his response to a landscape not long before scarred with the frenzy

of war. We need look no further than Vaughan's psalm translations to uncover the

language of hiddenness and secrecy frequently found in Royalist writings. We detect, as

well, a desperation to render the absent present, the invisible visible and to restore the

desecrated, features not unexpected in Royalist verse published during the Interregnum.

We can also locate in these translations the Royalist rejection of the urban, social

landscape, a world which offers little hope to one who will not, in Vaughan's opinion,

sell his soul and breath to serve the Commonwealth of Cromwell.

"Psalm 121" is the only biblical translation found in the 1650 edition of *Silex*

Scintillans. A song of ascent, Psalm 121 was presumably sung by pilgrims who

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[12] In "L'Envoy," Vaughan alludes to Psalm 102 and Psalm 55:21.

journeyed from their homes to Jerusalem for one or more of the three great pilgrimage festivals of the year.[13] As is the case with all three psalms which Vaughan elects to translate, Psalm 121 expresses the Hebraic longing for divine presence; in the case of Psalm 121, it is generally believed that the speaker looks to the Temple in the Holy City of Sion, an interpretation accepted in the metrical version of Sternhold and Hopkins, "I lift mine eye to Sion hill, / From when I do attend / That succour God me send" (*The Whole Book of Psalms* 92, v.1) and that of George Sandys, "To the hills thine eyes erect, / Help from those alone expect. / He, Who heav'n and earth hath made, / Shall from Sion send thee aid" (2:280, ll.1-4).[14] The Septuagint does not mention Sion, referring to "thee who dwellest in heaven," and the Hebrew text, like the Authorized Version (1611), refers only to "the hills" in their generic sense.[15] Nevertheless, given the popularity and ecclesiastical dominance of Sternhold and Hopkins's metrical version, one might conclude that Vaughan was aware of the interpretation of the "hills" as the Holy City.

Regardless of the specific object of the speaker's gaze (hill, mountain, creator or Sion), Vaughan's translation of the first two verses reveals a desire for a divine presence:

Up to those bright, and gladsome hills

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[13] These feasts were the feast of Unleavened Bread, Weeks, and Tabernacles. For a brief discussion of the "Songs of Ascents" see Mary Ellen Chase *The Psalms for the Common Reader*, 58 and Bullock. *An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetics Books*, 135.

[14] All further references to the Psalter of Sterhold and Hopkins will be taken from: Thomas Sternhold and John Hopkins, *The Whole Book of Psalms*. All further references to the works of Sandys are taken from *The Poetical Works of George Sandys*.

[15] All references to the Septuagint are taken from: Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton, Ed. *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English* . All references to the Hebrew Old Testament are taken from Jay P. Green, Sr., Ed. *The Interlinear Hebrew-Aramaic Old Testament*.

Whence flows my weal, and mirth,

I look, and sigh for him, who fills

(Unseen,) both heaven, and earth. (218, ll.1-4)

In his *Reflections on the Psalms*, C.S. Lewis has described such longing as an "appetite

for God" (51). Vaughan may have identified the experience of the psychologically-exiled

Royalist with the wayfaring Jewish pilgrim as both longed to experience divine presence

in a Temple often out of reach. And yet the speaker in "Psalm 121" goes beyond the

Psalmist in his expression of longing. The Psalmist looks to the hills for "help" alone; he

desires divine assistance in the face of danger. Vaughan augments the source text to

create an atmosphere of potential delight in the presence of the Lord. The hills become

"bright" and "gladsome" and offer "weal" and "mirth," emotions hardly connoted by the

terms "help" (AV), "succour" (Sternhold and Hopkins), or "reliefe", "aid" and "comfort"

(Sidney-Herbert, 294, 1.2). [16] This semantic transposition generates an atmosphere of

potential joy and well-being not present in the biblical psalm. Unlike the Psalmist who

envisions a distant Creator, the speaker of "Psalm 121" looks to an immanent God: "I

look, and sigh for him, who fills / (Unseen,) both heaven, and earth." We should pause to

note Vaughan's semantic substitution of "fills / (Unseen)" (218, 1.4) for "made" (AV).

Coverdale's translation and George Sandys's paraphrase of Psalm 121 retain the word

"made" and Sidney-Herbert conveys the sense of God as maker: "O there, O there abides

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[16] All further references to Mary Sidney-Herbert's Psalms are taken from J.C.A. Rathmell, Ed. *The Psalms of Sir. Philip Sidney and the Countess of Pembroke.*

the worlds Creator" (294, 1.3)[17] Vaughan, in contrast, diminishes God's transcendent role as Creator in order to foreground his immanence within, or his infusion of, the natural and supernatural realms, "both heaven, and earth" (218, 1.4).

Despite His immanence, however, God remains for Vaughan "unseen," an adjective which appears thirteen times in *Silex Scintillans* (Tuttle 219). Vaughan reads a secrecy, a hiddenness, into the Psalmist's account of God and creation, a secrecy which re-emerges throughout his work. It is expressed in "The Stone" where "God and his Creatures, though unseen" engage in a "busy commerce" (281, ll.20-21) and in "The Star" as a sign of spiritual purity: "For where desire, celestial, pure desire / Hath taken root, and grows, and doth not tire, / There God a commerce states, and sheds / His secret on their heads" (253, ll.25-28).

Rudrum locates Vaughan's vision of a creation encoded with the hidden and the secret in hermeticism. For the hermetic writer, the key to the secrets of the universe were found through a mystical search for God in nature. Nature, that is, was the key to humanity's secret union with God. The language of secrecy was central to the hermetic conception of the universe. As Vaughan's brother Thomas, the hermetic philosopher, writes in *Magica Adamica*, truth involves mystery and secrecy; nature is the source of truth and divine light but that truth is veiled and hidden from the common eye. Thomas Vaughan insisted that hermeticism was the art that could lead "directly to the *Knowledge* of the true *God*" and would permit the philosopher to "attain all the *Secrets* and *Mysteries* in *Nature*" (*Works* 166). Such a view of nature secretly encoded with divinely-

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[17] Sternhold and Hopkins replace "made" with "framed" (92, v.2).

inspired truth reflects that conveyed in Henry Vaughan's translation of Henry Nollius's

Hermetical Physick: Or, the right way to preserve, and to restore Health (1655). In the

first chapter of the translation, we find a description of "the most private and abstruse

closets of nature" that only the hermetic philosopher can open when he becomes "the

servant, not the Master of nature," a sentiment contrary to that expressed by Bacon who

envisions humanity as nature's lord (549).[18]

We can also interpret Vaughan's recourse to the discourse of secrecy as politically

inspired. Potter has identified the discourse of secrecy as a strategy within the Royalist

code of resistance. More specifically, Stevie Davies conceives of Vaughan's images of

the unseen and hidden as a Royalist metaphor for "buried resistance" and "underground

survival" (157). Perhaps such secrecy and hiddenness is a counterpart to the sense of

"loss and abandonment" characteristic of "the poetry of Anglican survivalism" as

understood by Claude J. Summers (49). That is to say, to sustain the "Anglican"

tradition, Vaughan may attempt to mitigate his sense of an absent Church by imagining a

secret or hidden force that awaits restoration. The desire for visible presence in the face

of undeniable absence, a common theme in *Silex Scintillans,* may indeed reflect a sense

of ecclesiastical absence, for the head of the Church had been forced to flee unto the

"mount of spices" because of hatching "*mists,* and *shadows*" ("The British Church").

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[18] Both brothers were admirers of Paracelsus whose work also reveals a belief in divine secrets embedded in the natural world that must be discovered by the philosopher. The "light of nature" for Paracelsus renders all that which is invisible visible. Through God, the philosopher can detect the invisible, "for God is the revealer of that which is hidden in all things." Interpreting the verse "Seek, and ye shall find" philosophically, Paracelsus concludes: "It is our task to seek art, for without seeking it we shall never learn the secrets of the world. . . .but the seeking that is needed here concerns the occult things. When the goal of the seeking is hidden, the manner of seeking is also occult; and because knowledge is inherent in the art, he who seeks the art also finds knowledge in it" (*Paracelsus: Selected Writings* 43, 111).

Longing for some indication of divine presence on earth is again expressed at the

conclusion of "Psalm 121." While the Psalmist sings: "The Lord shall preserve thy going

out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore," the speaker in

Vaughan's "Psalm 121" reflects: "Whether abroad, amidst the crowd, / Or else within my

door. / He is my Pillar, and my Cloud. / Now, and for evermore" (218, ll.17-20).

Vaughan clearly departs from the source text in lines 19 and 20; his expansion of the

biblical source involves intertextual referencing as he alludes to the pillars of cloud and

fire in which God appears in Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These allusions

establish the physical nature of divine presence.[19] God's manifestation in the pillars was

understood by Nehemiah to signify His refusal to abandon his people: "Yet thou in thy

manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed

not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew

them light, and the way wherein they should go." (Nehemiah 9:19). Vaughan's inclusion

of "Pillar" and "Cloud" in his translation of this verse is not, however, unique. Both

Giovanni Diodati and the Royalist biblical commentator Henry Hammond establish a

connection between the pillars and Psalm 121. Of the words "by day" in Psalm 121:6

Diodati writes:

> He hath a relation to the pillar of cloud by day, and of fire in the night,
>
> which God imployed in the bringing of the people forth of Egypt, and to
>
> defend them from the harmfull air that it might not hurt them: see *Isa.*
>
> 49.10. *Rev.* 7.16. And this may also be applyed to the return from

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[19] See Exod. 13:21-22; 14:19,24; Num. 12:5, 14:14; Deut. 31:15.

Babylon under Gods protection. (*Annotations* n.p.)

We find similar intertextual referencing in Hammond's paraphrase of Psalm 121:5-6:

"The omnipotent Lord of heaven and earth shall be present to thee, and overrule all his

creatures, and keep thee from being mischieved by them; his protection, as the cloud to

the Israelites, or as a faithfull second in a duel, shall defend thee from all approach of

danger" (*Psalms* 631). There is, therefore, an interpretive context within which Vaughan

operates to re-constitute this psalm as one which envisions paradoxically a materialized

yet veiled, immanent yet invisible, God. God for Vaughan would seem both to transcend

and to enter history.

Such a vision of divine immanence in history is extended into a context far more

military in nature in "Psalm 121" than the biblical pre-text suggests. Vaughan's

contemporaries generally agree that Psalm 121 is a work which treats God's providential

protection of his Church. The Geneva Bible introduces the Psalm as one which "teaches

that the faithful oght onely to loke for helpe at God, Who only doth maintain, preserve

and prosper his Church." In its heading to this psalm, the Authorized Version (1611)

directs the reader away from the ecclesiastical formation, and reflects on the protection of

the godly in general: "The just rejoice that their prayer is heard, and that God continually

protecteth them." Byfeild is inclined to follow the Geneva Bible's conception of the

Psalm as a work which teaches "the vigilancy, and all-sufficiency of the providence of

God over his Church" (122). Henry Hammond, following the Authorized Version,

interprets this psalm as one of assurance in the face of a physical or spiritual onslaught,

"The hundred twenty-first is a repose in God, and a confident expectation of succour and

safety under his protection" (*Psalms* 631). However, in his annotations, he produces a more finely tuned military interpretation of the psalm: "But for the immediate sense of them [the words], the scheme seems to be military. The besieged person daily looks to the *hills*, to see if any relief be coming from any quarter, any signal by fire or the like, giving intelligence of succour approaching" (*Psalms* 632).

The semantic changes in Vaughan's "Psalm 121" suggest that he too imagines this psalm within the context of the attempted enslavement of the godly perhaps by Parliamentarian enemies. After all, his rendition of Psalm 121:6 and 7 thrusts the reader into the landscape of military machinations and intrique. The biblical "sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night" is transformed by Vaughan into the language of invasion:

> The glorious God is my sole stay,
>
> He is my Sun, and shade,
>
> The cold by night, the heat by day,
>
> Neither shall me invade." (218, ll.9-12)

In the stanza that follows, we find an even more radical departure from the source text. While the Authorized Version describes the enemy in rather vague terms: "The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul" (121:7), Vaughan injects into his translation the image of plotting spiteful enemies:

> He keeps me from the spite of foes,
>
> Doeth all their plots control,
>
> And is a shield (not reckoning those,)

Unto my very soul. (218. II.13-16)

The word "plots" is associated in Vaughan's "Providence" with the sequestration

stratagems of his political opponents. In the fourth stanza of "Providence," the word

registers the speaker's resistance to the temporal power of the Sequestration Committee

established by Parliament:

I will not fear what man,

With all his plots and power can:

Bags that wax old may plundered be,

But none can sequester or let

A state that with the sun doth set

And comes next morning fresh as he. (271. II.19-24)

An intra-textual reading of *Silex Scintillans* would suggest that the term "plot" carried

political, military connotations. The language of "plots" and "invasions" is supplemented

in Vaughan's "Psalm 121" by the threatening image of the "crowd" which frequently

enters Vaughan's lyrics to convey a sense of spiritual and physical peril. While Psalm

121:8 speaks of the Lord's preservation in "thy going out," Vaughan writes of entering

the public world or community, of finding oneself "amidst the crowd" (218, I.17). In

"Jacob's Pillow, and Pillar," Christ is "slain by the crowd" (295, I.21) and the "multitude"

(295, I.6) and "public" (295, I.18) are seen as agents of divine destruction. By inserting

the language of invasions, plots and crowds into his translation of Psalm 121, Vaughan

makes more vivid the external forces, possibly military and coercive, which threaten to

penetrate his body and psyche.

Vaughan places the language of military threat and invasion and that of hiddenness and secrecy within a contemporary context in "Psalm 121" by excising the reference to the God of Israel in the original text: "Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." Vaughan omits the descriptive phrase which points to God's national affiliation, "he that keepeth Israel," and instead directs the reader's attention to the role of the recipient of God's protection, the "beloved": "His watchful Eye is ever ope, / And guardeth his beloved;" (218, ll.7-8) Genette labels this type of textual modification a diegetic transposition whose purpose "is a movement of proximization. . . .The hypertext transposes the diegesis of its hypotext to bring it up to date and closer to its own audience (in temporal, geographic, or social terms)" (*Palimpsests* 304). Vaughan appears unconcerned with the historical relationship between Jehovah and the Israelites, modifying the text to convey a proximate vision of God's protective powers.

Though Calhoun has described Vaughan's "Psalm 121" as a relatively strict rendition of the biblical psalm, it is evident that Vaughan's semantic modifications in his translation result, at the very least, in a thematic extension, if not transformation, of the biblical text. Vaughan invests his translation of Psalm 121 with the vision of the immanent but invisible God manifest in nature through which the divine and human interact. Such divine presence is established as the vehicle through which the speaker can combat the military invasions of his foes who threaten to invade his very being. The biblical pre-text as we have seen does not contain this paradoxical image of the unseen yet material God. The Lord, for the Psalmist, is helper, preserver and keeper; he is not a cosmic being who fills unseen both heaven and earth, appearing in natural phenomena

(cloud and fire) in order to assist the godly against the machinations of foes. Such

thematic transformation occurs, I imagine, because Vaughan's body of devotional verse

is permeated with a sense of divine presence in the natural world; as I have suggested

earlier, such a vision of the divine may result from the absence of a national church which

Vaughan can enter to experience the presence of God. Christ (or Charles) must flee into

the pastoral landscape of the Canticles while the ecclesiastical body is purged ("The

British Church"), and so Vaughan indubitably hides away the divine within the natural

landscape or internally within the soul. Though we do not have here a detailed account of

the subterranean subterfuge of a Royalist rebel. Vaughan's "religious intuition of a God-

animated universe" in conjunction with the languages of secrecy, invasion and social

withdrawal intimate a poetic response to Parliamentary rule (Rudrum *Henry Vaughan*

59).

In the Psalms translated in the 1655 edition of *Silex Scintillans*, we find a greater

sense of a vital universe in which the dynamic "natural world retains an enjoyment of

close relationship with God" even if the social and ecclesiastical landscape offers no such

harmony (Rudrum *Henry Vaughan* 59). There has been much agreement on the

motivation behind Vaughan's selection of Psalm 104. Lewalski has found it typical of

his "meditations on the creatures," a belief shared by Calhoun (52). A hymn of creation

and a call to praise, Psalm 104 presents a God who makes and preserves all living

creatures; here we find "a vast cosmos, teeming with life and full of light, bounded by

God's ordering power" (Gillingham 102). This theme of a dynamic, responsive,

harmonious creation is embedded in *Silex Scintillans*, and as such biblical hymns of

divine cosmic rule would have an immediate appeal to Vaughan. There is a long

exegetical tradition which reads Psalm 104 as a hymn of cosmic harmony. The patristic

writer Cassiodorus writes that therein "the prophet wishes to demonstrate that the state of

the world shows forth the divine mysteries" and to "acknowledge that all things are truly

in harmony with each other. created as they were by a single Maker" (30). During the

Reformation. Calvin found in this psalm a "lively image of his wisdom. power and

goodness in the creation of the world and in the order of nature" (*Psalms* 4:143). It is. to

use the recent typology of the theologian Walter Brueggmann, a psalm of orientation. in

which all is right with the world.[20]

Vaughan's contemporaries found in Psalm 104 not merely a song of orientation but a

hymn that celebrated humanity's central place in the ordered universe. In "Providence," a

free paraphrase of Psalm 104, George Herbert conveys a sense of domestic human order:

Chana Bloch finds that Herbert's "elaborations of the psalm material are all in the mode

of homely wisdom. like that of a farmer's almanac" and "his purview is restricted to the

world where man is comfortably the master" (254). In the second and third stanzas of

"Providence" Herbert identifies humanity as the source of inspired language and divine

knowledge in creation:

> Of all the creatures both in sea and land
>
> Only to Man thou hast made known thy ways,
>
> And put the pen alone into his hand,

---

[20] In *The Message of the Psalms*, Brueggemann categorizes psalms as those of orientation, disorientation and reorientation.

> And made him Secretary of thy praise.
>
> Beasts fain would sing; birds ditty to their notes;
>
> Trees would be tuning on their native lute
>
> To thy renown; but all their hands and throats
>
> Are brought to Man, while they are lame and mute. (113, ll.5-12)

In his poetic rendering of Psalm 104 Herbert appears to insert the anthropocentric view of

creation recorded Psalm 8:

> What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou
>
> visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and
>
> hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have
>
> dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his
>
> feet: (vv.4-6)

In *Thanksgivings for the Glory of God's Works*, Thomas Traherne unites Psalm 104 and

Psalm 8 to place man, the governing agent, at the locus of creation: "The heavens are the

Lords, but the earth hath he given to the children of men"; "The woods, and trees, and

fields, and valleys, hast thou subjected to the Government and work of our hands"; "All

these / Hath thou given to our bodies, / Subjected the same to the use of our hands" *(A*

Serious and Pathetical Contemplation 43-44). Milton's treatment of Psalm 104,

according to Mary Ann Radzinowicz, also lies in his concern with humanity, or at least

with the human voice. To Milton, Psalm 104 stands as a model of hymnody through

which the poet prophet can constitute an authorial identity in relation to his Maker

(208).[21] As is the case with Herbert's treatment of Psalm 104, Milton's allusions to this

psalm place humanity, as represented by the poet-prophet, at the center of the created

universe. Perhaps this is not surprising when we recall that Psalm 104 is a Whitsun

Proper Psalm: White Sunday or Pentecost celebrated the vocal inspiration of the disciples

upon the descent of the Holy Spirit.

Herbert's celebration of man as "the world's high Priest" (113, 1.13), Traherne's

description of man as nature's governor and Milton's configuration of himself as a poet-

prophet is not coincident with Vaughan's vision of humanity in his rendition of Psalm

104. While Herbert, Traherne and Milton transform Psalm 104 into a hymn of

orientation with humanity at the matrix, Vaughan's textual augmentation and

interpolations expand the sense of God's cosmic, yet hidden identity and create a sense

of retirement and secrecy in the natural landscape, changes consistent with those found in

"Psalm 121." In "Psalm 104" Vaughan also points to the collective response of non-

human creation and implicitly compares this to the selective union between God and

particular human souls.

Vaughan's first significant modification of the biblical source can be found in the

third and fourth lines of "Psalm 104" where he describes God: "Honour and majesty have

their abode / With thee, and crown thy brow." The Psalmist refers only to a God "clothed

with honour and majesty" (v.1). Vaughan could have transformed this verse into Royalist

propaganda; Sidney-Herbert imagined a king-like God in her version of the same verse:

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[21] One might suggest that John Norris also relied on Psalm 104, amongst others, as a model for hymnody. See John Norris, "A Divine Hymn on the Creation," *A Collection of Miscellanies* (1687).

"To thee, to thee, all roiall pompes belonge, / Clothed art thou in state and glory bright:"

(241,ll.3-4). However, Vaughan is a little more ambiguous in his addition of the phrase

"crown thy brow." On the one hand, Vaughan does produce an image of kingship with

the interpolation of the word "crown" to describe the "majesty" of God. God is certainly

here envisioned in monarchical language. However, the phrase "crown thy brow" may

suggest to the reader that Vaughan is reading Christ into the Jehovah of the Old

Testament, as the expression "crown thy brow" may suggest to the early-modern reader

Christ's crown of triumph. If such an association is made by the reader, Christ is injected

into a hymn of praise to Jehovah, a reading worthy of St. Paul who imagined such a

Cosmic Christ in Colossians 1:15: "For by him [Christ] were all things created, that are in

heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions,

or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him." Vaughan's

allusion, therefore, to a "crown" in "Psalm 104" may create in the reader a vision of

monarchy and cosmology, King and Christ, as the locus of order in the universe, an

association reintroduced in "Psalm 65," his final psalm translation.

Vaughan's next significant alteration is to augment the Psalmist's rendition of this

ordered cosmos. Where the Psalmist is content to describe God stretching out the

heavens like a curtain (v.2), Vaughan specifies the nature of the "globe / Of Air, and Sea,

and Land." (258, ll.7-8). But as with "Psalm 121," Vaughan finds this expansive globe

penetrated with the hidden and secret; the beams of God's chambers are laid "in the deep

waters, which no eye can find;" (258, l.10), the earth is hidden "as with a veil" (258, l.19),

and the mountains pass "by secret ways" (258, l.23). While the Psalmist finds no secrecy

in the universe, creation for Vaughan is encased in and protected by secrecy. Safety and retirement accompany such secrecy when Vaughan adds the language of play, retirement and healing to the biblical pre-text. For the Psalmist "the waters stood," for Vaughan the "floods played" (258, l.19); for the Psalmist the waters haste away (v.7) at the voice of thunder, the wild goats seek "refuge" in the high hills (v.18) and the lions lay "down in their dens" (v.22), while for Vaughan, the waters "retired apace" (258, l.22), the conies find a "retiring place" in the hills and the lions "retire into their dens" (259, l.62). Finally, for the Psalmist, the hills are "satisfied"with the plentiful waters (v.13), for Vaughan the parched hills are "healed by the showers from high" (l.40). Vaughan's desire to present nature as a sacred and secure landscape accounts for most of his textual modifications of Psalm 104 and may well be seen within the politics of retirement characteristic of much Cavalier verse.

However, one should be wary of reading the language of retirement in "Psalm 104" and other lyrics as an expression of passive political withdrawal.[22] Recent analysis of Royalist verse has led to the conclusion that apparently "private codes" of defeated Royalists are a "means of illicit communication and subversion during the Civil War period" and Interregnum (Raylor 182).[23] Publishing poetry and prose on retirement is hardly Vaughan's act of withdrawal from the world. In making such poetry and prose public, Vaughan engages in a political act; in publically fashioning himself an unworldly

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[22] In *The Cavalier Mode from Jonson to Cotton*, Earl Miner argued that cavalier verse for the most part expresses a mood of retirement and withdrawal from the political scene.

[23] On this point, see also James Loxley, *Royalism and Poetry in the English Civil Wars: The Drawn Sword*.

creature, content to reflect on the things of God, by comparison he designates those who wish to achieve power during the Civil Wars and Interregnum "worldly" creatures, destined for eternal punishment. While he keeps "the ancient way" and is rewarded with "flowers and spices," they are the "black parasites" who "sow tares / And scatter death / Amongst the quick, selling their souls and breath / For any wares" ("The Proffer" 249-250. ll.43.47.1,37-40).

Into the tableau of secrecy and retirement of "Psalm 104," Vaughan injects two types of commerce, that between the non-human creature and God and that between God and holy souls. The Psalmist does not speak of nature's praise of its Creator in Psalm 104; no such view of nature can be found in its twenty fourth verse: "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches" (v.24). Vaughan, however, interpolates into his translation a vision of the natural world's response to God:

> O Lord my God, how many and how rare
>
> Are thy great works! In wisdom hast thou made
>
> Them all, and this the earth, and every blade
>
> Of grass, we tread, declare. (259, ll.65-68)

Vaughan's conception of the semiotics of nature is scattered throughout his lyrics. The view of a communicative nature can be found in the Old Testament where the floods "clap their hands" and the hills, "joyful together," praise their Creator (Psalm 98:8). In the Hebraic landscape of Isaiah 55:12, the "mountains and the hills . . . break forth . . . into singing, and all the trees of the field . . . clap their hands" to signify God's mercy to

the righteous ones, a verse Vaughan integrates in the "The Bird." which immediately

follows "Psalm 104" and celebrates the silent consciousness of the non-human:

> So hills and valleys into singing break,
>
> And though poor stones have neither speech nor tongue,
>
> While active winds and streams both run and speak,
>
> Yet stones are deep in admiration. (261. II.13-16)

The New Testament also offers Vaughan a vision of a sentient creation. In "Church-

Service." Vaughan relies on Romans 8:26 to affirm the "sighs and groans," of nature

(8:26), a sentiment re-voiced in "And do they so?." a poem which glosses Romans 8:19 to

reveal nature animate and inspirited. Vaughan may well have been influenced directly

from both testaments in his vision of the worshipping earth in "Psalm 104" and the

animate creatures in a series of his lyrics. Alternatively, given his propensity to regard

humanity as inferior to the rest of creation, Vaughan may be asserting a primitive

appreciation of nature much as Montaigne celebrated the beast to wound man's pride.

However, Rudrum's claim that Vaughan read these scriptures, including "Psalm 104."

through the filter of the Hermetica to derive a vision of a vital universe filled with

sentient creatures is also convincing. Thomas Vaughan had asserted in *Anthroposophia*

Theomagica that "the *world*, which is *Gods building*" is "full of *Spirit, quick* and *living*"

(52). Such a view is espoused in *Libellus IV* and *VII* of the Hermetica where the author

writes: "The Kosmos also, Asclepius, has sense and thought; but its sense and thought

are of a kind peculiar to itself, not like the sense and thought of man, not varying like his,

but mightier and less diversified" (Scott 75). Though the author is definitely

anthropocentric in sentiment when he argues that "man has this advantage over all other living beings, that he possesses speech and mind" (61), he still attributes a kind of consciousness to non-human creation: "the sense and thought of all living creatures enter into them from without, being breathed into them from the atmosphere" (76). Margaret Cavendish, in her theorizing about atomism, had come to even more radical conclusions about animals and vegetation, without recourse to hermetic thought; in the preface to *Philosophical Letters* (1664) she concludes that "not onley Animals, but also Vegetables, Minerals and Elements, and what more is in Nature, are endued with this Life and Soul, Sense and Reason" as all of creation is "composed of the same matter" ("The Preface"; 192). "Man," she concludes, "is more irrational then any of those Creatures when he believes that all knowledg is . . . confined to one sort of Creatures" (517). However, Vaughan was no adherent of the "new-fangled" theories of atomism which explained the universe in terms of matter and motion.[24] Vaughan did not base his view of sentient

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[24] John Donne had articulated the cultural anxiety surrounding atomism in "An anatomie of the World . . . The first Anniversary":

> And freely men confesse, that this world's spent,
> When in the Planets, and the Firmament
> They seeke so many new; they see that this
> Is crumbled out againe to his Atomies.
> 'Tis all in peeces, all cohaerence gone;
> All just supply, and all Relation:
> Prince, Subject, Father, Sonne, are things forgot,
> For every man alone thinkes he hath got
> To be a Phœnix, and that there can bee
> None of that kinde, of which he is, but hee. (*The Poems* 1:237-8, ll.209-18)

That the theory of atomism had political implications in early-modern discourse is evident in this quotation. It was believed that atomism, in which the world was viewed as consisting of equally powerful competing atoms, supported the political theory of democracy. The earlier theory of the Aristotelian four elements combined with the belief that man was a microcosm of the macrocosmic universe, and hence linked by a series of correspondences and relationships, was used to support a hierarchical, monarchical political platform.

creation on the belief that all creation is formed from the same matter; rather, he shares

with Lady Anne Conway a belief in spiritual monism and vitalism. Both Conway and

Vaughan had been exposed to Hermetic and Cabalistic thought which held that the

universe (both spiritual and physical) was composed of one basic vital, spiritual

substance, vital in so far as matter is alive and "endowed with force and activity"

(Coudert and Corse, "Introduction" xxxi). Given that all creation was made from this

singular spiritual substance, each creature was engendered with life as Cabalistic writer

Hayyim Vital expressed: " There is nothing in the world, not even among silent things.

such as dust and stones, that does not possess a certain life, spiritual nature . . ." (qtd. in

Coudert and Corse, xx). Vaughan shares this Cabalistic conception of creation. both

human and non-human, as vital, sentient and active, and therefore challenges Cartesian

mechanical philosophy. Though stones are speechless. as he writes in "The Day of

Judgement [II]," they are "not dumb." (299, 1.16).

Vaughan's elevation of nature in his emphasis on the spiritual sentience of all creation

in "Psalm 104" and other lyrics, however, might also contain a political sub-text.

Simmonds has suggested that Vaughan's regard for nature may reflect his "sense of the

alienation of human society from God, the fragility of even sacred institutions" given the

overthrow of monarchical and ecclesiastical structures (*Masques* 148-49); in light of the

desecration of palace and church, past sites of social integration, Vaughan may have

located a vital, sentient society within nature to establish a sense of community.

Vaughan's lyric personas often find themselves in a concealed community of nature.

Potter has argued that "the royalist mode in the mid-century is increasingly characterised"

by a "sense of darkness and confined spaces," many Royalists finding an identity within the tavern and prison (134). In some ways, given the hidden and secret nature of Vaughan's natural society, he like many Royalists communicates this sense of darkness and confinement; his allusions to the garden of the Song of Songs frequently reflect a sense of an idyllic enclosure, threatened from without by the "vulgar" populace. However. Vaughan's society of nature also offers a vision of the hidden within the open space of the agrarian landscape and the vast cosmos. "Psalm 104," among other lyrics. conveys this paradoxical sense of the cosmic society of which his lyric speakers are a part; they are. as it were, hidden in full view.

The speaker of "Psalm 104," therefore, finds himself within a sentient and vital natural landscape, a "society" in which humanity is not high priest. However. humanity, or at least some of its members. shares in this communion with God. If we return to the fourth stanza of Vaughan's poem we find a substantial interpolation. In the fourth verse of the biblical text. the Psalmist describes God as he "who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire." Vaughan's radical departure from the pre-text is notable:

> In thy celestial, gladsome messages
>
> Dispatched to holy souls, sick with desire
>
> And love of thee, each willing Angel is
>
> Thy minister in fire. (258, II.13-16)

While in the biblical text, the Psalmist only describes the nature of the angelic ministers of God, Vaughan characterizes their actions and the recipients of that action. Only those "holy souls, sick with desire / And love of thee" will receive those gladsome, celestial

messages dispatched from God. There may be Arminian overtones to this interpolation, inasmuch as Vaughan conceives that divine communion can only come about with the desire of the believer. More importantly, however, Vaughan's interpolation tends to restrict the vision of cosmic orientation in terms of human creation. The response of nature seems an instinctual, collective act: "every blade of grass, we tread," declares God's wisdom while within the human realm only those "holy souls" are envisioned engaging in commerce with the divine. We might conclude, therefore, that unlike his contemporaries, Vaughan does not find in Psalm 104 a vision of humanity at the center of the cosmos worshiping the Creator and mastering creation. Rather some "holy souls" along with non-human creatures participate as a spiritual society in the worship of their Maker.

"Psalm 65," the final psalm translation in *Silex Scintillans*, is, like "Psalm 104," a hymn of worship which celebrates God's mercy to the elect and all creation. It is a psalm which observes God's presence in his two temples - the Temple of Zion, understood as the Church by reformation exegetes, and the Temple of Nature. Psalm 65 has been described as a hymn of communal thanksgiving and a song of craving; that is, the Psalmist is seen to appreciate God's mercy as evidenced in creation and to crave satisfaction with the pleasures of God's house (Gillingham 223; Lewis 50-51). Like Psalms 121 and 104, Psalm 65 celebrates God's engagement with humanity (or at least the elect) and envisions God's presence within the created universe. And like Psalm 104, Psalm 65 presents a God of cosmic order. The speaker of Psalm 65, however, expressly desires to find a place for himself within the holy Temple or Church; satisfaction within

an ecclesiastical setting is only intimated in "Psalm 121" in an oblique reference to the

"hills" of Zion and is not addressed at all in "Psalm 104." In "Psalm 65," then, there is a

desire to experience the divine within the boundaries of the Temple, which I hope to

demonstrate reflects a desire for restoration and order in both the temporal and celestial

realms.

Though patristic, reformed and early-modern exegetes interpreted Psalm 65 as a

hymn which prophesied the election of the Gentiles, this seems of little concern to

Vaughan.[25] No textual modifications are made by Vaughan to address election. The

speaker in "Psalm 65" is far more concerned with God's presence within his temples, and

we are hardly surprised to find in his portrayal of the temples the vocabulary of secrecy

and sentience. In his account of God's attendance on nature, the speaker of "Psalm 65"

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[25] In the Authorized Version, the Geneva Bible and the Great Bible, the phrase which elicited such a reading was ". . . unto thee shall all flesh come." The patristic writer Cassiodorus figures this psalm as a canticle of jubilation in which the community proclaims the glorious resurrection of Christ which permitted the salvation of both Jew and Gentile. Though Luther finds in this psalm an example of negative theology in which God is "praised in a way beyond expression . . . because of the amazement and wonder induced by His majesty," he too finds within this psalm a reference to election of both Jew and Gentile (*Luther's Works: First Lectures on the Psalms I* 10:313,316).

While Calvin believes the psalm to principally extol "God for the fatherly care which he exercises over his Church," he also reads into this psalm a prophetic account of the election of Gentiles: "It [Psalm 65] contains a prediction of the Gentiles being called to the common faith" (*Commentary on the Psalms* 2:450).

That this interpretation of Psalm 65 would be familiar to seventeenth-century Christians is suggested in the writings of early-modern biblical commentator David Dickson who found in Psalm 65 a song of praise and hymn on election which offers nine "arguments of God's praise"; God is extolled for his "decree of election of his own redeemed ones" and his maintenance and protection of his church and all creation (*A Commentary on the Psalms* 1:378-379).

It may be significant that Hammond does not interpret Psalm 65 as a poem on election given the current controversy between Calvinists and Arminians on predestination, foreknowledge, conditional and unconditional election, topics to be considered in the final chapter of this work. Hammond is content to describe the psalm as "a thankfull commemoration of Gods mercies and deliverances; probably of his restoring plenty...after the three years famine"; he paraphrases the fragment of the second verse, "unto thee shall all flesh come" as: "Thy property it is, to give a favourable audience to all petitions that are duly and faithfully presented unto thee by any obedient servant of thine....And this is an encouragement, and obligation to all such to make their constant addresses to thee...so they may have this freedome and dignity of access unto him" (*Psalms* 317).

speaks of the unseen:

> Thou water'st every ridge of land
>
> And settlest with thy secret hand
>
> The furrows of it; then thy warm
>
> And opening showers (restrained from harm)
>
> Soften the mould, while all unseen
>
> The blade grows up alive and green. (301, ll.33-38)

In typical fashion, Vaughan finds in nature life and growth unseen and unveils the secret interventions of God; and as expected no such secrecy is recorded in the tenth verse of Psalm 65: "Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof." Though Vaughan's representation of nature is more orthodox here inasmuch as it envisions nature in the service of humanity, "Thou visit'st the low earth, and then / Water'st it for the sons of men," (301, ll.27-28), it is again infused with the hermetic and political language of unseen growth. So too is this landscape engendered with sentient creation:

> The fruitful flocks fill every dale,
>
> And purling corn doth clothe the vale;
>
> They shout for joy, and jointly sing,
>
> *Glory to thee eternal King!* (301, ll.45-48)

Vaughan appears to choose psalms which infuse nature with a spirit of life creating once again a society of nature of which humanity is but a part.

Though the speaker of "Psalm 65" celebrates the earth's richness, secret growth and

sentient creation, he does not always express the confidence of the Psalmist; in the

Authorized Version and the Geneva Bible, the speakers reassure themselves of God's

atonement for, and mercy towards, their collective transgressions (v.3). Some of

Vaughan's contemporaries also encoded this sense of assurance in their verse translations

of Psalm 65. The author of *The Psalms of David, From the New Translation of the Bible*

Turned into Meter describes the Psalmist's sins as purged:

> My misdeeds (Lord) 'gainst me prevaile;
>
> Thy mercies though nere faile:
>
> Who our transgressions from thy sight
>
> Remov'st, and purgest quite. (113, ll.5-8)

In contrast, one hears in Vaughan's speaker a sense of urgency rather than cheerful

assurance. Vaughan, like the author of *The Psalms of David*, initially internalizes and

personalizes sin by transmuting the plural "our" in the biblical text to the singular "my" in

his expression of sinfulness:

> But sinful words and works still spread
>
> And over-run my heart and head;
>
> Transgressions make me foul each day,
>
> O purge them, purge them all away. (300, ll.5-8)

The speaker utters a plea for purgation and does not like the Psalmist reflect on the

cleansing of past sin; in this, he echoes the speakers of Sternhold and Hopkins's metrical

psalms who cry out: "But Lord forgive our great misdeeds, / and purge us from our sin."

There is a greater degree of personal anxiety in Vaughan's speaker than in the biblical

speakers who reflect on the collective sin of the Israelites. So too does Sidney-Herbert in her translation of the same psalm make vividly personal the transgressions of the Israelites, "There [Sion] thou my sinns prevailing to my shame / Dost turne to smoake of sacrificing flame"(147,ll.5-6) though her sense of the incineration of sin is more convincing. Perhaps Vaughan's anxiety and guilt is grounded in a deeper sense of sinfulness. Vaughan does, after all, augment Psalm 65:3 to amplify the description of sin; while the Authorized Version reads "Iniquities prevail against me," Vaughan's speaker recalls the "sinful words and works" that "spread" and "over-run" his "heart and head" rendering him "foul each day" (300, ll.5-7). Sin is seen to infect both his wit and will, his cognition and volition. In typical Calvinist fashion, Vaughan negates the sense of human worthiness in the face of the divine when he modifies Psalm 65:4. The biblical text reads, "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple." In Vaughan's translation of these lines, he suppresses the biblical image of man approaching God (albeit at God's instigation) to enjoy the pleasures of His temple:

> Happy is he! whom thou wilt choose
>
> To serve thee in thy blessed house!
>
> Who in thy holy Temple dwells,:
>
> And filled with joy, thy goodness tells! (300, ll.9-12)

The Psalmist speaks of God's permitting the elect to approach His house and dwell therein, underscoring God's initiative and the human response. Vaughan speaks only of

God's election of those who will "serve" in the Temple.[26] Though he too speaks of the

joy and goodness of the temple in a series of exclamations, such joy is seen within the

context of service rather than satisfaction.[27]

Having identified his sinful nature and longing for divine presence in the Temple, the

speaker of "Psalm 104," like the Psalmist, attempts to define the nature of God, a process

which leads to the politicization of his verse. Radzinowicz argues that in hymns of

praise, the Psalmist, after the initial invocation, "specifies the grounds of praise in God's

nature and action . . . adducing the Psalmist's own experience of God" (151). In Psalm

65, the Hebrew Psalmist experiences God as a figure of order and provision. The

speaker of Vaughan's "Psalm 65," however, experiences God as a monarch. It is the

language of kingship which is injected into the poem's fabric which first suggests to the

reader the presence of a political subtext. In his rendering of the fifth verse Vaughan

engages in semantic substitution: "King of Salvation" (300, l.13) is substituted for the

biblical "God." In his translation of the final verse of Psalm 65, Vaughan engages in

textual extension for the same purpose. In Psalm 65:13, the Psalmist writes: "The

pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout

for joy, they also sing." While Vaughan makes minimal textual subtraction or

substitution in his translation of the thirteenth verse, he extends the text by providing his

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[26] In his paraphrase of Psalm 65:4, Sandys also interfuses the concepts of service and satisfaction: "Thrice happy he of whom Thou mak'st / Thy choice, and to Thy service tak'st; / That may within Thy courts reside. / There with Thy goodness satisfied" (2:181, ll.9-12).

