"IF TRUTH BE THINE, WHAT NEEDS A BRUTISH FORCE?": HENRY VAUGHAN, *SILEX SCINTILLANS*, AND INTERREGNUM ANGLICAN SURVIVALISM

By

Brycen Dwayne Janzen

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Abstract

The following thesis examines the historical and critical conflation of politics and religion in Interregnum England and Wales. With reference to Henry Vaughan's *Silex Scintillans* (1650, 1655), this thesis attempts to deconstruct this understanding of seventeenth-century poetry. While not a work of deconstruction, as it is properly understood, the following text argues that this historical and critical conflation has placed an arbitrary and inhibiting limitation upon the scholarship of the period. Vaughan's *Silex Scintillans* has long been considered a representative text of Christian mystical poetry. However, since the 1970s, following the work of Martz and others, the text has been subject to increasingly political interpretations. In expanding the interpretive categories mentioned above, this thesis attempts to resituate *Silex Scintillans* within the Christian tradition while arguing that it is best understood as a representative piece of Anglican survivalist literature.

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The names mentioned above have contributed only to the success of this project. Where it fails, let no one hold them accountable. Any shortcomings indicate only that I was unable to reach the heights to which I was directed.

I humbly dedicate this thesis to my friend

ALEXIS BETH REKDAL

Thanks

Introduction

"Servus Inutilis: Peccator Maximus"

In 1650 a volume of poetry entitled *Silex Scintillans: or, Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations* was published by Humphrey Blunden and was to be sold at his shop, The Castle, at Cornehill in London. The volume identified its author as one Henry Vaughan, *Silurist*. Its titular emblem featured a flinty heart crying or dripping drops of blood; the hand of God is portrayed striking the flinty heart with an iron rod, and fire is seen igniting from the top of it. Not surprisingly, what followed was a collection of deeply religious verse. The volume sold moderately well, but apparently not as well as Blunden had expected. In 1655 when Vaughan approached Lodowick Lloyd and Henry Crips—the new owners of The Castle, following the death of Blunden—they agreed to print an expanded second edition of the text. This new edition would consist of a number of poems appended to the unsold copies of the first *Silex*. In addition, the titular emblem and "*Authoris (de se) Emblema*" were removed; these were replaced with a textual title page featuring an excerpt from The Book of Job, a polemical prose preface, and an expanded dedication. Because this "second edition" consisted of recycled unsold copies of the 1650 text, it has often been conjectured that Vaughan was quite simply not a poetic success during his own period. This assertion is given weight by the rarity of extant copies of both editions of *Silex*—a mere seven copies of the 1650 edition and six from the expanded 1655 collection are known to survive. However, William London's 1658 list compiling the sixty most vendible books in London includes both the expanded *Silex* and Vaughan's *Olor Iscanus* (1651), indicating that Vaughan was reasonably successful (West, *Scripture Uses* 69). Despite this modicum of success, Vaughan's name has often

been associated with a sort of obscurity; and indeed, Vaughan's name does not again

appear in the English poetic consciousness for nearly another two centuries.

While Vaughan is reasonably popular today—in the recent Penguin collection,

Metaphysical Poets only John Donne and George Herbert feature more prominently—it

was not until the Victorian Age that Vaughan enjoyed any sort of critical interest.

Scholars and students of Vaughan owe much, then, to the nineteenth-century 'cult of

anthologizing' for reviving Vaughan's name. Anthologies from George Ellis (1803),

Thomas Campbell (1819), John Mitford (1827), and John Willmott (1834) brought

Vaughan's name into mild circulation. Finally, in 1847, the Reverend H.F. Lyte would

publish an edition of Vaughan's *Silex Scintillans* (1650, 1655)—the first edition in nearly

200 years. In 1868, Archbishop Trench's *A Household Book of English Poetry* noted the

(likely coincidental) similarities between Vaughan's "The Retreate" and Wordsworth's

"Ode: Intimations of Immortality." Trench soon thereafter received a letter indicating that

the sender had purchased a copy of Vaughan's *Silex* at Wordsworth's estate sale. When

this note was added to the 2nd edition of Trench's book, Vaughan—now the recently

discovered intellectual and poetic progenitor of Wordsworth—became something of a

sensation. And while this Vaughan-Wordsworth connection has largely been discredited,

much of Vaughan's attention is owed to this legend (McMaster 325). A four volume

complete works was soon published by the Reverend Alexander Grosart (1871).