[27] As will be discussed in the final chapter, Vaughan's sense of human inadequacy may reflect a firm belief in human depravity and corruption. In general, however, Vaughan is doctrinally Arminian and tends towards envisioning man actively participating in his own salvation.

own account of the content of nature's joyful hymn: "They shout for joy, and jointly

sing, *Glory to thee eternal King!*" (301, ll.47-48). In their version of the third and

thirteenth verse of Psalm 65, the Coverdale, Geneva and Authorized versions do not

translate the Hebrew אלהים or Greek Θεὸς "King."[28] Neither do we find God

described as king in the metrical versions of Sternhold and Hopkins, Sandys or Sidney-

Herbert. Sandys, however, does envision God in monarchical terms in his translation of

Psalm 65:7: "Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult

of the people." For this verse, Sandys conjures up a military landscape and a monarchical

God who employs his "sceptre" to appease "the tumultuary jars / Of people breathing

blood and wars" (2:181, ll.23-24).

Vaughan's monarchical God, like Sandys's, is similarly associated with the

restoration of order. While Psalm 65:4 reads, "By terrible things in righteousness will

thou answer us, O God of our salvation;" Vaughan writes: King of Salvation! by strange

things / And terrible, thy Justice brings / Man to his duty . . . (300, ll.13-15). Vaughan

merges the language of sovereignty ("King of Salvation") and the language of duty ("man

to his duty") in his translation of verse four. In his work *From Divine Cosmos to*

Sovereign State, Stephen Collins has demonstrated that conservative politicians of

Renaissance England worded their platform with the language of order and duty. "Order"

he writes, "meant fixity, constancy, immutability. Change was the greatest of all

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[28] The Hebrew for king is מלך. The Greek for king is βασιλεύς (*The Interlinear Bible: Hebrew-Greek-English* 477). Though not discussing "Psalm 65" at any length, Rudrum writes that Vaughan's choice "to address God as *King* in translating a psalm, where the original gives no warrant for the word" has "implications" (*The Liberation of the Creatures* 34).

enemies"; when king or subject forgot their duty, the cosmic order was threatened (16,18-

21). Sir Robert Filmer, a proponent of Royalist absolutism during the Civil Wars. wed

the concepts of duty and sovereignty in *Patriarcha* and *The Free-holders Grand Inquest*,

frequently reminding his reader of their duty to the lawful king; In *Patriarcha*, he

concludes that "every subject in particular, by duty and allegiance is bound to give his

best advice to his sovereign when he is thought worthy to have his counsel asked" (87).

He finds a series of precedents for such a blending of concepts in common law. He cites,

for example, in *The Free-holders Grand Inquest*, the following Statute under Henry VII:

> The king our sovereign lord, calling to his remembrance the duty of
>
> allegiance of his subjects of this his realm, and that by reason of the same
>
> they are bound to serve their prince and sovereign lord for the time being
>
> in his wars, for the defence of him and the land against every rebellion,
>
> power and might reared against him, and with him to enter and abide in
>
> service in battle, if case so require. (106)

Though we should be wary of reading a coherent Royalist platform into Vaughan's

adoption of the language of sovereignty and duty into the fourth verse of Psalm 65, one

can hardly ignore the political implications of such language in a description of the

ecclesiastical and natural temples. With the language of monarchy and duty comes a

vision of civil and natural harmony which would be coincident with the Royalist scheme.

I think that Vaughan's attempt to frame this psalm within an apocalyptic context of

the restored Christ might also intimate a longing for royal restoration. That is to say, by

placing "Psalm 65" in a sequence of lyrics that address the eschaton, Vaughan may well

be drawing an analogue between the restored Charles and the restored Christ. That Psalm

65 referred to the restored Christ in His final kingdom was only occasionally hinted at in

early exegesis. Cassiodorus implies that this canticle articulates an international hope of

resurrection, as does Calvin who interprets Psalm 65:2, "O thou that hearest prayer! unto

thee shall all flesh come," as "a prediction of Christ's future kingdom" (*Psalms* 2:453).

In *Silex Scintillans*, "Psalm 65" is inserted between "The Day of Judgement [II]" and

"The Throne," both of which address the second coming and enthronement of Christ.

Framed by two eschatological lyrics, "Psalm 65" is placed within a context of future

orientation. Such a reading is encouraged by Vaughan's use of the future tense in his

translation of the first section of Psalm 65:4. While the biblical text reads "Blessed is the

man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto them, that he may dwell in thy

courts," Vaughan's speaker exclaims, "Happy is he! whom thou wilt choose / To serve

thee in thy blessed house!" (300, ll.9-10). Vaughan's substitution of "whom thou wilt

choose" for "who thou choosest" suggests that dwelling in the Temple is a future rather

than a present occurrence.[29] Such future orientation is linked to enthronement when the

reader completes the last line of "Psalm 65" and continues on to read the title,

introductory epigraph and first lines of "The Throne." We leave "Psalm 65" with the

exclamation: "Glory to thee eternal King" and we begin "The Throne" with a reference to

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[29] The Coverdale Bible reads: "Blessed is the man whom thou chusest and receivest unto thee: he shall dwell in thy Courts"; the Geneva Bible reads: "Blessed is he, whom thou chusest and causest to come to thee: he shall dwell in thy courts"; the author of *The Psalms of David, From The New Translation of the Bible turned into Meter* (London, 1654) reads: Blest is the man Thou do'st admit / Within Thy Courts to sit" (113, v.4); Sternhold and Hopkins version of the Psalter reads: "The man is blest whom thou dost chuse / within thy courts to dwell" (33, v.4); Sandys writes: "Thrice happy he of whom Thou mak'st / Thy choice, and to Thy service tak'st; / That may within Thy courts reside"(2:181, ll.9-11); Sidney-Herbert writes, "O he of blisse is not deceaved, / Whom, chosen, thou unto thee takest: / And whom, into thy court received . . ." (147, ll.7-8).

Revelation 20:11, a verse which speaks of the ceremony of enthronement: "And I saw a

great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled

away; and there was found no place for them." Here is an image of the idealized restored

monarch:

> When with these eyes closed now by thee,
>
> But then restored,
>
> The great and white throne I shall see
>
> Of my dread Lord: (301, II.1-4)

We see in "Psalm 65" and the lyrics framing that poem an attempt to blend the language

of monarchy, duty, enthronement and restoration. Though on the surface Vaughan is

conspicuously speaking of the restoration of Christ rather than Charles II, the

enthronement of Christ and of the Stuart monarch were not always seen as distinct

entities. We find in Thomas Vaughan's Latin lyric on "Charles I, King of England" a

clear association between, almost a merging of, the throne of Charles I and the throne of

God; in describing Charles, Thomas writes: "Behold, the magnet of the gods, and the

throne of God who has been drawn down below the sun" (*Works* 573,749). In pointing to

this association, I do not argue that Henry Vaughan has written "Psalm 65" and "The

Throne" as coded lyrics to communicate a desire for the restoration of the monarchy;

Vaughan's allusion to Revelation 20:11 in the epigraph to "The Throne" and the

substance of that lyric clearly indicate that Vaughan speaks of the restored Christ. What I

do suggest, however, is that Vaughan imports into "Psalm 65" the language of

sovereignty and duty and surrounds that psalm with the vocabulary of enthronement and

restoration because his political affiliations make such discourse inviting. Such

vocabularies complement the Royalist vision of dutiful man within a harmonious, ordered

cosmos.

"No one can escape the substance of his time any more than he can jump out of his

skin," wrote Georg Hegel, a conclusion which lead him to surmise that translations and

commentaries "do not so much acquaint us with content of scripture as with the mode of

thought of their age" (qtd. in Bruns 151). This would appear to be true also of

paraphrase, for we have seen in Vaughan's metrical renderings of Psalms 65, 104 and 121

the very historicity of which Hegel speaks. Though sacramental imitation may lead the

writer away from artistic discovery in his or her effort to reproduce a "great Original," we

read in Vaughan's paraphrases the philosophy and politics of the culture in which he

writes. The Psalmist's words are refracted through the prism of Vaughan's life context,

for the biblical pretext can be elucidated only within, as Gerald L. Bruns puts it, "the

conceptual order (or, say the spirit) of the one who interprets" (151). The vocabularies of

secrecy and hiddenness, veiled divinity and universal sentience, military invasion and

buried resistance, duty and sovereignty, and finally order restored encode in these

translations the theology, philosophy and politics of the poet whose identity is embedded

in the culture of Royalist defeat in interregnum England. In reading "Psalm 65," "Psalm

104" and "Psalm 121" it is inappropriate to assert that Vaughan transparently pens

Royalist resistance. As Potter has demonstrated, "Vaughan's parables . . . do not always

make clear which is the plain text and which the coded one" because he writes in an age

in which "a general point, biblical reference or an allusion to contemporary events" is

often indistinguishable.[30]   Nevertheless, we should note the political implications of

Vaughan's textual modifications, particularly when these may be read as a voice resistant

to the ideological state apparatus of the emerging Parliamentarian culture.

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[30] Potter points to Vaughan's "common theme of withdrawal from an uncongenial world into solitude and darkness" and asks us to consider whether for the Silurist the world is "a hostile place simply because it *is* the world, or because its dominant political or religious trends are uncongenial to the writer?" (133).

Chapter 4

"Glorious Assimilations":

The Poetics and Politics of Material Intertextuality

A Hundreth sundrie Flowres

bounde up in one small Poesie.

-George Gascoigne, "Title"

I have examined in the previous chapter Vaughan's interpretive paraphrase of self-contained scriptural passages, an imitative practice by which he "translates" a single biblical model to invest it with new philosophical and political meanings. Vaughan speaks, as it were, alongside the model to achieve a poetic voice, for in paraphrasing Psalms 65, 104 and 121, he does not wish to fully engage in transformative imitation. Nevertheless, I have attempted to demonstrate that such sacramental imitation demands that the pre-text be filtered through the conceptual order of Vaughan who steeps it in the thought and politics of his age.

The intersections of the biblical and poetic in the majority of Vaughan's sacred hymns and private ejaculations, however, occur most frequently on the level of word, phrase or verse. Vaughan rarely repeats in his lyrics biblical signs *en masse* as he does in his imitation of the psalms. An eclectic imitator, Vaughan gathers from Scripture and other texts fragments which can be absorbed into his verse, for it is through the deployment of "old voices" that Vaughan most often constitutes his poetic voice. Vaughan has, as Potter writes of the Royalist Samuel Sheppard, a "penchant for

experiencing life in the words of other people" (124). Calhoun has argued that, for

Vaughan, "the inner man, that living spirit, is a synthesis of near and remote *books* —

those places where spirit is communicated" and that in *Silex Scintillans*, "their sanctified

fragments" are "woven together like talismans" to "create the voice and identity of the

inner man at prayer" (*Henry Vaughan* 73). To weave his poetic voice into existence

through eclectic imitation is hardly unique on Vaughan's part, for the humanist practice

of gathering and framing texts to constitute and authorize the self was commonplace, as

discussed in the Introduction.[1] Vaughan's art of assemblage is consistent with early-

modern theories of reading and writing, for renaissance pedagogues taught that

knowledge was attainable through fusing fragments of crucial cultural texts. Such

eclectic imitation was known in poetics as *contaminatio*.

Though George Herbert's art is also eclectic inasmuch as he assimilates fragments

from a series of biblical books, the Prayer Book and so forth, it is Vaughan's disposition

of biblical and other textual excerpts rather than his eclecticism *per se* that renders his

intertextual practice distinct from Herbert's. Certainly, Vaughan shares Herbert's

predilection for culling scriptural fragments to produce holy verse, and like Herbert he

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[1] See my summation of Crane's research in the Introduction. Vaughan's collation of fragments of
Scripture in his verse was not only influenced by early-modern pedagogical practices and theories of the
production of knowledge; it was also inspired by contemporary methods of biblical exegesis. In popular
seventeenth-century religious manuals, readers were advised to collate scriptural texts to comprehend both
the letter and the spirit of the Word. In *Clavis Bibliorum* (1648), Roberts advises: "*Learne that excellent
Art of explaining and understanding the Scriptures, by the Scriptures*" for "the generality of the Scriptures
is concatenated or linked together part with part like a golden chaine, intwisted or woven together like a
curious *silken web*, one thing so depending upon another, as that they mutually help to the interpreting of
one another" (49,53). George Herbert gives similar instruction in *The Country Parson*:

> The third means [to understand Scripture] is a diligent collation of Scripture with
> Scripture. For all the truth being consonant to itself, and all being penned by one and the
> self-same Spirit, it cannot be but that an industrious and judicious comparing of place
> with place must be a singular help for the right understanding of the Scriptures (200).

transforms to varying degrees his borrowings to accommodate his own conceptual reality, "giving them a new dress that quite alters their aspect" (Holmes 13). However, Vaughan's allusive strategies are more varied and enigmatic than those of his literary master. In Herbert's poetry, the biblical voice and poetic voice are merged to create a seamless text: poetic word and biblical Word are largely indistinguishable. Herbert is far more inclined to weave Scripture loosely into his lyrics than to cite biblical passages directly. The same cannot be said of Vaughan who frequently engages in direct quotation through an introductory or terminal epigraph.[2] Further, in the body of his verse, Vaughan ensures that the reader does not confuse his poetic voice and that of the borrowed text by often (though not consistently) italicizing words and phrases not his own.[3] Though Vaughan does blend borrowed voices into the new linguistic totality of his lyric, he is often content to expose the crevices between texts.[4] Vaughan, therefore, combats monologic or single-voiced poetry in his desire to shape his verse from the "preformed linguistic property" or "foreign bodies" of other authors (Meyer 6).

Vaughan's choice to fashion his poetic voice through others' words has formal and political implications. The allusive texture of many of his poems creates the potential

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[2] In *The Temple*, there are only four instances in which a biblical passage or reference is cited in the title or opening of his poem. In "Coloss. 3.3" Herbert partially quotes Colossians 3:3 at the head of the lyric: "Our life is hid with Christ in God." Note that he excludes the initial phrase in this verse "For ye are dead." In "Ephes. 4.30," he again cites part of the biblical verse in the subtitle: *"Grieve not the Holy Spirit, &c."* In "The Odour, 2.Cor.2" and "The Pearl. *Matth.*13.," his titular allusions are not followed by a quotation of the passages.

[3] A distinction must be made, however, between the word(s) italicized because they are borrowed, and those italicized because Vaughan wishes to draw the reader's attention to them.

[4] Vaughan's allusions to other works range from the cryptic to the conspicuous.

for centrifugality in many of his lyrics, and as such they demand a nonlinear reading.[5] To "activate" borrowings, readers must enter other linguistic and cultural contexts and grapple with the possible intertextual links or patterns between the quoted and quoting texts (Hebel 140). Because, as Plett has said, the more quotations or allusions present in a text the more polyphonic the textual dialogue, Vaughan's lyrics often demand the most active of readers to reconcile this dialogue into a poetic unity (6). Though this is also the case for readers of Herbert's lyrics, the conspicuous allusiveness of *Silex Scintillans* generates poems far more associative or structurally loose than those found in *The Temple*, a trait both admired and censured by students of Vaughan.

Such a distinction between Vaughan's and Herbert's disposition of Scripture in their verse has been noted most recently by Martz, who writes:

> one is struck by the prominence of biblical texts in Vaughan's poetry —
> far more prominent than in the poetry of his beloved 'saint and seer,'
> George Herbert. . . .Herbert is less reliant upon the Bible as an overt text
> for meditation. Of course he echoes the Bible constantly, but these
> citations seldom call attention to themselves; (*From Renaissance to
> Baroque* 233)

Martz identifies the political environment in which Vaughan writes as the source of this difference. While the Bible, according to Martz, works within an ecclesiastical fabric in *The Temple*, such a fabric has become unraveled for Vaughan who must, for comfort, turn

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[5] Hebel argues that such textual allusions disrupt the "syntagmatic flow" of the text "and expose the reader to the realm of predominantly, if not purely, associative vertical context systems" (138)

with "special concentration to the Bible, often quoting sizable verses of Scripture at the

beginning or end of a poem, and using text after text as topic for his meditation . . ."

(234). Stefen Morawski's research on quotation as a trope suggests the validity of

Martz's reading, for he has found that "art has recourse to quotation in particular historic-

cultural cases: "Quotations accumulate in art when the boundaries between it and other

forms of social consciousness become muddied. This may be a period of socio-political

revolution" (704).[6] Writing shortly after the Civil War, Vaughan may form his verse

from a series of "old voices," often recited verbatim, to root his poetic identity and his

political allegiance in a long biblical, poetic and philosophic tradition. In his frequent,

often transparent, borrowings, Vaughan attempts to maintain some measure of cultural

continuity in radically discontinuous times. He exalts the past through duplication,

thereby rejecting the "innovation" of his political enemies (Morawski 692).

And yet, paradoxically, Vaughan is at his most singular, and often most

rhetorically powerful, when he absorbs into his voice echoes of his predecessors.

Vaughan's preoccupation with divine immanence in nature, communicated in the

language of secrecy and hiddenness; his perception of a sentient natural world; his

constitution of God in sensual, elemental, primal language; his alchemical impression of

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[6] Morawski further suggests that quotations accumulate during periods of "violent esthetic crisis." Though this is not relevant to Vaughan's poetry, it can be applied to the modernist writings of, say, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Marianne Moore. Alter appears to agree with Morawski when he notes in *The Pleasures of Reading in an Ideological Age*, "that the density of allusion increases noticeably in certain schools and eras, for reasons that variously have to do with ideology, with assumptions about literary convention, with cultural engagement in the past" (15). It is also possible that Vaughan is drawn to duplicate a pre-text because of his preoccupation with correspondence and sympathy between the terrestrial and celestial worlds. This habit of thought might well lead him to search for correspondences between texts.

spiritual transformation; his mystical longing to participate in a Cosmic Christ who is in

all, and yet often lies beyond his reach; his nostalgic and apocalyptic groanings — these

distinctly Vaughanian perceptions of reality are constituted through his dialogue with, and

absorption of, past voices. What T.S. Eliot has said of many poets, therefore, is also true

of Vaughan, "the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets,

his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously" (*Selected Prose* 38).[7]

In this chapter, I wish to demonstrate that Vaughan constitutes his poetic voice

through the disposition of heterogenous textual fragments in his poetry. I hope to

demonstrate that Vaughan's compositional practice produces highly dialogic lyrics which

compel the reader to participate more actively in the production of meaning.[8] I wish to

interweave throughout this discussion the politics of Vaughan's art of assemblage,

particularly his obsession with non-transformative imitation or quotation. Because the

object of this study is scriptural intersections in *Silex Scintillans*, however, this chapter

must be divided into two parts if I am to fully explore the complexity of Vaughan's poetic

voice. In the first part, I shall examine the formal and political implications of Vaughan's

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[7] Paradoxically, A.J. Smith correctly concludes that though Vaughan speaks through other voices, "one of the idiosyncrasies of *Silex Scintillans* is that it conveys no effective sense of community with living men at all, or of a communion with that regenerate few" ("Appraising the World" 310).

[8] Though Vaughan will be seen to share with the modernists a sensibility for assembling textual fragments in the composition of his poetry, his is not the verbal collage of say, Eliot. While the modernists overtly associate "fragments not explicitly connected," Vaughan believes his verbal fragments are inherently related (Leefmans, 183). For Vaughan, the poet must seek texts to find "truth(s)" and then constitute a poetic voice through the disposition, collation and transformation of these truthful fragments. Further, the verbal college of the modernists de-centers the poem, while in Vaughan's poems the lyric subject lies at the center of the voices interwoven in his verse. While Vaughan asserts the experience of the "I," the modernist Charles Olson demands that we "destroy the *I* in literature: that is, all psychology" to combat "the lyrical interference of the ego," the "obsessive *I*" (qtd. in Perloff, 26,43). Vaughan's poetics, as I will suggest later on, is closer to montage which aims, according to Jean-Jacques Thomas, "at the integration of the diverse combinatory constituents and, as such, provides unity" (85).

disposition of fragments from a single pre-text — the Bible — in his verse. In the

second part, I shall open up the discussion to the intersection of a series of pre-texts in

Silex Scintillans, for it is through the collation and transformation of multiple textual

fragments that Vaughan can assert his unique conception of the human and natural

worlds.

I.   **The Disposition of Biblical Fragments in *Silex Scintillans***

In creating his poetic form and voice, Vaughan often elects to "*precisely* duplicate

the verbal patterns of the original source" and to set these words apart through "the

graphic convention of assigning words elsewhere" (Diepeveen 2; Goldberg 111). It is

imperative, therefore, when analyzing the disposition of biblical signs in *Silex Scintillans*,

to distinguish between quotations and allusions. Elizabeth Gregory and Leonard

Diepeveen have recently make a convincing case for distinguishing between exact verbal

reproduction and loose borrowing. Quotation, the verbatim repetition of signs from

another textual world, according to Diepeveen, creates profound disruption in a work.

The quotation is not assimilated into an allusive text; it is a self-contained "alien texture"

that refuses integration and fights poetic unity" (4-5,95). Gregory argues that this

distinction bears directly on questions of submission and authority. While allusions

which alter the borrowing suggest "the possibility of reconstitution and redistribution of

authority," the quotation tends to locate authority in the borrowed text. This is more true

of biblical quotation, as the Bible was not merely an authorized text in the seventeenth

century, but the locus of "universal propositions" and "eternal truth" (8). Works that

engage in biblical quotation, Gregory suggests, "demonstrate an attitude of

submissiveness" which signal an author's "intention of internal, spiritual obedience

through their refusal to exercise external, linguistic willfulness"(8). And yet in this

moment of submission, poets paradoxically consecrate their own work, as the quotation is

a means to achieve the "unction of a(nother) prestigious filiation" (Genette *Paratexts*

161).

Vaughan's predilection for quotation or non-transformative imitation, is

particularly apparent in those poems which begin or conclude with a biblical epigraph.[9]

These poems open or close with what Bakhtin describes as "the pious and inert quotation

that is isolated and set off like an icon" (*From the Prehistory* 146). Lewalski has argued

that in such poems Vaughan desires that "scripture speak directly in its own terms

(*Protestant Poetics* 229). In those lyrics framed by a biblical epigraph, Vaughan adopts

an emblematic poetic form. Like the emblems of Francis Quarles, composed of picture.

biblical text, poem, patristic quotation, and verse epigram, many of Vaughan's lyrics are

composed of an "assemblage or *bricolage* of elements of varying authority" and the

reader must hear, as it were, a conversation between the elements, if he or she is to glean

the message of the poem (Bath 213). In such poems, Vaughan appears less concerned to

produce a single meditative voice than to generate "a conversation or dialogue of voices,"

though unequal in authority (Bath 212). While an integrated allusion creates the illusion

of a single speaker (the "I"), the biblical headnote or coda in these lyrics serves to

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[9] I accept here Genette's definition of an epigraph "as a quotation placed *en exergue* [in the exergue], generally at the head of a work or a section of a work." Though epigraphs generally refer to those inscriptions at the head of a work, Genette differentiates between introductory epigraphs and terminal epigraphs (those placed at the end of a text), a distinction relevant to *Silex Scintillans* (*Paratexts* 144-60).

distinguish between voices — that of the Holy Spirit and that of the poet. This demarcation serves to emphasize the gap between the pre-text and the lyric, a gap which reflects a hierarchical relationship between the original text and a derivative one. That is, the spatial architecture of these lyrics serves to underscore the gap in authority between the two works.

No doubt, Vaughan wishes to retain the authority of the biblical voice in these poems — to let Scripture speak for itself — while asserting the derivation of his voice from the Word. He desires, that is, to thematize his indebtedness to Sacred Writ. Nevertheless, despite the posture of submission, his voice is not subsumed in the biblical voice in these poems; for the effect of the poetic form, as Lewalski suggests, is "a medley of voices" which the reader must navigate to establish the poem's meaning (*Protestant Poetics* 247). What Sergei Eisenstein has written of montage can be applied to these poems: "when any separate objects are placed before us side by side" they "*inevitably combine into a new concept, a new quality*" (4). Therefore, though the biblical text retains its form, it is indirectly transformed by Vaughan, as is apparent when we examine individual lyrics with either a headnote or coda.

A.   **Non-Transformative Imitation: Epigraphic Quotation**

1.   Biblical Headnote

The intertextual relation between the biblical headnote and the poem that follows is much the same as the relation between the Word and scriptural commentary, homiletic

exposition or meditative reflection.[10] The poem depends on the prior hieratic text which

it "glosses." The biblical headnote establishes a particular mental climate through

which the reader processes the poem. Such poems in *Silex Scintillans* have been correctly

identified as meditations by both Martz and Lewalski, who persuasively demonstrate that

Vaughan resists the systematic meditative practice of Ignatius or Sales.[11] Pettet suggests

that Vaughan's meditations on biblical texts might be suitably cast "intent cogitations," a

phrase current in the seventeenth century. Devotional manuals admonished readers to

cogitate on, or converse with the Word, in order to engraft it on the heart " to make it

thine own" (Ussher 15-16). Vaughan's meditations of biblical texts testify to a spiritual

encounter with the Word, for the poetic voice is presented as a reading subject who lays

his heart bare to Scripture.

Vaughan, like most Protestant writers in early-modern England, rejected a strict

pattern for such cogitations. In *Spare-Minutes; or, Resolved Meditations and*

Premeditated Resolutions (1634), Arthur Warwick embraces a loose, associative view of

meditation, though he insists on the eventual application of meditative thought:

"Meditation is a busy search in the store-house of fantasy for some ideas of matters, to be

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[10] Lewalski argues that for early-modern Protestants, the meditation, sermon, and brief familiar essay were closely related forms (150-52). Consider, for example, Donne's description of his sermons: "For, as a hearty entertainer offers to others, the meat which he loves best himself, so doe I oftnest present to Gods people, in these Congregations, the meditations which I feed upon at home . . . " (*Sermons* 2:49). In a sermon "Preached upon Candlemas Day," Donne also writes, "yet if thou remember that which concerned thy sin, and thy soul, if thou meditate upon that, apply that, thou hast brought away all the Sermon, all that was intended by the Holy Ghost to be preached to thee" (*Sermons* 7:329).

[11] On this point, Calhoun notes that while "formal meditation is systematic and rigorous; Vaughan is not . . ." (*Poetics* 54).

cast in the molds of resolution into some forms of words or actions" (141).[12] While

structural concerns are of little import in Protestant meditative manuals, the didactic or

instructional value lies at their core, hence Edmund Calamy's reminder in *The Art of*

Divine Meditation (1680), "Be sure to join application with your contemplation" (n.p.),

and Jeremy Taylor's conclusion "that meditation is an act of the understanding put to

right use" (*Whole Works* 2:131).

As a Protestant poet, Vaughan does not adhere to a uniform method in

constituting his voice and vision in response to a biblical voice. Vaughan's meditations

on biblical texts might be loosely categorized ratiocinative or associative.[13] In the former,

the reader can easily detect a relationship between the biblical voice and the poetic voice.

There is a logical or linear relation between the voice of the epigraph and that of the

poem. In the latter, the relation between the epigraph and poem is, at times, tenuous and

the speaker appears to meander from the subject introduced in the biblical headnote. In

either case, the speaker "converses" with the biblical text as he interprets, transforms and

applies it to himself, and this emphasis on application reflects the broader cultural

concern with the tropological sense of Scripture – that which pertains to moral conduct.[14]

"And do they so?" is perhaps the most ratiocinative of Vaughan's biblical

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[12]Likewise, in *The Art of Divine Meditation* (1633), Bishop Joseph Hall writes: "I desire not to bind every man to the same uniform proceeding in this part" (88). Though he offers his "subtle scale of meditation" to the reader, he accepts any other method which works "in our hearts so deep an apprehension of the matter meditated as it may duly stir the affections" (87-89).

[13] I have intentionally avoided a more precise terminology as too rigid a system of classification would distort the fluidity of Vaughan's meditations on biblical passages.

[14] It should be noted that the biblical text is not, however, always applied to the self. It is not infrequently directed to the violent, artful, worldly other.

cogitations. It is no surprise that Vaughan selects Romans 8:19 to meditate upon, as it

offers the reader a vision of sentient creation attending the Creator, a favorite theme of

Vaughan's: "For the creatures, watching with lifted head, wait for the revelation of the

sons of God." The biblical headnote is taken from Beza's Latin translation: *Etenim res*

creatae exerto capite observantes expectant revelationem Filiorum Dei.[15] In the opening

lines of the poem, Scripture is affirmed and offered as proof of the sentience of non-

human creation:

> And do they so? Have they a sense
>
> Of ought but influence?
>
> Can they their heads lift, and expect,
>
> And groan too? Why the elect
>
> Can do no more: my volumes said
>
> They were all dull and dead,
>
> They judged them senseless, and their state
>
> Wholly inanimate.
>
> Go, go; seal up thy looks,
>
> And burn thy books. (188, II.1-10)

Conversing with the Word through a series of rhetorical questions, the speaker

challenges the Cartesian conception of the "wholly inanimate" mechanical creature. An

opposition is established between Scripture and other "books" as a source of theological

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[15] This is the only headnote presented in Latin, the language suitable for scholarship, and such a choice is probably made because the poem begins on a philosophical note and because Vaughan wishes to challenge the view of Beza.

truth, and the books are found wanting, "their doctrine chaff and windy fits" ("The

Agreement" 297, 1.26). *Sola Scriptura* is a sufficient authority for doctrine, necessitating

the conflagration of his philosophic "volumes" which misread nature. The speaker, then,

establishes the authority of the Word, submits to it, and explores its allegorical

(doctrinal) sense.

The speaker soon leaves philosophical debate to engage in wistful self-reflection:

> I would I were a stone, or tree,
>
> Or flower by pedigree,
>
> Or some poor high-way herb, or spring
>
> To flow, or bird to sing!
>
> Then should I (tied to one sure state,)
>
> All day expect my date; (188, 11.11-16)

Here we see a clear application of the biblical text to the self by way of comparison: since

non-human creation (unlike humans) expects its redemption in Christ, the speaker wishes

he were stripped of his humanity. Here the speaker finds himself interpreted by Romans

8:19, yet his application of this text is unusual. Certainly, proponents of meditation had

long argued that nature offered spiritual lessons, and that the conduct of the creatures

should be imitated, a sentiment echoed by Vaughan in "The Tempest": [16]

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[16] In *Meditations of Instruction* (1616), for example, Francis Rous argues that,
> the will of God is a straight and fixed line, to which all things created by the same will
> should so fit and fashion themselves that they should not bow from it in any degree. This
> do the baser things, steadfastly following the imprinted light and law of their first
> creation. . . .What now remains, but that as this based lord of creatures hath been checked
> and reproved by the creatures his vassals, so he should also be instructed by them (69)

In *A Commentary on the Most Divine Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans*, Thomas Wilson inquires in his
annotations on Romans 8:19, "What other doctrine will arise from this 19. verse?," and concludes: "since

O that man could do so! That he would hear

The world read to him! All the vast expense

In the creation shed, and slaved to sense

Makes up but lectures for his eye, and ear. (220, ll.17-20)

However, in "And do they so?," the speaker does not aspire to emulate the creatures; he

yearns to *be* a creature ("I would I were . . ."), an usual request, though typical of

Vaughan. The speaker's desire is founded on the doctrine that all non-human creatures

have some type of faculty beyond "influence" and are capable of constancy,

characteristics which permit devout attendance on God.

This doctrine of the creatures is neither expressly stated in Romans 8:19 nor is it

present in most commentaries on the verse.[17] Georgia B. Christopher describes the

speaker's application of the creatures to the self in "And do they so?" as Calvinist; she

finds that Vaughan echoes Calvin's dictum that we should "imitate the dead elements"

(*Institutes* 2:989). I take issue with this reading, for surely the point of "And do they so?

is that the elements are not dead, and are endowed with some type of perception in the

loosest sense. The poetic voice, therefore, generates an implicit exegesis of Romans

8:19 not coincident with "orthodox" readings of the text. as Rudrum has explored at

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the creatures do greedily and continually desire the glory of God's sons, the sons themselves ought much more fervently to desire it (288). As Donne remarked in a sermon, "There is not so poore a creature but may be thy glasse to see God in" (*Sermons* 8:224).

[17] Though Wilson, for example, acknowledges that the creatures naturally desire "that perfection and most glorious estate in which the creature was at first created," he interprets this verse as an example of *prosopopeia*. Paul, he believes, "putteth upon the creatures the person of one who most desirously expecteth and looketh." Rous shares Vaughan's belief in part, for he argues that "brute beasts have but a light determined and certain," though he finds that "lifeless things have no light of reason, but an orderly influence and moving power fixed into them" (69).

length in his article on the liberation of the creatures. Such a vision of nature permits Vaughan to establish a radical antithesis between humanity and non-human creation in this poem and in many others. In so doing, he directly contradicts the biblical context of the headnote, for Paul finds similarity rather than difference between the non-human and human: "And not only they, ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Given Vaughan's predilection for the doctrine of contraries and his profound sense of human displacement in the cosmos, it is no surprise that he transforms the biblical text to conform to his experience of humanity, even when that experience does not accord with the biblical passage he engages.[18]

Vaughan links exegesis with experience in the third stanza of the lyric. The speaker recalls those times when he tarried with God and soon lost interest in his relation with the divine, and then observed the "other creatures" enjoying loving and steady intercourse with their creator:

> Sometimes I sit with thee, and tarry
>
> An hour, or so, then vary.
>
> Thy other creatures in this scene
>
> Thee only aim, and mean; (189, ll.21-24)

His meditation on nature reveals to the speaker his personal instability, which is contrasted with the observed consistency of the creatures who "only aim, and mean"

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[18] That is to say, even when the quoted text's contextual function in the original text is different than its function in the new text.

(l.24). Vaughan confirms the validity of the scriptural passage through natural experience, thereby combining textual and experiential epistemologies — the Word and Self. However, the speaker's experience is not defined with the discourse of empiricism. He does not dissect nature to unearth empirical principles, but attends upon nature to discover the reality of scriptural truth.[19] Simmonds argues that nature and Scripture complement and "mutually illuminate each other" in *Silex Scintillans*, and indeed in the third stanza of "And do they so?," Scripture is read in the light of nature (*Masques* 140).[20]

Having discovered human mutability through Scripture and nature, the speaker in the poem's final stanza adopts the posture of a penitent supplicant:

> O let me not do less! shall they
>
> Watch, while I sleep, or play?
>
> Shall I thy mercies still abuse
>
> With fancies, friends, or news? (189, ll.31-34)

The speaker's previous reflection has caused him to discover the moral or tropological sense of Romans 8:19; that is, the speaker's commerce with Scripture and nature teaches him to watch expectantly.[21] Though the speaker intends to apply the moral, he discerns he

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[19] In his letter to John Aubrey dated June 28, 1680, Vaughan contrasts "attendance upon" and "speculations into" nature in order to define his interaction with nature: "If in my attendance upon (rather than speculations into) Nature, I can meet with any thing that may deserve the notice of that learned & Honourable Societie: I shall humblie present you with it, & leave it wholie to your Censure and disposal" (692).

[20] Of "And do they so?," Christopher writes, "[it] is a poem specifically about reading nature with the spectacles of Scripture" (182). We could, however, easily reverse the terms and posit that Vaughan reads Scripture through the spectacles of nature.

[21] This biblical lesson is cherished by Vaughan, for the dictum "watch and pray" is repeated throughout *Silex Scintillans* through a series of allusions to 1 Peter 4:7, "Now the end of all things is at hand, be you therefore sober, and watching in prayer"; Mark 13:35, "Watch you therefore, for you know

cannot do so without divine grace, figured in the concluding lines as rain: "O brook it

not! why wilt thou stop/After whole showers one drop?" (189, ll.37-38). Obedience

hinges on divine grace, the means to the full application of the biblical text to the self.

We see in "And do they so?" a linear relation between voice and poetic voice. The

speaker reiterates and endorses the biblical text, extrapolates a doctrine from the text (the

allegorical sense), locates the truth of the doctrine in his experience of the natural world

thereby exposing human inadequacy, unveils a "moral" in the text (the tropological sense)

through which he can experience abundance, and entreats God to cleanse and transform

him through the living waters. In the process, the biblical text which frames the lyric is

uniquely interpreted and transformed, just as the speaker is transformed through his

cogitation on the verse. For as Bruns explains, "interpretation is an event that moves in

two directions. It is not possible to interpret a text without being interpreted by it in turn"

(156). An exchange, therefore, occurs between the biblical and poetic voices, the living

Word and the poetic word, and the reader discovers meaning in the "dialogue" or the

"intertext."[22]

While in "And do they so?," Vaughan establishes a transparent relation between the

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not when the master of the house cometh . . ."; Matthew 26:41, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation . . ."; and Luke 21:36, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be counted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." 1 Peter 4.7 serves as the biblical coda to "Day of Judgement [I]" and Mark 13:35 is the biblical coda of "The Lamp." In "Rules and Lesson," the speaker admonishes the reader to "*watch, and pray*" (196, l.140), in "Cock-Crowing" he calls to mind the need "to watch for thy appearing hour" (251, l.16), in "Providence" he considers the birds and herbs which "watch all night for mists or showers, / Then drink and praise thy bounteousness" (271, ll.29-30), in "The Seed Growing Secretly," he admonishes himself to "keep clean, bear fruit, earn life and watch / Till the white winged Reapers come" (278, ll. 47-48), and in "The Night" he reflects on the trees and herbs which "watch and peep" while the "*Jews* did sleep" (290, ll.23-24).

[22] The "intertext" is the "meaning(s)" which lies *between* two or more texts; as Harold Bloom phrases it, "there are *no* texts, but only relationships *between* texts" (3).

biblical and poetic voices, there are associative meditations in *Silex Scintillans* in which it is more difficult to decipher the relation between the poem and the passage meditated upon. Associative meditations are more typical of Vaughan, who is inclined to respond to the biblical voice with greater licence and with less "reason" than he does in "And do they so?" Unlike Herrick who contracts the biblical voice into proverbial epigrams, Vaughan generally dilates the Word through an associative expansion of theme and imagery.

Consider "Jesus Weeping (II)," Vaughan's meditation on John 11:35. It is well known that John 11:35, "Jesus Wept," is the shortest verse in the Bible and yet Vaughan manages to augment the text substantially by reflecting on the tears of the historical Jesus. The speaker initially engages with the text through a series of questions. a technique we saw employed in "And do they so?":[23]

> My dear, Almighty Lord! why dost thou weep?
>
>> Why dost thou groan and groan again,
>>
>>> And with such deep,
>>
>> Repeated sighs thy kind heart pain,
>>
>> Since the same sacred breath which thus
>>
>>> Doth mourn for us,
>>
>> Can make man's dead and scattered bones

---

[23] Such a conversation with Scripture through questions is also present in "Jesus Weeping [I]," "The Dwelling Place," and "Isaac's Marriage."

Unite, and raise up all that died, at once? (268-69, ll.1-8)[24]

The dramatic engagement of the speaker in these lines is with the psychology of

Jesus, made manifest in tears and groans. He responds to these images in a repetitive,

exclamatory manner which borders, according to Post, on the "histrionic" (*Henry*

Vaughan 131):

> O holy groans! groans of the Dove!
>
> O healing tears! the tears of love!
>
> Dew of the dead! which makes dust move
>
> And spring, how is't that you so sadly grieve,
>
> Who can relieve? (269, ll.9-13)

Vaughan relies in these lines not only on the image of Jesus presented in John 11:35, but

borrows freely the language of John 11:33: "When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and

the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled."

Vaughan writes these lines with a baroque effusiveness characteristic of Crashaw.[25]

Though excessive, this outburst serves a dramatic function: it demonstrates the requisite

stirring of the speaker's affections. The speaker's dialogue with the biblical voice has

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[24]These questions function within the broader Ignatian meditative practice of "composition of place" for the speaker addresses Jesus as if he were at the tomb of Lazarus. Ignatius argued that to meditate one must create "a mental image of the place" (*composition of place*) and "imagine Christ our Lord before you" in order to "speak with him" (*colloquy*) (54-55). However, Vaughan does not follow Ignatius's directive to summon to mind the visible surroundings of Christ, for we are provided with no details of the landscape of Bethany or the cave in which Lazarus lay. In "Jesus Weeping [I]," Vaughan creates a much more vivid mental picture of Jerusalem.

[25] Compare ll.9-13 in "Jesus Weeping (II)" to lines from Crashaw's *The Weeper*: "O cheeks! Beds of chaste loves / By your own showers seasonably dashed. / Eyes! Nests of milky doves / In your own wells decently washed" (*Poems* 311).

produced fervent "rumination," that phase of meditation in which our thoughts "work

upon the affections" (J. Hall 88).

It is the tears of Jesus, the dew which brings forth life from dust, that stir the

speaker's emotions.[26]   John 11:35 is selected by Vaughan, as is Luke 19:41 in "Jesus

Weeping (I)." to apply a metaphor central to his volume: the grace of Jesus, variously

manifested as dew, fountain, rain or river. Donald Dickson argues that "the most

prominent metaphor for grace in *Silex* involves the dew-cycle" (139). The weeping of

Jesus, the "dew of the dead," is for Vaughan not a sign of his humanity, as it is for

Donne.[27] It is a symbol of divine grace bestowed upon man. Such an exegesis of the

tears of Jesus in John 11:35 has origins in the Old Testament where dew often symbolizes

divine blessing, divine favor or promised prosperity (Gen 27:28; Hos. 14:5; Zech. 8:12).

Such Old Testament passages in which God is figured as "dew" are imported by

Vaughan into John 11:35 to expand the image of Jesus's grief into a broader portrait of

divine grace and restorative powers. Earlier, the speaker identifies Jesus with Jehovah

when he refers to the dry bones of Ezekiel in the first stanza of the poem: "Since the same

sacred breath . . . can make man's dead and scattered bones / Unite, and raise up all that

died, at once" (268-69, ll.5,7-8). Jesus is associated not only with Jehovah; he is also

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[26] Vaughan's interpretation of the tears of the historical Jesus as living water is shared by Taylor who writes of John 11:35: "Jesus suffered the passions of piety and humanity, and wept, distilling that precious liquor into the grave of Lazarus; watering the dead plant, that it might spring into a new life, and raise his head above the ground" (*Whole Works* 2:599).

[27] Of John 11:35, Donne writes, "Christ made it an argument of his being man, to weepe, for though the lineaments of mans bodie, eyes and eares, hands and feet, be ascribed to God in the Scriptures, though the affections of mans mind be ascribed to him, (even sorrow, nay Repentance it selfe, is attributed to God) I doe not remember that ever God is said to have wept" (*Sermons* 4:331).

clearly aligned with the Spirit in an allusion to Romans 8:26 ("the Spirit itself maketh

intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered") when he describes Jesus's

groaning as "Groans of the Dove!" (269, 1.9). The speaker minimizes the humanity of

Jesus by describing him in terms of God the Father and the Holy Spirit, just as he does in

"Jesus Weeping (I)" when he uses the terms God and Jesus interchangeably: "Art

senseless still? O canst thou sleep / When God himself for thee doth weep!" (267, 11.3-4).

Jesus weeping, for the speaker, is transformed by way of a natural metaphor into the grace

of God. As is typical of Vaughan's lyrics, the speaker conceives of divine operations

through the operations of nature. The speaker, thus, responds to the metaphorical

potential of the biblical text, interpreting the tears of Jesus as a figure of the grace of the

Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is hardly surprising, for as I have argued earlier,

Vaughan frequently figures Jesus as the Cosmic Christ who is in all and is all.

This metaphoric expansion of John 11:35 is interrupted by an awkward digression

on the nature of affliction and precipitation. The speaker employs two analogies to

suggest that Jesus should not be able to sigh and weep simultaneously. Two afflictions, he

argues, cannot coexist at the same time in one person; neither can rain fall from the sky

shortly after a shower. Perhaps the speaker attempts to illustrate the biblical text with

"similitudes" which, according to Joseph Hall, "give no small light to the understanding

nor less force to the affection" (96).[28] However, these similitudes are neither substantively

nor thematically related to the biblical text.

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[28] Vaughan's analogies do reveal his understanding of the doctrine of correspondences, where natural phenomenon (rain), medical conditions (ailments) and spiritual expressions (sighs and groans) are connected.

The speaker returns in the fourth and fifth stanzas to his initial query on the cause of Jesus's weeping, figuring Jesus as the embodiment of grief and love. He concludes, in a meandering vein, that Jesus does not weep because he is unable to procure a cure for spiritual ailment, but because he is by nature merciful and loving. Once his cogitations have led him to this doctrine on the nature of the divine, the speaker interprets himself through the text. He has seen and must taste, as Joseph Hall terms it, for "sight is of the understanding; taste, of the affections" (100). The speaker cries out with a hearty exclamation:

> Then farewell joys! for while I live,
>
> My business here shall be to grieve:
>
> A grief that shall outshine all joys
>
> For mirth and life, yet without noise. (270, ll.44-47)

The speaker wishes to imitate the weeping Jesus through grief, and anticipates that his tears will be a "silent" dew which will "breed lilies and myrrh." In evoking the language of the Canticles (dew, lilies, myrrh), Vaughan prompts the reader to consider the union of the Bride and Bridegroom, the soul and Christ; the dew of Christ (his tears) is seen to activate dew in the speaker (his tears), which generates a landscape of lilies and myrrh which illuminate the "land of darkness."[29] Here again, Vaughan turns to a natural landscape — that of the Canticles — to express his sensual, primal experience of the

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[29] These lines remind me of Vaughan's reference to the Canticles in *The Mount of Olives:* "O *Jesus Christ*, the lover and the redeemer of all humble and penitent souls! Thou that feedest among the Lilies untill the day breaks and the shadows flee, what is there in my heart where onely tares and thistles grow, that thou canst feed upon?" (161).

divine. The biblical voice, then, is seen to produce the moral lesson that joys must be rejected in favour of grief. In applying the lesson, the speaker is transposed into a biblical paradise, where he can sing his way to eternity.

We find in "Jesus Weeping (II)" what Martz describes as the "operation of the 'three powers of the soul' - memory, understanding, will," for Vaughan recalls the weeping of Jesus, analyzes the event until he apprehends the nature of Jesus, and allows his will and affections to be moved (Martz "Introduction" xxviii). The poem demonstrates, however, a mental meandering which mirrors the loose style characteristic of many seventeenth-century prose writers (Croll 1065).[30] Such an informal structure is characteristic of many biblical meditation in *Silex Scintillans*. Seelig correctly concludes, for example, that in his meditation on Genesis 24: 63 ("Isaac's Marriage"), Vaughan "digresses from the scene itself, which prompts such negative comparisons with his own time, to the surrounding celebration of heaven and earth (itself a metaphor for the ascent of Isaac's soul)" (68). And yet digression permits Vaughan to inject into the biblical text his sense of Jesus as a cosmic figure and to respond to Him in the language of nature, as is his practice.

Genette has written, "For the reader, the relationship between introductory epigraph and text is still prospective"; the epigraph is "always a mute gesture whose interpretation is left up to the reader"; the reader must supply the connectives between epigraph and lyric (*Paratexts* 149,156). In my cursory glance at "And do they so?" and "Jesus

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[30] Consider, for example, Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). The posthumous 6th edition of Burton's work was published in 1651, the same year the first edition of *Silex Scintillans* was issued.

Weeping," I have supplied possible connectives between the biblical and poetic voices.

Though "And do they so?" is dialogic insofar as the speaker and verse "converse," the

text and poem merge to create a cohesive unit. Though the reader must initially determine

the "meaning" of the quoted text in its biblical context, such meaning is readily absorbed

into the poetic meditation.[31] In the case of "Jesus Weeping[II]," there is a tension

between assimilation and dissimilation when the reader attempts to interpret the poem in

light of the biblical text, for the cited text in its original linguistic and cultural context is

not easily integrated into the new text due to substantive differences (Meyer 8). Such

tension has led Sharon Cadman Seelig to remark of Vaughan's biblical meditations:

"frequently the lesson has little relation to the incident on which it is based and little felt

connection with the persona of the poem" (67). Though Seelig criticizes the disjunction

between headnote and poem in Vaughan's associative meditations on biblical texts, she

fails to recognize the greater interpretive liberty involved in such meditations. For

Vaughan's poetic voice in the associative meditation is less constrained by the biblical

voice and takes greater license in playing with the borders of Sacred Writ. Though

Vaughan's digressive style, or as Martz puts it, his "fluid associative movement" of

thought, has been much criticized, it is this rich allusive style which permits both the

writer and the reader to "play" with the multiple meanings of a biblical text, to stretch the

mind by inspiring creative associations between lyric and Scripture.

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[31] Ben-Porat describes the reader's response to the marker in the alluding text as the "activation of the evoked text" which precedes actualizing the allusion itself" (111), while Hebel describes the process as "archeological activity" which eventually results in the actualization of the allusion and the "verbalization and documentation of the potential associations they might trigger" (139-41).

2. Biblical Coda

Vaughan's biblical codas have often been treated as indistinguishable from his

headnotes. Lewalksi describes poems with either a biblical headnote or biblical coda as

meditations on that verse. She characterizes, for example, "The World" as "a meditation

on John 2:16-17" (208).[32] It is possible that Vaughan had John 2:16-17 in mind when he

composed "The World." Nevertheless, had he wished to present the poem as a formal

meditation on John 2:16-17, he would have placed the biblical passage at the head of the

poem, as he does with John 3:2 in "The Night." His failure to do so implies that, for

Vaughan, the biblical coda serves a different function than the headnote. A difference in

function is further suggested by the inverse relation between the number and dispersal of

headnotes and codas in the two parts of the poetic collection. While *Silex* I includes

seventeen poems with biblical codas and three with biblical headnotes, only four poems

in *Silex* II conclude with codas, and ten begin with headnotes.

The terminal epigraph, according to Genette, is typically "obvious and more

authoritatively conclusive: it is the last word" (*Paratexts* 149). It often functions as a

"conclusion" or "moral" (149). In Quarles's *Emblems*, a work which greatly influenced

early-modern poetry, we find evidence to support Genette's theory of the terminal

epigraph, for Quarles's codas, taken from patristic writers, certainly have a peremptory,

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[32] In his essay on "The World," Simmonds argues both that the biblical coda is a summary of the poem's theme and that the poem is an amplification of John 2:16-17: "The theme of the poem is summarized in the verses from St. John appended at the end, and the whole composition is neither more nor less than an expansion and dramatization of those verses" ("Vaughan's Masterpiece" 82).

proverbial quality.[33] Quarles's codas might be read as proverbs or, more generally,

sententia, a genre popular in the early-modern classroom.[34] The "epigram madness" or

"adage habit" of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, may have rendered the

economic, condensed form appealing (Colie, 36; Fowler *Genre and Tradition*, 82).

Many of Vaughan's biblical codas function as proverbial wisdom in relation to his

poems, wisdom which communicates "authentic and stable truth" (Crane 44). The lyric

subject's experience is assimilated into the biblical remnant, which functions as a figure

of closure. As Post argues, the coda is the means by which Vaughan practices "verbal

self-effacement," for codas "absorb the poet's language into that of another order" and the

"intervening voice . . . seals off the poem on a gnomic note of authority" (*Henry Vaughan*

178). Though Vaughan does not rely on biblical wisdom literature per se for his codas,

these codas are proverbial inasmuch as they are presented as "wisdom compressed in

memorable formulations" (Bloch 180);[35] and like the biblical proverb, they often

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[33] Consider, for example, his emblem on Jeremiah 9:1: "O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night." After Quarles recites the biblical passage and produces a less than memorable poem on his desire for spring-like eyes, he sets forth three proverbial codas: "*He that committeth sins to be wept for, cannot weep for sinnes committed: And being himself most lamentable, hath no tears to lament his offences*" (S. Ambros. in Psal.118); "*Tears are the deluge of sinne, and the world's sacrifice*" (Nazianz. Orat. 3); "*Prayer appeaseth God, but a tear compelleth him: That moveth him, but this constraineth him*" (S. Hieron. in Esaiam)(3:8).

[34] The first collection of English proverbs or sayings was produced by John Heywood in 1546 (*A Dialogue containing the number in effect of all the proverbs in the English tongue*), and several collections of foreign proverbs were available by 1600. That there were so many sententious forms discussed in educational treatises of the period (proverb, parable, maxim, gnome, adage, *sententia*, aphorism, precept) suggest a deep-seated concern with gathering the "wise saying" during the reading process and the reactivation of such during the writing process.

[35] Vaughan did borrow formal features of biblical wisdom literature. His poems "Rules and Lessons" and "Righteousness," both mosaics of sacred *sententia* on righteous living, are structured like the book of Proverbs, which Diodati describes as "a *cabinet* filled with rich, and orient pearls and jewels, not tied or linked together in any chain, or connection, but scattered here and there without *method*" (*Annotations*). However, though Vaughan displays an adage-habit of thought and relies on the formal

prescribe or promote ethical behaviour.[36]

The biblical coda in *Silex Scintillans*, however, serves not only as a device of closure which condenses meaning into a compressed moral formulation. It is also a device which stirs up interpretive inquiry, for the concluding biblical voice encourages, even compels, the reader to reinterpret the poetic voice in its light. Rudrum notes this feature of the coda when he writes of "The Search" that "one good way of ending one's reading of 'The Search' . . . is to ponder the meaning and relevance" of the biblical coda, while another is "to return to the beginning of the poem and read it as if it were the end" (*Henry Vaughan* 74). Both reading strategies are facilitated by the biblical coda which moves towards, yet postpones, interpretive closure.

This paradoxical quality of the biblical coda is transparent in "The Lamp," a poem regarded for its emblematic, and hence, instructional value. The lamp or the candle was a man-made object frequently "read" for a spiritual sub-text.[37] For Quarles, as for many others, the lamp or candle was a figure of the divine light, the "morning-star," whose "conqu'ring ray" chased away the "clouds of night" which threatened eternal damnation (3:55). Vaughan's poem is often read as a standard exploration of this motif. As Post

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features of the Book of Proverbs in his production of two poems, he does not share Herbert's interest in biblical wisdom literature. He makes allusions to Old Testament wisdom literature on only thirteen occasions.

[36]As Carole Fontaine reminds, the word proverb in Hebrew (*mashal*) is a verb, and therefore, proverbs were not only "observational" but were also "persuasive sayings that exert social control" (496).

[37] Though most early-modern meditators are vociferous on the meditative potential of God's creation, many dedicated a significant portion of their meditations to man-made objects. In Joseph Hall's *Occasional Meditations* (1633), for example, sixty-eight of the one hundred and forty meditations are dedicated to humanity and human artifacts.

notes, the speaker inspects a flame "for its moral application to man" (*Henry Vaughan*

195). Post writes of the "little gothic dress" of the poem (*Henry Vaughan* 195), and

Calhoun finds in it a "chilling" quality (*Henry Vaughan* 153). I imagine they are

thinking of the "horror" that "doth creep / And move on with the shades" (ll. 1-2), lines

which bring to mind Eliot's "yellow fog" and "pair of ragged claws" (*Collected Poems*

3.5, ll. 15,73). And yet the horror of night is present for only a moment, for the speaker's

cogitations soon interrupt him. Pettet finds the speaker's turnabout a disappointment,

describing "The Lamp" as "a laboured and heavily emblematic piece that never lives up

to the promise of its intense, haunting opening" (170). However, in Vaughan's writings,

the night occasions illuminating contemplation:

> It is an observation of some *spirits*, that *the night is the mother of*
>
> *thoughts*. And I shall adde, that those thoughts are *Stars*, the *Scintillations*
>
> and *lightnings* of the soul struggling with *darknesse*. This *Antipathy* in her
>
> is *radical*, for being descended from the *house of light*, she hates a
>
> contrary *principle*, and being at that time a prisoner in some measure to an
>
> enemy, she becomes pensive, and full of thoughts. (169)

"The Lamp" testifies to the scintillations of the soul struggling for spiritual truth in the

midst of "dead night" and creeping horror (l. 11). The night inspires its contradictory

principle — the light — and horror can no longer be sustained.[38] That which Pettet finds

unsatisfying is, in part, the process of illumination, and it is this spiritual awakening that

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[38] Vaughan borrows this view of the night from Paracelsus, who wrote, Vaughan tells us, that "the night is the working-time of spirits" (*Works* 305).

lies at the poem's core. For the poem dramatizes the exegetical skill and ethical response

of the speaker who extrapolates doctrinal and moral truths from a creature.[39]

The speaker successfully detects sacred meaning in this man-made hieroglyph. He

reads in the flame a "true, practic piety" ("Preface" 142):

> But still thou dost out-go me, I can see
>
> Met in thy flames, all acts of piety;
>
> Thy light, is *charity*; thy heat, is *zeal*;
>
> And thy aspiring, actives fires reveal
>
> *Devotion* still on wing. . . . (163, ll.9-13)

The speaker finds in the image of the lamp kindled by the droppings stored in the socket.

a figure of the repentant soul, whose grief, manifested in "sighs," fuels eternal life: "And

such is true repentance, every breath / We spend in sighs, is treasure after death" (163,

ll.21-22). The speaker concludes his exegesis by contrasting himself and the object of his

gaze. While the lamp must expire with the evaporation of the oil, the speaker's final sigh.

or last gasp. is his rebirth, a new beginning: "But whensoe'r I'm out, both shall be in. /

And where thou mad'st an end, there I'll begin" (163, ll.25-26).

Vaughan could have very well ended "The Lamp" with this vision of true

repentance and eternal life. And yet he feels compelled to add a biblical coda, a

proverbial saying from Mark 13:35: "Watch you therefore, for you know not when the

---

[39] As Lewalski notes, "In the Protestant manuals, "creature" is a broadly inclusive term, and may refer to the handiwork of man as well as of God" (340). Quarles explains the function of the genre in the preface to *Emblems* where he describes the emblem as "a silent Parable" in which the careful reader finds an "allusion to our blessed Saviour." Emblems are "Hieroglyphicks" of God's Glory (3:45).

master of the house cometh, at even, or at mid-night, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning." On the simplest level, the coda — a biblical injunction to prepare oneself for the return of Christ — confirms the speaker's moral exegesis of the lamp: eternal reward will be available to those who spend their days in a repentant, grieving state. Joseph Hall had advised his readers that those meditating on a particular object should "recall any pregnant 'Testimonies of Scripture' concerning the theme," for "in these matters of God none but divine authority can command assent and settle the conscience" (99). The Word of God is both a "benediction," God's blessing conferred on the poet's words, and an instance of linguistic submission, the silencing of the poet's voice in deference to the divine word.

On a more complex level, the biblical coda to "The Lamp" causes the poem to take on an entirely new dimension, and demands re-interpretation. The early-modern reader would be well aware of the apocalyptic significance of Mark 13. In the thirteenth chapter of Mark, Jesus, speaking from the Mount of Olives, describes the "signs" of the apocalypse when "nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom," when "the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son," when all shall hear of "wars and rumours of wars," and when "false Christs and false prophets shall rise": "in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time" (13:4-22). Jesus warns the disciples that when such things are seen: "know that the kingdom of God is near, even at the door."[40] This apocalyptic

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[40] In *A Plain Pathway to Plantations* (1624), Robert Eburne cites Mark 13:10 to advocate the speedy colonization of America before the Second Coming, whose arrival was imminent.

rhetoric is frequently echoed in the publications of civil-war England.

When Vaughan concludes his emblematic, seemingly trans-historical lesson on repentance with an apocalyptic biblical verse, an early-modern reader might well re-read the poem as an apocalyptic cry of a Royalist in the darkness of Parliamentary rule. This does not require a stretch of the imagination, for Vaughan frequently used the lamp or candle as a political figure. In *The Mount of Olives*, he compares the "*shining* and *fervent piety* of those [primitive] Saints" with the "*painted* and *illuding appearance* of it in *these of our times*," and concludes that he has "just cause to fear that our *Candlestick* (which hath been now of a long time under a Cloud) is at this very instant upon removing" (181). The candlestick, an image of "powerful *faith* . . . perfect *charity*, hearty *humility*, and true *holinesse*" is associated with the true British Church while the Parliamentarian (181), "the *hypocritical, factious pretender of sanctity*" who conceals within his breast "*closet-sins, bosome-counsels, specious pretences*, and *bloody machinations*," is imagined as a looming cloud which shades and nearly suffocates the light of the true Church (180) . In his address to the reader of *Flores Solitudinis*, Vaughan admits he writes out of a "*land of darknesse . . . where the Inhabitants sit in the shadow of death: where destruction passeth for propagation, and a thick black night for the glorious day-spring*," though he asks the reader "*to remember, that there are bright starrs under the most palpable clouds, and light is never so beautifull as in the presence of darknes*" (217).[41]

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[41] In the previous chapter, I discussed a similar use of the candle in the Welsh, Royalist pamphlet *Gemitus Ecclesiæ Cambro-Britannicæ: Or, The Candle-Sticks Removed, By the Ejectment of the Ministers of WALES* (1654), a work in which the ministers are figured as "lamps of the church" and "candles" that

The apocalyptic biblical coda to "The Lamp," the preceding poem on the tattered

state of the British church ("The British Church" 162) and Vaughan's frequent

politicization of the language of light might cause the reader to interpret the "dead night"

and creeping horror of "The Lamp" as a metaphor of spiritual and ecclesiastical darkness.

John Wall puts forward such a reading, though he provides no textual support for his

claim that the "world shrouded in 'dead night,' where 'Horror doth creep / And move on

with the shades'" are "metaphors for the world bereft of Anglicanism" (332). Though I

agree with Wall that "Vaughan stresses the importance of watchfulness and uses his

eschatological expectation as a stance from which to understand present [political]

events," it would be better to avoid identifying "Anglicanism" as the particular object of

which Vaughan has been bereft (335).[42] However, I do not think it would be far off the

mark to suggest that the dead night and creeping horror are metaphors for an England

overwhelmed by "Schismes and Heresies" (Vaughan, Works 377). If the coda introduces

into the poem an apocalyptic fervor, and causes us to read the "dead night" as the last

days and the speaker's "sighs" as signs of his "faith in a land grown dark and

inhospitable," then "The Lamp" may be considered a poem which encodes the strife of

the Royalist who can only watch for and expect imminent restoration (Summers 67). The

theme of apocalyptic expectancy in the final biblical inscription, therefore, postpones

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can be snuffed out by the Parliamentary Ecclesiastical Commission (4). Consider also Taylor's description on national sin in "Of the Causes and Manner of the Divine Judgments," The History of The Life and Death of the Holy Jesus (Whole Works 2:596).

[42] As I discuss in the chapter on Vaughan's biblical theology, the term "Anglicanism" was not used in early-modern England.

textual closure, and demands that the reader create an intertextual dialogue between coda

and poem.

In those lyrics framed by a biblical headnote or coda in *Silex Scintillans*, it is clear

that the poem does not offer the reader a truth alternative to the biblical text. The poem

is conceived of as either an amplification and interpretation of, or a return to, a primary

utterance. In these poems, Vaughan thematizes his indebtedness to "another's language,

another's style, another's word" (Bakhtin, *From the Prehistory* 146). In so doing, he re-

enacts in a poetic medium Luther's dictum that "nothing but the divine words are to be

the first principles of all Christians; all human words are conclusions drawn from them

and must be brought back to them and approved by them . . ." (qtd. in Bruns 147).

According to Bakhtin, such linguistic submission to another's word results in a

monologic literary production. Each of these biblical epigraphs, these "pious quotations"

would be seen to discourage dialogue (Bakhtin *From the prehistory* 146). No doubt,

there is an iconic quality to Vaughan's epigraphs, though this would hardly distress a

poet more concerned with origins than originality. Nevertheless, as I have shown, the

whole purpose of early-modern meditation on a biblical text is to generate dialogue which

involves both a submission to, and a questioning of, the biblical text. The iconic quality

of both the biblical headnote and postscript in no way prevents the poem from

functioning as an interpretive gloss on Scripture. As Lewalski proposes,"the poet's voice,

responding to, or elaborating upon, or reinterpreted by, such texts is seen to engage them

in a kind of dialogue," and remarks that "the effect is again that of a medley of voices . .

." (247). We have witnessed Vaughan transform the relationship between humanity and

nature in "And do they so?" in response to Romans 8:19, just as we have observed his

metamorphosis of the historical Jesus in his response to John 11:35. At the same time,

the poetic voice in both poems is seen to lay himself bare before Scripture and is

interpreted thereby. As intertextuality is bilaterally directed, therefore, the speaker both

transforms and is transformed by the Word.

B. Embedded Biblical Quotation or Near-Quotation

In his embedded biblical quotations or near-quotations, Vaughan gestures towards

"digesting" the text, making it his own. The biblical and poetic voice often remain

distinct, however, for as I have said Vaughan often prefers to proclaim the "otherness" or

alien texture of the biblical voice through italicization or marginal notation. Vaughan's

decision to mark his embedded quotation through typographical conventions, accenting

their referential character, reflects a strong impulse to signal his appropriation of the

biblical voice. However, while the reader can distinguish between the biblical voice and

the poet's voice in a poem framed by an epigraph, the voices are confused in the

embedded quotation. I would suggest that this is intentional, for it testifies to the

inscription of the Word on Vaughan's hard heart — an internal dialogue — and it re-

assures us that he pleads in groans of his "Lord's penning" ("Holy Scriptures" 198, ll.9-

11). Vaughan desires, I believe, that those speakers of lyrics which contain an embedded

quotation are seen to function transparently as God's writing tablet. Though this allusive

strategy complicates the reader's perception of voice and lyric subjectivity in the poem, it

often serves to align God's inscriptions with a political will to resist the Commonwealth.

In scanning the elegy "'Fair and Young Light'," readers accepts that a single

speaker utters the words of grief and loss until he or she reaches the last line of the second

stanza: "*For he that's dead, is freed from sin*" (280, 1.46). When confronted with this

italicized repetition of Romans 6:7, we ask ourselves who speaks these words. Is this the

voice of the speaker, who rehearses the Pauline proclamation on death to confront his

experience of loss? Or is this the voice of the Holy Spirit (the biblical author) who

interrupts the speaker to pronounce a sacred truth just as the whispering voices of

"Regeneration" and "The Search" halt each pilgrim's journey? When the same biblical

verse is employed as a biblical coda to "The Timber," it is set apart as a distinct voice,

and the words are not confused with those of the speaker. Yet in "Fair and Young Light,"

once the biblical passage is assimilated into the poem proper, it is difficult to determine

whether there is a "single, chordal voice telling us the poem" or whether this speaker is a

space upon which multiple voices are written? (Diepeveen 97). Goldberg's question

"who speaks in the text-in-quotation" is of relevance here. It is not possible to determine

definitively whether the speaker utters these words or whether he is a vehicle through

which the Word is spoken. Vaughan appears to present the self as a space on which the

divine other is written. Shuger explains that for the early-moderns "rather than being an

enclosed monadic entity, the self is inhabited by an alien life, which is yet 'natural,' or as

Levy-Bruhl writes, the premodern 'individual is only himself by virtue of being at the

same time something other than himself'" (100). If, in "'Fair and Young Light'," the

speaker utters the words of God (as opposed to the Spirit entering the lyric to utter these

words), then Vaughan appears to illustrate the self, the lyric "I," as a space of pneumatic

indwelling.

The marked embedded quotation causes the reader, therefore, to reflect on the intersection of the self and the divine, and the reader must examine the way in which the speaker's voice plays off against the biblical voice in an internal dialogue. The marked embedded quotation, however, also reveals one of the more practical purposes for deploying biblical quotations: to render the opinions of the poetic voice valid by anchoring them in a text whose legitimacy is unquestioned by the reader. Vaughan embeds quotations in "The Hidden Treasure" and "The Men of War" with such an intent.[43] Both lyrics open with a biblical headnote, and both headnotes are followed immediately by an embedded quotation. In "The Men of War" Vaughan includes the phrase "Saith holy *John*" in the midst of his quotation to distinguish between the speaker's voice and that of St. John: "*If any have an ear /* Saith holy *John, then let him hear. / He that into captivity / Leads others, shall a captive be*" (283, ll.1-4). The speaker's voice is further distanced from that of the biblical voice by his announced submission to the Word: "Were not thy word (dear Lord!) my light, / How would I run to endless night" (ll.9-10). In "The Hidden Treasure," Vaughan does not refer to King Solomon (the supposed author of Ecclesiastes) when he opens his lyric:

> *What can the man do that succeeds the* King?*
>
> *Even what was done before, and no new thing.*
>
> Who shows me but one grain of sincere light?

---

[43] In the case of "The Hidden Treasure," the biblical verse (Ecclesiastes 2:12) has been altered for the sake of meter and rhyme. The King James version reads: "And I turned my self to behold wisdom, and madness and folly: for what can the man do, that cometh after the king? even that which hath been already done."

False stars and fire-drakes, the deceits of night (287, ll. 1-4)[44]

He does, however, place an asterisk after "*the*" in the first line, and places at the bottom

of the page the following note: "* Ecclesiastes, chap.2.12."[45] Because the flow of the

line is disrupted by an asterisk, readers interrupt their textual processing to glance down

at the marginal note.[46] This may cause the reader to assign the words to Solomon rather

than to the speaker, who my have internalized and recycled them. Again, the self is

conceived as a slate upon which the words of the divine are etched.

In both of these poems, however, the functions of the embedded quotation are clear;

they serve, to cite the typology of Morawski, a "stimulatory-amplification function" and

an "authoritative function" (694). On the one hand, these introductory words, like those

of the biblical headnote, can be viewed as soil upon which Vaughan builds his own

interpretive argument on political and military practices (Morawski 694). However, more

significant, these quotations serve an authoritative function as their presence renders the

political arguments of both poems unarguable. In "The Men of War," the speaker asserts

a politics of pacifism and through the embedded quotation indicts his political adversaries

who have secured power through violence and have deemed themselves saints: "For in

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[44] I take this quotation from L.C. Martin's edition of Vaughan's works, as Martin reproduces the typographical conventions of the first edition.

[45] In the first part of *Silex Scintillans* only two of the seventy-four poems (2.7%) contain asterisks accompanied by footnotes. In the second part, eight of the fifty-five poems (14.5%) have asterisks and footnotes. This increase of 11.8% is expected in light of the great increase in the number of biblical headnotes and biblical titles in the second part of *Silex Scintillans*.

[46] Vaughan's use of asterisks is perhaps his most disruptive typographical device for relating the origins of other's words embedded in his verse. This is largely because the asterisk is placed, for example, between a subject and predicate, or as is the case with "The Hidden Treasure" between a definite article and the noun it modifies.

this bright, instructing verse / Thy saints are not the conquerors;" (283, ll.17-18). In "The

Hidden Treasure," though the poem does not directly criticize the Cromwellian

government, its expression of *contemptus mundi* is predicated on the words from

Ecclesiastes that he who "succeeds the King" can do "no new thing." These words are

immediately followed by a description of the "false stars and fire-drakes, the deceits of

night / Set forth to fool and foil thee" (287, ll.4-5). There can be no doubt that Vaughan

(who could have selected any of a number of verses in Ecclesiastes had he wished merely

to denounce worldly vanity) chose Ecclesiastes 2:12 because it indicts those who had

succeeded the king (Charles I) as propagators of "the deceits of night" (287, l.4). Could

any seventeenth-century reader fail to read a political subtext in this embedded quotation?

When criticizing the present government, Vaughan signals the biblical origin of his

opinion, an origin which should render the critique indisputable. In the process, he re-

directs responsibility for the utterance to avoid being perceived as the innovator of

partisan sentiment. Instead the speaker appears to duplicate a biblical position consonant

with a Royalist agenda.[47] The biblical voice, therefore, serves to authorize the poetic

voice, though paradoxically Vaughan suggests that the poetic voice merely echoes the

biblical sentiment.

The embedded quotation in *Silex Scintillans*, particularly the marked quotation,

offers us the opportunity to witness Vaughan's twin concerns to have the Word speak for

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[47] Writers were most anxious at the prospect of publishing political opinions during the 1650s. Potter reminds us of Robert Wild's elegy on Christopher Love, a Presbyterian minister executed in 1651. Wild did not publish his elegy until after the Restoration because he feared that to lament Love's execution was to endanger his life: "Shelter, bless'd *Love*, this verse within thy Shroud, / For none but Heav'n dares take thy part aloud. / The Author begs this, lest, if it be known, / Whilst he bewails thy Head, he lose his own" (qtd. in Potter, 151).

itself and to have the Word speak in and through him. However, even when Vaughan

permits the Word to speak for itself in the body of his verse, he invariably gives it a new

social significance , as it is imported into a new linguistic environment. For as Still and

Worton argue: "Inevitably a fragment and displacement, every quotation distorts and

redefines the 'primary' utterance by relocating it within another linguistic and cultural

context" (11). This is apparent in Vaughan's rendering of Romans 6:7 in "Fair and

Young Light," for while Paul speaks of a spiritual death and rebirth in this epistle, Paul's

words are relocated by Vaughan in "Fair and Young Light" in a panegyric on physical

death. Therefore, the biblical voice is again interpreted and transformed by the poetic

voice to suit Vaughan's purpose.

I have tried to demonstrate thus far that Vaughan is determined in many of his

poems to quote Scripture rather than to refer to it. He shows a similar propensity to quote

Herbert verbatim, though he rarely marks these borrowings. Such a compositional habit

is contrary to that of Herbert who finds himself altering the biblical text at every turn. I

have proposed that this difference is, at least in part, politically motivated. Vaughan

wished to stake a claim on the Bible, which he felt had been appropriated and "wrested"

by the Parliamentarians. He condemns those who, with "detestable designs" and

"impious wit," "force on Holy Writ" their "forgeries," thereby dishonouring "those pure

lines" ("Day of Judgement [II] 299-300, ll.35-38). Through quotation, Vaughan can

visibly demonstrate his linguistic submission to the Word — show himself "divested,

exposed, and transformed" by Scripture. He can assert that his political and ecclesiastical

opinions and his spiritual experience are derived from the undistorted Word of God

(Bruns 154).[48] In choosing to quote rather than to allude, Vaughan minimizes the

perception that he twists Scripture to invest it with his private meanings — political or

otherwise.

C. Transformative Imitation: Eclectic Allusion

Though Vaughan has a propensity to let Scripture speak for itself and to foreground

his linguistic submission to the living Word, he also wishes at times to be seen to "digest"

or "consume" the biblical voice. We find biblical signs absorbed into his vocabulary and

transformed in the poetic landscape. Vaughan's choice to allude to Scripture rather than

to quote it in many cases would have been, in his own day, appreciated. Though some

Renaissance proponents of imitation emphasize distribution, disposition and arrangement,

most insist on "transformative imitation" (Pigman 6,7). Erasmus is perhaps most eloquent

on the point:

> I approve an imitation . . .which transfers what it finds into the mind itself,
>
> as into the stomach, so that transfused into the veins it appears to be a birth
>
> of one's intellect, not something begged and borrowed from elsewhere,
>
> and breathes forth the vigor and disposition of one's mind and nature, so
>
> that the reader does not recognize an insertion taken from Cicero, but a
>
> child born from one's brain . . . . (qtd. in Pigman 9)[49]

---

[48] Vaughan's communicative and interpretative acts, expressed through the trope of quotation.
"are defined by power relationships and structures of interest" (Hampton 17).

[49] Petrach also advised: "Take care that what you have gathered does not remain in its original
form inside of you: the bees would not be glorious if they did not convert what they found into something
different . . ." (qtd. in Pigman 7).

Needless to say, even in his allusions, Vaughan hardly attempts to disguise the relation

between his lyric and the pre-text, whether Scripture, *The Temple* or the hermetic

writings. Vaughan's lyrics magnify poetic and spiritual filiation. In "The Match,"

Vaughan even thematizes indebtedness. Even when loosely echoing Scripture, Vaughan

often continues to emphasize the biblical origins of his voice through italicization. We

find few cryptic allusions in *Silex Scintillans*, and many would be considered

conspicuous.

Nevertheless, in absorbing biblical language and concepts through allusion, the

words do appear to flow naturally from the heart of the poet. We see this in "The Call," a

dramatization, and hence an interpretation, of Ephesians 5:13-16;[50] and yet because

Vaughan does not include a biblical headnote, there is a sense that the words cascade

from his innermost parts as he attempts to redeem the time which rapidly slips away. A

single, controlling voice subsumes and creatively transforms the echoes of past voices.[51]

Instead of setting up a transparent competition between linguistic environments, the Bible

or *The Temple* is transported and assimilated into the new poetic environment.

This is not to say that Vaughan undermines biblical authority or challenges biblical

meaning in transformative imitation. What Bloch says of Herbert and the Bible is equally

applicable to Vaughan's scriptural allusions: "He works *through* Scripture, not *against* it,

departing from the text . . . to enter it more fully" (81). When both Herbert and Vaughan

---

[50] "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephes. 5:14-16).

[51] In this regard, Mahood believes that "Vaughan controls, and is not controlled by, his borrowings" (20).

modify a biblical image it "is not to abandon it but rather to preserve it, to secure it for the present" (85). Paul Ricoeur has said that the Scriptures "must constantly be restored as the living word if the primitive word that witnessed to the fundamental and founding event is to remain contemporary" (382). Vaughan, like Herbert, shapes his experience through the biblical voice, and in the process the Word is restored to life through him.[52]

Vaughan recasts the biblical voice to proclaim his apprehension of the self, society, nature and God and, as Alter puts it, to create "a spark of revelation" in the reader (*Pleasures* 121).[53] In "The Agreement," Vaughan re-animates the Word through a brief allusion to the tree of life: "Thine are the present healing leaves, / Blown from the tree of life to us / By his breath whom my dead heart heaves" (297, ll.20-22). The tree of life is heavily weighted with symbolic meaning in the Bible; it is at once a symbol of provision, immortality and loss in Genesis and a symbol of healing and restoration in the Revelation: "and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:2). An economic symbol of creation (life), loss (death) and restoration (rebirth), the tree of life is associated with the Word through verbal wordplay, for the leaves of the tree become the leaves of the Scripture. Through this simple pun, the speaker suggests that each biblical page offers in "the present" the past radiance of a paradise lost and the future splendor of a paradise regained (297, l.20). In this brief biblical allusion, Vaughan

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[52] I do not argue that Vaughan does not bring the Bible to life in those poems headed or concluded with quotations or in those poems in which we find embedded quotations. As I have demonstrated, Vaughan applies the biblical text in all his poems, thereby making it present. Nevertheless, the Bible in these poems is spatially presented as a static form, gnomic wisdom set apart from the speaker's voice.

[53] Not surprisingly, Vaughan did not perceive *his own* recasting of the biblical text as "wresting" Scripture.

impresses on the reader with a creative sleight of hand that Scripture, like the tree of life,

can heal and quicken its readers because it is the living word. Though Vaughan alters the

biblical image, he maintains a consonance of theme, for both the poetic stanza and those

biblical passages in which the tree of life appears are concerned with eternal life. Further,

his alteration is particularly "Vaughanian," for as we have seen, Vaughan has a penchant

for linking the biblical and the natural, the divine and nature, and for perceiving life in the

apparently inanimate.[54] Through his transformation of the biblical, Vaughan also

manages to attack his political adversaries, for while he is restored to life by the living

Word, his enemies are seen to inhale the "chaff and windy fits" of their "modern books"

in which puritanical "self-worship and self-ends" are written ("The Agreement" 297,

11.25,26,30).

A more complex instance of the altered borrowing is to be found in "Ascension-

Hymn," where Vaughan collates several biblical passages to envision the transforming

power of Christ's sacrificial love:

> Then comes he!
>
> Whose mighty light
>
> Made his clothes be

---

[54] Consider, for example, his fascinating treatment of the historical Jesus in "St. Mary
Magdalene":
> Dear *Soul*! thou knew'st, flowers here on earth
> At their Lord's foot-stool have their birth;
> Therefore thy withered self in haste
> Beneath his blest feet thou didst cast,
> That at the root of this green tree,
> Thy great decays restored might be. (274, 11.27-32)

Or reflect on the imagery of "The Book," a poem in which Vaughan renders matter animate, for he returns
a book to its natural origins.

Like Heaven, all bright;

The Fuller, whose pure blood did flow

To make stained man more white then snow. (246, ll.31-36)

To bring to life his perception of the bleeding fuller, Vaughan compresses and transmutes

three biblical tropes from: Mark 9:3, "And his raiment became shining, exceeding white

as snow: so as no fuller on earth can white them"; Malachi 3:2, "But who may abide the

day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire,

and like fullers' soap"; and Revelation 7:14, "And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest.

And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed

their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Here we witness Vaughan diligently collating biblical text with biblical text,

weaving passages together "like a curious *silken web*," and condensing them into an

economic metaphor of transfiguration (Roberts 53). In so doing, he not only

demonstrates that biblical passages have "a contexture and coherence one part with

another," but also reworks the biblical theme of transfiguration to shock the reader

(Roberts 31). For Vaughan fuses the biblical tropes of the fuller's soap, the bleaching

blood, the snow-white fabric, and the sacrificial lamb to figure Christ as both the fuller

and the fuller's cleansing agent, a remarkably macabre metaphor, for we are compelled to

imagine Christ draining his own blood to cleanse his beloved. Because Vaughan is less

inclined to recast the metaphor of Christ's bleaching blood in "As time one day by me

did pass," the reader is more likely to skim over the line, "And robes are bleached in the

Lamb's blood" (279, l.36). In addition, through his collation of Scripture and Scripture,

Vaughan fashions the Godhead in elemental, primal terms — as blood and water (and

earlier in the poem as fire) — as is his custom.[55]

As I have said, Vaughan's poetic voice does not negate the biblical voice in this

moment of collation and transformation; rather the "conversing" voices are fused and

recast to fashion Vaughan's experience. What Bloch write of Herbert is applicable to

Vaughan in this instance: "I see him rather as clinging tenaciously to the old symbols and

making them serve his need to say something new" (85).[56] Vaughan takes possession of

the biblical in order to "perform" the Word.