Vaughan's Victorian revivalists were interested in him not only for his influence on

Wordsworth, but also for the apparent purity of his religious expression. Somehow

Vaughan's political temper was completely overlooked—so much so that Grosart, an

avowed Puritan sympathizer, saw no problem in publishing his complete works. Vaughan

was principally seen as a curiously mystical disciple of George Herbert. The politics of

his era were disregarded by these new readers; and the text of *Silex Scintillans* was, for

the first time, reasonably widely available to Victorian readers.

Vaughan's religiopolitical affiliations were known to these readers, but his

relationship with Herbert was afforded a great deal of primacy. These readings of

Vaughan as a disciple of Herbert were so much in vogue by the mid-nineteenth century

that when F.E. Hutchinson—himself vocationally an Herbert scholar—undertook to write

what was to become the authoritative biography on Vaughan, he could not escape them.

Hutchinson acknowledges Vaughan's political orientations, describing the frank candour

of his early poems: "Vaughan ... had, in early years, at least, no political moderation; the

young Welshman takes fire and expresses his hot indignation in the reckless language of

a partisan." He goes on to admit that this political temper even "disturb[s] the remote air

of Silex Scintillans" (44). When Hutchinson asserted that outbursts of contemporary

consciousness weaken some of Vaughan's best poems, the academic world seemed to

have listened. "Allusions to contemporary events are constant in *Silex Scintillans* and are

often violent" writes Hutchinson, and he suggests that such "outbursts do not make for

good poetry and they mar some of Vaughan's best poems" (121). Despite these

interpolations, the volume has largely been read as an apolitical religious document

composed (almost) in homage to George Herbert—a reading which explains Vaughan's

various aforementioned Victorian revivals. Hutchinson's assertion, in concert with the

then still-relevant Victorian readings, effectively depoliticized Vaughan's writings;

spectres of political thought were seen as regrettable, but easy enough to gloss over when

attempting to institute alternative readings.

By the time John Davies published his popular history of Wales, *Canes Cymru* (*A History of Wales*,) in 1990, this critical amelioration had been more or less completed. In 711 pages, Davies devotes the whole of two sentences to Vaughan: the first addresses him as an English poet living in Wales, and the second remarks upon his political orientation. Davies suggests that Vaughan's "attitude towards the struggles was one of epicurean unconcern" (271). Of course, a popular history cannot reasonably be appealed to for determining current critical trends; rather, it is quoted here to illustrate the interpretive inertia of this earlier commentary, and to demonstrate just how far this picture of Vaughan has come. Chris Fitter has commented on the insistence of the scholarly community to read Herbert's almost passive religious voice into Vaughan as recently as 1992. Fitter comically jabbed that such readers of Vaughan are quick to identify echoes of the canon George Herbert, while ignoring the cannons of the civil wars (123). However, by the time Fitter was making these snide remarks—as appropriate as they perhaps may have been—the critical field of Vaughan had long since begun to acknowledge and appreciate the political orientation of much of Vaughan's verse. Beginning with Louis Martz in the 1970s, Vaughan's religious poetry began to be recognized for its political temper, and this realization has generated a wealth of commentary from E.L. Marilla, Frank Kermode, Jonathan F.S. Post, Alan Rudrum and others. Moreover, discussions of Vaughan's political tones have contributed significantly to chapters in Post's *Henry Vaughan: The Unfolding Vision*, Philip West's *Henry Vaughan's Silex Scintillans: Scripture Uses*, and Holly Faith Nelson's recent Simon Fraser University doctoral dissertation "The Scriptural Texture of Henry Vaughan's *Silex Scintillans*: The Poetics, Politics and Theology of Intertextuality." And Vaughan is

mentioned frequently in Robert Wilcher's recent *The Writing of Royalism: 1628-1660*, where Wilcher further entrenches Vaughan's politics by using a line from Vaughan's "The Proffer" as an epigraph for his book.

This recent emphasis on Vaughan's political obduracy has sometimes detracted from a genuine understanding of his poetry, and this ought to be contested. Throughout his article, "Resistance, Collaboration, and Silence: Henry Vaughan and Breconshire Royalism," Rudrum refers to Vaughan and his circle as "ultra-Royalists." Rudrum argues that "the literary persona projected in *Silex Scintillans* is a deliberate artistic construct, in the service of a political end" (102). Rudrum evidences this point by calling attention to Vaughan failing to include an elegy for his friend and cousin Charles Walbeoffe in the 1655 edition of *Silex Scintillans*. Rudrum reasonably dates the poem to either late 1653 or 1654, and finds the absence of the poem in Vaughan's augmented volume conspicuous. His answer to this is to suggest that Vaughan intentionally omitted the poem because in it he is personally sympathetic to Walbeoffe's acceptance of an administrative position from the Parliament. Vaughan and his circle would have found themselves taxed in attempting to accommodate Walbeoffe's compromise. Instead, the poem appeared in Vaughan's 1678 collection of unpublished miscellany, *Thalia Rediviva*, in which he was somewhat freer to acknowledge the moral complexities of the period. Rudrum's argument, however, depends on the omission of this particular elegy from *Silex* being in some way exceptional; and given Rudrum's expertise with Vaughan, this is a surprising oversight. Rudrum is correct in noting the presence of a number of elegiac poems in both editions of *Silex Scintillans*. There are six unaddressed elegies in *Silex*. Of these, five are universally accepted to be about Vaughan's youngest brother William. There is some

dispute about one, however, but this disagreement is centred around whether this poem is about William (like the others) or if it is an acknowledgement of the passing of Vaughan's first wife, Catherine Wise. These two deaths are usually mentioned in commentaries on Vaughan's religious conversion, and therefore, their inclusion in *Silex* is sensical in a way that an elegy for Walbeoffe just is not. This is, perhaps, a slightly tangental discussion; but it is necessary when challenging Rudrum's depiction of Vaughan as being somehow merely a polemicist. While his poems certainly betray a notable political temper, it is hardly appropriate to dismiss his truly devotional poems; to do as Rudrum has done is effectually to invert the Victorian whitewashing of Vaughan and his poems.

Jonathan F.S. Post has adroitly suggested that Vaughan's sacred poems often exhibit a manic quality: they express nostalgia for times gone by and a frustration with times current—the fallen voice of Adam contrasted with the recuperative voice of Christ (*Henry Vaughan: The Unfolding Vision* 162-63). Not surprisingly, the critical community is similarly polarized: scholars are either keenly aware of the depth of Vaughan's religious experience or they are finely attuned to a deeply satiric and subversive political temper of his writing. Given the political and religious temper of the Interregnum, it is not surprising that this is sometimes, or even often, the case. And while this distinction may seem hyperbolic *ad absurdum*, it is an effective categorization to draw; what is alarming, though, is the reluctance of the Vaughan community to allow the lines that demarcate these two approaches to blur. Most students of Vaughan welcome M.M. Mahood's assertion that Vaughan's work "reveals a deeper and finer knowledge of [scripture] than even [John] Bunyan attained" (255); but West has recently remarked that

"a glance of the most recent surveys of mid-century literature ... shows that a 1970s preference for what is radical and revolutionary still prevails" (2). There is, however, certainly a political temper to Vaughan's poems. But my contention here is that *Silex Scintillans* is not intended for a strictly political audience. The text itself assumes that its readers will share Vaughan's political sympathies. But if Vaughan were looking for a purely political audience, there seems little reason for him to have abandoned his Cavalier roots. Vaughan is unique amongst Royalist poets in that the religious lyric was typically associated with Puritan zeal. Vaughan, much like Robert Herrick, is a Cavalier turned religious poet. J.C. Shairp comments on this generically coded form when he notes that

> Henry Vaughan belongs to that small band of Royalist poets of the Caroline era who stand discriminated from the host of dashing, rollicking, cavalier lyrists, by being essentially religious poets. What attracted them to the Royal cause was not its worldly splendor; but they identified it with that refinement of feeling and that deep and sober piety which seem to have descended ... from Catholic ages. (120)

And indeed, in 1655 an augmented 'second edition' of *Silex* appeared with a significant quantity of newly appended materials including a polemical preface in which Vaughan denounces non-religious poetry. In this preface, writes Jonathan Nauman, Vaughan likely burned most of his Cavalier bridges ("The Publication of *Thalia Rediviva*" 88-89). He advises those with poetic talent to turn their focus to religious verse. Vaughan declares himself to be "pious convert" of George Herbert, but is quick to deride others who have similarly (though, in Vaughan's mind, superficially,) styled themselves after Herbert. Vaughan is addressing these poets when he writes:

> They had more of fashion than force. And the reason of their so vast distance from [Herbert], besides differing spirits and qualifications—for his measure was eminent—I suspect to be, because they aimed more at verse, than perfection, as may be easily gathered by their frequent impressions and numerous pages. Hence

sprang those wide, those weak, and lean conceptions, which in the most inclinable
reader will scarce give any nourishment or help to devotion; for not flowing from
a true, practick piety, it was impossible they should effect those things abroad,
which they never had acquaintance with at home.... (391)[1]

This passage is worth quoting for a number of reasons. First, it illustrates the severity of

Vaughan's religious conviction: he prefers to scorn potential allies for their superficiality

rather than align himself with them on principle. Moreover, his target audience is clear.

He is not interested in 'dashing, rollicking, cavalier' Royalists; but rather, he is interested

in Anglicans seeking after 'true, practick piety.'

It is clear that Vaughan's sacred poetry is imbued with both a religious *and* a

political temper. My contention here, however, is that when one champions one voice at

the expense of the other, something is invariably lost. The poems in *Silex* are primarily

religious, but the strong secondary voice is very much a political one. Each of these

voices represent an essential element of Vaughan's creative vision; and his inability to

completely abandon his political context is very much portrayed in the form of many of

his poems. As mentioned by Post, Vaughan's poems often exhibit distinct and conflicting

voices. I am indebted to Post, whose greatest contribution to the study of Vaughan is in

identifying that Vaughan's poems are very rarely one or the other, but often seem to

embody competing voices. Vaughan often changes what he is saying—and this is often

indicated by alterations to both form and prosody—within individual poems themselves.

However, rather than being a poet of binary voices, Vaughan is a poet who routinely

makes use of a tripartite poetic model. Vaughan's poems often begin with a meditation

on some grand spiritual theme before they shift to some worldly concern; and it is here

where Vaughan sometimes lacks moderation. Finally, and most importantly, though,

Vaughan recognizes how his material concerns often lead to spiritual failures, and he

attempts either to reconcile these conflicts or console himself and his readers. Vaughan's

answer is very often that his worldly woes will refine his spirit. His 'hermeneutics of

suffering' often come near to being a *contemptus mundi*, but the Celtic immanence

tradition of which Vaughan was likely an inheritor—and which various orthodoxies have

never completely succeeded in eliminating from Wales and Ireland—prevented him from

entirely taking this step. Vaughan's poem "The World" is a great illustration of the

formal model described above. It begins with the beautiful and famous meditation: "I saw

eternity the other night / Like a great Ring of pure and endless light" (1-2). The first

stanza of this poem is generally considered to be Vaughan's most beautiful work

(Simmonds, *Masques* 15), but Vaughan then shifts his focus in the second stanza to the

"darksome statesman" ("The World" 16)—Oliver Cromwell—and lashes out at the

parliamentary and puritan impositions upon the delicate pre-revolutionary world with

which he so strongly identified. Vaughan ends the poem on a consolatory note

referencing the traditional view of the Church as the bride of Christ (cf. Revelations 19,

21). *"This ring the Bridegroom did for none provide, / But for His bride"* writes Vaughan,

indicating a belief that, as true disciples of Christ, he and his Anglican cohort would be

saved while his tormentors likely would not be. When Hutchinson speaks of the remote

airs of *Silex* being disturbed by a contemporary consciousness, he may very well be

speaking to this poem specifically. Anthologists often struggle with this poem; many

seem to resent the ephemeral beauty of the beginning contrasted so alarmingly with

echoes of civic strife. Because of this, it is somewhat common for only the first stanza to

be anthologized, a practice which "produces an attractive, if somewhat obscure poem"

(Pettett 193). There is a delightfully grotesque quality to this poem, and it is one of

dozens of Vaughan's finest poems that makes use of the tripartite model described above. As Bennett has wonderfully suggested, "[f]ew poets have phrased more beautifully the experience of time-bound man [*sic*] striving to apprehend eternity" than did Vaughan (87).