II.   The Disposition of Heterogeneous Pre-texts in *Silex Scintillans*

It would be a great mistake, however, to suggest that Vaughan forges his "new"

voice — his own particular apprehension of the world — by collating and transforming

only fragments of biblical texts. Vaughan's transformative imitation involves the

intersection of a series of past voices — the most prominent of which are those of

George Herbert and the author of the Hermetica. To employ Derrida's metaphor,

Vaughan's lyrics might be viewed as the products of a series of textual grafts, and the

distinct nature of his perceptions often results from the manner in which these texts are

combined (Culler 135). Vaughan orchestrates the voices of his forerunners into complex

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[55] The Bible itself, of course, presents the divine in elemental, primal, natural terms - Christ is figured as the tree of life, the water of life and so forth. Vaughan finds such natural metaphor greatly appealing and readily absorbs them into his experience of God.

[56] Bloch echoes Rosemond Tuve's sentiment that Herbert reanimates "connexions among elements already carrying weighty meanings" (Tuve 63, n.18). Tuve's perception is perhaps even more relevant to a study of Vaughan's poetics than Herbert's.

combinations (Alter *Pleasures* 140).[57] Rudrum has for some time argued this point in his

examinations of the hermetic borrowings in *Silex Scintillans*. In "The Influence of

Alchemy in the Poems of Henry Vaughan" (1970), he proposes that hermetic philosophy

provided Vaughan "with a coherent system of thought" and that its terminology "helped

him to actualize his religious intuition of a God-animated universe" ("The Influence"

480). Rudrum finds that "even where Vaughan draws his phrase from the Bible, he gives

it a distinctly alchemical twist" (474). That is, when Vaughan alludes to Scripture it is

often re-visioned within a hermetic system of thought.[58]

Vaughan's highly intertextual poetic technique, at times, dissolve the boundaries of

his texts, thereby undermining its "organic form." I do not suggest that Vaughan, like

many postmodern poets, engages in eclectic allusion to exclude wholly an axis of

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[57] To borrow another of Derrida's metaphors, the structure of his poems might be perceived as "an interlacing, a weaving, or a web, which . . . allow[s] the different threads and different lines of sense or force to separate again, as well as being ready to bind others together" (*Speech and Phenomena*, 132).

[58] Rudrum's argument should be read in light of the lengthy debate on the degree to which Vaughan borrows from hermeticism, and the extent to which such borrowings influence his borrowings from Scripture. In many early publications, including that of Elizabeth Holmes, hermeticism was shown to be a central influence on *Silex Scintillans*. In response to this body of scholarship, Garner argued that "Hermeticism in Vaughan . . . is troublesome" (46). Garner wonders if hermeticism merely affords a source of imagery or whether Vaughan's poems might be rightly deemed hermetic (90). Pettet feels that "Vaughan's poetry owes more to his hermetic reading than a group of somewhat technical words that he uses sporadically" and concludes that "he also drew substantially on hermetic thought . . ." (73). However, he warns against the "danger of reading into his [Vaughan's] work hermetic references where none really exist" (73). There is a concern, in particular, in several publications about whether Vaughan's hermetic borrowings undermine or challenge his Christian or biblical borrowings. While Pettet describes the "fusion of hermetic and Christian ideas" in his lyrics (82), Garner is far more likely to see many hermetic notions and Christian ideas as either irreconcilable or insists that the hermetic material is "shaped" by the biblical material "and not vice versa" (90). Rudrum and Pettet concur in so far as both argue that Vaughan is much indebted to the conceptual content and the language of hermeticism. I agree with Rudrum and Pettet, for I believe that ideology is inherent in any utterance and that Vaughan cannot borrow hermetic terms without bringing to bear upon his poetry (at least to some extent) a hermetic view of the world. Bakhtin notes that "*Words are always filled with content and meaning drawn from behaviour or ideology*. . . .Any human verbal utterance is an ideological construct in the small" ("Marxism" 33; "Freudianism" 45).

organization in his poems; *Silex Scintillans* hardly "disintegrates into numerous text particles"(Plett 6). However, *Silex Scintillans* is "an infinitely re-centerable system whose provisional point of focus depends upon the reader, who becomes a truly active reader" (Landow 11). The reader of *Silex Scintillans* is confronted with a series of inter-poems or inter-texts. The process of interpreting such poems might be described (if but for a moment) in the language of hypertext. A highly allusive poem like any given hypertext permits "multiple reading paths, which shift the balance between reader and writer" (Landow 23). Just as links within the electronic hypertext permit the operator to enjoy a plurality of connections during the reading process, so too the reader of Vaughan's lyrics is encouraged (if not compelled) to read through the words on the page, to link as it were with texts frequently made visible in the poem through italicization. The "meaning(s)" of Vaughan's lyrics is embedded in a maze of textual relationships which must be activated and related.

To some degree, this is true of all texts. Foucault has argued that "the frontiers of a book are never clear-cut," because "it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network . . . [a] network of references" (*Archaeology of Knowledge* 23). However, Theodor H. Nelson identified in hypertext a particular type of text, "*nonsequential writing* - text that branches and allows choices to the reader" (2). There are, of course, significant differences between the electronic hypertext and *Silex Scintillans* and I do not wish to take the comparison too far. Nevertheless, the analogy is useful as it permits us to recognize that *Silex Scintillans* is a relational text whose meaning is founded on a field of textual connections.

Vaughan's readers would likely have a high capacity for retention of texts and would have recognized many of the pre-texts that form part of his authorial consciousness.[59] As readers of *Silex Scintillans* actualize these pre-texts, they are thrust outward into the allusive context ("the *centrifugal* vector of allusion"). They then return to the alluding context and establish patterns between the pre-texts and Vaughan's lyrics ("the *centripetal* vector of allusion")(Rudat 2). However, because many of Vaughan's poems often consist of layers of quotations and allusions, readers must continually re-center the poem as they navigate the network of voices which lie under its surface. There is, therefore, a continuous movement in the reading of his lyrics between fragmentation and coherence.

Vaughan's eclectic poetics is manifest in a series of his finest poems, one of which I will briefly consider here. In "Cock-Crowing," Vaughan embeds a theme common to all his lyrics: participation in Christ. As has been often remarked upon in Vaughan scholarship, there is in *Silex Scintillans* a tension between divine immanence and divine transcendence. Vaughan struggles to reconcile his experience of God both within himself and in nature with his deep sense of the absence of God. Shuger's remarks on the spiritual perceptions of Richard Hooker and Lancelot Andrewes might be applied to Vaughan: "For both Hooker and Andrewes the central problem of faith is not sin but absence," for both are sensitive to the "distance of God" (73,83). Shuger believes that the

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[59] In terms of the capacity of early-modern readers to memorize texts, Potter recalls a remark made in the funeral sermon on the Countess of Suffolk (d.1649) given by her chaplain: "she had been able to complete almost any poem by George Herbert after hearing the opening lines" (116) The bibliographical details for the sermon referred to are: Edward Rainbowe, *A Sermon Preached at Walden in Essex, May 29. At the Interring of the Corpse of the Right Honorable Susanna, Countess of Suffolke*, 1649.

self that emerges in Andrewes's sermons "makes itself felt as absence and desire," and

yet both theologians have at times an almost tangible "sensuous awareness of [divine]

presence" (89,77). In "Cock-Crowing," Vaughan's inward experience is, like theirs,

"paradoxically structured by the desire for that which is absent and by participation in

indwelling presence" (89). Vaughan voices this spiritual experience through a web of

intersecting texts.

Vaughan speaks to divine absence and presence, light and darkness, in "Cock-

Crowing" through the biblical symbol of the crowing cock. Some readers find in the title

an allusion to the Apostle Peter, a figure of the "penitent self exile," as did Joseph Hall in

his meditation, "Upon the Crowing of a Cock" (1633): "How harshly did this note sound

in the ear of Peter, yea, pierced his very heart!" (Hewitt 8; J. Hall 172).[60] Others call to

mind the long tradition of the cock as a symbol of the resurrection: "For centuries before

Vaughan saw visions by the Usk, the cock had been famed for his instinctive knowledge

of light. . . .he was associated with the priest as an expeller of spiritual darkness and of

evil . . . reminded men of their duties to God and . . . warned them of Christ's Second

Coming and urged them to prepare for the Day of Judgement" (Allen 85). Vaughan

relied on this biblical notion of the cock crowing in his epigraph to "The Lamp:" "Watch

ye therefore, for you know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at mid-

night, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning" (Mark 8:35).

The single titular allusion directs the reader in at least these two directions, and in

activating the evoked texts, we recall themes of betrayal and hope, human frailty and

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[60] See Matt. 26:34, 75; Mark 14:30,72; Luke 22:60-2.

human potential. With these themes in mind, we enter a world of divine light and natural magnetism:

> Father of lights! what sunny seed,
>
> What glance of day hast thou confined
>
> Into this bird? To all the breed
>
> This busy ray thou hast assigned;
>
> Their magnetism works all night,
>
> And dreams of Paradise and light." (251; ll.1-6)

Vaughan's biblically-literate contemporaries would recognize in the first phrase James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." They might even recall the verse that follows as they reflect on the phrase's biblical context: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James 1:18). The biblical texts activated so far pertain to humanity's relation with the divine. However, predictably, Vaughan turns to the natural world not for its symbolic value but for its own sake. In the remaining lines of this stanza, the cock takes central stage, not as a symbol of human resurrection, but as a creature in sympathy with the divine.

To address the cock's instinctual connection with the celestial realm, Vaughan turns to a new pre-text: the Hermetica. It appears that for Vaughan, biblical language cannot speak fully to his perception of a world infused with life, "full of *Spirit, quick,* and *living*" (Thomas Vaughan, *Works* 52). So Vaughan finds himself borrowing both the language of

hermeticism ("glance," "magnetism," "expelling," tinned," "tincture") and its conceptual

content (sympathy, influence, magnetism) to write of the divine spark within the creature

which permits it to "respond to divine influences" (Walters 118).[61] As we are thrust

outward into the allusive context of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, we enter a world in which

there are "buried similitudes,""invisible analogies," and "signatures," a landscape in

which the power of sympathy "excites the things of the world to movement and can draw

even the most distant of them together" (Foucault, *The Order of Things* 26.23). We must

activate these writings if we are to grasp the speaker's vision of the solary bird imbued

with a sunny seed, "a *spice* or *touch* of the *first Intellect*," which "compels him to herald

the sun's rising" (Thomas Vaughan, *Works* 111: Mahood 22).

The speaker's hermetic borrowings might also compel us to re-read the fragment of

James 1:17. For the speaker's desire to perceive God in terms of light against a backdrop

of darkness, an impulse which permeates much of Vaughan's corpus, may be informed by

the hermetic vision of God. For in *Libellus I*, God is figured as Light out of darkness:

"That Light . . . is I, even Mind, the first God, who was before the watery substance

which appeared out of the darkness; and the Word which came forth from the Light is

[the] son of God . . . But Mind the Father of all, he who is Life and Light . . . gave birth to

Man" (Hermetica 48-49). As Walters explains, in the Hermetica, the essence of God is

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[61] Holmes concludes that Vaughan does not rely "so much in frequency of direct reference to hermetic tradition as in a charging of his poetic atmosphere with this idea of 'sympathy'" (40). Likewise, Pettet describes Vaughan's "debt" to the hermetic writings as more "ideological" than "verbal" (73). As Rudrum has shown, Vaughan's poem may not be indebted verbally to the hermetic writings, but "is nevertheless referable to hermeticism for its central idea and its meditative structure" ("Henry Vaughan's 'The Book'" 165).

"infinite light" (112). Though Vaughan draws his vision of God from a biblical source, it may well be filtered through this hermetic frame.

It is possible that Vaughan alludes to the Hermetica in these stanzas by way of his brother Thomas,who writes in *Anima Magica Abscondita*: "For she [the *Anima*] is guided in her Operations by a *Spirituall Metaphysicall Graine*, a Seed or Glance of *Light* . . . descending from the *first Father of Lights*. For though his full-eyed love shines on nothing but Man, yet everything in the world is in some measure directed for his preservation by a spice or touch of the first intellect" (*Works* 111). Like his brother, Henry's first impulse is to consider the presence of the divine within nature (in the figure of the cock who instinctively "dreams of Paradise and light") before turning to the human experience of divine luminescence.

In shifting his focus to the human in the third stanza, Vaughan returns to Scripture. He finds in the book of Genesis, his favourite biblical book, the language of human potential and spiritual hope:

> If such a tincture, such a touch,
>
> So firm a longing can impower ·
>
> Shall thy own image think it much
>
> To watch for thy appearing hour?
>
> > If a mere blast so fill the sail,
> >
> > Shall not the breath of God prevail? (251, ll.13-18)

To activate the biblical allusions in this stanza, the reader leaves the hermetic landscape of influence, magetism, sympathy and enters the biblical landscape: "And God said, Let

us make man in our image, after our likeness . . . So God created man in his own image . .
. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils
the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7). We envision man
inspired or quickened by God, a divine act through which God is irrevocably linked to
human creatures, though we may too think of the hermetic creation scene in which man
emanates forth from the "Father of lights."

Returning to Mark 13:35 ("Watch ye therefore . . . "), Vaughan wonders whether a
being imbued with the breath of God will "watch" for God's appearing hour as the "eyes"
of the cock "watch for the morning hue" (251, l.7): "Shall thy own image think it much /
To watch for thy appearing hour?" (251, ll.15-16). The allusions in the poem so far hint
at two possible answers, for these texts have introduced both the theme of denial and that
of hope in human/divine sympathy on Christ's resurrection. The reader considers,
therefore, both divine absence caused by the rejection of the "Father of lights," and divine
presence as the Spirit of the Living God fills the universe. Reflecting on the
quintessence in the cock which "makes it respond to celestial influences," the reader
wonders whether humanity, inspirited by God, will deny Christ or watch ardently for His
return (Walters, 118).

These thoughts are halted for a moment when we are confronted in the fourth stanza
with a panegyric to God, which is at once Herbertian, biblical and hermetic.

> O thou immortal light and heat!
>
> Whose hand so shines through all this frame,
>
> That by the beauty of the seat,

We plainly see, who made the same.

Seeing thy seed abides in me,

Dwell thou in it, and I in thee. (251,ll.19-24)

Post remarks of the first few lines of this stanza,

"Vaughan 'matches' and excels his master in his praise of God by

conflating [in these lines] the opening lines of 'Love I' ('Immortal Love,

author of this great frame') and 'Love II' ('Immortal Heat, O let thy greater

flame') to achieve an even greater sense of God's love penetrating and

inflaming the frame of the universe" (*Henry Vaughan* 149).

Many of Vaughan's readers would hear in the poem's lines echoes of "Love I" and "Love

II," poems on human frailty and divine love. If we activate "Love I," we recall Herbert

disparagement of man who has "parcelled out" and thrown upon a dust heap the "glorious

name" of God, "Immortal Love" (51, ll.1-4); and if we activate "Love II," we recall the

speaker's request that God, "Immortal Heat," consume our lusts and "mend our eyes" so

we may see Him (52, l.-5,14). The reader returns to Vaughan's phrase "immortal light

and heat" with a sharper picture of unworthy man groping through the dust to see God.

Herbert's reflection on seeing God ("Our eyes shall see thee, which before saw dust"

"Love II" 152, l.9) ties in with Vaughan's theme of watching expectantly for Christ's

appearing hour. So too is Herbert's focus on the eye echoed by the speaker of "Cock-

Crowing" who remarks on the cock's watching eyes and later expresses his desire to be

warmed at God's "glorious eye" (l.46).

To underscore human potential, the speaker alludes once again to Scripture and the

Hermetica when he appeals to the divine seed which dwells in him and in which God

dwells: "Seeing thy seed abides in me, / Dwell thou in it, and I in thee" (ll.23-24). Durr

argues that Vaughan alludes to "a seed of the Tree of Life" in these lines (33). It seems

more likely that if Vaughan alludes to Scripture here, he refers to 1 Peter 1:23 and 1 John

3:9, both of which speak of the seed of God within: "Being born again, not of corruptible

seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever";

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for his seed remaineth in him: and he

cannot sin, because he is born of God." The biblical theme in and around these verses —

of eternal life available to one in whom Christ lives or to one reborn in Christ — deepens

our sense of the speaker's longing for divine penetration of his soul.

Vaughan may be drawn to this image of the seed, as he is throughout his poetry

because of the hermetic preoccupation with the *sperm*. His brother Thomas said of the

"*sperma* of St. John" that it was "the seed of God which remains in us," an appealing

notion to the hermeticists who were preoccupied with the notion of Christ as an

"indwelling spirit . . . in all things though invisibly" as Rudrum explains

("Anthroposophia Theomagica" *Works* ; "Henry Vaughan and the Theme of

Transfiguration" 57,59). Regardless, the speaker's allusion to the seed returns the reader

to the promise of divine presence, for in the image of the seed the speaker envisions the

interpenetration of the self and the divine other.

Yet, in the very next stanza he expresses through a radically different biblical text

the desperation of spiritual desolation, of God's absence:

To sleep without thee, is to die;

> Yea,'tis a death partakes of hell:
>
> For where thou dost not close the eye
>
> It never opens, I can tell.
>
> In such a dark, Egyptian border,
>
> The shades of death dwell and disorder (251, ll.25-30)

The dominant mood of despair in this stanza is established by the speaker's echoes of Exodus 10:21-22: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. . . . and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days." Vaughan probably comes to this verse by way of Herbert who writes in similar terms in "Sighs and Groans" of the darkness he deserves: "I have deserved that an Egyptian night / Should thicken all my powers" (80, ll.14-15). For readers familiar with "Sighs and Groans," they would recall the intensity of the speaker's cry for a divine reprieve in the face of his sin and frailty, and bring back to "Cock-Crowing" a sense of the unworthiness of the human spirit in the face of God. To deny God, to blind our eye to Him, is to align oneself with the cursed Egyptians rather than the Israelites, and the result is to live in "shades of death" or the "shadow of death," a phrase taken from the Psalms and Job to convey the bleakness of God's absence — the absence of Light.

The mood of despair recorded in this stanzas is soon overthrown by a tone of hope established through a series of allusions to Scripture and *The Temple* in the final three stanzas:

> If joys, and hopes, and earnest throes,

And hearts, whose pulse beats still for light

Are given to birds; who, but thee, knows

A love-sick soul's exalted flight?

    Can souls be tracked by any eye

    But his, who gave them wings to fly?

Only this veil which thou hast broke,

And must be broken yet in me,

This veil, I say, is all the cloak

And cloud which shadows thee from me.

    This veil thy full-eyed love denies,

    And only gleams and fractions spies.

O take it off! make no delay,

But brush me with thy light, that I

May shine unto a perfect day,

And warm me at thy glorious Eye!

    O take it off! or till it flee,

    Though with no lily, stay with me! (251-52, ll.31-48)

Vaughan draws upon the Canticles, the most exquisite epithalamium, to speak to divine penetration of the soul. Like the Bride of Christ in the Song of Solomon, the speaker is "love-sick": "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love" (5:8; cf. 2:5). He longs to be with his beloved, though he is inadequate and unworthy, for he has "no lily" upon which Christ might feed: "My

beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies" (2:16). To reach the voice of

his beloved, the speaker turns to the language of ascent from the Psalter and Isaiah. We

hear in the "exalted flight" of his winged soul echoes of Psalm 55:6: ". . . Oh that I had

wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest"; and of Isaiah 40:31: "But

they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as

eagles." The dream of ascent articulated by the Psalmist and Isaiah is immersed in the

rhetoric of self comfort, for both biblical authors find hope in an unstable world through

the imagery of upward retreat.[62]   In this biblical metaphor of spiritual ascent, Vaughan

draws into his poem a sense of comfort and security in an anticipated union with God.

And yet his final allusions to *The Temple* and Scripture make it clear that despite his

soul's willing ascent to God, divine presence is not fully available in this world. Through

the complex biblical image of the veil which appears 45 times in 42 Bible verses,

Vaughan speaks to his experience of a limited participation. As Mahood explains,

through the image of the veil Vaughan draws upon the many biblical associations of the

veil to convey "all the limitations that mortal life imposes on the soul: the body, space

and time" (25). The veil for the speaker in this context is his flesh, that which separates

him for the "full-eyed" love of God. He cannot·be brushed with light as was Moses,

whose luminous countenance was noted after his meetings with God (Exod. 34:29-35).

Unlike the high priest, Vaughan cannot go beyond the veil in the Temple, on the Day of

Atonement to experiences the numinous. And though Jesus "broke" the veil at his

crucifixion (Matt. 27:51, Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45), the speaker's flesh prevents him from

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[62] Frye discusses the biblical metaphor of ascent in some detail in *The Great Code*, 158-63.

beholding "with open face . . . as in a glass the glory of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18). In

responding to this line, the biblically-literate reader, as Bloch puts it, "summon[s] to mind

a number of related passages, each with its own train of associations, its nuances and

implications" (61). We recall Moses's communion with God, the veil of the Temple, the

rent veil at Christ's crucifixion and the removing of the veil under the new dispensation,

and we attempt to integrate into "Cock-Crowing" this history of divine concealment and

revelation.

So too might we might bring to bear on the poem Herbert's "The Glance" or

Quarles's Emblem 12 (Book 5), for it is Herbert who speaks of the "full-eyed" love that

we will see, when "more than a thousand suns disburse in light" on Christ's return (168,

11.20,23), and Quarles who, in his meditation on Psalm 42:2, *"When shall I come and*

appear before God?," describes "The gracious presence of thy glorious eyes" (3:97-98).

Both of these possible pre-texts conceive of divine presence in terms of light. The

speaker of "Cock-Crowing" expands this metaphor into the broader context of daybreak

("that I may shine unto a perfect day," 1.45) by quoting a fragment of Proverbs 4:18: "But

the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect

day." Though he recognizes that the fulness of divine presence must be delayed until the

removal of his veil, the speaker ends his meditation by associating himself with the just

and by invoking the language of divine presence from the Canticles: "Though with no

lily, stay with me!"

It is apparent that in "Cock-Crowing," to experience the speaker's participation in

and separation from the divine, the reader must navigate a whole network of texts, must

journey back or forth through the landscapes of *The Temple*, the Hermetica and Scripture.

We must participate in his associative process if we are to experience Vaughan's "free

association" that "leaves the final product far from the original germ, yet logically

connected to it" (Hewitt 9). As we are repeatedly thrust into other textual worlds and

return to the poem, we form a series of intertextual patterns between text and pre-text to

establish the meanings that lie between the texts. These pre-texts provide an

indispensable context within which Vaughan's poetry discloses its fullest meanings to the

reader.

Vaughan's transformative, eclectic imitation, therefore, requires an active reader

who can navigate, as Bahktin terms it, "the interaction of several consciousnesses"

(*Problem* 18). Even when he transforms the pre-text, Vaughan does not hide its origins.

His poetic voice is distilled from the voices he has read, and so he assigns his words, his

poetic self, elsewhere. His self is not original but is a space upon which other voices —

those which Vaughan considers sacred — are written. Yet in this lyric and many others,

there is no textural or conceptual disruption, no transparent syntactic or ideological

fractures. However, as Plett has said, our response to these intertextual lyrics depend on

the reader's "quotation competence," which is challenged when a text lacks both explicit

and implicit quotation markers"(12). For in missing quotations and allusions, the reader

may neglect to open up dialogues between the pre-text(s) and Vaughan's lryic (15).[63]

This is particularly true of the modern reader, for whom the Bible and the Hermetica are

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[63] As Still and Worton put it, "a delicate allusion to a work unknown to the reader, which therefore goes unnoticed, will have a dormant existing in the reading" (2).

largely uncharted territory.

Nevertheless, given Vaughan's tendency to mark his quotations and allusions, few readers can ignore the "old voices" through which he writes his poetic self into existence. As I have demonstrated, his imitative strategies tend to consistently reflect his desire to underscore the referential character of his borrowings, particularly his scriptural borrowings. He is not so much one who invents, but one who glosses or transmutes. His voice is often framed by a biblical voice which he engages in dialogue, and in this dialogue he makes, as Bloch says of Herbert, "something that is neither old nor new" which is "the true measure" of his originality (110,111). At other times, Vaughan slightly transforms the quotation to embed it in his verse to suit his personal perception and to authorize his word. Finally, we have seen Vaughan's absorption of a series of voices, which are seamlessly interwoven in his verse to forge a distinct poetic identity. These layers of intertextual strategies make for a highly dialogic poetics, and we must, like the speaker of Vaughan's "Regeneration," grope our way through many landscapes if we are to fully embrace the richness of his poetic "meaning."

As I have also suggested, it is not surprising that Vaughan would wish to embed voices from the past within his verse. As Morawski's research demonstrated, in a world of revolution, there is comfort and authority in quoting old voices. The presence of these voices, repeated verbatim or transformed, supports the pervasive tone of nostalgia in his literary corpus— his longing to retreat to that time before the "sacred rose," Charles I, was brutally "cast down" by "a vile weed" (*Complete Poems* 64). Thus, in his art of assemblage, Vaughan asserts duplication over innovation, and appropriates for his verse the authority accorded to Scripture, *The Temple* and the *Corpus Hermeticum*.

Chapter 5

The Poetics and Politics of Structural Intertextuality

> Beauty consists in colours; and that's best
>
> Which is not fixed, but flies, and flows;
>
> The settled *red* is dull, and *whites* that rest
>
> Something of sickness would disclose.
>
> Vicissitude plays all the game. . . .
>
> -Vaughan, "Affliction [I]" (219, ll.25-29).

We have observed in the preceding chapter Vaughan's art of assemblage. In the process, we have witnessed the paradox of citation; that is, quotation and allusion are governed by competing centripetal and centrifugal forces. Though Bakhtin argues that these forces are intrinsic to language itself, quotation and allusion intensify or, at the very least, render visible this feature of language, for readers who recognize pre-texts must interrupt linear textual processing to become, in Barthes's terms, an echo chamber for the fragmented voices of the past.[1] Post, Lewalski and Thomas intimate that Vaughan does not only borrow particular biblical signs (words, figures, images), but biblical structures as understood by Reformation exegetes in order to harness the centripetal force of allusion.[2] That is to say, it is argued that Vaughan encodes within his lyric collection the

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[1] In *The Dialogic Imagination*, Bakhtin argues that "every concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear. The process of centralization and decentralization, of unification and disunification, intersect in the utterance" (75).

[2] When I refer to the perceived underlying "structure" of Scriptures throughout this Chapter, I refer to its perceived mythical or literary form, which will be explained in more detail as my argument

biblical "narrative" of fall, redemption and restoration, the entire "myth" of salvation

history, to create a sense of unity and continuity. Vaughan is seen both to embed his lyric

collection within the macro "archetypal structure which extends from creation to

apocalypse" and the micro Pauline structure which extends from election to salvation

(Frye, *Anatomy* 315; Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics* 13-27).

I do not deny in this chapter that Vaughan inscribes to some extent the biblical

"narrative" of fall, redemption and restoration in and across some of his lyrics. This is not

unexpected in a Christian poet taught to perceive himself and the world in terms of a

Providential view of history. I shall demonstrate that Vaughan employs typological

exegesis in *Silex Scintillans* to locate several lyrics and lyric clusters in such a narrative.

However, I hope to establish that Vaughan's poetics of nostalgia — his appreciation of

the past and distaste for the present — frequently undermines the sequential, progressive

structure of the biblical "narrative" in individual poems and across the entire collection.

Rather than read *Silex Scintillans* as a narrative which progresses from creation to

apocalypse or from the speaker's election to his redemption, I propose that Vaughan's

collection is indebted to the structure of the Psalter. The Psalms, for Vaughan and his

contemporaries, were viewed as a flexible form which permitted the Psalmist to record

the vicissitudes of the human spirit (Abbot "To the Reader" n.p.). Though, as Henry

Hammond remarks, the Psalms can be divided into some categories, "Penitential, and

Eucharistical" for example, "all will not be comprised under this or the like divisions"

(*Psalms* 4). Like that of the Psalms, the structure of *Silex Scintillans* is based on the

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unfolds.

notion of *variatio* or variety, "a simple yet flexible structural concept" which permits the

exhibition of a variety of psychological states (Warkentin 18).[3] Given his richly

associative mind and his sensitivity to the political and religious instability of

Interregnum Britain, I believe Vaughan is drawn to this loose, fluid structure of the

Psalter as it permits him to examine the unstable self in a fractured society. I will

consider, therefore, in this chapter the poetics and politics of Vaughan's structural

allusions to Scripture. However, in order to address the broader critical issue of the

structure of *Silex Scintillans*, I will embed my deliberation within the larger scholarly

discussion of that work as a structural unit or narrative.

I.   Structuralist Readings of *Silex Scintillans*

A critical debate has surfaced of late on the nature of lyric collections. Mary

Thomas Crane argues that poetic collections, derived from the "aphoristic miscellany

tradition" are antithetical to narrative in that the Renaissance lyric collection involves the

humanist practice of gathering fragments ("sayings") of texts and framing them in a poem

in such a way as to "undermine attention to narrative sequence" and to forestall "a

narrative history of personal experience" (162-63). Composition of the lyric subject in

these poetic compendiums eschews the creation of a coherent narrative of self; such

collections, in fact, fashion a series of unstable and fragmented selves inscribed in each

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[3] *Variatio* is a classical rhetorical principle which, according to Warkentin, "dictated that poems on similar themes, or treated from different points of view, or initiated by the same moment of an experience, be separated from each other, often in different books of the same work" (18). The structural principle of *variatio* resulted in collections of poems devoid "of the expected linking devices, especially those of plot and narrative," making the "relation between fragment and whole . . . so difficult to handle" (15). The Psalter was viewed by early-modern theologians and poets as structured according to the principle of variation as I discuss later in this chapter.

lyric. Genette reaches the same conclusion about the structural patterns of such

collections:

> In a collection of short poems, the autonomy of each piece is generally
>
> much greater than the autonomy of the constituent parts of an epic, a
>
> novel, or a historical or philosophical work. And even though the
>
> thematic unity of the collection may be more or less strong, the effect of
>
> sequence or progression is usually very weak, and the order of the
>
> constituent parts is most often arbitrary. Each poem is in itself a closed
>
> work that may legitimately claim its own title. (*Paratexts* 312)

The contributors to *Poems in Their Place: The Intertextuality and Order of

Poetic Collections* reject the notion that poetic collections are generically distinct from

narrative. Earl Miner insists on a category of "integrated collections" which he defines as

"minimal" or "plotless narratives," among which he includes Herbert's *The Temple*.

These plotless narratives afford one who reads sequentially "a pleasure and significance

not available to one who reads the lyrics separately" ("Some Issues" 21). Such integrated

collections are governed by principles of "sequential continuousness . . . progression,

recurrence and varying relation between the units of a collection" (40) While I

sympathize with Miner's attempt to describe the intertextual relations between lyrics in a

collection, I am compelled to ask whether such "plotless narratives" exist or whether they

are the wish-fulfillment of a pattern-seeking animal who finds unity and progression in

the face of discontinuousness and fragmentation.[4] One need not forget Foucault's maxim

that scholars frequently desire to find "a principle of cohesion that organizes the discourse

and restores it to its hidden unity" (*Archaeology of Knowledge* 149).[5] Annabel Patterson

adopts a less radical view than Miner when she suggests that we can find categories and

thematic groupings in the miscellanies of Jonson and Marvell and that such groupings in

sequence produce order and coherence in a text previously thought to be no more than an

assortment of unrelated or loosely related verse ("Jonson, Marvell" 95-118). Though

James Loxley also reads many of the poetic collections of the late 1640s as "a single

signifying unit" with a singular purpose, he does not argue for narrative structure (223).

Patterson and Loxley, then, also resist Crane's assertion that the lyric compendium is a

collection of moments, fragments and segments, and adhere to the structuralist imperative

to reduce "all 'surface' features of the work . . . to an 'essence', a single central meaning

which informed all the work's aspects" (Eagleton 112).

Vaughan scholars have entered the debate on the coherence of lyric collections to

discuss the relative merit of structuralist readings of *Silex Scintillans*. Calhoun reads

Silex Scintillans as a "continuously mobile yet enduring design" distinct from those

collections of other poems with their "separate lyrics, detached, hostile to expansive

---

[4] It is surprising that Miner wishes to identify the lyric collection with narrative as, generically speaking. lyrics share more features with drama than narrative, particularly when we keep in mind that the words of the lyric (while written) appear to be spoken by the lyric subject. In *The Idea of Lyric*, W.R. Johnson's examines *Silex Scintillans* and finds that forty-six percent of Vaughan's lyrics are I-You, fifty-one percent meditative and the remainder a miscellaneous assortment (6). The I-You poems are surely closer to a scene of dialogue, while the "oral" meditative poem might suitably be categorized a dramatic monologue or overheard interior monologue.

[5] Foucault believes that scholars use a heuristic rule of coherence to resolve "the greatest possible number of contradictions. . . by the simplest means" (*Archaeology of Knowledge* 149).

movement, fulfilling no order greater than their own . . . " (*Henry Vaughan* 19,18). He

finds in *Silex Scintillans* a "serial operation," a "dramatic narrative" rooted in both

multiplicity and unity: "The sequence, then, represents an action that moves from one

kind of unity — limited, alien, and defiant of change — through a separation of parts,

multiplicity, then back to unity," bearing a theme of "return, recovery, reform" (*Henry*

Vaughan 135). Though Calhoun is initially reluctant to use the words narrative or plot to

describe the relationship between or across lyrics in *Silex Scintillans*, he is soon at ease

with these terms, arguing that the collection conforms to a basic structure or "formula"

(*Henry Vaughan* 136), describes any lyrics that do not conform to the narrative

progression as punctuations in the lyric continuum, and finally provides a paraphrase of

the "plots" of both parts.[6] Though Lewalski finds that the two parts "are composed of

discrete poems" she too insists "that the volume as a whole has impressive unity as Part I

presents "the earlier stages of the speaker's experiences as a Christian pilgrim" and Part II

records the "advance in the speaker's spiritual life" towards spiritual assurance and

calmness (318-19,322).

At the other end of the critical spectrum, Seelig finds no structural pattern,

controlling metaphor, or "overall scheme" in *Silex Scintillans* (44) but discovers recurrent

themes: "It is even more difficult to find a consistent movement or development in *Silex*

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[6] Calhoun's interpretation had evolved over time. In his unpublished dissertation, Calhoun discussed the collection in terms of "groups" and "sequences" determined by "place," "subject," "dominant image" and "voice" rather than narrative though his description of the work as a "superstructure" and his revelation of the "master-plan of the book" suggest his propensity to read *Silex Scintillans* as narrative. He writes: "Vaughan expands his thoughts beyond single poems to create tightly integrated sequences of poems. The sequences in turn fall into more general thematic groups, and the groups, in their own sequence, create the large pattern and form of *Silex Scintillans*." He concludes that Vaughan conceived of his poems "as a unified book rather than a mere collection of miscellany." (*The Poetics* 76-78).

Scintillans than in *The Temple*, but easier to see Vaughan's concentration on three main

themes or topics:" the book of creatures, meditations on biblical passages or incidents

and poems about divine revelation and the poet's relationship with God (55).[7] Seelig

reminds us, however, that "these three designations are of course emphases, not hard-and-

fast categories" (55). So too has Rudrum made note of frequent themes or motifs in the

collection -- potentiality, transfiguration, penitence, mourning, hiddenness, divine

immanence in nature — without suggesting these themes are explored by a single,

evolving lyric subject (*Henry Vaughan* 32-119).[8]

II.   Structural Intertextuality: Biblical Narrative and *Silex Scintillans*

Several of those critics who read *Silex Scintillans* as a structured narrative

intimate that such structure is embedded in the "narrative" of Scripture. Post claims,

"viewed in its entirety, *Silex*, like the Bible, moves from Genesis to Revelation, beginning

to end, light to darkness" (*Henry Vaughan* 190).[9] Though Noel Thomas makes no

explicit claim in this regard, he discusses *Silex Scintillans* sequentially in terms of the

---

[7] It is interesting that though *The Temple* has often been seen as an ecclesiastical "narrative" by many. Colie argued some time ago that "as a whole [it] resists schemes to organize it into a consistent structure, although scholars have tried to fit it to one or another Procrustean bed" (51-52). I think Colie's point is equally applicable to *Silex Scintillans*. In more recent days, Shuger argues for the advantages of "modern critical practice" which "no longer forces one to discovery unity anyway" and begins with the question of whether "the *disunity*... can be shown to be meaningful" (92). Nevertheless, it would be unwise to ignore or dismiss wholly the thematic linkages in lyric clusters in *Silex Scintillans*, as I discuss later in this chapter.

[8] In earlier criticism, Durr also identifies recurrent metaphors (growth, dark journey, spiritual espousal).

[9] The basis for such a claim is rather weak, however, as Post relies on a subjective and arbitrary sense of poetic achievement: "*Regeneration* (a morning poem) stands in clear opposition to *The Night* (an evening poem), and as Vaughan's two finest poetic achievements, they help both to map the "progress" of the collection and to indicate the temporal poles in the two parts around which the devotional imagination gathers" (*Henry Vaughan* 191).

themes of "infant innocence," "the old white prophets" and "a door opened in heaven," appealing to the biblical pattern of beginnings, foreshadowing and endings. Further, Thomas argues that Vaughan's is a teleological poetics of revelation concerned with moving the reader towards Apocalypse. Lewalski's identification of a "biblical frame" which consists of the two controlling metaphors of pilgrimage (Part I) and apocalyptic (Part II) suggests that she too finds a biblical structure inscribed in Vaughan's collection.

In light of these claims, a student of biblical allusion in *Silex Scintillans* should not dismiss out of hand the possibility that the work is an intertext upon which Scripture's "unity" is written. After all, Frye's claim that the mythic structure of the Bible formed the structures of western literature is, at times, convincing (*The Great Code, Words with Power*).[10] Frank Kermode had reached a similar conclusion in his theory on textual endings, "The Bible is a familiar model of history. It begins at the beginning . . . and ends with a vision of the end . . . the first book is Genesis, the last Apocalypse. Ideally, it is a wholly concordant structure, the end is in harmony with the beginning, the middle with beginning and the end" (*The Sense of an Ending* 6). As such, Kermode, like Frye, believes the Bible served as a structural model for literary "images of the grand temporal consonance," in which one finds concord "between beginning, middle and end" (17, 178).