I would like to volunteer this reading of Vaughan in preference to the existing modes of interpretation which emphasize the incompatibility of worldliness and transcendence. To Vaughan, these discourses are part of the same spiritual process, and their divorce is part of a critical partisanship that has unhelpfully emerged. My principle argument is that Vaughan's worldly concerns were an integral part of his religious experience and his process of spiritual revelation. It is accepted that he was "nigh unto death" with illness—though there is some debate as to whether or not this was ca. 1648 (Lyte xxix) or ca. 1653 (Simmonds, *Masques* 203)—and it is known that he was greatly and personally affected by the "late and dusky" days of the civil wars ("The Night" 51). Contra Rudrum, my contention is that *Silex Scintillans* is primarily a religious text, but Vaughan's worldly experiences and trials shaped his religious expression. Despite the mystic and transcendent character of many of Vaughan's poems, he remained a poet for whom the world was a stage with very real material (as well as spiritual) consequences. This is not to say that Vaughan struggled with his faith in response to personal tragedy; rather, following his conversion experience, and the evolution and refinement of it, there seems every indication that Vaughan's faith was stalwart. Religiousness aside, though, the living, material world provided a genuine problem for Vaughan: it was rife with sedition, the Bible was being used to justify every manner of abomination, and the Anglican liturgy had been derided as Popish and banned from British parishes. It is

scarcely surprising, then, that Vaughan would approach the world with disease and even hostility, but one ought to remember that Vaughan himself saw his world as a purifying fire which would temper his soul for its real existence. Vaughan's relation to the world seems at times to be one of stoic resolution, and he sees this as ideal; however, he often fails to maintain such composure, and it is precisely this anxiety which fuels much of his verse. The essential conflict in Vaughan is his inability to live up to his own heightened religious sensibility. Vaughan's reaction to the world, rather than the world itself, is the source of his anxiety, and his struggle to attain stoical equilibrium charges his religious poetry with yearning. It is for this reason that his chosen epitaph declared him to be *SERVUS INUTILIS: PECCATOR MAXIMUS*—or, a *profitless servant, greatest of sinners*—and it is through this complex reflexivity hinged upon religious scrupulosity that Vaughan's worldly echoes within *Silex* ought to be understood. Treating Vaughan as a religious poet who occasionally mars his verse with references to contemporary goings on, as does Hutchinson, is just as problematic as suggesting that Vaughan's religious poetry was merely a strategic battleground on which to wage a political war, as does Rudrum. Recognizing the co-textual role of each of these voices is vital in garnering any genuine understanding, not only of Vaughan, but of his sacred poetry.

Vaughan was almost certainly, as Rudrum has suggested, an ultra-Royalist. He was obdurate, scornful, and proud. And all of these things are reflected in his religious poetry. However, this is not the defining character of the volume. Vaughan was also intelligent, meditative and reflective, and *Silex Scintillans*, more often than not, is centred around his sense of his own shortcomings. This is not to say that every poem in the volume is based on this model—many scarcely achieve a peaceful religious note, and

some never get past prolonged ravings—but this is the principle tension that Vaughan's

verse seeks to overcome. While I agree with Pettett and Simmonds that Vaughan's

secular poetry is often unjustly disvalued, it is so tonally (and, of course, thematically)

distinct, that it should be looked at differently. That Vaughan sometimes appropriated and

modified his own secular symbols and motifs in his sacred poems matters somewhat less

than has been suggested; what is important is that Vaughan was using these images to

express something radically different. Had Vaughan intended to be merely a poet of the

world, there would be no reason for his adoption of religious verse. What has been

proposed here will obviously and surely fail the reader who attempts to read *Poems, Olor*

Iscanus, or *Thalia Rediviva* with this interpretive model in mind. And while these

volumes may be appealed to for illustrative reasons, the focus here is on *Silex Scintillans*.