Frye and Kermode articulate a view of Scripture shared by Vaughan and his

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[10] Combrink notes that structuralist readings of Scripture generally overlook the generic, thematic and stylistic incongruity of the biblical canon. However, he further indicates that many biblical scholars who practice structural exegesis do not attempt to argue for an overarching structure which relates Scripture as a totality. Most concern themselves with particular biblical books, rhetorical patterns or lesser narrative structures. As such, they direct their attention to one or two passages, analyzing a very limited section of Scripture (715-18). For an introduction to the history of biblical exegesis see David Dockery's *Biblical Interpretation: Then and Now*.

contemporaries; a foundational cultural text, Scripture was viewed as a coherent meta-

narrative or grand narrative during and after the Reformation. Rather than interpret

Scripture as a disparate collage, Reformers engaged in figural exegesis to render the

sixty-six biblical books a singular linear narrative:

> The emphasis in figural interpretation of the Bible is on the whole
>
> putatively temporal sequence narrated, and on the fact that inclusion in it
>
> shapes into one story the whole set of independent biblical stories covering
>
> its chronological subsequences. . . .In the service of the one temporally
>
> sequential reality the stories become figures one of another, without losing
>
> their independent or self-contained status. . . .all of them together form one
>
> literal narrative. (Frei 28)

Though Reformers emphasized the literal meaning of Scripture, typological exegesis was

seen as a means to acknowledge the literal historical value of each text while establishing

connections between biblical objects, people and events not otherwise transparently

related. Old Testament persons, objects or events were seen to foreshadow Christ or a

feature of the Christian dispensation, an association which depended on the interpretation

of Scripture as a:

> record of the long development by which God, with a redemptive purpose
>
> always in mind, called Israel into being out of Egypt, led her through the
>
> wilderness, made a covenant with her, brought her into Canaan, guided
>
> and admonished her through her troubled history . . . and consummated his
>
> relationship by sending his Son in Jesus Christ — thereby effecting an

eternal salvation by establishing a people of God whose membership is

open to all. (Hanson 783-84)[11]

It is within this early-modern hermeneutic of sequence, resemblance and coherence that

Roberts, Vaughan's contemporary, asks readers of Scripture to observe "*the accurate*

Concord and Harmony of the Holy Scriptures" (37-38). Given Christ's centrality to both

testaments ("*What are the whole Scriptures, but as it were the spirituall swaddling-*

cloathes of the Holy child Jesus?), the reader must "*parallel heedfully the Old and New*

Testament together" (50,55). So too did Thomas Hall insist on "the sweet Harmony and

consent" in the Scriptures, "the Old Testament agreeing with the New," reminding the

---

[11] Typological interpretation as an intertextual strategy of cohesion is, of course, an intrinsic feature of Scripture. Though typological exegesis is not a feature of the Hebrew Bible, Alter explains that there is in the Old Testament a "sense of absolute historical continuity and recurrence, or an assumption that earlier events and figures are timeless ideological models by which all that follows can be measured" for many biblical writers "saw history as a pattern of cyclical repetition of events" (*The World* 117). In the New Testament, exegesis was most commonly used by Paul who, as Calvin demonstrates in *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, used intertextual strategies to demonstrate the continuity between Hebrew texts and Christian doctrine. As Herbert Marks argues, "Paul, having appropriated the [Hebraic] scriptural figure, incorporates it as part of a dramatic sequence in which he and his contemporaries are the ultimate term" (79). It is upon this Pauline intertextual exegesis that Calvin's discussion of "The Similarity of the Old and New Testaments" is based: "Both [testaments] can be explained in one word. The covenant made with all the patriarchs is so much like ours in substance and reality that the two are actually one and the same. Yet they differ in the mode of dispensation" (*Institutes* 1:429). Similarity was perceived in terms of degree of exposure to promise and fulfillment: "But the gospel did not so supplant the entire law as to bring forward a different way of salvation. Rather, it confirmed and satisfied whatever the law had promised, and gave substance to the shadows. . . .the gospel differs from [the whole law] only in clarity of manifestation" (1:427). Luther took a different view of the "law," arguing for its negation in the face of the "gospel": "But because they [the world] mingle the Law with the Gospel they must needs be perverters of the Gospel. For either Christ must remain and the Law perish, or the Law must remain and Christ perish. For Christ and the Law can by no means agree and reign together in the conscience" (*Commentary upon Galatians* 221). The rule of grace, according to Luther, erased the need for the righteousness of the law, from whose bonds we are freed in Christ. Nevertheless, both Luther and Calvin engage in an exegetical practice grounded in shadow and substance, promise and fulfillment which relied upon each distinct biblical narration participating in a single overarching narrative of salvation history in which Christ was figured as the fulfillment of the covenant. Though such a reading of the continuity of the Old and New Testaments was generally uncontested during and after the Reformation, Anabaptists believed that one should only argue from the New Testament, emphasizing the distinctions between the Old and New Testaments (Stephens 32).

reader that "if any place seem to contradict another, the fault lies in our own blindnesse, and not in the Scripture, which is alwais at peace with it selfe" (124); and who can forget George Herbert's vision of scriptural interpretation as the location of each textual "constellation" within a single story:

> Oh that I knew how all thy lights combine,
>
> And the configurations of their glory!
>
> Seeing not only how each verse doth shine,
>
> But all the constellations of the story.
>
> ("The H. Scriptures II" 56, ll.1-4)

In light of the dominant perception of Scripture as a structured "story" as established internally in the epistles of St. Paul and externally through Reformation and Post-Reformation figural exegesis, it is necessary to determine whether Scripture's "narrative" is inscribed in individual poems in *Silex Scintillans*, across poems sequentially placed in the collection and within the lyric collection in its entirety. Such exploration may assist us to address the more general question of whether *Silex Scintillans* is a "plotless narrative."

In several lyrics in *Silex Scintillans*, Vaughan's material allusions have a cumulative effect insofar as they form a structural allusion to the biblical narrative as "a definitive myth, a single archetypal structure extending from creation to apocalypse" through which the speaker can organize his spiritual reality (Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* 315). Such structural allusion is most common in those lyrics influenced by the Pauline typology of 2 Corinthians, Romans and Galatians. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul establishes

Christ as the antitype of Adam: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. . . .And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. . . .The first man is of the earth, earthly; the second man is the Lord from heaven" (15:22,45,47).[12] Vaughan incorporates this biblical passage into his devotional verse on more than one occasion to wed Genesis and the Gospels, Adam and Christ. This is perhaps most effective in "Easter-Hymn," a poem which celebrates the remedial role of Christ after the defilement of paradise. The speaker compresses in the first few lines of the poem the consequences of fall and redemption:

> Death, and darkness get you packing,
>
> Nothing now to man is lacking,
>
> All your triumphs now are ended,
>
> And what *Adam* marred, is mended: (216, ll.1-4)

Though the crucifixion of Christ is not made manifest in the first few lines of the poem, a typological relationship is soon established between the old and new covenants, for the speaker advances in "Easter-Hymn" from the sin of the first Adam, the type, alluded to in the fourth line of the lyric, to the inheritance of the saints in the last days through the sacrifice of the second Adam, the anti-type:

> And by his blood did us advance
>
> Unto his own inheritance,
>
> To him be glory, power, praise,

---

[12] This typological relationship is more simply stated in Romans, where Paul writes that Adam "is the figure of him that was to come" (5:14).

From this, unto the last of days. (216, ll.15-18)

It is the passion, signified here by "his blood," that effects the transformation of the

landscape of death and darkness, described at length at the poem's centre. As was

commonplace in early modern devotional lyrics, the passion reinvests death with a

positive signification. Death is now no more than "a nap" (216, l.6), a vehicle through

which the aged and weak acquire "new strength" (216, ll.9-10), a view of death

originating in Romans 6:9: "Knowing that Christ being raised from the death dieth no

more; death has no more dominion over him."[13] In overcoming death, the second Adam

projects the speaker to the end of salvation history, "the last of days" (216, l.18), just as

Paul in 1 Corinthians 14 progresses from the resurrection of Christ to the resurrection of

the dead. The speaker's references to biblical events and figures immerse us in the

Pauline typological exegesis of 1 Corinthians 15, itself an economical account of

salvation history.

In "Man's Fall and Recovery," the speaker is projected into each major

episode of salvation history — he turns unwillingly from the everlasting hills of Eden, he

is enslaved to his passions after the Fall, his sins are strengthened under the old

dispensation at Mount Sinai, and he embraces the new dispensation at the Passion, all

within the first twenty-seven lines of the poem. He systematically progresses from

shadow to substance, law to grace, following the orthodox typological formula, and

concludes by expressing the assurance that the antitype affords him:

---

[13] Vaughan's allusions to Romans 6:9 and 1 Corinthians 15 in "Easter-Hymn" may have liturgical origins. In the Book of Common Prayer, the anthems to be sung or said at Morning Prayer on Easter Day were Romans 6:9-11 followed by 1 Corinthians 15:20-22.

This makes me span

My fathers' journeys, and in one fair step

O'er all their pilgrimage, and labours leap,

For God (made man,)

Reduced the extent of works of faith; so made

Of their *Red Sea*, a *spring*; I wash, they wade. (164, ll.27-32)[14]

As Ira Clark states, in "Man's Fall and Recovery" the speaker "precisely explicates the

movement of typology, recalling the old legal condemnation in order to understand

himself and also to praise Christ for mercifully abrogating it by his sacrificial blood"

(Clark 119). Vaughan reveals to the reader that he relies on Pauline typology when he

recites Romans 5:18 in a biblical coda to the poem: "Therefore as by the offence of one

judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the*

free gift came upon all men unto justification by life."

So too in "Faith" we discover a similar movement of thought, for in these

lines Vaughan encodes a traditional typological structure through allusion to Hebrews 9

through 11, perhaps one of the most typological passages of the Pauline epistles.[15] Here

we find clearly outlined the Old Testament high priest as type and Christ as priestly anti-

type, the blood sacrifice of "goats and calves" as type, the blood of Christ as New

Testament antitype, culminating in Paul's conclusion:

---

[14] In the first line of this quotation "this" refers to Christ's "saving wound."

[15] During Vaughan's lifetime, Paul's authorship of Hebrews was in question. In his biblical annotations to the New Testament, Henry Hammond writes, "Whether this *Epistle* were written by Saint *Paul* hath not only of late, but *anciently* been doubted" (765). However, as Paul was generally referred to as its author, I shall include it in the Pauline epistles for the purposes of this paper.

> For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very
>
> image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered
>
> year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect . . . then said
>
> he [Jesus Christ], Lo, I come to do they will, O God. He taketh away the
>
> first [sacrifice], that he may establish the second. By the which will we are
>
> sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
>
> (10:1,9-10)

Speaking in the language of "figure" and "shadow," the author of Hebrews constitutes a

coherent biblical narrative by using the incarnation as the prism through which to read

backward and forward in time.[16] In "Faith," the speaker echoes Paul's conception of the

biblical past by describing the law in the language of ostentatious display and mere shell;

the "Law, and ceremonies" are no more than "A glorious night" (209, ll.13-14) immersed

in "mists" (209, l.19) and are as nothing compared to the "Sun of righteousness" (Mal.

4:2) who reinvests the landscape with "*Light, motion, heat*" and "*Faith, Hope, Charity*"

(209, ll.34-35):

> So when the Sun of righteousness
>
> Did once appear,
>
> That scene was changed, and a new dress
>
> Left for us here;

---

[16] Of Hebrews, Gabriel Josipovici comments, "[it] is the most profound and sustained exploration in the Bible of the relation of Jesus to the Old Testament, and of 'now' to 'then'" (504). Josipovici continues, "[the author's] dismissal of old priestly ritual is of course part of something larger, of a view of the Old Testament as having to do with mere externals and revealing confusion and imperfection, while Christ reveals to us the inner man and brings clarity and perfection, an end to doubt and the fulfillment of what has been promised" (518).

> Veils became useless, altars fell,
>
> Fires smoking die;
>
> And all that sacred pomp, and shell
>
> Of things did fly;
>
> Then did he shine forth, whose sad fall,
>
> And bitter fights
>
> Were figured in those mystical,
>
> And cloudy rites; (209, ll.21-32)

In using the word 'Faith' as the title of this lyric, Vaughan thrusts the reader into the

"mighty roll call of the Old Testament champions of the faith" as delineated in Hebrews

11, which would provide the speaker with the opportunity to describe himself in terms of

the Old Testament "heroic" types (Josipovici 509). And yet, the speaker shows no

interest in his Old Testament forefathers, but is concerned only with the Old Testament as

"shell" (l.28), echoing the language of Puritan typologist Samuel Mather: "The Type is

the Shell, this the Kernel; the Type is the Letter, this the Spirit and Mystery of the Type ..

. " (52). Unlike those lyrics in which Vaughan constitutes the present as a time of veils

and shadows, in "Faith" veils and shadows are the trappings of the past, removed with the

first coming of Christ. In an allusion to the useless veils of Mosaic worship (209, l.29),

Vaughan brings to bear upon his lyric the Pauline image of the blinded minds of the Old

Testament Israelites: "And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children

of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds

were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of

the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ" (2 Corinthians 3:13-14). The faith

of the Old Testament type is elided and the speaker's personal faith, complete in the anti-

type Christ, is his only concern, and such faith is duly rewarded at the poem's conclusion:

> So that I need no more, but say
>
> *I do believe,*
>
> And my most loving Lord straightway
>
> Doth answer, *Live.* (209, ll.41-44)

We do indeed find that a compressed, economical biblical narrative exists within the

borders of these typological lyrics. Just as typological correspondences demonstrate the

unity of the Bible, so too do the inclusion of these correspondences in certain of

Vaughan's poems re-inscribe such narrative unity into individual lyrics. In these

typological lyrics, Vaughan never permits us to imagine absence, loss and the law without

divine presence and grace. The present is defined in terms of substance, grounded in a

New Testament superiority, and the past is conceived of in terms of shadows, figures, and

the hidden; and yet, through typology the two resemble each other, though they differ in

degree. Korshin has argued that this typological exegesis of resemblance "answers to the

fundamental human need to establish predictive patterns between past and present and

between present and future" which generates an overwhelming sense of order (Korshin

99).[17]

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[17] We might relate Vaughan's employment of typological exegesis to the more secular hermeneutics of resemblance that dominated Renaissance and early modern philosophy. As Foucault explains: "Up to the end of the sixteenth century, resemblance played a constructive role in the knowledge

III. Narrative Breakdown in *Silex Scintillans*

Though at times the biblical "narrative" embedded within a lyric offers order and

assurance in a tumultuous and chaotic world, Vaughan does not generally adhere to strict

conceptions of the biblical narrative as one of progression and fulfillment. In fact, he

frequently inverts the typological structure of Scripture through the idealization of the

world of the Old Testament, especially that of Genesis. This inversion has been noted by

both Lewalski and Clark. Clark describing those poems in which inversion occurs as

"antipodal neotypological lyric[s]," though neither identify the political nature of

Vaughan's resistance to typological exegesis. Vaughan's tendency to value the Old

Testament type seems to correspond to his conservative political agenda which associates

the "past" with the utopian and the present (the time of the anti-typical Christ) with social

fragmentation, chaos and noise. Gerald M. MacLean advises that when seventeenth-

century poets refer to the past, in Vaughan's case through references to Genesis, "they

increasingly constructed an idealized version that exemplified the proper workings of

whichever political system suited their purpose" (141). Historical allusions, exemplary

history and a more general appeal to the past became vehicles through which poets could

"represent the past for current political purposes" (143). Genesis is encoded, though

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of Western culture. It was resemblance that largely guided exegesis and the interpretation of texts: it was resemblance that organized the play of symbols, and made possible knowledge of things visible and invisible, and controlled the art of representing them" (*The Order of Things* 17). Just as Old Testament types are signs of New Testament fulfillment, the English landscape was for Vaughan filled with signs, sympathies and correspondences which, though often hidden, ensured connectedness. Knowledge of the world is possible if one deciphers the buried similitudes. In his writings on Vaughan and hermeticism, Rudrum has consistently demonstrated Vaughan's reliance on what Foucault has labelled the *epistime* of similitude, revealing in *Silex Scintillans* Vaughan's dependence on "a complex of kinships, resemblances, and affinitities" (Foucault, *The Order of Things* 54).

indirectly, in Vaughan's discourse with Royalist origins or with the Royalist discourse of

the Caroline state. Though, as we have seen, Vaughan does not completely negate

typological exegesis which associates the Old Testament with shadow and the New

Testament with substance, he more often than not engages with the Old Testament as the

pastoral ideal. While, strictly speaking, Vaughan rarely employs the language of pastoral,

many of his lyrics encode a conventional pastoral sensibility in so far as they afford "us

an easily and instantly apprehended image of perfection and beauty" in a rustic setting

(Sowerby 198). In these poems Vaughan creates a past far superior to the present, a

representation of pastness which stands in direct opposition to that envisaged by

typological exegesis and yet a view shared by members of a residual culture. Bourdieu

has argued that those previously in power who are "unable to restore the *silence of the*

doxa, strive to produce, through a purely reactionary discourse, a substitute for everything

that is threatened by the very existence of heretical discourse"(131). Confronted with the

ideological and repressive state apparatus of an emerging Parliamentarian culture, which

he conceives of as "heretical," Vaughan borrows the language of nature in order to

"restore the doxa to its original state of innocence" (131). A psychological exile in a

newly emerging world, Vaughan becomes, as Joseph Brodsky says of all writers in exile,

"a retrospective and retroactive being," retrospection playing "an excessive role . . . in his

existence, overshadowing his reality . . . " (6). His is a world of pining for that which is

past, the "retrospective machinery . . . delaying the arrival of the present" (8). As an exile

Vaughan must, as Edward Said has theorized, "overcome the crippling sorrow of

estrangement . . . a condition of terminal loss," which he accomplishes by entertaining a

nostalgic pastoral tone which idealizes the past, represented metonymically by Genesis

(137). Allusions to Genesis become a means to construct an Arcadian vision of the

biblical, and by extension, his political past.

In many lyrics, Vaughan saturates his verse with historical allusions from the

book of Genesis, read in early-modern England as both a sacred and historic text. In

alluding to Abraham's angelic visitors in "Religion," Vaughan's becomes a poetics of

nostalgia: "O how familiar then was heaven!" (155, l.14), a sentiment echoed in "Isaac's

Marriage":

> O sad, and wild excess! and happy those
>
> White days, that durst no impious mirth expose!
>
> When Conscience by lewd use had not lost sense,
>
> Nor bold-faced custom banished Innocence; (160, ll.17-20).

Vaughan defines Genesis in terms of divine presence. In the "blessed days of old"

(Begging [II] 265, l.11), "Angels did wind / And rove about" ("Isaac's Marriage" 160,

ll.25-26), Abraham discoursed with a "winged guest," God deigned to wrestle with and

bless Jacob ("Religion" 155, ll.8-13). The past is translated into a pastoral epoch in

which shepherds water their flocks and entertain angels ("The Shepherds" 232). The

patriarchs of Genesis, divorced from the sordid moments of their histories, are rendered

incorrupt. Abraham and Moses, like the shepherds of Bethlehem, are construed as

"Sweet, harmless livers! (on whose holy leisure / Waits innocence and pleasure,)" ("The

Shepherds" 232, ll.1-2) and Rebekkah is all "plain, modest truth," the embodiment of

"sweet, divine simplicity" ("Isaac's Marriage" 161, ll.33,37).

The past, as constituted through the book of Genesis, is nostalgically configured in these lyrics as a time of theophany, a visible or auditory manifestation of God. Such theophany includes the appearance of an Angel of the Lord, regarded from the time of Justin as the pre-incarnate Logos (McComiskey 48). Here Genesis signifies not things yet to come, but that which is lost or absent in the present. In the first five stanzas of "Religion" Vaughan finds in Genesis divine presence in the natural landscape, angels hidden in shades, divinity meeting with humanity in the "cool *myrtle's* canopy," beneath an "oak's green boughs," or at some *"fountain's* bubbling eye" (155, ll.5-8). Vaughan borrows the language of nature here to naturalize the past, rendering the present unnatural, mechanical and exploitative. As MacLean has argued of many Royalist poems, this version of the past does indeed lend "credibility to partisan versions of the present" (141), in particular to Vaughan's view in "Religion" of the present as a time of absence, falsity, poison and disease (156, ll.38-48). The present, marked in other lyrics as a time of Christ's incarnation (God's ultimate presence on earth) is defined in negative terms in "Religion," by lack: "We have no conference in these days;" (155, l.20). The present is also described in the language of death, through marked biblical allusion, to "that *Samaritan's* dead *well,"* (156, l.46). Religion in the present is tainted because of its journey into an almost classical netherworld, as it passes "through the earth's dark veins," seizing "on veins of *sulphur* under ground," reminding the reader of the Stygian river (156, ll.34,40). An exemplary past becomes the tool to comment on ecclesiastical development during the Interregnum, and Vaughan engages in such commentary by immersing Genesis in the Caroline "arcadian rhetoric of natural, rural simplicity" and

then contrasting it with the rhetoric of disease and depravity of present days (Maclean

79). Though Christ is referred to in passing, ("Is the truce broke? or 'cause we have / A

mediator now with thee, / Dost thou therefore old treaties waive / And by appeals from

him decree?" (155, ll.21-24)), he is not the centre of the poem as he is in "Easter-Hymn."

It is the Old Testament characters that are placed at the poem's matrix, the ideal against

which the present must be compared.

Allusions to Genesis in "Isaac's Marriage" also serve to elevate the historical past.

In his extrapolation of Genesis 24:63, Vaughan creates, in MacLean's terms, "nostalgia

for the past and consequent discontent with the present" (158). The introductory

epigraph, "And Isaac went out to pray in the field at the even-tide, and he lift up his eyes,

and behold, the camels were coming" conjures up an atmosphere of a pastoral past of

prayer, devotion and mystical insight which is immediately contrasted with the present in

the first few lines of the poem:

> Praying! and to be married? It was rare,
>
> But now 'tis monstrous; and that pious care
>
> Though of our selves, is so much out of date,
>
> That to renew't were to degenerate. (160, ll.1-4)

Isaac is the exemplar of "conscience" and "innocence" as opposed to "custom,"

"pompous train[s]" and "antic crowds." Given his exemplarity, divinity is made manifest

in his presence: "Angels did wind / And rove about thee, guardians of thy mind," (160,

ll.25-26). So too is Rebekkah described in the language of nature rather than that of art:

> All was plain, modest truth: nor did she come

In *rolls* and *curls*, mincing and stately dumb,

But in a virgin's native blush and fears

Fresh as those roses, which the day-spring wears.

O sweet, divine simplicity! ...   (161, ll.33-37)

The language of Genesis, like the secular language of the halcyon days, is the means by

which Vaughan discredits current conditions.[18]

In "Isaac's Marriage" the natural, pastoral world of Isaac is repeatedly contrasted

with the studied and artful modern world in which the speaker lives; the language of

nature (past) and art (present) are repeatedly invoked and opposed. Isaac is innocence

and Rebekkah chastity, both true icons of divine simplicity; those in the present are

marred by compliment, custom, oaths, studied looks and "painted face!" (160, l.38).

Vaughan intimates that "the corruption of society was synonymous with its departure

from nature, its concern with artifice" as did Davenant in many of his plays: "In

Davenant's plays. . . fashion overturns natural hierarchy and order, subverts language and

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[18]We find in the poem *The Foure Ages of England* (1648) a secular Royalist fashioning of the past remarkably similar in substance to "Isaac's Marriage":

Gone are those golden Halcion daies, wherein
Men uncompell'd, for love of good, fled sin:
When men hug'd right & truth, whose souls being clear,
Baffled the threats of punishments or fear.
No Lawes, no penalties, but there did rest
A Court of equity in each mans brest;

. . . .

Mans quiet nature did not feel that fire,
Which since inflames the world, too great desire.
Kings did not load their heads with Crowns, nor try
By force or fraud, t'invade the liberty
Of their obedient Subjects; nor did they
Strive with Annoynted Soveraigns for sway;
But Prince and people mutually agree
In an indissoluble Sympathie. (1,ll.1-6,19-26)

truth, and perverts normal (natural) human relationships" (Sharpe 269).[19] In marking

such discrepancies, Vaughan clearly echoes the "pastoral myth of halcyon days," a myth

which Patterson argues was "designed to ratify the behaviour and circumstances of the

ruling classes" (*Pastoral and Ideology* 151). Though Vaughan is hardly atypical in

celebrating figures in Genesis as exemplars worthy of imitation, even those most

concerned to write the lives of worthy men and women did not ignore their lapses in

judgment as is evident from the subtitle of Whately's work on the prototypes in Genesis:

Prototypes, Or, The Primary Precedent Presidents Out of the Book of Genesis. Shewing

the Good and Bad things They did and Had (London, 1647). Vaughan's political

mandate, however, does not permit him to address those features of Isaac, Rebecca,

Rachel and other inhabitants of Genesis which render them less than ideal.

In retreating backwards in time, in lyrics like *The Retreat*, the speakers find

themselves stripped of the "black art" and "sinfulness" that accompanies the progress of

time: "Some men a forward motion love, / But I by backwards steps would move, / And

when this dust falls to the urn / In that state I came return." (*The Retreat*, ll.29-32). Leah

Marcus has said of Vaughan regarding his view of childhood that which might be applied

to his vision of Genesis: "with no confidence in the future, he was locked into nostalgia

for the past, into a need to recapture somehow --through death if not in life — the steady

white light which shines upon childhood" (175). Achsah Guibbory echoes this sentiment

in *The Map of Time*, when she describes this regressive impulse in Vaughan as "a desire

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[19] Vaughan repeatedly contrasts nature and art in his lyrics, particularly in those which portray female subjects. See, for example, *The Daughter of Herodias* and *St. Mary Magdalene*.

to reverse the pattern of history." She finds in Vaughan's elegies "a desire to remedy the degenerative course of history by returning to the purer time in the past" (263). Vaughan, she writes, feels "trapped in time" (263).

Though Vaughan's references to Genesis in "Religion" and "Isaac's Marriage" may strike the reader as nostalgic reflection rather than transparent polemic, his conflation of references to Genesis and the Canticles clearly situates the idyllic past within an ecclesiastical context. Though interpreted literally as a song composed by Solomon upon the occasion of his marriage with Pharaoh's daughter, the Canticles were simultaneously read allegorically: the bride was a figure of the Church, and the bridegroom Christ. As Christopher Hill has demonstrated, George Wither and Thomas Brightham advocated the commonplace position that the Canticles provided an allegorical account of the history of the church "from Abel to the last judgment" in Wither's estimation, and "from the time of David till the end of time" according to Brightman (qtd. in Hill, *The English Bible* 366,367). When allusions to Genesis are interfused with allusions to the Canticles in Vaughan's lyrics, we invariably enter the realm of ecclesiastical commentary.

In the case of "Isaac's Marriage," Vaughan begins with an apparent meditation on Genesis 24:63, and yet he seems uninterested in the typical features of this verse appreciated by practitioners of meditation. Calamy, who bases his handbook, *The Art of Divine Meditation*, on Genesis 24:63 is concerned with Isaac's meditation on divine creation while William Whately, late pastor of Banbury, comments that this verse involves Isaac's meditation on "Gods Word and works" (247). Vaughan would appear

unique in his interpretation of this verse in light of the sacrament of marriage. However,

if we examine Jacob Boehme's commentary on Genesis, *Mysterium Magnum. Or, An*

Exposition on the First Book of Moses called Genesis (1654), Vaughan's exposition on

Genesis 24:63 in terms of marriage seems less surprising. Boehme re-interprets the

marriage of Isaac and Rebekah as an allegory of the union of Christ and his Bride, thereby

connecting Genesis 24:63 to the marriage of Christ and the Church in the Canticles (359-

360).[20] Like Boehme, Vaughan conflates in "Isaac's Marriage" the world of the patriarch

and the language of perfumed air, myrrh, incense and spicy clouds found in the Canticles

(161, ll.51-62). "Isaac's Marriage," therefore, may not merely encode the hagiography of

Isaac, "a *young Patriarch*, then a *married Saint*" in order to reflect negatively on the

current state of affairs, but may also promote a more primitive, "natural" vision of the

love between Christ and the Church in those early days. This reference to the blissful

union of Christ and the Church in "Isaac's Marriage" should be contrasted with the

function of the Canticles in "The British Church." For in this poem which immediately

follows "Isaac's Marriage" the speaker cites the Canticles to describe the hidden "hills of

myrrh, and incense" (162, l.4) to which Christ has fled because his bride is stained,

divided and her property pillaged (162, ll.10,19). The landscape of pastoral innocence

can no longer exist in the British church, for the idyllic past of Isaac has been destroyed

by the military machinations of Cromwell.

We find again in "Religion" an intertextual blending of the idyllic landscape of

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[20] Boehme is unlikely the first person to interpret Genesis 24:63 in terms of marriage. In our correspondence, Rudrum suggested to me that such a reading is implicit in the marriage service of the Book of Common Prayer.

Genesis and the imagery of the Canticles through which the speaker renders a political

commentary on the present state of affairs. Vaughan concludes "Religion" with a biblical

coda: "My sister, my spouse is as a garden enclosed, as a spring shut up, and a fountain

sealed up" [Song Sol. 4:12], a verse highly politicized in seventeenth-century England.

The garden metaphor was appropriated by Royalist and Parliamentarian alike as Hill

demonstrates at length (*The English Bible* 126-53). The enclosed garden, like the hidden

"hills of myrrh and incense" becomes for Vaughan the quintessential image of the

invisible Church secreted away from the violence of those who wish to destroy it.

Vaughan's contemporary John Brayne who published *An Exposition Upon the Canticles*

(1651) writes that the garden enclosed differs "from the wildernesse or desert world" in

that it is "enclosed from the world, that those in and of the world cannot come unto her,

or be of her" (16).[21] He continues: "The inclosing of the garden is Gods Ordinance set up

in the Church for the admitting of Members or Believers, and keeping or shutting out

Unbelievers, by which as by a fence it was hedged in" (16). In his *Annotations on the*

Song of Solomon (1658), Arthur Jackson makes more vivid the dangerous force which

lurks outside the garden threatening to invade with bestial violence:

> And then againe she is compared to a *garden enclosed*; 1. Because as
>
> gardens are lesser parcels of ground, taken out and severed from some
>
> larger field, so is the Church, Christs little flock, taken out and separated

---

[21] While in many lyrics Vaughan imagines the true Church as an enclosed garden, in "The Search" he refers to the wilderness or desert as "the refuge of the bride" (l.64), an allusion to Revelation 12:6. In his article "The Temple in 'The Night': Henry Vaughan and the Collapse of the Established Church," Watson argues that the wilderness was a symbol of refuge for the persecuted Royalist, though he notes that it was hardly "a delightful alternative to the institutional temple" (152).

from the world for Christs peculiar service, Joh. 16:19. All the world

besides is as a vast wilderness, full of uncleane beasts, but the Church is

separated from them to be Gods peculiar portion . . . Because as gardens

are alwayes hemmed in with some fence, that beasts may not break into

them, and that passengers that goe by may not goe into them at their

pleasure, and so spoile and marre their beauty, so the Church is continually

secured from being defaced and defiled by the hedge of divine Providence.

(182-83)

In these commentaries of Interregnum England, the garden enclosed becomes an image of

the Church set apart from defacement and defilement, a means to hedge out the bestial

unbeliever that threatens to intrude. Vaughan employed such a vision of the bestial

denigration of his Church at the conclusion of "The British Church" when he appended

the Latin inscription to his poem, which translated reads: "O lily of the valley! how are

you now made food for swine" (162). In "Religion," recognizing that he cannot enjoy a

conference with the divine as did his predecessors, the speaker hastily retreats into the

safety of an invisible congregation closed off from the vulgar crowd. At the poem's

conclusion, the speaker does not revel in the benefits of Christ as antitype but rather

laments the absence of the antitype, as he cries out like David for the Lord's restoring

powers:

Heal then these waters, Lord; or bring thy flock,

Since these are troubled, to the springing rock,

Look down great Master of the feast; O shine,

And turn once more our *Water* into *Wine*! (156, ll.49-53)

The quotation of The Song of Solomon 4:12 at the conclusion of "Religion" leaves the reader, therefore, with the impression that in the present day when "most voices like the *shell*" (156, l.48) rather than the kernel, the true Church becomes insular, set apart, and hidden, while the visible ecclesiastical formation is riddled with confusion and disease.

We do not find in this poem the same assurance inscribed at the conclusion of "Jacob's Pillow, and Pillar," an exposition on Genesis 28:18-22: "Thy pillow was but type and shade at best, / But we the substance have, and on him rest" (296, ll.53-54). In both "Religion" and "Isaac's Marriage," the present ecclesiastical landscape, unlike the pastoral idyl of the past, is infiltrated by "false echoes" and "bold-faced custom" necessitating temporary withdrawal and enclosure. This denigration of the present and elevation of the past created through biblical allusion is antithetical to that displayed by the speakers of Vaughan's typological lyrics who experience the present as a time of substance and view the past as mere shadow. The temporal order is reversed: the past is associated with transparency and clarity and the present with veils and secrecy. A "biblical narrative" based on typological exegesis of shadow and substance is not sustained in these lyrics as the speaker, like all members of the political rearguard, averts his eyes backward.

Vaughan's allusions to Genesis, therefore, frequently mark the radical disjunction of time rather than its progressive evolution. We find a similar sense of temporal discontinuity in many of Vaughan's allusions to Revelation. Revelation, no doubt, is often embraced by Vaughan as a time of restoration and renewal; many of Vaughan's

lyric subjects anxiously await such universal re-creation with "sighs and groans."[22]

However, a distinction must be made between those lyrics in which the speaker "knows

in part" and "sees through a glass darkly" as does Paul in 1 Corinthians 13, and those in

which the speaker finds only "thick darkness" and corruption in the present. Further,

though Revelation is often incorporated in an evolving narrative as the final term, the

forma perfectissima, in many lyrics Vaughan invokes Revelation to address present moral

decay and to threaten his political opposition. Post hints at this feature of Vaughan's

allusions to Revelation when he posits that many of Vaughan's apocalyptic poems are

"not meditations on the impending End but dramatized fictions whose purpose is either to

help inaugurate the religious life or to sustain it on its correct course" (*Henry Vaughan*

192).[23]

We might at first find frequent allusions to Revelation in *Silex Scintillans*

perplexing given Vaughan's status as a political conservative. References to Revelation in

Royalist poetry of the mid-seventeenth century are infrequent, while Parliamentarians

immersed their language in a revolutionary apocalyptic vocabulary. Puritans resorted to

such vocabulary to attack their political opponents as is apparent in William Sedgwick's

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[22] See, for example, the exclamations in "Resurrection and Immortality": "*Would it were Day*! / One everlasting *Sabbath* there shall run / Without *Succession*, and without a *sun* (151, ll.68-70); "Burial": "O come Lord *Jesus* quickly!" (183, l.40); "Corruption": "Arise! Thrust in thy sickle." (197, l.40); "Ascension-day": "Come then thou faithful witness! come dear Lord / Upon the clouds again to judge this world!" (245, ll.61-62); "Day of Judgement [II]": "Descend, descend! / Make all things new! and without end!" (300, ll.45-46). Note that these lyrics which conclude with a call for the end of time should be distinguished from those in which the speaker calls out for the end of his days, a sentiment expressed in many of Vaughan's elegies.

[23] Post believes that allusions to Revelation only function in this manner in Part 1 of *Silex Scintillans*; my readings of poems from both parts suggest that this is a feature common to lyrics across the collection.

speech to fellow Puritans:

> Your adversaries are antichristian, they that will deal with such, must
> come armed with *the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony*,
> *Apocalypse* xii.11. You should carry the blood of the lamb always about
> you, wear it in your hearts, and think you have to do with the enemies of
> that Christ that shed his blood for you, against those that trample that
> blood under their feet by their superstition and prophaneness, such are
> bloody enemies that thirst for the blood of saints. (qtd. in Christianson
> 232-233)

The language of Revelation was the language of social revolution. Leveller Gerrard

Winstanley could not imagine Revelation outside the context of large scale social reform.

Expounding the mysteries of the last things, Winstanley wrote: "Then will come plentiful

manifestations of God in his Saints, and the great will be filled with anger at seeing

inferior people raised up to speak the deep things of God. Tradesmen will speak by

experience the things they have seen in God and the clergy will be slighted" (90).

Though Winstanley describes the last days in the future tense, it is far more common to

find in sectarian usage of Revelation a sense of the present, the "now"; the eschaton "is"

rather than "will be" as Jade Fleck's study of the grammar of eschatology in early modern

prose and poetry documents.[24]

---

[24] Fleck reveals the "revolutionary millenarianism of countless Protestant sects that saw the 'now' as the moment in which they, supposedly the elect, were to usher in the eschatological kingdom and to judge their religious and political opponents" (60-61). To read the revelatory visions of the Quaker Katherine Evans is to sense the immediacy of the "bewildering kaleidoscope of scenes, punctuated by voices and bursts of heavenly hymnody" envisioned by John (Sweet 651). A prisoner of the Inquisition in Malta, Evans writes herself into the landscape of Revelation:

Unlike his political opponents Vaughan rarely reads the future into the present.[25]

However, neither does he consistently envision the future as an extension of the present.

The allusion to Revelation 14:18 at the conclusion of "Corruption," "But hark! what

trumpet's that? What Angel cries / *Arise! Thrust in thy sickle*" (197, ll.39-40), is a call for

the destruction of a present defined by madness and darkness. The speaker of

"Corruption" begins his lament reminiscing on the post-lapsarian landscape of Genesis

which afforded visits with angels and access to Paradise which still "lay / In some green

shade, or fountain" (ll.21-25). The idealization of the past is followed by an account of

the present as a time of divine absence:

> Almighty *Love*! where art thou now? mad man
>
>   Sits down, and freezeth on,
>
> He raves, and swears to stir nor fire, nor fan,
>
>   But bids the thread be spun.
>
> I see, thy curtains are close-drawn; thy bow
>
>   Looks dim too in the cloud,
>
> Sin triumphs still, and man is sunk below
>
>   The centre, and his shroud;

---

and in the time of our great trial, the Sun and Earth did mourn visibly three dayes, and
the horror of death and pains of Hell was upon me: the Sun was darkned, the Moon was
turned into Blood, and the Stars did fall from heaven, and there was great tribulation ten
dayes, such as never was from the beginning of the world: and then did I see the Son of
man coming in the Clouds, with power and great glory, triumphing over his enemies;
(11-12)

[25] In Chapter 6, "The Biblical Theology of *Silex Scintillans*, I will discuss the few instances in
which Vaughan describes the calamities of the apocalypse in the present tense.

All's in deep sleep, and night; thick darkness lies

And hatcheth o'er thy people; (197, ll. 29-38)

While the past is a time when man "shined a little," the present is a time of "thick

darkness" rather than luminescence in Christ. This is the "thick darkness" of Joel 2:2

which precedes the apocalyptic "day of the Lord."[26] While the speakers of the typological

lyrics see "gleams and fractions" of God through the semi-transparent veil of Christ's

flesh, the speaker of "Corruption" faces "close-drawn" curtains through which he sees

only darkness. Though the apocalypse is the third phase of divine self-revelation in the

typological scheme, in "Corruption" the apocalypse returns light to a world of complete

darkness undermining any sense of historical continuity and progression.

In "The Seed Growing Secretly," Vaughan alludes again to the image of the

sickle-wielding angel of the apocalypse, rendering it more violent by fusing the image of

harvesting (Mark 4:26) with the "winged Reaper" who casts the gathered wine into the

"winepress of the wrath of God" (Rev. 14:19):

Then bless thy secret growth, nor catch

At noise, but thrive unseen and dumb;

Keep clean, bear fruit, earn life and watch

Till the white winged Reapers come! (277-78, ll.45-48)

The emphasis of these lines and of the whole poem is not the imminent end, but the

behaviour appropriate in present days. Those who withdraw from the world and its glory,

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[26] The phrase "thick darkness" appears nine times in Scripture; the context of the phrase in Joel 2:2, however, seems to inform this lyric.

"the crowd's cheap tinsel" (277, 1.37) will reap rewards rather than being reaped by the

sickle of death. This ethics lesson is repeated in "The Day of Judgment [I]," a poem

whose initial vision of Revelation's rushing fires and scrolling heavens is followed by a

maxim on spiritual health:

> Three things I'ld have, my soul's chief health!
>
> And one of these seem loath,
>
> A living FAITH, a HEART of flesh.
>
> The WORLD an Enemy,
>
> This last will keep the first two fresh,
>
> And bring me, where I'ld be. (154-55, II.39-44)

Allusions to Revelation do not only negate the present "WORLD" for its essential

core of sin and darkness; they are also employed to attack what Vaughan perceives as a

Parliamentary politics of violence and bloodshed. Relying on the very biblical book that

Parliamentary forces employ to justify their use of violence as the self-proclaimed

"saints" of the millennium, the speaker of "Men of War" collocates Revelation 12:11,

13:10 and 3:21 in order to generate a proof text for Royalist pacifism in the face of

Parliamentary destruction:

> *If any have an ear*
>
> Saith holy *John, then let him hear.*
>
> *He that into captivity*
>
> *Leads others, shall a captive be.*
>
> *Who with the sword doth others kill,*

A sword shall his blood likewise spill.

Here is the patience of the saints,

And the true faith that never faints.

. . . .

Give me, my God! a heart as mild

And plain, as when I was a child;

That when *thy Throne is set*, and all

These *conquerors* before it fall,

I may be found (preserved by thee)

Amongst that chosen company,

Who by no blood (here) overcame

But the blood of the *blessed Lamb*. (283-84, ll.1-8,45-52)

In these lines, Revelation 13:10, "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he

that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword" is merged with Revelation

12:11, "And they overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their

testimony. . . ." These intersecting verses assert that to "overcome" is to resist the sword.

Such a policy of passive resistance is a theme which runs throughout Vaughan's

prose translations. In his translation *Of Temperance and Patience*, we find written "by

patiently enduring we become impassible" and "force must not be used against Fortune,

but Patience" (226, 235). So too in *Mount of Olives* Vaughan praises the practice of

pacifism in "*A Prayer in time of persecution and Heresie*": "Keep me therefore, O my

God, from the guilt of blood and suffer me not to stain my soul with the thoughts of

recompense and vengeance. . . " (167). Vaughan relies on both Genesis and Revelation to

produce the image of Royalist innocence in the face of Parliamentary civil disruption in

his portrayal of Abel. Vaughan brings to bear upon "Abel's Blood" his interpretation of

Abel in *Of Temperance and Patience* as "that great *Arch-type* of Patience in life and

death" (240). The blood of Abel spilled in Genesis 4:10 is used as a metaphor in this

poem for the blood of the innocent of Revelation who cries out "How long, O Lord, holy

and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

(Rev. 6:9), the very words the speaker of "Abel's Blood" recites midway through the

poem (291, l.22). Cain is imagined by the speaker as the origin of dissent, his disciples

bathed in "a deep, wide sea of blood" (291, l.14).[27]

One might interpret Vaughan's identification with the figure of patient endurance

against Cain's butchery as defeatist in its tendency to draw inward; however, I think it

more appropriate to relate such an ethic to the passive underground resistance or

survivalism of which we spoke in the second chapter of this work. In "Misery," the

speaker who rejects "action and blood" (l.67) must come to realize that peace is not "a

lethargy, and mere disease," but a spiritual alternative to the intemperance of violence:

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[27] In John Dryden's "The Hind and the Panther," Cain, the archetype of violence and murder, is presented as the source of the religious divisions in the seventeenth century. Henry King also relies on such an interpretation of Cain as the source of ecclesiastical dissent in his elegy on Charles I when he introduces a simile associating Cain and the murderers of Cain:

> Alas! our Ruines are cast up, and sped
> In that black Totall— Charles is Murthered.
> . . . .
> The Butchery is such, as when by Caine,
> The fourth Division of the world was slaine.
> The mangled Church is on the shambles lay'd,
> Her Massacre is on thy Blocke display'd. ("A Deepe Groane" 111, ll.17-18,23-26)

'The age, the present times are not

To snudge in, and embrace a cot

Action and blood now get the game,

Disdain treads on the peaceful name,

Who sits at home too bears a load

Greater than those that gad abroad.' (235, ll.65-70)

The passive resistance of Vaughan's lyric subjects depends, however, not merely on the

construction of themselves as correlative types of Abel or his anti-type, the suffering

Christ, "*Who* prayed for those that did him kill!" ("Abel's Blood" 292, l.44). Such

resistance also relies on the displacement or transference of the desire for vengeance for

as we have seen in "Corruption," "The Seed Growing Secretly" and "Men of War,"

Revelation is cited to remind readers that violence will be repaid in kind in the final

days.[28] Nevertheless, Vaughan's interest lies less in the punishment of his enemies than

in the reward of the innocent, a reward defined in his allusions to Revelation 7:9, a verse

cited on more than four occasions in the collection: "After this I beheld, and lo, a great

multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and

tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and

palms in their hands": In his notes to this verse, Henry Hammond directs the reader's

attention to Hebrews 12:4, indicating that those who reap such rewards "had not resisted

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[28] In his annotations to Revelation 14:14-15, Henry Hammond also takes comfort in describing in the language of royal restoration this moment when his enemies will be destroyed: That the. . . *golden crown* is an ensigne of *Regal power*, is sufficiently known, and little doubt but here it is so, denoting that, which in the *New Testament* is oft exprest by the style of the *kingdome of God*, or *Christ*, the *destroying*, and *subduing* of his *enemies*, it being the special part of the *Kings office*, *debellare superbos*, to *subdue* all that *hold* out against him (*Paraphrase/Annotations of the NT* 977).

unto blood." The image of the white robe and green palm would seem in this context to

signify a practice of non-violent resistance.[29] In "Palm-Sunday," the reward of "one

green branch and a *white robe*" (267, 1.46) is steeped in the discourse of peace in the face

of tribulation:

> Then like the *palm*, though wrong, I'll bear,
>
> I will be still a child, still meek
>
> As the poor ass, which the proud jeer,
>
> And only my dear *Jesus* seek." (267, 11.39-42)

We find, in another allusion to the same biblical verse in "The Seed Growing Secretly,"

the imagery of Revelation 7:9, the "immortal green" and "spotless white" translated into a

landscape of hiddenness and secrecy in the face of the predatory hawk who would destroy

for the sake of worldly glory (277, 11.21-36). The innocent, therefore, are repeatedly

envisioned in Vaughan's lyrics in the apocalyptic language of peace and meekness, a

language quite common to Royalist polemics after the loss of the second civil war.[30]

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[29] The notes to the Geneva Bible written by Calvinist Reformers in the sixteenth century interpreted the white robe and palms as symbols of purity, felicity and victory.

[30] At Carisbrook-Castle in 1647, Hammond presented an advent sermon on *The Christian's Obligations to Peace & Charity* at the request of His Majesty Charles I. The Royalist politics of pacifism was, of course, convenient given recent losses, but indeed the incipient discourse of peace was revived to surround Charles with the vocabulary of charity and national health. Hammond alludes to such in his letter dated September 16, 1648 to Charles I which prefaces this and other sermons:

> The sermon of *Peace* and *Charity* which Your Majesty was pleased to call for about twelve Weeks since. . . may demonstrate and testifie the reality of Your Majesties inclinations to *Peace*, (which alone could render this trifle considerable to You) and the sincere desire of Your most private undisguised retirements, to make the way back to Your Throne by none but Pacifick means, even then when others thought it their duty by the Sword to attempt it for you. ("For His most Sacred Majesty." n.p.)

For an excellent introduction to the history of pacificism from the late Middle Ages to the Elizabethan period see Ben Lowe's *Imagining Peace*.

Vaughan's interpretation of Revelation in these lyrics as a text which endorses the Royalist ethics of peace complements his attempt to interpret Genesis in terms of an idyllic past, as both exegetical practices evaluate the present in terms of loss, sin and darkness. Vaughan writes of the present in "The Epistle Dedicatory" to *Flores Solitudinis* as a time of "Phantasmes" and fallacies," "trash & illusion" which he compares to the "substantial and certain" supreme fruitions of the future (214). Such a construction of the "now" effectively diminishes the power of his political opponents who are imagined in his lyrics as propagators of present violence rather than of the gospel, men of "sorcery / And smooth seducements" ("The Proffer" 250, ll.34-35) who would "dare divide, and stain" "that seamless coat" of Christ once again ("The British Church" 162, ll.8-10). The future and past as represented by Genesis and Revelation are not so much conceived as part of "a unilinear movement in time distinguished by three interlocked acts - creation, redemption, and judgment — alike presided over by Christ," but rather are seen as time periods through which to lament current political and ecclesiastical affairs (Patrides 204).

Therefore, though Vaughan's typological lyrics envision the present as the time of redemption, as the period in which veils and shadows are removed, in many others the present, by virtue of its relation to the past and future, is exposed as a world in which God is absent or shrouded in "thick darkness." In some lyrics, the speaker finds a sense of antitypical fulfillment in the body of Christ, and celebrates his present state. In others, the speaker finds substance rather than shadow in the biblical past, a substance defined in the language of nature, childhood and innocence. Yet in others, Vaughan's flagging hope generates speakers that rely on the eschatological or ultimate antitype, which often

expresses itself in the language of death rather than the language of hopeful expectation.

Though Post and Lewalski recognize this nostalgia or anticipation in individual lyrics, they remain convinced that the collection as a whole moves from origins to endings based in biblical chronology. However, a reading of Vaughan's lyric compendium as a sequence embedded in a biblical narrative cannot be sustained. This is not to argue that there are no instances in lyric clusters where intertextual strategies re-inscribe a "biblical narrative" in which the reader moves from death to re-birth. One wonders, in fact, given the order of the early lyrics "Death. A Dialogue," "Resurrection and Immortality" and "Day of Judgement," whether Vaughan may have initially intended to work within such a pattern for these four lyrics situated early in the first edition are linked sequentially by introductory or terminal epigraphs which contain biblical quotations. These biblical quotations work to create a dialogue between lyrics, a dialogue of promise and fulfillment or loss and restoration.[31] "Death. A Dialogue" concludes with a quotation from Job 10:21-22 which draws the readers attention to the *forma inferior*, Job, "Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness, and the shadow of death; A land of darkness, as darkness it self, and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness." The subsequent lyric "Resurrection and Immortality" offers hope through Christ, the *forma perfectior*: "Hebrews x 20 *By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.*" "Resurrection and Immortality," in turn, ends with a marked quotation from the

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[31] In the previous chapter, I examined the way in which these introductory or terminal epigraphs worked within a particular poem; here I am concerned with the way in which these quotations generate a dialogue between poems.

apocalyptic Daniel 12:13: *"But go thou thy way until the end be, for thou shalt rest, and stand up in thy lot, at the end of the days"* pointing towards the *forma perfectissima* of the *eschaton*. This is a suitable conclusion given that the following lyric "Day of Judgment [I]," re-inscribes the need for the speaker to internalize the anti-type, thereby recapitulating Christ's suffering:

> Give me, O give me crosses here,
>
> Still more afflictions lend,
>
> That pill, though bitter is most dear
>
> That brings health in the end. (154, ll.33-36)

The "Day of Judgment" concludes with a marked quotation taken from I Peter 4:7: *"Now the end of all things is at hand, be you therefore sober and watching in prayer,* directing the reader once more to the *forma perfectissima* who will appear, according to the speaker, in the not too distant future. In this lyric cluster, therefore, Vaughan transparently connects three moments in time through typological exegesis by invoking the Old Testament type (Job), the New Testament antitype (the risen Christ) and the eschatological antitype (the reigning Christ).

Though Vaughan clearly incorporates biblical quotation in this lyric cluster to participate in a "biblical narrative" of shadow and fulfillment, such an intertextual technique occurs in no other sequence of lyrics in either edition of *Silex Scintillans*. The question remains, however, whether "viewed in its entirety, *Silex*, like the Bible, moves from Genesis to Revelation, beginning to end, light to darkness" despite the absence of

such movement in particular lyric clusters (Post, *Henry Vaughan* 190).[32] This question is compelling because of Vaughan's pronounced preference for Genesis and Revelation. He cites Genesis more often than any other biblical book while Revelation is the third most cited biblical book in his devotional verse.[33] Such frequency of citations to the first and final biblical books has understandably led to the presumption that Vaughan incorporates the biblical narrative sequentially into *Silex Scintillans*

In quantitative terms, however, references in *Silex Scintillans* do not appear to encode a progression from Genesis to Revelation. There are twenty-seven allusions to Genesis and sixteen to Revelation in *Silex Scintillans* (I) compared to twenty-six to Genesis and twenty-three to Revelation in *Silex Scintillans* (II). Though there are seven more references to Revelation in Part II than in Part I, indicating Vaughan's preference for this biblical book in the 1655 edition, this difference is not substantial enough to suggest that the collection as a whole re-inscribes the biblical structure of Creation to Apocalypse. Neither does Vaughan allude to the apocalyptic visions or parables of the prophets, gospels or Pauline epistles with greater frequency in Part II. On the theme of final judgment, for example, Rudrum notes, "it should be stressed that reference to the

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[32] It should be noted that in this passage Post equates Genesis with light and Revelation with darkness and I cannot simply concur with such an assertion, as we have determined that in some instances Vaughan conceives of Genesis as a book of shadows rather than light while in others he does indeed interpret Genesis as a time of blissful union, metaphorically represented in terms of light. The same might be said of Vaughan's treatment of Revelation. As has been demonstrated in this Chapter, Revelation is interpreted ambiguously in Vaughan's lyrics and cannot be reduced to a singular term like "darkness."

[33] Only Genesis and Matthew are cited with more frequency than Revelation. In calculating biblical allusions, I am indebted to Rudrum, whose annotations to Vaughan's poetry provide a comprehensive account of Vaughan's scriptural allusions.

Day of Judgement is pervasive in both parts of *Silex Scintillans*" (*Henry Vaughan* 100).[34]

There is no narrative, "plotless" or otherwise, in the collection embedded in the

biblical narrative as understood by Reformed exegetes. Instead, we find a tension, a

pulling back and forth, between past and future, memory and anticipation, given

Vaughan's conspicuous dissatisfaction with the present. The references to Genesis and

Revelation are on the whole scattered throughout both volumes, thereby undermining any

narrative structure grounded in an "archetypal myth." The past and future, as represented

in Genesis and Revelation, rather than assuming their assigned space in an evolving

Christian history, acquire to some extent a "sameness" as both are imagined as landscapes

of purity (white) and nature (greenness), just as both endorse the politics of swordless

innocence. Such a vision of these two landscapes of incorruption compel the reader to re-

interpret the present not as the time of redemption but rather as a time of divine absence,

human violence, social discord and epistemological fragmentation.

IV.   *Silex Scintillans* and Psalmodic Structure

I have attempted to show that the "biblical narrative" as understood by early-

modern theologians is inscribed within and across a selection of lyrics and lyric clusters

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[34] I do not wholly reject Lewalski's impression that the "controlling vision" in Part II "is apocalyptic, looking beyond the soul's incorporeal life in heaven to the re-creation of nature, the making of all things new" (322). There are several poems on the *eschata* near the end of Part II of *Silex Scintillans*. On the other end of the spectrum, Forey argues that Part I is more truly visionary and apocalyptic than Part II. However, her argument is complex as she finds a different type of apocalyptic in each Part. In Part I she finds that the apocalyptic images are inscribed into the poet's body, thereby empowering the poet, while in Part II, "the moment of general recreation lies at a distance untouched by the poet's language" (178). I am not entirely persuaded by Forey's argument as she uses the concepts of personal spiritual renewal and cosmic re-creation interchangeably, describing both as apocalyptic, justifying such usage because some early-moderns anticipated a spiritual millennium (transformation of the heart) while others anticipated a political apocalypse. Nevertheless, her claim that Vaughan finds "an apocalyptic role for his poetry as the expectant groans of one awaiting the redemption of the body" is convincing (68).

in *Silex Scintillans*. I have concluded, however. that such structural allusion to an overarching biblical narrative is not consistent enough to produce a narrative sequence in the collection as a unit. Lewalski and Donald Dickson suggest that Vaughan may have alluded to a lesser biblical structure to permit narrative development in his poetic collection. Lewalski argues that from the Pauline epistles "the Protestant extrapolated a paradigm against which to plot the spiritual drama of his own life" (15). This paradigm consisted of the sequential stages of election, calling, justification, adoption, sanctification and glorification, from which Protestants constructed the spiritual narrative of their own lives. Though Frye does not speak to the Pauline epistles, he too finds in Scripture not only a "gigantic cycle from creation to apocalypse" but also the lesser cycle of individual development "from birth to salvation" (*Anatomy of Criticism* 316). Lewalski finds this micro-biblical structure embedded in *Silex Scintillans*, for as we noted earlier she discovers in Vaughan's many lyrics a single speaker who advances in his spiritual life with each subsequent lyric. Dickson abandons Lewalski's conception of the speaker's progress from fall to redemption, though he also interprets the collection as an account of the spiritual development of a single speaker. While he rejects a simple structure of "promise and fulfillment" which "obscures the dynamics of the speaker's progress toward sanctification, which is still as much a struggle in Part II as it is in Part I," he concludes that the speaker in all of the lyrics is a single persona who moves between "elation and despair" on his partially successful journey towards sanctification (136). To Dickson, there is one speaker in *Silex Scintillans*, a pilgrim who traverses a spiritual landscape, much as Bunyan's Christian navigates the terrain of Vanity Fair and

the Delectable Mountains on his journey toward the Celestial City. Dickson, like

Lewalski, reads into *Silex Scintillans* a story or plot in which a character attempts to

achieve redemption but is drawn from the narrow path along the way.

After examining the order of the poems in *Silex Scintillans* I can discover no

sequential structure which would suggest that a lone speaker or pilgrim spiritually

evolves from election through glorification. "Thematic groupings," to use Patterson's

term, are indeed present, for we observe a series of speakers at times reflecting on similar

subject matter. We find, for example, in the 1650 edition of *Silex* sequentially arranged

poems which treat sacramental or liturgical themes: "The Morning-Watch," "The

Evening Watch," "Church-Service," and "Burial." So too do we find a sequence of lyrics

concerned with doctrinal or ethical matters: "The Relapse," "The Resolve," "The

Match," and "Rules and Lessons." In the second edition, there are a trinity of poems on

gender and politics, or the politics of gender: "The Knot," "The Ornament," and "St.

Mary Magdalene."[35]

Though I find a recurrence of themes in *Silex Scintillans*, I sense no monoglossia

based in a Protestant or "Anglican" identity. Vaughan's lyric subjects cannot be reduced

to a single figure of spiritual introspection. Some of his speakers are fashioned to re-

inscribe the meanings and values of a residual culture, some are identified in their relation

to an absent loved one, some define themselves as sacred poets in opposition to vain-

speakers, some promote themselves as instructors of ethics, while others define

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[35] In fashioning the "female" in *Silex Scintillans*, Vaughan very often invests her with political meaning. I am presently working on a paper in which I propose that the Virgin Mary, St. Mary Magdalene, Rachel and Rebekkah are incorporated into Vaughan's poems as symbols of a Royalist British Church.

themselves in relation to nature. In his four body-soul dialogues, we do not even find a

"speaker" but rather a dramatic dialogue in which a theological debate is generated by

dividing the self.[36] Further, as I establish in my final chapter, Vaughan's theology is too

complex to simply assign his poetic voice(s) the label "Anglican" or "Calvinist." We

should beware of simply designating the more than one hundred voices that speak to us

across the centuries as a single "Anglican" voice as argued by Wall and Summers or a

consistently Calvinist voice as suggested by Lewalski. What we find in *Silex Scintillans*

is a myriad of voices created by a poet who is himself a product of intertextuality, whose

identity is embedded in certain familial, ecclesiastical, political, economic and sexual

formations (Culler 49). I find myself agreeing, therefore, with Seelig and Rudrum, who

refer to no structural pattern or overall themes but rather identify recurring motifs.

Narratologists have argued that a narrative is the "recounting . . . of one or more

real or fictitious events communicated by one, two or several . . . narrators to one, two, or

several . . . narratees," which "situations and events should make up a whole, a sequence.

The narrative should be distinguished from "the mere recounting of a random series of

changes of state" (Prince 58-59).[37] However, as I stated in the introduction to this

chapter, the lyric tradition within which Vaughan writes is far closer to the "recounting of

a random series of states." Gary Waller has argued that the lyric collection is

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[36] I should note that no one has suggested that there is either a single speaker or a sequential, narrative structure in Vaughan's other lyric collections, *Poems with the Tenth Satire of Juvenal Englished* (1646) or *Thalia Rediviva*. This is perhaps because *Silex Scintillans* is a collection of devotional poems, permitting it to be associated with Protestant narrative forms like the spiritual autobiography.

[37] There is of course a dispute over the definition of narrative. Genette discusses the controversy in the introduction to *Narrative Discourse*.

"discontinuous, open to a multiplicity of juxtapositions and combinations and so insisting upon a self that is fragmented, dislocated, self-questioning. Linkages may be suggested by the poet . . . but such hints of a plot are invited rather than imposed" (78). Based on the principle of *varatio*, the lyric collection, like the biblical Psalter, creates and re-creates the "self" or "selves" and is often more concerned with the (in)stability of subjectivity than the recounting of a particular event or events. While it is certainly possible to create a lyric sequence with a narrative structure as Lady Mary Wroth and John Donne have attempted to do in their versions of the Italian Corona, for the most part, *variatio* as a structural principle undermines a sense of continuity, sequence and progression associated with narrative.

Silex Scintillans is less a unified and autonomous unit than an exploration of identity or subjectivity; like the Book of Psalms, Vaughan's poetic collection is an anatomy of the human soul, a compendium of diverse voices inscribed within a variety of genres - lyrics of praise, lament, didacticism, worship, thanksgiving and prophecy. Abbot argued in 1651 that the Psalms record for the reader a "*change of states . . . inward as well as outward*," revealing the constant "*ebbings and flowings*" of the soul ("To the Reader" n.p.).[38] Some years earlier, Henry Peacham praised St. Hillary's apt comparison of the Psalms of David "to a bunch of keys, in regard of the several doors, whereby they give the soul entrance either to prayer, rejoicing, repentance, thanksgiving etc." (*The*

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[38] We should keep in mind that modern readers also attempt to find a narrative structure or at least a sequential structure within the Psalter. C. Westerman, for example, argues that the Psalter moves from lament towards praise, while Brueggemann envisions unity based on "its movement *from the Torah-Psalms, which affirm a relationship with God through obedience to the law* (Ps. I), to the *Hymns*, which live in that relationship, expressing it in terms of praise of God (Psalm 150)" (qtd. in Gillingham 275).

Compleat Gentleman 117).

It is with this structural model of the Psalter in mind that we should approach the

lyric collection of *Silex Scintillans* rather than with the structure of narrative. In his

poem "To Mr. M.L. Upon his Reduction of the Psalms into Method" *(Thalia Rediviva)*,

Vaughan recognizes the absence of form in the Psalms, viewing them as "a *medley*"

without method grounded in "confusion" and governed by the instability of David's

"*crosses*"(330, ll.3-8). Simmonds refers to this poem in which the speaker praises Mr.

M.L. for giving form and method to David's matter in order to argue that Vaughan

endorses a poetics of order and form in the vein of Ben Jonson. However, *Silex*

Scintillans shares the formal or structural instability of the Psalter in its propensity to

move between subjects "By no safe *rule*" to use Vaughan's term (330, l.9). There is no

obvious narrative purpose in Vaughan's placement of a poem on the marriage of Isaac

("Isaac's Marriage") after a poem which explores the efficacy of Ignatian meditation as a

means to unite with Christ ("The Search"). Nor can we explain by recourse to a single

speaker's spiritual evolution Vaughan's choice to locate a didactic, emblematic poem on

preparation for Christ's return ("The Lamp") between a lyric on a divided church

("British Church") and one on the fall and recovery or humanity ("Man's Fall or

Recovery").[39] How does Vaughan's placement of an elegy between "Ascension Hymn"

and "White Sunday" relate to the development of a spiritual pilgrim?

    Silex Scintillans is influenced structurally not by the Protestant paradigm of

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[39] Here I cite only a few examples of a phenomenon frequent in *Silex Scintillans*. And even though we do find thematic clusters in the collection, such thematic clusters do not always reflect the spiritual development of a single speaker.

salvation, but by what Chana Bloch describes as the unpredictable movement from hymn to complaint to thanksgiving in the Psalter. Though "the haphazard arrangement of the Psalms is given a kind of authority . . . by the liturgical practice of the Church of England," Bloch argues quite rightly that the Psalter remains "a sequence without a predictable pattern" (Bloch 239). The structure of *Silex Scintillans*, like the Psalms, inscribes a series of subjective states while existing as a sequence without a predictable pattern. Though there are clearly thematic groupings in the collection, *Silex Scintillans* is structurally like the Psalter, an "*Apothecaries stop, full of boxes, and . . . full of all manner of store for men in all tempers and distempers*," and in its unpredictability and variation lies its overwhelming comprehensiveness (Abbot, "To the Reader" n.p.). It is the structure of *variatio* freed from the constrictions of sequence, continuation, progression or evolution necessary for narrative that permit the Psalter and *Silex Scintillans* the freedom to explore the unstable spectrum of human subjectivity in a period of political crisis. If we are to find any unity in *Silex Scintillans* it is the same unity that we find in the Psalter. Each poem in the biblical and poetic text struggles to explore the numinous relationship between the self and the divine. So the collection, like the Psalms, is a treasury of theology, but as Gillingham would have it, a living theology or a "theology in process" (275).

Chapter 6

The Biblical Theology of *Silex Scintillans*

Vaughan did not intend to present a systematic theology in *Silex Scintillans*. His

devotional poems, as he remarks in *The Dedication*, are a "gift" from and for God which

explore "divine themes" and utter "celestial praise" (141). The very nature of poetic

discourse prevents him from delineating his theological hermeneutic, for his

representation of the human and the divine is expressed in the language of insight,

emotion and desire rather than in the logical, conceptual language of theology.[1] This is

not to say that the poetic texture of Vaughan's religious convictions prevents the

uncovering of doctrinal precepts. The unveiling of a Vaughanian theology is possible if

one avoids subordinating the rich diversity of the poet's religious thought to a pre-

existing theological matrix.

The seal of "Anglicanism," however, has been impressed on *Silex Scintillans* in

recent years by Wall and Summers, both of whom wish to associate Vaughan with the

"Established Church," the "'third stream' within Western Christendom alongside Roman

Catholicism and the reformed church traditions" (Wall 2-3). So too does Hill announce

that "Vaughan's was the church of Grindal, Abbott, Ussher, of Spenser, Quarles and

Herbert: stoutly protestant, with no more sympathy for protestant sectaries than for popish

recusants" (*Collected Essays* 219).[2] It is specifically to Vaughan's ecclesiology, a sub-

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[1] Vaughan uses the word "doctrine" on only three occasions: "And yet, how few believe such doctrine springs / From a poor root . . ." ("'I walked the other day'" 241, ll.36-37); "Poor birds this doctrine sing" ("Providence" 271, l.25); "Most modern books are blots on thee, / Their doctrine chaff and windy fits" ("The Agreement" 297, ll.25-26).

[2] Hill offers no evidence to support his claim that Vaughan is devoid of sympathy for popish recusants or protestant sectaries. While Vaughan's literary corpus reveals his distaste for "the seditious and *schismatical*" (*Complete Poems* 139), nowhere do we find disparaging remarks on Catholicism or recusants; in fact, Vaughan seems to sympathize with their expression of devotion, hence his translations

discipline of theology, that these scholars point to as proof of his Anglicanism. Wall, and

subsequently Summers, distinguish the Church of England from the other "streams" by

reference to its liturgical practices or its rituals of worship, and subsequently uncover in

Silex Scintillans allusions to the proscribed Prayer Book, liturgical calendar and rites of

the British church. No doubt, Vaughan endorses some Laudian rituals of worship in his

verse and candidly rejects the removal of Christmas from the calendar of the British

church; his allegiance is transparent in "The Dressing," "The Feast," "The Throne" and

"Christ's Nativity." Perhaps as Shuger claims, the terms "Anglican" and "Puritan" are

expedient as analytic categories to address ecclesiology "where the difference between

Presbyterian Puritanism, Roman Catholicism, and the Church of England is clear and

straightforward" (8). However, when addressing Vaughan's theology as a whole, the

label "Anglican" is misleading for as Nicholas Tyacke has established, the term has no

contemporary warrant, nor does it sufficiently reflect the doctrinal diversity evident in

early-modern theological pamphlets (viii).

When characterizing Vaughan's theology, it is more expedient, and more

historically-sound, to employ the terms "Calvinist" or "Arminian" though I acknowledge

that they are not distinct categories of thought. In *Appello Evangelium* (1652), John

Plaifere delineates at least five possible theological positions to be found within the

Calvinist-Arminian spectrum in early-modern England.[3] In the following survey of

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of Catholic religious prose and verse. Perhaps Hill is thinking of Henry's brother Thomas, who defends Cornelius Agrippa by setting forth his reformed religion and anti-Catholic sentiment (*Works* 102-03).

[3] Though Plaifere is an Arminian and hence biased, his account of the "five opinions" and their adherents is the least partisan account of theological differences I have met in my reading of early-modern theological treatises. Many of his contemporaries deny any continuity between Calvinism and Arminianism, providing tables to visibly reflect the absolute differences in doctrine. This is the case, for example, in William Prynne's pamphlet, *The Church of England's Old Antithesis to New Arminianism* (1629).

Vaughan's theology, in which Vaughan's doctrinal positions are examined in relation to those of the Church Fathers, Reformation theologians, and early-modern religious writers, I hope to demonstrate that he glides to some extent back and forth on this spectrum, importing his views on natural philosophy into his reflection on doctrinal matters. Patrick Grant and Rudrum have noted such doctrinal complexity in their examination of Vaughan's views on sin and restoration respectively.[4] However, though Vaughan will be seen to fluctuate in his theological views, I shall show that he firmly leans, as might be expected of a Royalist, towards Arminianism in his constitution of divine/human interactions.[5] For Vaughan's striking portrayal of man's depravity and the corruption of body and soul is mitigated by his belief in the expansive love of a God who not only bestows his universal grace on all creation, but who invests humanity with the free will to elect to be bathed in his light. In fact, as will become evident in what follows, it is Vaughan's Arminian leanings and his hermetic frame of mind that gives his poetry its optimism.

I.   **Falling into Sin: The World of Innocence Lost**

In his poetic production of man's fall from grace, Vaughan differs from both Church Fathers and Reformation theologians, depicting the Fall in terms of loss rather than punishment. Although Vaughan builds into "Burial" Paul's profession that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) and does not deny that "weights (like death / And sin)

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[4] Only Grant and Rudrum attempt to elucidate Vaughan's doctrinal precepts within the context of early-modern English theological disputes. For Rudrum's treatment of Vaughan's views on the restoration of all things, see his article "Henry Vaughan, The Liberation of the Creatures, and Seventeenth-Century English Calvinism"; for Grant's approach to Vaughan's conception of sin, see *The Transformation of Sin: Studies in Donne, Herbert, Vaughan and Traherne*.

[5] In his "Introduction" to *Essential Articles for the Study of Henry Vaughan*, Rudrum suggests that there are connections between "hermeticism and freewill, between alchemy and the universal sacramental grace of the Arminian position" (4). I hope to address these connections in the course of my discussion.

hang at him" ("The Palm Tree" 253, ll. 7-8), Vaughan displays more concern with the

loss of both "Almighty Love" and his "home." The Fall is configured in terms of the

absence of light and a corresponding descent into darkness: "Besides I've lost / A train of

lights, which in those sun-shine days / Were my sure guides . . ." ("Man's Fall and

Recovery" 164, ll.9-11). Once in secret commerce with his Creator, man is now

shrouded in silence and shadows, left a "slave to passions" (164, l.8). Thick darkness

hatches over earth's landscape ("Corruption" 197. 1.37) where light not long before

infused its paradisiacal garden.

Vaughan juxtaposes prelapsarian and postlapsarian man in "Ascension-Hymn" to

accentuate the self-generated loss involved in man's rejection of God:

> Man of old
>
> Within the line
>
> Of *Eden* could
>
> Like the sun shine
>
> All naked, innocent and bright
>
> And intimate with Heaven, as light:
>
> But since he
>
> That brightness soiled
>
> His garments be
>
> All dark and spoiled
>
> And here are left as nothing worth,
>
> 'Til the Refiner's fire breaks forth. (245, ll.19-30)

No longer bathed in the pure beams of God's holiness, the human species is entombed in dust and clay. Vaughan's emphasis, through rhyme, on soiled and spoiled serves to focus attention not on the punishment that resulted from the Fall, but rather on the self-induced contamination of man's glory. Human agency is presented syntactically as the source of post-lapsarian loss, for it was "he" that soiled himself and, in the process, "cracked nature":

> for that act
>
> That fell him, foiled them all,
>
> He drew the curse upon the world, and cracked
>
> The whole frame with his fall. ("Corruption" 197, ll.13-16)

Vaughan's emphasis on loss of love and innocence stands in opposition to the Pauline, Augustinian, Lutheran and Calvinist preoccupation with judgement. When deliberating on the Fall, Paul, Augustine, Luther and Calvin emphasize God's punishment of man through forensic metaphor; that is, all highlight the sentence of death as punishment for sin. God is figured as the condemner of sin, rather than as the embodiment of Love whose nature compels him to withdraw from sinners. In Romans, Paul explicitly interprets Adam's fall in terms of judgement, sin and death:

> Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and
>
> so death passed upon all men. . . .for the judgement was by one to
>
> condemnation. . . .Therefore as by the offence of one judgement came
>
> upon all men to condemnation . . . .(Romans 5:12,16,18)

While Augustine briefly mentions the deprivation of God's favour in *The City of God*, he too concentrates on what he labels "the first punishment." Having disobeyed God, man was "justly condemned to the punishment of death" (510). In his commentary on

Romans 5:14 ("Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses"), Luther makes

concrete man's punishment by referring to hell where no reference to such a place exists,

"Yet death reigned, because it totally possessed us even to hell." And Calvin would have

us "reflect on the strictness of the sentence pronounced upon all sinners" (*Reformation*

Debate 66).

I do not argue that Vaughan entirely rejects God as judge. A glimpse at "The Day

of Judgement [I]" would prove the contrary. Nor do I contend that those theologians

quoted above fail to understand the loss of innocence and divine love. It is perhaps a

difference in emphasis rather than substance, but a difference central to Vaughan's

understanding of the interaction between God and his creatures. In Vaughan's paradigm,

it is man who elects to grovel in the dirt, not God who has forced him to do so. It is man

who has chosen death over life, not God who is shown imposing eternal torment. The

free will of humanity is fundamental to Vaughan's conception of man's alienation from

God. God remains, for Vaughan, "the God of harmony, and love!" ("Church-Service"

181, l.1). He "that accuseth none" ("The Stone" 281, l.29), at all stages of humanity's

spiritual development.

Vaughan is decidedly Arminian, therefore, in his constitution of the Fall. In

attempting to abolish the doctrine of free will and underscore the sovereignty of God,

English Calvinists seem to make God the author of sin. The first article of The Lambeth

Articles (1595) records that "GOD from Eternitie hath Predestinated certaine men unto

life; certaine men he hath Reprobated unto Death" (qtd. in Prynne 10). Since reprobates

had not yet sinned at the time of their reprobation in this predestination scheme, God's

decree appeared to provoke or at least to beget the Fall.[6] To the contrary, English

Arminians believed that God decreed to create mankind good and formed a universe in

which humanity was capable of, yet not predestined to, fall (Plaifere 34-36). In the

Arminian paradigm, the Fall is caused by inadequate human faith and perseverance,

rather than by the sovereign will of God. Perhaps Vaughan's hermetic vision of the

universe prompted him to adopt an Arminian position on the Fall, for in the creation

narrative of *Libellus I*, the fall of humanity is described not in terms of divine sovereignty

or judgment, but rather in terms of man's self-propelled descent into matter (earth and

water) which polluted his essence of light and life (fire and air).[7] The hermetic writer

Jacob Boehme provides an account of the Fall coincident with that of Vaughan's when he

explains that "paradisical Man . . . captivated by the Spirit of this World . . . fell into Lust

. . . and then was blind as to God . . ." (*The Three Principles* 231,244). This is the self-

generated loss of which Vaughan writes.

Vaughan's obsession with the descent into darkness and the loss of secret

commerce with the divine causes introspection. Self-examination leads to the

verbalization of depravity, perversion and corruption, which he generally extends to

humanity at large. This vision of the human species seems at odds with Vaughan's usual

reverence for God's creation, and certainly fails to mirror the celebration of mankind

articulated in the *Centuries* of his contemporary Thomas Traherne. Yet, the recurrence of

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[6] Not all Calvinists held such rigid views on predestination. Fearing any doctrine which intimated that God authored sin, Calvinist Peter Moulin argued in *The Anatomy of Arminianism* (1620) that "it must be graunted that sinne is not committed without Gods permission" (10). He insists that this "word of *permitting*" should not "offend any one as if it derogated from the care or providence of God" (10). Indeed many Calvinists would have been offended by such a word as it implies that God did not from eternity decree to create, elect and reprobate a certain number of men.

[7] As with Vaughan, the author of the *Hermetica* envisions God as the "Father of Light," a title attributed to God by Vaughan in "Cock-Crowing."

such imagery cannot be minimized. In *The Mount of Olives*, Vaughan discloses and

renounces the Self, in a manner reminiscent of the Puritan diaries of the period: "And

now, O my God, seeing I am but Dust and Ashes, and my Righteousnesse a filthy Rag,

having no deserts in my self but what should draw Everlasting vengeance, and the Vials

of thy bitter wrath upon my body and soul" (145).[8] Throughout *Silex Scintillans*,

Vaughan constitutes the human subject as "all filth, and obscene" ("Christ's Nativity"

199, l.23), "a very brute" ("The Law and The Gospel" 226, l.21), "crumbled dust"

("Distraction" 165, l.1), "impure, rebellious clay" ("The Incarnation and the Passion"

168, l.14), who with a restless breath soils the name of God. The clean and steady heart

surfaces for poetic moments in *Silex Scintillans*, when Vaughan discovers within himself

echoes of eternal hills and dismembered hieroglyphics which signify his fragmented

spiritual identity ("Vanity of Spirit" 171-2). Yet these visions of hope are contrasted with

the image of man sinking into dead oblivion, of humanity groveling in the shade and

darkness ("The Tempest" 220-1). Perhaps Vaughan's most powerful attack on human

nature is made in "Repentance," a lyric in which the speaker confronts his own depravity:

> O What am I, that I should breed
>
> Figs on a thorn, flowers on a weed!
>
> I am the gourd of sin, and sorrow
>
> Growing o'er night, and gone to morrow
>
> In all this *round* of life and death

---

[8] Compare these lines, for example, to those of Bunyan in *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*:

> But my Original and inward pollution, that, that was my plague and my affliction; that I saw at a dreadful rate always putting forth it selfe within me, that I had the guilt of to amazement; by reason of that, I was more loathsom in mine own eyes then was a toad, and I thought I was so in Gods eyes too: Sin and corruption, I said, would as naturally bubble out of my heart, as water would bubble out of a fountain. (27)

Nothing's more vile than is my breath,

Profaneness on my tongue doth rest,

Defects, and darkness in my breast

Pollutions all my body wed,

And even my soul to thee is dead. (207-08, 11.69-78)

Writing at the time of England's Civil War, there is no doubt that Vaughan experienced

first hand man's corruption.[9] Geraint H. Jenkins contends that the Welsh Royalists saw

the Cromwellian administrators, who invaded their land, labelled them heathens,

sequestered their property and ejected their clergy, as "a vulgar breed of money-grubbing

opportunists and sycophants" (Jenkins 38). Having observed "base men" eject his brother

Thomas from his living, and perhaps cause the death of his brother William, Vaughan may

have concluded with Calvin that humanity was "blind, darkened in understanding, and

full of corruption and perversity of heart" ("Confession of Faith" 27), which attitude

certainly informs his angry ejaculation in "Providence":

I will not fear what man,

With all his plots and power can;

Bags that wax old may plundered be,

But none can sequester or let

A state that with the sun doeth set

And comes next morning fresh as he. (271, 11.19-24)

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[9] In Vaughan's translation of *Hermetical Physick* (1655), an association is made between human depravity and military violence: "But men, whom God adorned with rationall soules, kill one another, and those to whom nature, reason, and the faculty of speech, did (above any other creatures) commend love and unity, do by troopes (as it were for spectacle and ostentation,) murther and butcher themselves" (*Works* 553).

However, it was not only the violence of the civil wars which caused Vaughan to accept the doctrine of the depravity of man. It is likely that he was influenced by both his contemporaries and the Church Fathers, as the belief in a depraved humanity was founded on traditional western Christian thought. Augustine records that the "ugliness [of sinners] is disgusting when they are viewed in themselves" (*The City of God* 456); Calvin argued, "Since man is naturally . . . depraved and destitute in himself of all the light of God, and of all righteousness, we acknowledge that by himself he can only expect the wrath and malediction of God" ("Confession of Faith" 27); and according to Luther, man is "so completely inclined toward evil that nothing at all remains in us which is inclined toward fulfilling the law" (qtd. in Althaus 155). Both Calvinists and Arminians, John F.H. New posits, "accepted the doctrine of total depravity, the Fall from Grace, and its attendant consequence, the doctrine of justification by faith alone," although he recognizes that there were "variations within the same broad framework" that "gave rise to behaviour patterns that at times became diametrically opposed" (6). Andrewes, known for his moderation and considered an Arminian, described humanity as "corruption and rottenness, and worms . . . vile, base, filthy and unclean" (*Works* 1:4), while Donne, often more Calvinist in sentiment, declares that "every man hath a devil in himself" (7:71-72). This general acceptance of the depravity of man is reflected in Article 9 of the Thirty-Nine Articles: "whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit."

In adopting the orthodox doctrine of man's depravity, Vaughan resists, though he does not wholly reject, the neo-Platonic or hermetic view that humanity through the power of reason or "natural light" can bring about his own transformation. So too does Vaughan reject the humanist optimism of Traherne who reflects on humanity's spiritual

sovereignty: "Here [man] is an Invisible Power, an Indivisible Omnipresence, a Spiritual

Supremacy; an Inward, Hidden, unknown Being Greater than all, a Sublime and

Sovereign Creature meet to live in Communion with GOD in the fruition of them"

(*Poems,Centuries* 225-26). Vaughan accords no such sublimity to humanity as a species

in *Silex Scintillans*, and seems more inclined to renounce than to celebrate human nature.

In this he even deviates from his twin Thomas, who conceded in *Euphrates* that though

"*Man* . . . is but a small part of Nature" "he be the noblest part" (*Works* 518).

While insisting on the depravity of man, Vaughan struggles to locate that

depravity in the flesh or spirit. In several poems he represents the soul, that "noble

Essence" ("Resurrection and Immortality" 152, l.39), attempting to flee the body, that

grave, tomb and "mass of sin." In "Cheerfulness" the body is drawn as the "sinful frame"

and in "Distraction" the encased spirit is "coffined in . . . [a] mass of sin." (184, l.19; 166,

ll.17-18). These and other metaphors lead us to conclude that with Plato, Vaughan

locates evil in the flesh, the material component of the human makeup.[10] Of Plato,

Osmond writes, "Plato . . . implies that certain differences in value and moral quality are

attached to soul and body. The soul is immaterial (spiritual) and immortal; the body is

material and perishable, an unworthy and temporary dwelling for the soul, a prison" (4-5).

Vaughan's ideas seem consistent with Plato's representation of the body in much of his

verse, as he conceives of the soul as that which must escape the body to scale the ladder

of ascent in quest of unity with the Godhead.

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[10] In *Hermetical Physick*, we find a Platonic vision of the soul enslaved to vile flesh: "The soul, which God made and ordained to be the nobler essence, and the mistress, is now the bond-woman, and the servile drudge to the vile body" (*Works* 552).

However, while in some lyrics Vaughan, like Plato, "pictures the immortal soul as a kind of fallen angel which loses its wings when it is thrust down into a mortal body," in others he affirms the sinfulness of the soul (Luce 105). In "Disorder and Frailty," Vaughan writes that God "beckon[ed] out / My brutish soul" (202, ll.2-3), in "Fair and Young Light" sin initially infects the soul, which in turns causes bodily defilement (279, ll.12-13), and in "Repentance" Vaughan announces, "Pollutions all my body wed, / And even my soul to thee is dead" (208, ll.77-78). Vaughan continues in "Repentance" to construct redemption as that which purifies both body and soul, for the speaker defines sanctification as both a fleshly and spiritual event, "Only in him, on whom I feast, / Both soul, and body are well dressed" (208, ll.79-80). From these lyrics, it can be inferred that Vaughan locates sin in spirit and matter.

It becomes difficult, therefore, to establish whether Vaughan constitutes the body and soul in Aristotelian terms, in which the body is the instrument of the soul, or in Platonic terms, in which the body is considered the prison of the soul (Osmond 22). Vaughan is inconsistent in his vision of either soul or body. However, the body-soul dialogues contained in *Silex Scintillans* display an intimate and tender relationship between the corporeal and the spiritual.[11] The soul is shown to reassure and comfort the body, petitioning God in "Burial" to preserve the body until its resurrection: "Watch o'er that loose / And empty house, / Which I sometimes lived in" (182, ll. 8-10). The flesh and spirit, therefore, in Vaughan's paradigm are more consistently defined in terms of unity than disparity, illustrating Vaughan's emphasis on the desired harmony and wholeness of

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[11] For body-soul dialogues see: "Death. A Dialogue"; "Resurrection and Immortality"; and "The Evening-Watch." See also "Burial" in which the body addresses the soul, and "The Palm-Tree" in which the soul addresses the body.

the self.

If we accept that Vaughan configures both body and soul as blackened by sin, we can align him with Paul, Luther and Calvin. At first glance, Paul would appear to present humanity dualistically, dividing human beings into "flesh" and "spirit," and then to privilege the spirit, as seems apparent in Romans 8:5, "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit." E.P. Sanders, however, concludes that while, at times, Paul's allusions to the flesh refer to the physical body, in general Paul employs the term flesh to mean "humanity in the state of opposition to God" (36). Luther insists that the Pauline usage of the terms flesh referred "to everything that is born of the flesh, that is, the entire self, body and spirit" ("Preface to Romans" 25); and Calvin maintained that "the whole nature is, as it were, a seed bed of sin" in which "perversity never ceases" (qtd. in New 8).[12]

Vaughan is more Calvinist than Arminian in his conception of the corruption of both body and spirit. While accepting the doctrine of depravity, Arminians like Hooker and Andrewes believed that man's reason was still intact. Andrewes assured his congregation in this regard with the voice of optimism: "Now then, this is the rule of reason, the guide of all choice, evermore to take the better and leave the worse. Thus would man do" (*Works* 1:5). Vaughan shows little or no interest in the reason of man,

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[12] The degree to which the body and soul are held accountable for sin varies in Calvinist treatises wrote in early-modern England. Expounding on Romans 6:13, Moulin, for example, concludes that sin originates in the soul. Sin, he argues, is the deprivation of the soul, a vice of the will. "The soule" he writes "doth use the body as an organ to sinne" through which "sinne doth passe from the soule into the body, and not from the body into the soule" (66). This is the doctrine to which Vaughan refers in "Fair and Young Light": "Our souls' diseases first, and then / Our bodies';" (279, ll.12-13).

nor suggests that reason will direct man to goodness.[13] Perhaps Vaughan is influenced

in this by Herbert, who reflects on reason or cognition only to indict it as the source of

sin. Strier demonstrates that like Luther, Herbert intellectualizes sin equating ingenuity

with egotism, mischief and evasion (*Love Known* 32). For Herbert, Strier concludes, both

the wit and will are infected (37). Neither flesh nor spirit are free from pollution.

Vaughan goes farther than Herbert, however, when he repeatedly privileges instinct over

reason. Animals and vegetation are depicted instinctually drawn towards God, dreaming

of "Paradise and light" ("Cock-Crowing" 251, 1.6), and man is encouraged to do likewise.

Despite his otherwise optimistic vision of creation, Vaughan seems disillusioned with

humanity, and makes no attempt to confer upon him any sovereign status.

Although Vaughan embraces the doctrine of the depravity of man, representing

humanity as corrupt in both body and spirit, the onset of that depravity is unclear, for

Vaughan would appear to resist the doctrine of original sin.[14] Like Paul, who wrote "by

one man's disobedience many were made sinners" (Rom. 5:19), Vaughan believes that

Adam "marred" humanity ("*Easter-Hymn*" 216, 1.4). However, the doctrine of inherited

sin is implicitly rejected as an explanatory model for the transmission of sin in *Silex*

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[13] Thomas Vaughan also distrusted reason in the search for spiritual knowledge. Aware that "Reason is subject to Error, as well as Opinion," he explains in *Magia Adamica*: "a *True Faith* consists not in *Reason*, but in *Love*; for I receive my Principles, and believe Them being received *Solo erga Revelantem amore*; onely out of my Affection to Him that reveales them (*Works* 151)

[14] Vaughan rarely addresses the question of original sin directly. The only poems in which he obliquely refers to the seed of original sin are "Jesus Weeping [II]" and "The Sap." Writing of his rejection of the world, the speaker of "Jesus Weeping [II]" exclaims: "A grief, whose silent dew shall breed / Lilies and myrrh, where the cursed seed / Did sometimes rule . . ." (270, ll. 48-50). The speaker of "The Sap" refers to the sapless blossom in whom "the first man's loins didst fall / From that hill to this vale" (237, ll.19-20), here referring to nature's fall as a consequence of human sin.

Scintillans. Vaughan's poems of childhood figure a sinless newborn child.[15] When

speaking of a child's death in "The Burial of an Infant," Vaughan celebrates his

innocence:

> Sweetly didst thou expire: thy soul
>
> Flew home unstained by his new kin,
>
> For ere thou knew'st how to be foul,
>
> Death *weaned* thee from the world, and sin. (208, ll. 5-8)

In "The Retreat," the speaker appears to have existed in a state of grace in childhood,

distanced from any sinful thought:

> Happy those early days! when I
>
> shined in my Angel-infancy.
>
> Before I understood this place
>
> Appointed for my second race,
>
> Or taught my soul to fancy aught
>
> But a white, celestial thought,
>
> . . . .
>
> Or had the black art to dispense
>
> A several sin to every sense, (172-73, ll.1-6, 17-18)

Vaughan even suggests that children do not require redemption in Christ when he happily

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[15] There is only one poem in which Vaughan associates the child with sin, though indirectly:
Thou holy, harmless, undefiled high-priest!
The perfect, full oblation for all sin,
Whose glorious conquest nothing can resist,
But even in babes doth triumph still and win;" ("Dressing" 214, ll.9-12)

records in "Child-hood" that children can "by mere playing go to Heaven" (288, 1.8). It is

conceivable that in describing the innocence of the child Vaughan refers to that time

period after baptism and before the "years of discretion" mentioned in the Confirmation

Catechism of the Book of Common Prayer (282). However, I am not entirely convinced

that this is the case, as Vaughan remains unconcerned with the sacrament of baptism

which purifies the child prior to confirmation. In the third book of "The Civil War,"

fellow Royalist Cowley envisions the unbaptized infant with horror: "They [Anabaptists]

scorne their wretched Infants to baptize; / (The unwasht Soule in black uncleannes lies)"

(1:148, ll.101-102). I find no specific concern with the sacrament of baptism in *Silex*

Scintillans, and unlike Herbert who writes two poems on baptism, Vaughan dedicates no

lyric to the subject matter.[16]

Vaughan's privileging of childhood may be founded on both the Platonic concept

of the pre-existence of the soul and the biblical concept of rebirth in Christ.[17] Vaughan

espouses the pre-existence of the soul in "The Retreat" where, before entering the human

form, the child dwells with his "first love," illuminated by his "bright face" (173, ll.8,10).

Perhaps Vaughan, like Plato, conceived of the child as only a "short space" away from a

disincarnate state in which he was "able to journey through the heavens in direct

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[16] It is possible that Vaughan presumes that all infants have been baptized when he speaks of infants in this vein. However, while Herbert writes that "Childhood is health" ("H. Baptisme [II]" l.15), such a statement is made within the context of baptism. Vaughan praises infancy without recourse to any ritual of cleansing or purification.

[17] Origen, like Plato, believed that all souls were initially created together with the angels and afterwards placed in bodies. Tertullian believed that the soul was conveyed with the seed, and that the soul of the son came from the soul of the father. Though Augustine wrote at length on the soul's origin, he remained undecided on the question.

contemplation of eternal Forms" (Luce 105).[18] However, Vaughan's love of childhood is also, no doubt, rooted in Scripture: "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as a little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3-4).

In his treatment of original sin, Vaughan aligns himself with Pelagius rather than Augustine. Of Pelagius, J. Martos remarks "Pelagius believed that people were born in a state of 'original grace' which was the reason for their natural goodness . . . .Children, of course, were born innocent and so had no need of baptism" (173). Sin, Pelagius argued, was transmitted by imitation not by propagation. Julian of Eclanum defended Pelagian thought as follows: "You ask me why I would not consent to the idea that there is a sin that is part of human nature. I answer: it is improbable. It is untrue. It is unjust and impious. It makes it seem as if the devil were the maker of men. It violates and destroys the freedom of the will" (qtd. in P. Johnson 121). Augustine's rejection of the innocence of the child is put forth in *The City of God*:

> Even infants have broken the covenant, not in consequence of any
>
> particular act in their own life but in consequence of the origin which is
>
> common to all mankind, since all have broken God's covenant in that one
>
> man in whom all have sinned. . . .Thus the process of birth rightly brings
>
> perdition on the infant because of the original sin by which God's
>
> covenant was first broken, unless the rebirth sets him free; (688-89)

Calvin reinterpreted Augustine's view to convict each child of personal, embryonic sin:

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[18] Ecclesiastes 12:7 was later read as biblical evidence of the soul's origins in God: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (see Moulin 68).

"For that reason, even infants themselves, while they carry their condemnation along with them from the mother's womb are guilty not of another's fault but of their own. For even though the fruits of their iniquity have not yet come forth, they have the seed within them" (*Institutes* 1:251).

Puritans in the seventeenth century accepted as truth Augustine's and Calvin's belief in the sinful state of a newborn child. John Owen even went so far as to produce a treatise outlining the five stages of sinfulness displayed by a child. Speaking of young infants, Owen writes that original sin is first apparent in "the indignation and little self-revenges wherewith they are accompanied in their disappointments when all about them do not subject themselves unto their inclinations" (qtd. in Watkins 56). So too did Moulin describe infants as "rightly obnoxious, and subject to punishments: For although they have not sinned in act, yet there is in them that contagious pestilence, and that naturall pronenesse to sinne" (65).

Though Calvin's doctrine was accepted by the Synod of Dort in 1618, it was not wholeheartedly endorsed by all members of the Church of England. Church leaders responded on an individual basis. Donne did not question the doctrine of original sin, and based several of his sermons on the notion that "original sin has induced this corruption and incineration upon us." "If wee had not sinned in *Adam*," Donne advises, "*mortality had not put on immortality*, (as the Apostle speakes) *nor corruption had not put on incorruption*" (*Sermons* 10:236).[19] In contrast, Traherne espouses a Pelagian notion of the transmission of sin in the *Centuries* where he writes:

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[19] Shuger, however, notes that though Donne accepts original sin its " heteronomous and morally unintelligible" nature "fascinates him" (174).

And that our Misery proceedeth ten thousand times more from the outward

Bondage of Opinion and Custom, then from any inward corruption or

Depravation of Nature: And that it is not our Parents Loyns, so much as

our Parents lives, that Enthrals and Blinds us. Yet is all our Corruption

Derived from Adam: inasmuch as all the Evil Examples and inclinations

or the World arise from His Sin (*Poems, Centuries* 268).

Other theologians accepted a revised model of original sin. In a letter to John Warner,

Bishop of Rochester, for example, Taylor defends his conception of original sin as set

forth in *Unum Necessarium*. Taylor contends that all "the sinfulness of original sin is the

lust or concupiscence, that is, the proneness to sin." It is only when the child commits a

sinful act that she can be labelled sinful. To assert that a child is born in a sinful state,

Taylor fears, is to represent a horribly distorted God:

to say that for Adam's sin it is just in God to condemn all infants to the

eternal flames of hell; and to say that concupiscence or natural inclinations

before they pass into any act could bring eternal condemnation from God's

presence into the eternal portion of devils, are two such horrid

propositions, that if any church in the world would expressly affirm them,

I for my part should think it unlawful to communicate with her in the

defence or profession of either, and to think it would be the greatest

temptation in the world to make men not to love God, of whom men so

easily speak such horrid things. (*Works* 7:547)

Certainly, in their rejection of the conventional model of original sin, Vaughan,

Traheme and Taylor generate a more constructive and loving Creator than the Puritan

God who reserves chambers in hell for infants. However, Vaughan's account of the

transmission of sin as presented in *Silex Scintillans* is rather unsatisfying, and certainly

less logical than that offered by Traheme or Taylor. In "The Retreat," Vaughan suggests

that the transformation from innocent child to depraved sinner is a self-induced process.

The lyric subject tells us that he taught his soul to desire that which was sinful, that which

would wound. It is through his own "black art" that he dispenses a "sin to every sense"

(173, ll.17-18). While describing the acquisition of sin as an act which originates in the

self, Vaughan fails to explain how a sinless agent can transmit sin to itself.

In proposing that sin is self-taught, Vaughan diverges from the "heretical"

environmental model of the transmission of sin, just as he clearly rejects the orthodox

notion of original sin when he fails to situate the cause of sin in the genetic constitution

of the infant. Perhaps Vaughan is more concerned to reject the doctrine of original sin,

which he may have found abhorrent, than to work out for the reader a systematic account

of the transmission of sin in poetic discourse.[20] Vaughan simply suggests that humanity

was corrupted through Adam's sin, that this corruption involved self-instruction, and that

our due is death. Perhaps in his insistence on man's free will, it is essential for Vaughan

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[20] Thomas Vaughan is also less than forthcoming in his opinion of the transmission of sin. In *Euphrates*, he reflects on the philosophical debate:

> A Child, I suppose, *in puris Naturablibus*. Before education alters, and ferments him, is a Subject hath not been much consider'd; for men respect him not, till he is companie for them, and then indeed they spoile him. Notwithstanding I should think, by what I have read, that the naturall disposition of Children, before it is *Corrupted* with *Customes* and *Manners*, is one of those things, about which the *Antient Philosophers* have busied themselves even to some *curiosity*. I shall not here expresse what I found by my own experience, for this is a point of *foresight*, and a ground by which wise men have attained to a *certain Knowledge* of *Moralls*, as well as *Naturalls*. (*Works* 521-22)

to represent each stage in the regeneration process as self-motivated, so that even where it appears illogical, Vaughan makes man culpable for his spiritual state.

It would appear that Vaughan, in his representation of the Fall and its attendant consequences, places man rather than God at the matrix. While Paul, Augustine, Luther and Calvin wish to define the Fall in terms of the sovereignty and omnipotence of God. Vaughan defines the Fall in terms of the loss suffered by man upon his rejection of Almighty Love. Just as Adam brought death and depravity into the world by his free will, each individual has the opportunity to accept or reject sin. Before that choice must be made, the child lives in a paradise of white celestial thoughts, thoughts which echo the harmony of Eden. By constructing the image of the sinless infant, Vaughan once again resists the Calvinist attempt to limit the free will of humanity. Although he does accept that man is depraved, Vaughan foregrounds and affirms individual choice. The child is neither compelled to sin nor bound to spiritual death without cause. We enter this world as individuals, and as a race, spiritually pure, imprinted with traces of divine light, and we are free to select good or evil. That loss is communicated by images of paradise lost and visions of the innocent, celestial child, the shining infant brushed with light. In this vision of the Fall, Vaughan tends towards an Arminian theology, though his beliefs are often tempered by Calvinist reflections on the depravity of fallen man. The Calvinist terms used by Vaughan to define the spirit of depraved humanity, devoid of light, suggest that his conception of redemption must be God-centered.

II.   Redemption: A Participatory Theology

The initiator or catalyst of the salvation process in *Silex Scintillans* is invariably

God. Vaughan presents the grace of God, manifested in the elixir of Christ, unmerited by humanity. In "The Relapse," the speaker acknowledges that he has "deserved a thick, Egyptian damp, / Dark as my deeds . . ." (190, ll.13-14). "Sullen, and sad eclipses, cloudy spheres," he continues, "these are my due" (190, ll. 19-20). God's initiation of the metamorphic process of regeneration is enacted in the opening lines of "Disorder and Frailty":

> When first thou didst even from the grave
>
> And womb of darkness beckon out
>
> My brutish soul, and to thy slave
>
> Becam'st thy self, both guide, and scout;
>
> Even from that hour
>
> Thou gotst my heart. . . . (202, ll. 1-6)

So too is God seen to invite, even beg, his creatures to enter into a state of grace, in "The Check":

> Hark, how he doth invite thee! with what voice
>
> Of love, and sorrow
>
> He begs, and calls; *O that in these thy days*
>
> Thou knew'st but thy own good!
>
> Shall not the cries of blood,
>
> Of God's own blood awake thee? (201-2, ll. 37-42)

In accepting the doctrine of prevenient grace, Vaughan concurs with both early reformers and early-modern theologians, Calvinist and Arminian alike. In 1524 Luther pronounced in *The Bondage of the Will*: "No man can be thoroughly humbled until he knows that his

salvation is utterly beyond his own powers, devices, endeavours, will and works, and depends entirely on the choice, will, and work of another, namely, of God alone" (qtd in Sinfield 8). In seventeenth-century England, theologians endorsed Luther's views on the doctrine of prevenient grace. Lewalski contends that English Protestants accepted that "the drama of man's spiritual restoration, his regeneration, must . . . be understood wholly as God's work, effected by the merits of Christ and apprehended by a faith which is itself the gift of God" (*Protestant Poetics* 16), a belief inscribed in Article 10 of the *Articles of Religion*: "we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will." In this, Vaughan does not disagree with the dominant mode of thought.

Vaughan's views on the redemption of humanity, however, do not always conform to the Calvinist sentiment expressed in the *Articles of Religion*, particularly when they concern the recipients of, and the response to, God's grace. Vaughan, for the most part, adopts an Arminian frame within which to sketch the portrait of redemption. His poetic vision of salvation affirms the Arminian doctrines of unlimited atonement, conditional predestination and resistible grace.

Like Arminius, Vaughan insisted that Christ's atonement was unlimited in its benefits. Arminius had interpreted the scriptural phrase "he died for all" (2 Cor. 5:14-15; Tit. 2:11; 1 John 2:2) literally, arguing that all have the opportunity to become children of God if they so choose (Grider 80). Vaughan propounds unlimited atonement when he claims that God offers salvation to all, and awaits a response. In "The Stone," the speaker says of God, "for he all invites" (282, l.54), and in "Jacob's Pillow, and Pillar" he advises that God was "most willing to save all mankind" (295, l. 13). In "The Passion" the pale

and bloody Christ cries out "I die to make my foes inherit" (187, 1.42) and in "Dressing"

the speaker cites the Communion Service from the *Book of Common Prayer* when he

addresses Christ as "the perfect, full oblation for all sin" (214, 1.10). These words in their

original context suggest that the blood of Christ was shed for all humanity rather than the

elect: "[Christ] made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect

and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world" (263).

In Vaughan's lyrics, the grace available through Christ's death is inclusive, expansive,

and universal.

The English Calvinists had rejected the notion of universal grace. William Prynne

interpreted the reference to Christ's *"full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice"* in the

Communion Service to mean that though Christ's death was in theory sufficient to satisfy

the sins of the world, in practice the blood was efficacious for the elect alone: "That

Christ Jesus died *sufficiently for all men*: (his death being of sufficient merit to redeeme

& save them) but primarily, & *effectually for the Elect alone*, for whome alone hee hath

actually and effectually obtained remission of sinnes, and life æternal" (20-21, 50). The

liberal Calvinist Bishop John Overall who asserted that Christ died for the world to offer

salvation to all men was accused of Arminianism by the conservative Calvinist George

Abbot. Throughout his prose and verse, Vaughan rejects a Calvinist God who denies

universal grace to all of creation, and would have said with Donne: "But with the Lord

there is *Copiosa redemptio*, plentifull redemption, *and an overflowing cup of mercy*"

(*Sermons* 9:119).

Having accepted universal grace, Vaughan must reject the Calvinist scheme of

supralapsarian double predestination whereby God from eternity elected some to

everlasting life and reprobated others to eternal death. In *The City of God*, Augustine

informs us that God had a plan "whereby he might complete the fixed number of citizens

predestined in his wisdom, even out of the condemned human race" (591). Such a belief

was based on biblical passages like Romans 9:11-18:

> (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil,
>
> that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works,
>
> but of him that calleth;). . . .As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau
>
> have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God?
>
> God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have
>
> mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. . . .
>
> Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will
>
> he hardeneth. (vv.11,13-15,18)

In his "Articles Concerning Predestination," Calvin expanded the doctrine:

> Before the first man was created, God in his eternal counsel had determined
>
> what he willed to be done with the whole human race. . . .he adopted some
>
> for himself for salvation, he destined others for eternal ruin. . . .While the
>
> elect receive the grace of adoption by faith, their election does not depend
>
> on faith but is prior in time and order. (*Theological Treatises* 179)

We find few references in Vaughan's poetry or prose to election and none to reprobation.

Vaughan's conscious omission of reprobation in his portrayal of the salvation process

suggests that he may have shared Laud's distaste for the doctrine: "almost all of them

[Calvinists] say that God from all eternity reprobates by far the greater part of mankind to

eternal fire, without any eye at all to their sin. Which opinion my very soul abominates.

For it makes God, the God of all mercies, to be the most fierce and unreasonable tyrant in

the world" (Laud *Works* 6:133). Most Royalist poets, like Vaughan, rejected the doctrine

of double predestination, as does Robert Herrick in his epigram "Predestination":

"*PREDESTINATION* is the Cause alone / Of many standing, but of fall to none" (*The*

Poems 389).[21]

When Vaughan incorporates the concept of election in his poems, which he does

on only two occasions, he does not bring to bear upon his verse the polemics of

conditional or unconditional predestination. In "And do they so?" the "elect" are

dismissed as capable of no more than non-human creatures who lift their heads

heavenwards to "expect and groan":

> And do they so? have they a sense
>
> Of ought but influence?
>
> Can they their heads lift, and expect,
>
> And groan too? why the elect
>
> Can do no more. . . . (188, ll.1-5)

In "Trinity Sunday," the speaker prays that the antitypes of spirit, water and blood,

"elected, bought and sealed for free" will be "owned, saved, *Sainted*" (257, ll. 8-9) by the

Trinity. Vaughan's use of election in these poems support neither Calvinist nor

Arminian doctrines on election. Neither does Vaughan's use of the word suggest

Calvinist leanings, for the term was freely used by all parties. We find, for example, the

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[21] Though she provides no evidence to support her conclusion, Davies also senses that Vaughan is "little troubled by Calvinist terrors of predestination to hell-fire" (16).

Catholic poet Patrick Cary employing the term in *"Dies Iræ,Dies illa"*; speaking of the

final judgment, the poem's speaker exclaims: "My Request doe not reject, / Thou that

savest thine *Elect*, / God! Of mercy mee protect" (*Poems* 66).[22]

Nevertheless, though Vaughan shows little interest in the doctrines of

unconditional reprobation and election, in "Retirement [I]" God himself espouses the

doctrines of divine foreknowledge and predestination:

> I know thee well; for I have framed
>
> And hate thee not,
>
> Thy spirit too is mine;
>
> I know thy lot,
>
> Extent, and end, for my hands drew the line
>
> Assigned thine;
>
> If then thou would'st unto my seat,
>
> 'Tis not the applause, and feat
>
> Of dust, and clay
>
> Leads to that way,
>
> But from those follies a resolved retreat. (222-23, ll. 23-33)

It is clear from these lines that God both foresaw and predestined the course of the speaker's

life. That Vaughan in this poem accepts the doctrines of divine predestination and

foreknowledge is hardly surprising as both were endorsed by Calvinist and Arminian alike.

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[22] Cary, son of Henry Carey, Viscount Falkland, served as an abbot in the Catholic Church in Rome. At the time of the publication of his poems, he was in the process of defecting to the Church of England (*Poems* xxxiv).

Such doctrines permitted theologians to strip humanity of pride and highlight the absolute, independent will of God. This Vaughan would seem to do in "Retirement [I]" for praise cannot be given to the speaker for electing God, an act not within his power; it is within his power only to retreat from sinful "follies" (223, I. 33).

Nevertheless, though Vaughan acknowledges the truth of predestination, he attempts to communicate a sense of its conditional nature by writing in the subjunctive: "If then thou would'st unto my seat . . ." (222, I.29). The conditional nature of predestination and election in Vaughan's theology, highlighted by his use of the subjunctive, resurfaces in "Discipline," a poem published in *Thalia Rediviva*:

> Fair prince of life, light's living well!
>
> Who hast the keys of death and hell!
>
> If the mule man despise thy day,
>
> Put chains of darkness in his way.
>
> . . . .
>
> If Heaven and Angels, hopes and mirth
>
> Please not the *mole* so much as earth:
>
> Give him his *mine* to dig, or dwell;
>
> And one sad *scheme* of hideous hell. (367-68, II.1-4, 13-16)

Vaughan insists on man's choice to reject or accept the grace of God. In "The Stone" Vaughan advises us that we can "reject" or "slight" God, clearly acknowledging his belief in both the doctrines of conditional election, free will and resistible grace:

> If any (for he all invites)

His easy yoke rejects or slights,

The *Gospel* then (for 'tis his word

And not himself shall judge the world)

Will be loose *dust* that man arraign,

As one than dust more vile and vain. (282, ll. 54-59)

Throughout his sacred verse, Vaughan attempts to balance the sovereignty of divine

predestination with the responsibility of human faith, as does Taylor in his dedicatory epistle

to *Holy Living and Holy Dying*. In his letter to Richard Lord Vaughan, Earl of Carbery,

Taylor argues that those who hold certain beliefs and act in particular ways are clearly

predestined to eternal life and do "certainly belong to God" (*Works* 3:3). In this epistle, as

in Vaughan's poems, predestination is associated with human action.[23] In Vaughan's

theological landscape, the onus is once again placed on the created rather than on the Creator.

[24] Just as Adam freely rejected "Almighty Love" shortly after Creation, and just as each child

elects vice over virtue, each individual has the choice to receive God's saving grace as freely

given. In the theology of Vaughan, God in his mercy offers all humanity entrance into

Paradise and awaits our response.

Vaughan's emphasis on human agency in the regenerative process is demonstrated

in several of his poems. In "Faith" Vaughan urges his readers to utter the words "*I do*

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[23] This is also the case in Vaughan's prose works. In his translation of Anselm's *Man in Glory*, for example, Vaughan writes: "Whoever then shall leade an Angelical life here upon earth, shall without doubt be admitted into an equal liberty with the Angels in heaven" (*Works* 197).

[24] Vaughan and Taylor do not share Donne's obsession with punishment in the absence of complete obedience and submission to divine dicta: "He that believes not every article of the Christian faith, and with so steadfast a belief, as that he would die for it, *Damnabitur* (no modification, no mollification, no going less) he shall be damned" (*Sermons* 7: 618-21).

believe" and the "most loving Lord straightway [will] . . . answer, *Live*" (209, ll.42-44). However, Vaughan's doctrine of faith includes not only a lingual response to God. He who would be saved must be an active seeker of God. Throughout *Silex Scintillans*, the speaker entreats his readers to embark on a spiritual journey in search of Christ. In "Regeneration" the speaker "stole abroad" in search of God's grace (147, l.2), in "The Search" the speaker spends the night in "roving ecstasy / To find my Saviour" (157, ll. 4-5) and in "Ascension-Day" his search takes him up to the heavens:

> I soar and rise
>
> Up to the skies,
>
> Leaving the world their day,
>
> And in my flight,
>
> For the true light
>
> Go seeking all the way; (209, ll. 9-14)

In his vision of an active rather than a passive faith, Vaughan aligns himself with Arminian theologians of early-modern England. In his Sermon preached before the King's Majesty at Whitehall on Christmas day, 1622, Lancelot Andrewes draws an analogue between the wise men and all believers to persuade his listeners that Scripture instructs us to seek out Christ rather than passively to await his appearance:

> I wot well, it is said in place of Esay, 'He was found,' a *non quaerentibus*, 'of some that sought Him not,' (Isa. 65.1), never asked *ubi est*? But it is no good holding by that place. It was their good hap that so did. But trust not to it, it is not every body's case, that. It is better advice you shall read in the Psalm [24.6] . . . 'there is a generation of them that seek Him.' Of which these were,

and of that generation let us be. Regularly there is no promise of *invenietis* but to *quaerite*, of finding but to such as 'seek.' It is not safe to presume to find Him otherwise (1:259).

Like Andrewes, Vaughan gloried in, and sought to express, man's potentiality under God. Where Calvinist doctrines of salvation may encourage passivity in those who adhere to them, since reprobates have no opportunity to avoid condemnation and the elect cannot resist God's irresistible grace, Vaughan's doctrinal position results in the animation of man. It allows him to elect to follow God, to fulfil his potential as a believer, and to aid in his transformation from a depraved to a holy creature.

Man's active participation in his transfiguration, or sanctification, is made visually compelling in *Silex Scintillans* through the motifs of blood and tears. In "The Dedication" to *Silex Scintillans*, Vaughan praises his Redeemer whose "blood washed me as white as heaven" (146, 1.42), and in "Ascension-Hymn," Vaughan explains that we are purified through Christ's blood: "The Fuller, whose pure blood did flow / To make stained man more white than snow" (246, ll.35-36). However, in "Vain Wits and Eyes," Vaughan suggests that man can also cleanse himself through repentance, when he admonishes vain wits to "with true tears wash off your mire" (146,1.4). By metaphorically representing the sanctification process as the commingling of blood and tears, Vaughan implies that we are transfigured both by the grace of God, as manifested in Christ's blood, and our own endless cleansing of ourselves, through tears of repentance.

Though Vaughan espouses the doctrine of imperfect sanctification, "that believers must be continually infused with grace," such grace can only be acquired if believers actively prepare to receive that grace, thereby participating in their own regeneration (Donald Dickson 133). In *The Mount of Olives*, Vaughan subscribes to such a participatory vision

of spiritual cleansing when he counsels his readers that they "receive only so much grace as their preparation and holiness makes them capable of" (155).[25] Dickson contends that Vaughan's belief "that sacramental grace is received in proportion to one's spiritual preparation" differentiates him from "his literary master, Herbert, who was a far stricter Calvinist" (133). In "Dressing," in typical Arminian fashion, Vaughan sets out in verse the rituals of cleansing, kneeling and bowing necessary to receive the grace that flows from the "mystical *Communion*," that "sacred feast" (214-5, ll.14,34). For only in "dressing" the soul can the believer receive the sacramental grace of Christ's "blest blood" (215, l.35). Like the Arminians Archbishop Laud and Robert Shelford, Vaughan "substitutes sacramental grace for the grace of predestination" (Tyacke 7,55) for in "The Feast," the speaker renders communion and salvation indivisible:

> Come then true bread,
>
> Quickening the dead,
>
> > Whose eater shall not, cannot die,
>
> . . . .
>
> O drink and bread
>
> Which strikes death dead,

---

[25] In his notion of preparing the soul to receive grace, Vaughan displays a certain ascetic sentiment. His speakers are adorned in "mourning sack-cloth" "all mortified" ("The Obsequies" 306, l.16) and, modelling the desert fathers, they reject the treasures of the world: "My business here shall be to grieve: / A grief that shall outshine all joys" ("Jesus Weeping[II]" 270,ll.45-46). In his description of holy life, we hear echoes of the rhetoric of suffering common to writers of Stuart England. In *Areopagitica* Milton assures us that trial and suffering result in purification, for "that which purifies us is triall, and triall is by what is contrary" (*MCPW* 2:515). Of course, the notion that affliction is intrinsic to sanctification has biblical origins. In one instance of many, Paul reminds the Corinthians that suffering breeds eternal rewards: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:17). Vaughan's prayer "give me crosses here/Still more afflictions lend . . ." is consistent, then, with biblical truth and the widespread belief in the seventeenth century that suffering "brings health in the end" (*Day of Judgment* 154, ll.33-34).

> The food of man's immortal being!
>
> . . . .
>
> For this true ease
>
> This healing peace,
>
> For this taste of living glory,
>
> My soul and all,
>
> Kneel down and fall
>
> And sing his sad victorious story. (303-4, ll.13-15, 37-39, 55-60).

Shelford's claim that believers "shall never be saved without the grace of the sacraments"

(66), reflects, according to Tyacke, an English Arminianism derived from the Book of

Common Prayer (55). In Vaughan's devotional manual *The Mount of Olives*, which may

be read as a substitute for the proscribed Book of Common Prayer, he instructs readers to

dress their souls in "white linen" in order to experience the mystical supper which permits

creation and Creator to interpenetrate: "where thy flesh is the meat, where thy blood is the

drink, where the creature feeds upon the Creatour, and the Creatour is united unto the

creature, where Angels are spectators, and God himself both the Priest and the Sacrifice,

what holinesse and humility should we bring thither?" (*Works* 156). Vaughan at the very

least sensed the "Real Presence" of Christ during Holy Communion.

Vaughan's devotional poems suggest that the infusion of sacramental grace can

initiate, though not complete, the process of glorification. Vaughan intimates in "The

Query" that while difficult, it is indeed possible to begin transfiguration on earth.

Vaughan effectively conveys to the reader the process of transfiguration in the language

of spiritual alchemy, as can be seen in "Love-Sick" when he cries,

Thou art

Refining fire, O then refine my heart,

My foul, foul heart! Thou art immortal heat,

Heat motion gives; then warm it, till it beat,

So beat for thee. . . .(257, ll.12-16)

In "The Dressing" the speaker echoes these sentiments: ". . . my gloomy breast / With

clear fire refine, burning to dust / These dark confusions . . ." (214, ll.5-7). In "White

Sunday" the discourse of alchemy in the account of sanctification is even more

pronounced:

So let thy grace now make the way

Even for thy love; for by that means

We, who are nothing but foul clay,

Shall be fine gold, which thou didst cleanse.

O come! refine us with thy fire! (249, ll. 57-61)

The language of spiritual alchemy lends itself to notions of imparted righteousness in

contrast to the Reformation emphasis on imputed righteousness. In his Epistle to the

Romans, Paul would seem to affirm the imparted righteousness that Vaughan upholds:

"Being then made free from sin, ye [believers] became the servants of righteousness"

(6:18). Likewise, in 2 Corinthians, he describes Christians as new creatures: "Therefore if

any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things

are become new" (5:17). Paul suggests, therefore, that we are made righteous through the

blood of Christ. For Paul, E.P. Sanders maintains, "those in Christ had already begun the

process of transformation which would culminate at the return of the Lord" (69).

Augustine also conceived of "justifying righteousness" as imparted. As McGrath argues,

"in Augustine's view, God bestows justifying righteousness upon the sinner, in such a way that it becomes part of his or her person" (*Reformation Thought* 106). Vaughan appears to concur with this account of Pauline theology in his visual representation of sanctification as a process of gradual refinement.

However, during the Reformation, Luther diverged from the Augustinian doctrine of imparted righteousness and developed the concept of forensic justification. In the heavenly court, Luther informs us, believers are declared righteous only because Christ's righteousness is imputed to us. It is, as Luther labels it, a *iustitia aliena* - an alien righteousness. Calvin developed this concept of forensic justification in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* where he claims, "justified by faith is he who . . . grasps the righteousness of Christ through faith, and clothed in it, appears in God's sight not as a sinner but as a righteous man" (1:726-27). In and of ourselves, "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6).

Vaughan, of course, recognizes the role of imputed righteousness during the initial stages of justification. In "Repentance" Vaughan demonstrates his desire to be judged on the basis of Christ's merit not his own righteousness: "O let thy *justice* then in him confine, / And through his merits, make thy mercy mine!" (208, ll.85-86). He is more overt in his endorsement of imputed righteousness in *The Mount of Olives* where he asks God to forgive his sins because of the righteousness of Christ, "O look not upon my Leprosie, but on his beauty and perfection! and for the righteousnesse of thy *Son*, forgive the sins of the *Servant*" (145-46). However, as has been suggested, Vaughan's emphasis in *Silex Scintillans* is on imparted righteousness.

In fact "being made righteous" in Christ is a notion central to Vaughan's understanding of the interaction between God and all creation. For Vaughan, Christ does

not exist outside His creation with his alien righteousness. Instead, as many of

Vaughan's poems indicate, He dwells within creation, transforming it to His likeness. In

The Knot, for example, Vaughan weaves together the divine and human:

> And such a knot, what arm dares loose,
>
> What life, what death can sever?
>
> Which us in him, and him in us
>
> United keeps for ever. (272, ll.13-16)

In "The Search," the speaker examines "externals" in his quest for Christ, before reaching

the conclusion that Christ can only be found within, a realization supported by Acts

17:27-28, the biblical coda to the poem: "That they should seek the Lord, if happily they

might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far off from every one of us, for in

him we live, and move, and have our being." So too in "Cock-Crowing," recognizing

that the essence of God is within, the speaker exclaims to God: "Seeing thy seed abides in

me, / Dwell thou in it, and I in thee" (251, ll.23-24).

Everywhere they journey, whether into the soul or nature, Vaughan's lyric

subjects encounter the Cosmic Christ of Colossians by whom all things are created, and

by whom all things consist:

> For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth,
>
> visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or
>
> principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And
>
> he is before all things, and by him all things consist. . . .For it pleased the
>
> Father that in him should all fulness dwell. (Colossians 1:16,17,19)

Recall the portrait of God in "Psalm 121" as he "who fills / (Unseen,) both heaven, and

earth" (218, ll.3-4) or the image of God's "love-twist," the "unseen link" which upheld the

speaker of "Retirement [I]" (222, l.22). That Creator and creation interpenetrate is most

fully revealed by Vaughan in "The Stone," where the speaker is shown in a strange glass,

"That busy commerce kept between / God and his Creatures, though unseen" (281, ll. 20-

21). God is that "tincture," the "immortal light and heat" that "shines through" the frame

of man. his "sunny seed" implanted in the believer ("Cock-Crowing" 251, ll. 1,13,19-20).

For Vaughan, as with St. Paul, the diversity of the creation unites in the Creator;

the many unite in the One. Vaughan's understanding of the Cosmic Christ is rather like

that of the Cambridge Platonists who conceived of Christ as the supreme Unity who binds

the universe. As Walker advises, they saw the soul of Christ as "the uncreated mind

within the godhead," his body as "the totality of the Ideas of all creatures" (109).

Vaughan is also influenced, as earlier argued, by the hermetic belief in the Spirit's

infusion in, and redemption of, all creation. In Euphrates, Thomas Vaughan argues that

"it were great impiety to separate God and Nature" when speaking of redemption, for,

> if it be true then that Man hath a Saviour, it is also as true, that the whole
>
> Creation hath the same; God having reconciled all things to himself in
>
> Christ Jesus. And if it be true, that we look for Redemption of our Bodies,
>
> and a New man: It is equally true, that we look for a New Heaven, and a
>
> New Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness: (Works 518)

Vaughan's neo-Platonic or hermetic preoccupation with God's immanence in Nature sets

him apart from most Reformation theologians who conceived of God primarily in terms

of difference and distance. In attempting to establish the sovereignty of God and His

holiness, the reformers placed a vast gulf between humanity and God (Sinfield 9). While

they preached the omnipresence of God, they were more concerned to proclaim His

sovereign right to save a few of his creatures and condemn the remainder. This is not a

vision shared by Vaughan. The language of redemption for Vaughan moves towards

inclusion and coherence rather than exclusion and condemnation.[26]

Though Vaughan accepts that the believer is made righteous in Christ, his view on

the loss of righteousness, and by extension the loss of salvation, is not as transparent.

That is, it is difficult to determine whether Vaughan denies or embraces the Calvinist

doctrine of absolute, infallible perseverance. Calvinists argued that the elect were given

the *donum perseverantiae*, the gift of enduring to the end. Such a doctrine of

perseverance offered the Puritan an assurance not available to the Arminian. In *Brevis et*

Dilucida Explicatio, Matthew Hutton argues that though the faith of the elect "can be

shaken, injured, strangled, and apparently dead and buried," it "never fails totally, much

less finally" (42). In *Heaven on Earth* (1654), Thomas Brooks accuses the Arminians of

asserting an "uncomfortable" "soul-disquieting," "soul-unsettling" doctrine which makes

"the poor soul a *Magor-missabib* (Jer.20.3), a terror to itself" (32,31). For the Arminian.

writes Brooks, one might well be in a state of life at one moment, and the next in a state

of death, a vessel of honour today, a vessel of wrath tomorrow. Many theologians,

however, found in the doctrine of perseverance a self-righteousness. Donne found in

Scripture a warning against spiritual complaisance: "when Christ himself saith 'The

children of the kingdom shall be cast into utter darkness' who can promise himself a

perpetual or unconditional station?" (*Sermons* 7:423). So too did William Laud find the

---

[26] Though Vaughan longs for transfiguration and hence harmony and beauty, he does not share the intense optimism of humanist thinkers. Pico della Mirandola believed, "if we burn with love for the Creator only, His consuming fire will quickly transform us into the flaming likeness of the Seraphim" (*Oration on the Dignity of Man* 13-14).

doctrine of perseverance antithetical to the spirit of Scripture: "So, according to this divinity, the true saints of God may commit horrible and crying sins, die without repentance, and yet be sure of salvation; which teareth up the very foundations of religion, induceth all manner of profaneness into the world, and is expressly contrary to the whole current of the Scripture" (*Works* 6:132).

Vaughan is inconsistent in his treatment of the doctrine of perseverance. "The Agreement" is the only poem which addresses the subject matter directly. The speaker tells of "thick busy clouds" which claim he is "no child of day": "They said, my own hands did remove / That candle given me from above" (298, ll.39-42). I imagine that such "busy clouds" are the speaker's own thoughts which threaten his assurance of salvation, though his later reference to his "foes" (298, l.48) is suggestive of an external enemy. While he acknowledges his "most heinous" "numberless" sins, he reminds himself that the mercy of Christ cannot be undermined by sin:

> If thy sure mercies can be broken,
>
> Then all is true, my foes have spoken.
>
> . . . .
>
> No sins of frailty, nor of youth
>
> Can foil his merits, and thy truth. (298, ll.47-48, 53-54)

Such a description of God's mercy and merits in the face of human sinfulness suggests that Vaughan adheres to the Calvinist doctrine of perseverance. And yet as is typical of Vaughan, we find within this poem of assurance the possibility of being "cast off" by God in the absence of faith (298, ll.59-60). He begs that his faith may be sustained, recognizing that such faith is effected by God alone: "Wherefore with tears (tears by thee sent) / I beg, my faith may never fail!" (298, ll.61-62). In "Dressing," the lyric subject

longs for assurance of future salvation, an assurance made evident in the "private seal" of

the Holy Spirit, and yet such assurance is predicated on the believer following Christ:

> Let him so follow here, that in the end
>
> He may take thee, as thou dost him intend.
>
> Give him thy private seal,
>
> Earnest, and sign; Thy gifts so deal
>
> That these forerunners here
>
> May make the future clear; (214, ll. 17-22)

In his summation of his ethics in "Rules and Lessons," the speaker suggests that salvation

can be lost if one does not act in accordance with his code of behaviour:

> Briefly, *Do as thou wouldst be done unto,*
>
> *Love God, and love thy neighbour; watch and pray.*
>
> These are the *words,* and *works* of life; this do,
>
> And live; who doth not thus, has lost *Heaven's way.*
>
> O lose it not! look up, wilt change those *lights*
>
> For *chains* of *darkness,* and *eternal nights?* (196, ll.139-44)

And yet in "Love-Sick," the speaker seems convinced that Christ's blood unites him

eternally with God: "for thou didst seal / Mine with thy blood, thy blood which makes

thee mine, / Mine ever, ever; and me ever thine" (257, ll.20-22).

Vaughan, for the most part, shares the Calvinist confidence in salvation, an

assurance which motivates frequent calls for death which will wing his soul into the arms

of his Beloved. He locates this assurance not in the ability of humanity but in the

reliability of God, whose mercy is boundless. Yet such mercy is predicated in many lyrics on contrition and righteousness, for as the speaker of "Day of Judgment [I]" explains, without spiritual preparation and repentance, the soul cannot achieve salvation (154, ll.25-32). Such a view is propounded in *The Mount of Olives* when Vaughan claims that salvation is not secured if the conditions of repentance and righteousness are not met: "With what Christian thrift and diligence should we dispose of every minute of our time that we might make *our calling and election sure*? It is a fearful thing to die without reconciliation; And with what confusion of face and horrour of spirit (if we die in that state,) shall we appear before the *Judge of all the world*?" (*Works* 180).

In his poetic vision of man's redemption, Vaughan venerates God for universal and sacramental grace in Christ and for boundless mercy shown to the "wretched" creature predestined to salvation . Yet, as with his depiction of the Fall, Vaughan reflects on the free will and active participation of humanity in the process of salvation. For Vaughan, the creature must cleanse and purify the self through God's grace and must engage in the "*words*, and *works* of life" if he is to be made righteous in Christ and sustain the process of spiritual refinement ("Rules and Lessons" 196, 1.141). However, unlike the Quakers and hermeticists who believed with Pelagius that earthly perfection was possible, Vaughan recognizes that glorification and perfect union with God cannot take place until the return of Christ. Therefore, in moving from his treatment of redemption to that of restoration, we are again reminded of the limitation of humanity and the omnipotence of God.

III. **Revelation, Resurrection and Restoration: *"Swan-like singing home"***

Faced with the absence of God's fullness, in this world, Vaughan longs to dwell in

God's fullness: "O for that night! / where I in him / Might live invisible and dim" ("The

Night" 290, ll.53-54). Yet the dominant revelatory theology of the period rejected any

notion of complete mystical union on earth, as is evident in Donne's sermon on 1

Corinthians 13:12, where he records that even God in "his absolute power cannot make a

man, remaining a mortall man, and under the definition of mortall man, capable of seeing

his Essence" (8:231-32). No doubt, Vaughan shares, in part, Boehme's belief that "the

right man regenerate and born anew in Christ, is not in this world, but in the Paradise of

God" and George Fox's understanding that "such as were faithful to Him, in the power

and light of Christ, should come up into that state in which Adam was before he fell"

(*The Epistles of Jacob Boehme* 178; Fox 97). In "Ascension-Hymn," Vaughan accepts

the possibility that some experience paradise in this world:

> And yet some
>
> That know to die
>
> Before death come,
>
> Walk to the sky
>
> Even in this life; (245, ll.7-11)[27]

Though the speakers in *Silex Scintillans* never appear to experience fully such mystical

union, in moments of secrecy and silence some "into glory peep" ("'They are all gone

---

[27] Perfection in the earthly world also seems theoretically possible in "'I walked the other day'":
    That in these masques and shadows I may see
        Thy sacred way,
    And by those hid ascents climb to that day
        Which breaks from thee
    Who art in all things, though invisibly; (242, ll.50-54)

into the world of light'" 247, 1.28). Perhaps Vaughan would have appreciated William

Blake's revelation that, "There is a Moment in each Day that Satan cannot find" ("Milton:

Book the Second" 136, 1.42).[28]

Unable to experience the fullness of divine revelation, Vaughan's speakers

repeatedly take comfort in the rhetoric of postponed reward expressed, in one instance, in

"Resurrection and Immortality":

<blockquote>

So shalt thou then with me

(Both winged and free)

Rove in that mighty, and eternal light

Where no rude shade, or night

Shall dare approach us. . . .(153, ll.61-65)

</blockquote>

Such rhetoric, however, rarely brings solace, and so we find *Silex Scintillans* imbued with

thanatopsis, a contemplation of death. Many of Vaughan's lyric subjects express a

distaste for the world beyond the commonplace *contemptus mundi* of, say, Henry King in

"The Labyrinth":

<blockquote>

Life is a crooked Labyrinth, and wee

Are dayly lost in that Obliquity.

'Tis a perplexed Circle, in whose round

Nothing but Sorrowes and new Sins abound. (173, ll.1-4)

</blockquote>

The presence of death in many of Vaughan's lyrics is even more pronounced than that in

the epistles of St. Paul, who wrote, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil.

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[28] I am indebted to Rudrum for this quotation.

1:21). We find in Vaughan's elegies a desperate desire for personal absence, for the earthly removal of the self. "O let me (like him,) know my end!" exclaims the speaker of "Thou that know'st for whom I mourn" as he reflects on the crown of life which his loved one wears (Rev. 2:10; Jas. 1:2). So too the speaker of "Vanity of Spirit" after realizing only a "dismembered" epistemology in nature's womb, wishes to "*disapparel*" and will "*most gladly die*" (172, ll.33-34). The speaker of "Come, come, what do I here?" desires himself asleep with the dead (174, l.29) while the speaker of "They are all gone into the world of light!" begs to be removed from a world of mists "which blot and fill" his perspective (247, ll.37-38). We discover in effect a longing for "beyondness" (as Derrida terms it) in many of Vaughan's lyrics, an effort on the part of many of Vaughan's poetic personas to impel themselves beyond the present. In death, Vaughan hopes to free himself from captivity on "an air of glory" (246, l.9).

The death-longing inscribed in *Silex Scintillans* complements his desire for life in the New Jerusalem where God will "Make all things new! and without end" (*The Day of Judgment*, 300, l.46). Though Vaughan has been described as having a "millennarian impulse" by Davies, he is not in fact a millenarian (156). His desire for temporal endings and his vision of an eternal New Jerusalem reveal that he neither expects nor hopes for a thousand-year "rule of the saints on earth inaugurated by the second advent of Christ" (Christianson 7).[29] Garner quite correctly argues that Vaughan rejects the notion of an

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[29] Vaughan not only rejects the opinions of the millenarians who expect an earthly reign of Christ and His saints, he is also uninterested in the views of those who looked to a spiritual millennium in which Christ reigns in the hearts of men. The author of *The New Jerusalem* (1652) explains this position when he writes: "*this new* Jerusalem *in the Spirituall sense thereof, is observed to bee also that which is called the holy Ghost, it being considered in the amplest measure thereof vouchsafed now unto the Saints. . . .So that it is manifest, that the Spirituall new* Jerusalem *is now attaineable through the grace of the Almighty God*" ("To the unpartiall Reader" n.p.).

earthly New Jerusalem:

> it is clear that he [Vaughan] did not think of this earth as the seat of the
> resurrection and the life; the 'world of light' and 'that hill, / Where I shall
> need no glass,' are not material substance. Although he was impatient at
> the slowness of the Second Coming, nowhere does he prophesy doom and
> rejoice in the earthly paradise to which he will be admitted as all the
> wicked are cast into everlasting fire. (101)

Davies misapplies the term "millennial" *to Silex Scintillans.* She intimates that Vaughan leans towards a post-millennial position in so far as he sees himself living in a catastrophic millennium which will be followed by the second advent of Christ.[30] There are no references, however, to the millennium in Vaughan's literary corpus. Those references which Davies considers millennial would be better termed apocalyptic or eschatological, inasmuch as they speak to "events which will attend the end of the world and the inauguration of the kingdom of God" or more specifically to the "last things" (death. resurrection, judgment, and the afterlife) (Ladd 62).

Rudrum quite correctly describes the political quality of Vaughan's eschatology without recourse to millennial language:

> The very harshness of the times, for Royalists and Anglicans, would have
> led the more religiously inclined of them to expect the end of all things,
> for it was part of Old Testament prophetic teaching that the Day of

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[30] I reach this conclusion from her description of *Silex Scintillans* as "a millennarian survivor's manual" (157).

Judgment would be heralded by various woes, after which would come the

Day of the Lord when God would vindicate Himself against the sinful

nation. (*Henry Vaughan* 90-91)[31]

Vaughan does suggest in his verse that many of the woes or tribulation described in

Revelation had already played themselves out on the political stage of early-modern

England, and that the second advent of Christ which would actuate the world's

dissolution, was not far off. In "White Sunday," the speaker describes his time as the

"last and lewdest age,"[32] and in "The Constellation," the speaker's political enemies are

likened to the beast of Revelation 13:11:

The children chase the mother, and would heal

The wounds thy give, by crying, zeal.

Then cast her blood, and tears upon thy book

Where they for fashion look,

And like that lamb which had the dragon's voice

Seem mild, but are known by their noise. (231, ll.43-44)

Persecution at the hands of self-proclaimed "saints" compels the speaker of "Abel's

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[31] Post also disassociates Vaughan's verse "from the millenarian zeal that inspired many Puritans" though he uses the term "Antichrist" to describe Vaughan's impression of his enemies, a term not used by, and likely distasteful to, Vaughan (*Henry Vaughan* 189). Hill also labels Vaughan anti-millenarian: "Vaughan's eschatology has no place for the rule of the saints, but all the signs for him too pointed to the approaching end of the world (*Collected Essays* 219).

[32] Though Vaughan believes he lives in the last age, he does not participate in the popular millenarian speculations regarding the exact date of Christ's return. In "The Evening-Watch," in response to the Body's question "How many hours dost think 'till day?" (180, l.10) the Soul exclaims: "Ah! go; th'art weak, and sleepy. Heaven / Is a plain watch, and without figures winds / All ages up . . . " (180, ll. 11-13).

Blood" to utter the apocalyptic cry of the blood of the innocent, "How long, O

Lord . . .dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev.

6:10). The speaker of "Day of Judgment [II]" echoes the apocalyptic longing of St. John

when he exclaims "the fields are long since white" and cries "with earnest groans" (299,

11.13-14) for freedom (John 4:35). Summers is quite correct when he argues that for

Vaughan, "apocalypticism is fundamentally an attempt to escape history by means of an

appeal to a vision of eternity and an expression of faith in God's eventual intervention in

human affairs" (52).

Vaughan's eschatological reflections suggest that he shares the theological

viewpoint of J. Seager as presented in *A Discoverie of the World to Come According to*

the Scriptures (1650):

> 2. That the time of Christs second coming shall be the time of the worlds
>
> dissolution, as may appear plainly, *Mat.* 24.3. I *Cor.* 15.24. *Pet.* 3.7,10,12.
>
> where we find, that *in the very day of Christ's second Coming, the*
>
> *Heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, the Elements shall melt; the*
>
> *Earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.* (42)

In "The Day of Judgment [I]," Vaughan amplifies Revelation 6:14, "And the heaven

departed as a scroll when it is rolled together," to produce a poignant description of the

sequence of conflagration, dissolution and judgment:

> When through the north a fire shall rush
>
> > And roll into the east,
>
> And like a fiery torrent brush

And sweep up *south*, and *west*,

When all shall stream, and lighten round

And with surprising flames

Both stars, and elements confound

And quite blot out their names,

. . . .

When like a scroll the heavens shall pass

And vanish clean away,

And nought must stand of that vast space

Which held up night, and day,

(153-54, ll.1-8, 13-16)

In "L'Envoy," the dissolution of the earth is predated by the return of the "Sun" who

appears to "fold up these skies, / This long worn veil" and transform his creation (312,

ll.8-9). Vaughan relies in these passages on the apocalyptic writings of St. Peter who

envisioned the second advent of Christ as a day of conflagration, dissolution and

recreation; for Peter, the "day of God" was one in which "the heavens being on fire shall

be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat," which destruction would be

followed by "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. 3:12-

13).

Vaughan's refusal to take a position on millenarianism is not unexpected given

his Royalist platform, Arminian disposition and hermetic sensibility. Radical Puritans

and sectaries envisioned the rule of the saints as an opportunity to challenge traditional

social, political and ecclesiastical hierarchies. According to Bernard Capp, only a few

"royalist eccentrics" claimed that Prince Charles "was destined to reign in the millennium

and lead the Jews back to Jerusalem" (183). As Michael Wilding suggests, Royalists like

Thomas Browne expressed anti-millenarian sentiment because of the political expression

and radical activism of millenarian beliefs (96,100). Not only Vaughan's politics,

however, led to a distaste with millenarianism. J.P. Grider states that Arminians rarely

committed themselves to a given millennial view, and had little interest in specific

prophecies (81). Hermetic writers shared this lack of interest. Boehme makes no

reference to the millennial thought, concerning himself with the return of Christ, the last

judgement, the dissolution of the earth and eternal life in the triune God (*The Three

Principles* 455-64). In the mind of the hermetic thinker, the renovation of creation rather

than the reign of the saints is uppermost.

The same might be said of Vaughan, whose poetic chimera of the eschaton is

dominated by visions of revelation (divine disclosure), resurrection, refinement and

restoration to be actuated by the second advent of Christ. The glorified Christ, the

eschatological anti-type, dominates Vaughan's vision of the last days. This is hardly

surprising given Paul's description of the last day as "the day of the Lord Jesus" or "the

day of Christ" (1 Cor. 1:8, 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14; 2 Thess. 2:2). In describing the *eschaton*,

Vaughan frequently alludes to the various manifestations of Christ described in

Revelation to imbue his verse with hope and promise, the dominant notes of eschatology.

No longer obscured by clouds, veils and shadows, Christ's face will shine forth ("The

Wreath") as he sits upon his great white throne ("The Throne") at the dawn of eternity

(Rev. 22:4, 20:11). The Lamb will lead those who have been washed in His blood to the living fountains of water ("The Water-fall") and will call the same to enjoy a marriage supper with Him ("The Feast")(Rev. 7:17, 19:9). Christ, the Bridegroom, will fill the sky with "all-surprising light" because he "will be the Sun," just as He, the Morning Star, will "disband, and scatter" the "pursy clouds" ("The Dawning") which bring darkness to the world (Rev. 22:16, 21:23).

In "L'Envoy," Vaughan reproduces John's cosmic vision of the light of Christ which pierces creation to render it "clear as crystal" and as "transparent glass" (Rev. 21:11,21):

> O the new world's new, quickening Sun!
>
> Ever the same, and never done!
>
> . . . .
>
> Arise, arise!
>
> And like old clothes fold up these skies,
>
> This long worn veil: then shine and spread
>
> Thy own bright self over each head,
>
> And through thy creatures pierce and pass
>
> Till all becomes thy cloudless glass,
>
> Transparent as the purest day
>
> And without blemish or decay,
>
> Fixed by thy spirit to a state
>
> For evermore immaculate. (311-12, ll.1-2,7-16)

Vaughan borrows the biblical metaphors of Christ as light (Sun, morning-star) and heat

(refining fire) in his collection as this permits him to envision Him as the source of both

illumination and transmutation. He is the refining fire and cleansing light, whose

combined operations effect the process of refinement. Recall the speaker of "Cock-

Crowing" who longs to be brushed with the light of Christ and warmed at His glorious

eye so that he "may shine unto a perfect day" (252, ll.43-46). Such notions of Christ may

well be influenced by hermetic and alchemical texts. Wilson O. Clough explains that

"the fire and light of the alchemist became the means of purification, the Truth, the

mystical philosopher's stone" (1111), and Rudrum has demonstrated that Vaughan "had

the hermetic habit of thinking of Christ in alchemical terms, either as the *lapis* or the

elixir or the "refining fire"; or as the master-alchemist, who alone can transmute human

experience" ("The Influence of Alchemy" 474). Such thinking was supported by

Malachi 3:2-3: "But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he

appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: "And he shall sit as a

refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold

and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."

In *Man in Darkness*, Vaughan relies on this biblical metaphor of Christ as fire to

explain the resurrection and restoration of the body, the dominant eschatological theme in

Vaughan's literary oeuvre:

> We see mortal men when the *body* and *substance* of *vegetables* is
>
> consumed in the *fire*, out of their very *ashes* to make *glasse*, which is a
>
> very bright and noble *body*, how much more shall the Immortal and

Almighty God (who created all things of nothing) out of dust and

corruption, raise us up incorrupt and glories bodies? (*Works* 175-76)

Vaughan offers numerous proof texts, Job 19:25-27, Isaiah 26:19, Ezekiel 37:12-14,

Philippians 3:21, 1 Corinthians 15, to assure himself of bodily resurrection and

refinement. In the three body-soul dialogues, the Body re-enacts the doubt and confusion

surrounding his resurrection, a subject matter of which Calvin said: "that it is something

too hard for men's minds to apprehend" (*Institutes* 2:990). In "The Evening-Watch," the

body lies unnamed and unnumbered, loose particles of dust awaiting "*eternal prime*"

(180, l.16). In "Resurrection and Immortality," the Body speaks to his fear of dispersal,

the decay of the material self, and must be comforted by the soul's dictum: "no thing can

to *Nothing* fall" (152, 1.25).[33] Garner argues that we find in this poem "how the spirit of

God in nature arranges for the progression from birth through life through death through

decay to rebirth, in a never-ending succession - that is, the flux and the indestructibility of

matter" (88). In "Death. A Dialogue" the Soul reflects on this very indestructibility, when

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[33] Compare "The Waterfall":
> With what deep murmurs through time's silent stealth
> Doth thy transparent, cool and watery wealth
>> Here flowing fall,
>> And chide, and call,
> As if his liquid, loose retinue stayed
> Ling'ring, and were of this steep place afraid,
>> The common pass
>> Where, clear as glass,
>> All must descend
>> Not to an end:
> But quickened by this deep and rocky grave,
> Rise to a longer course more bright and brave. (306, ll.1-12)

she calls to mind the moment when she and the body will "mix again" (151, 1.31).[34]

Vaughan's apprehension about the state of the body when the soul "wings" herself

to the "*source* of spirits," ("Resurrection and Immortality" 152, ll.41-43), reflects a

broader cultural anxiety about the state of the material self after death and before

resurrection.[35] In typical fashion, Donne renders visible the cultural horror of

"posthumous death" in his sermon "Deaths Duell":

> Though this be *exitus à morte*, it is *introitus in mortem*: though it bee an
>
> *issue from* the manifold *deaths* of this *world*, yet it is an *entrance* into the
>
> *death of corruption* and *putrefaction* and *vermiculation* and *incineration*,
>
> and dispersion in and from the *grave*, in which every dead man dyes over
>
> againe. (*Sermons* 10:235-36)

The "death after burial" permits each body to be "mingled in his dust with the dust of

every high way, and of every dunghill, and swallowed in every puddle and pond"

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[34] Vaughan's preoccupation with the vitality and indestructibility of matter may also be read in his images of life hidden beneath earth's cold and dark surface; see, for example, "The Timber" or "The Seed Growing Secretly." As for the latter poem, though the seed growing secretly ostensibly refers to the life rather than the death of the speaker, it should also be noted "the seed is the oldest Christian metaphor of the resurrection of the body" (Bynum 3).

[35] Vaughan's belief in the separation of body and soul at death is conventional. Calvin explains that souls "when divested of their bodies" have "capacity of blessed glory," but warns against tormenting oneself "overmuch with disputing as to what place the souls occupy and whether or not they already enjoy heavenly glory" (2:997). However, such a belief was challenged by some Puritans and sectaries who supported the "heresy" of mortalism. In *Christian Doctrine*, Milton understands "the hope and resurrection of the dead" to refer to the hope of the soul and body conjointly, both of which suffer "privation of life" at death:

> There are some who insist that the soul is exempt from death. They say that once it has thrown off the body it goes directly to or is led by angels to the place appointed for reward or punishment, and that there it remains in isolation until the end of the world. Their case rests fundamentally on ... Psal. xlix.16: *God is going to redeem my soul from the grave*. But this, like various texts I quoted above, proves rather that the soul goes down into the grave with the body, and therefore stands in need of redemption (i.e., at the resurrection) (*MCPW* 6:407).

(*Sermons* 10:239). However, Donne assures us that despite their dispersal in the dunghills of England, believers would be re-integrated eventually by God: "God knowes in which Boxe of his Cabinet all this seed Pearle lies, in what corner of the world every atome, every graine of every mans dust sleeps, shall recollect that dust. and then recompact that body, and then re-inanimate that man. and that is the accomplishment of all" (*Sermons* 7:115).

Vaughan and Donne may be concerned to dispute the doctrinal "error" of Laelius Socinus, and subsequently his nephew Faustus Socinus, who argued that the resurrected soul should be clothed with new and different bodies.[36] Vaughan, however, may also be responding to the annihilationists who denied any resurrection (Hill, "Irreligion" 201-02). For Vaughan, God "knows" his clay "in life or dust" though the "crumbled" body strays "in blasts, or exhalations," and "wastes beyond all eyes" ("Burial" 183, ll.24-30). The fragmented and dispersed body, the "poor querulous handful" with whom God has a covenant. must be preserved, re-compacted and rendered "all pure, and bright" through the refining power of the "shining light" of Christ ("Resurrection and Immortality" 152-53, ll. 19,47-50). Vaughan is certainly orthodox in his interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15 where we find Paul's account of the "mystery" of bodily resurrection. In *The City of God*, Augustine proposes that every particle of body, regardless of its state, shall be discovered, restored and resurrected by the Creator: "As for bodies that have been . . . disintegrated

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[36] Paracelus, whose work Vaughan read and appreciated. gives another perspective on the resurrection of the body. He asserts that at death the "spirit of God in us" returns to God, the "elemental, material body" "goes to the grave along with its essence. dropping "down to earth like lead" and the "sidereal, subtle body" "soars up to Heaven like an angel" (217-19). The elemental (natural) body is our visible body, the sidereal (intangible) our invisible body, yet both bodies will be transfigured and appear in one flesh on the day of the Lord (218). Paracelsus would seem to base his theory on 1Cor. 15:40-54.

into dust and ashes, or those parts that have dissolved into moisture, or have evaporated into the air, it is unthinkable that the Creator should lack the power to revive them all and restore them to life" (1062).[37] For Augustine, as Caroline Walker Bynum succinctly puts it, "resurrection is the reassemblage of bits" (103). Calvin is in agreement with Augustine when he insists that at the last day, the soul will "receive the same bodies with which they are now clothed," underscoring the "change of quality" in the transfigured body (*Institutes* 2:998,999). Like Calvin and Augustine, Vaughan embraces material continuity in his vision of the resurrected creature, for he senses that without the body "we are not persons; we are not *our selves*" (Bynum 340).

Vaughan's emphasis on the resurrection and reunification of "man's dead and scattered bones" in his treatment of the *eschata* reflects a concern with the indestructibility, continuity and transfiguration of matter. It also illustrates, however, his broader interest in the theme of "multiplicity tending towards unity" (Rudrum *Henry Vaughan* 95). I have already argued in my discussion of original sin that Vaughan rejects the dualism of flesh and spirit in his treatment of the human subject, insisting on the fusion of spirit and matter in the constitution of the self. For Vaughan, the two parts of the self are rendered one. The same might be said of Vaughan's vision of the reconstituted self at the moment of resurrection. Like the speaker of "Distraction" who begs God to "knit" him "that am crumbled dust" (165, l.1), Vaughan longs for the buried body to be knit or reassembled, just as the dry bones of Ezekiel "came together bone to

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[37] In the twenty-second book of *The City of God*, Augustine treats the minutiae of the subject. inasmuch as he speaks, for example, to the weight and sex of the restored body and considers the restoration of an aborted body or a body ingested in an act of cannibalism.

bone," "were clothed with sinews, flesh and skin" and were "infused with the "breath of

life" (*Man in Darkness* 175). Multiplicity is rejected in favour of unity in and through

God.[38]

The same theme of multiplicity tending towards unity is evident in Vaughan's

treatment of another pronounced eschatological theme in *Silex Scintillans: apokatastasis,*

or the restoration of all things (Rudrum, *Henry Vaughan* 89). In his account of the

Restoration. Vaughan draws upon Colossians and Revelation in his vision of the whole of

creation (the many) restored and reconciled in Christ (the One). Restoration is defined in

"The Book" as a time when "Thou shalt restore trees, beasts and men. / When thou shalt

make all new again, / Destroying only death and pain" (310, ll.26-28). In "The Day of

Judgment," vegetation and animals await the second advent with humanity, "My fellow-

creatures too say, *Come*" (299, l.15), in "Cock Crowing," the cock dreams of "Paradise

and light" (251, l.7). For Vaughan, the stones. trees, flowers, herbs, birds and beasts

"their heads lift, and expect / And groan" ("And do they so" 188, ll.3-4) "to see the lamb.

which all atones" ("Palm-Sunday" 266, ll.11-13). These poems reflect Vaughan's

exegesis of Romans 8:21, "Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the

bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

In his article *Henry Vaughan, The Liberation of the Creatures, and Seventeenth-*

Century English Calvinism, Rudrum demonstrates that Vaughan's poetic interpretation of

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[38] Such a theme has political implications. In "L'Envoy" and "The Constellation" both poems invoke numerous metaphors to idealize the union of the many in the one, and both attempt to configure "an humble holy nation" and church whose "rents" must be repaired. The Church, a fragmented rag, must become a "seamless coat" again.

Romans 8:21 places him in alignment with "his twin brother, and with the Renaissance

hermeticists" (40). Though Calvin attested in his commentary on Romans that all

creation aspired to the hope of resurrection, he admonished those who would conjecture

"with great curiosity into the future perfection of the beasts, plants, and metals." Such

conjecture, Calvin hints, may lead to confusion or, perhaps, heresy: "If we give rein to

these speculations, where will they finally lead us?" (qtd. in Schreiner 98). The English

hermetic writers did, however, speculate about the nature of the resurrection and

restoration of non-human creation. In *Euphrates*, Thomas Vaughan writes that:

> it is not Man alone, that is to be *Renued* at the general *Restauration*, but
>
> even the *world*, as well as *Man*, as it is written: *Behold! I make all things*
>
> *New*. I speak not this to disparage man, or to match any other Creature
>
> with him: for I know he is *principall* in the *Restauration*, as he was in the
>
> *Fall*, the *Corruption* that succeeded in the *Elements*, being but a Chain,
>
> that this prisoner drags after him: but I speak this to shew, that God minds
>
> the *Restitution* of *Nature* in general, and not of *Man alone*, who though he
>
> be the noblest part, yet certainly is but a small part of *Nature* (518).

For the hermetic philosopher there is a mystical correspondence which unites all things,

celestial and terrestrial. Such a paradigm is grounded in the broader renaissance

hermeneutic of resemblance which employs the figures of *convenientia, aemulatio,*

analogy, and *sympathy.* [39] When such a hermeneutic is applied to Vaughan's

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[39] Foucault has argued that by the beginning of the seventeenth century the *episteme* of resemblance was going out of fashion. He points to critiques of resemblance by Descartes and Bacon who find in similitude the occasion of error rather than the form of knowledge (*The Order of Things* 51).

eschatology, it naturally produces a vision of the restoration as inclusive of all creatures.

Unlike Calvin and the hermetic writers, Augustine and Aquinas had rejected the sense of continuity and similarity between human and non-human creation, and were thereby repelled by the notion of trees and beasts inheriting eternal life, envisioning such creatures as different in nature and function than humanity. Rudrum has convincingly argued that the views of Augustine and Aquinas had permeated the thinking of seventeenth-century English Calvinists, many of whom believed that the brute beasts, no longer useful in the kingdom of heaven, would be abolished rather than resurrected. Such "orthodox opinion" was confuted by some sectaries who believed, with Vaughan, that "there shall be in the last day a resurrection from the dead of all the bruit creatures . . . (Edwards, *Gangraena* 27). Though Vaughan's belief in the resurrection and restoration of the creatures may be more sectarian than Arminian, his inclusive, expansive conception of restoration accords with his Arminian emphasis on universal grace which envisions a landscape in which all men have the potential to be redeemed (Rudrum, "Alchemical Philosophy" 15).

We must not, however, confuse, Vaughan's belief in an inclusive restoration with a defense of universal salvation. Vaughan does not propose that all humans will eventually enter God's presence. Unlike nature with its "state untired" and loyalty to God, man is a "busy, restless thing" ("The Pursuit" 166-67, 11.1,10), called and hurled by the world's many voices. Those who elect to be distracted from God, rejecting Christ in the

---

Though interest in hermeticism was renewed in the seventeenth century, it has been viewed as a product of a sixteenth-century epistemology.

process, are condemned to hell in Vaughan's eschatological scheme. In "The Call," those

who fail to repent shall be sentenced to death by God: "Who never wake to groan, nor

weep, / Shall be sentenced for their sleep" (169, ll.8-9); in "The Relapse," Vaughan

briefly describes the hell in which the condemned reside:

> My God, how gracious art thou! I had slipped
>
> Almost to hell,
>
> And on the verge of that dark, dreadful pit
>
> Did hear them yell; (189, ll.1-4)

and we have noted in "Rules and Lessons" the warning that to lose Heaven's way is to

"change those *lights* / For *chains of darkness*, and *eternal nights*" (193, ll.43-44). Hell's

presence is referred to with greater frequency in Vaughan's prose works. Vaughan

reflects in *Man in Darkness*, for example, on the blackness of the fire of hell with its

"furious and unquenchable burnings" (169) and considers the "everlasting punishment"

of the wicked in the "pit of perdition" (201, 203).

References to hell in Vaughan's lyric collection indicate that such a place exists

for those who reject the holy way. In some cases, judgement necessitates condemnation.

Though Vaughan accepts in several lyrics a God who will "judge" and "avenge" ("Day of

Judgement [I] and [II]," "The Dawning," "Ascension Day," "Abel's Blood"), he seems

uncomfortable with this forensic vision of the divine who condemns men to perdition.

And so we find in "The Stone" that it is Scripture, not God, which judges and condemns

men: "The *Gospel* then (for 'tis his word / And not himself shall judge the world)" (282,

ll.56-57). In the seventeenth-century edition of *Silex Scintillans*, an asterisk is placed

after "not himself" (282, 1.57) which directs the reader's attention to Vaughan's footnote "*St. John, chap.* 12. *ver.* 47, 48." In this biblical passage, Jesus embraces his role as savior not judge: "And if any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." In this verse, as in *Silex Scintillans*, final damnation is effected by failure to receive the word: it is not a consequence of the active will of God nor is it caused by the will of Satan who is only referred to once in *Silex Scintillans*.[40] Satan does not figure in Vaughan's spiritual tableau. Unlike Milton who places sin and salvation within the cosmic battle of Christ and Satan, Vaughan locates sin within the depraved Self or within the demonized human "Other" whose "arts and force" are built unto a "Babel-weight" ("Mutiny" 229, ll.17-18). As is typical in Vaughan's spiritual paradigm, the damned determine their own fate, shun the light and chain themselves to darkness.

In embracing the orthodox doctrine of hell as that place of eternal condemnation, Vaughan rejects the neo-Platonic belief in universal salvation.[41] Hell as a temporary centre of punishment where sins could be eradicated was envisioned by several seventeenth-century neo-Platonists. The damned, it was claimed, would be saved once suffering had purged their souls. The English neo-Platonist Jeremiah White advances this

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[40] Satan is referred to briefly in "Jacob's Pillow, and Pillar": "This little *Goshen*, in the midst of night, / And Satan's seat, in all her coasts hath light," (296, ll.31-32).

[41] It was Origen who first advanced that the *apokatastasis* included the salvation of all humanity.

doctrine in *The Restoration of All Things*, where he insists that the damned will eventually rejoice in heaven: "Yea, so shall the Damned rejoyce over that Hell they have been in. They shall reflect on that Fire out of which they are Delivered; and it shall be the food of their Joy . . ." (106). However, while Vaughan does not posit temporary damnation in his devotional poetry, neither does he place an emphasis on hell in *Silex Scintillans*. Where Vaughan briefly mentions its eternal nights, Taylor writes of hell.

> there . . . the devils shall not cease to deride, whip, and cruelly torment
>
> him . . . .in hell the eyes and ears of the damned shall never be free from
>
> such afrights. . . .in hell they shall burn into his bowels. . . .in hell he shall
>
> suck in nothing but flames, stink and sulphur . . . .this is to be the calamity
>
> of that land of darkness. (*Works* 3:517)

Vaughan feels it unnecessary to create for his readership a vision of endless punishment. He chooses to reside with Christ not from fear of hell, but because he is drawn to the God of love and harmony. With Thomas Browne, Vaughan might have said,

> I have so fixed my contemplations on Heaven, that I have almost forgot
>
> the Idea of Hell, and am afraid rather to lose the joyes of the one than
>
> endure the misery of the other; to be deprived of them is a perfect hell, &
>
> needs me thinkes, no addition to compleate our afflictions; (49)

As Vaughan's eschatology highlights the unveiling of divinity and the consequent transfiguration of all creation, his apocalyptic verse is imbued with a tone of hope and celebration. In his poem "The Day of Judgment," for example, Vaughan fails to commemorate the eternal punishment of his enemies, but instead rejoices in a vision of eternal day and infinite growth:

O day of life, of light, of love!

The only day dealt from above!

A day so fresh, so bright, so brave

'Twill show us each forgotten grave,

And make the dead, like flowers, arise

Youthful and fair to see new skies. (299, ll.1-6)

These lines suggest that Vaughan interprets Revelation as a book of rebirth, growth and the restoration of life, light and love. The apocalypse brings for Vaughan an illuminated, immaculate world of "cloudless glass" ("L'Envoy" 312, l.12), "living waters" ("The Feast" 304, l.33), seas of light and "glorious liberty" ("The Water-fall" 307, l.38). Such an apocalyptic hermeneutic is hardly consistent with the overall content of the book. Revelation is largely concerned with war, civil strife, famine, pestilence, the persecution of the Church and the binding of Satan. Rather than represent eschatology in terms of tribulation, destruction and punishment, however, Vaughan aspires for a universe bonded by Almighty Love, transfigured by the Father of Lights. Such expectation of divinity unveiled gives Vaughan's devotional poetry an optimism which is not undercut by the painful experience of exile from Paradise.

Throughout *Silex Scintillans*, Vaughan certainly affirms the Calvinist doctrine of the depravity of man, and depicts the corruption and perversity attendant on the Fall. The Self - flesh and spirit - is vilified for its descent into darkness and its adoration of dust; human social interaction, marred by "frothy noise" ("Mutiny" 229, l.25), would un-knit or un-parcel the ever-crumbling Self ("Distraction"); the "Commonwealth" is run by "black parasites" and "flies of hell / That buzz in every ear, and blow on souls / Until they smell / And rot . . ." ("The Proffer" 249-50, ll.1,14-17). Patrick Grant has argued that Vaughan

reconciles this Augustinian pessimism about humanity with a hermetic optimism about

Nature. Vaughan's portrayal of man as a "cosmic misfit" is balanced, according to Grant,

by his hermetic vision of the cosmos, infused and animated by an immanent God

(140,151). Grant proposes that Vaughan softens his views on human nature when he

reflects on pathetic man, displaced and disoriented. No doubt, some of the optimism

underpinning Vaughan's theology is rooted in a hermetic sense of the "secret commerce"

between God and Nature. We have seen that Vaughan celebrates pneumatic indwelling

in creation and repeatedly takes comfort in the expectant groaning and eventual

renovation of "all things." However, Vaughan's optimism is not only based in hermetic

philosophy. It is also inherent in his Arminian constitution of divine/human interaction.

For Vaughan, all creation is bathed in the universal grace of God, each individual has the

opportunity to receive or reject that grace, and all can prepare to be infused and refined by

the indwelling of Christ, effected by the sacrament of holy communion. Though some

will be damned, the journey to damnation can be avoided, for God is willing to save all

mankind. Rudrum suggests that Vaughan's Arminianism is supported or rendered

palpable by his alchemical thought:

> Alchemy . . . presupposes a world in which man, through the exercise of
>
> free-will, may help to bring about the transformation of creation. . . .If the
>
> natural world is potentially transformable, it hardly makes sense that large
>
> numbers of human beings are doomed to final corruption: that is, the
>
> implied 'universalism' of alchemy better fits the potential 'universalism'
>
> of Arminianism (all men are in principle redeemable) than it goes along
>
> with Calvinism" ("Alchemical Philosophy" 12-13).

Indeed, Vaughan never doubts the human potential to spy a glimpse of light, a fragment

of eternity, or to absorb the Spirit of God. For Vaughan, the human spirit can wing itself

to God to receive the grace which transmutes foul clay to fine gold and the pining heart

can attract the living waters and refining fires of Christ. Thus, the boundless grace of

God, the potential of a love-sick soul, the immanence of God in creation, and the hope of

apocalyptic renewal give *Silex Scintillans* an optimism which offsets any despondency

over the depravity of the human spirit and the corruption of nature.

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