Vaughan's prayer manuals and prose tracts are worth noting as well, since they were

composed between the two Parts of *Silex*, and they are generally consistent with, and

indicative of, Vaughan's anxieties therein. It was a common Stoic practice to record

one's failures, to meditate upon them, and reflect upon how one could act 'next time' (the

most famous example of this practice is Marcus Aurelius's journal, from which is given

to us his *Meditations*,) and Vaughan, as a very competent and learned Latinist, can be

reasonably conjectured to have been familiar with this exercise. Indeed, Vaughan's

poems often resemble the *Consolation* of Boethius, and *Silex*, at its most basic, is

Vaughan's attempt to work through nearly the same set of existential problems. It is,

therefore, a deeply personal book. Simmonds objects to this notion, suggesting that *Silex*

is a book for the world. Vaughan intended the book to aid those in a similar position, and

as such, it has a very public purpose. I reject Simmond's contention that this reflexivity

precludes the possibility that the book is the product of socially withdrawn introspection

(*Masques* 20-21); there seems little reason to assume that Vaughan was unable to see the

pedagogical values of his own struggles and reflections.

Chapter One

"Late and dusky" Days: Re-Evaluating Context(s)

> Shall my short hour, my inch,
> My one poor sand,
> And crumb of life, now ready to disband,
> Revolt and flinch,
> And having born the burthen all the day,
> Now cast at night my Crown away?
> —"The Proffer"

Since Lois Potter's now seminal book, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature 1641-1660*, royalist writing in the seventeenth century has garnered rather a lot of attention. Prior to Potter's work, scholars of the period laboured under the populist belief that if anything subversive, seditious, or, to be frank, *interesting*, was written in the period, it was republican or parliamentarian. However, notes Potter, the "source of the most consciously and deliberately subversive publications was the royalist party" (3). Potter is interested in the scant scholarship available on this umbrella group. She writes that "most scholars have been primarily concerned with literature which is subversive in the literal sense of the word: coming from below, whether from the lower classes of society or from suppressed religious and political groups" (3). Royalist writers, however, differ appreciably in their mode of subversion; they are "writers who defied censorship while defending censorship, [and] underdogs whose greatest desire was for the re-establishing of hierarchy" (3). Robert Wilcher's book, *The Writing of Royalism 1628-1660*, expands upon Potter's work and acknowledges a significant debt to her. Much of Wilcher's book is concerned with the years prior to 1649—filling the gap left in Potter's wake—and provides excellent historical context for the writing of this period, but it is

when he turns his attention to the interregnum years that his book really takes hold. He

spends some time discussing the lengths that were taken by the Rump Parliament to

stymie the diffusion of information and ideas following the execution of Charles I (289).

For instance, when the gentry of Kent drafted a petition, signed by 2000 townsfolk, that

was "mildly Royalist" (but thoroughly Episcopal,) all copies of the petition were burned.

The men trusted to deliver the petition to the Parliament, the renowned Cavalier soldier

and poet, Richard Lovelace and William Boteler, were arrested (121-22).[2] It is not at all

surprising, then, as Potter claims, that Royalist writers adopted a "philosophy of secrecy"

(113). From this 'philosophy' it would be safe to suspect that Vaughan, a staunch

royalist, would similarly use *Silex Scintillans* as a forum for royalist political

commentary. But before we turn our attention to Vaughan and *Silex Scintillans* again, it is

worth briefly discussing the goings on of what Vaughan, in "The Night," called the "late

and dusky" days of the civil wars (51).

That the civil conflict in England and Wales—legally a constituency of England

since the Laws in Wales Acts of 1535 and 1542—were inextricably linked with the

religious issues of the day is generally accepted. Religion and politics, then, were

conflated at the beginning of the civil wars; that the conflicts ended with the death of

Charles in 1649 and the banning of the *Book of Common Prayer* assured that they were

similarly conflated at the end of and throughout the Interregnum. It comes as little

surprise, then, that Vaughan's religious poems sometimes acknowledge the political

unrest of the period. In the same way, Vaughan, in the "Author's Preface," speaks of

Olor Iscanus, writing that it contained many "pious mixtures" (390). Certainly, then, the

era allowed (and even, it seems, expected) some admixture. The suggestion that poetry

ought to be timeless—i.e., a pure aesthetic not rooted in context—was an invention in the

twentieth century of T.S. Eliot and others, and would not have been how Vaughan and his

contemporaries understood poetry. For many reasons, the Interregnum policies of the

parliament and the protectorate greatly and personally affected Vaughan, and his

rejection of the Commonwealth is unsurprisingly predictable. As suggested previously,

Vaughan's poems often seem to regress from heightened spiritual meditation to political

critique; however, such a view ignores the subsequent themic volta, after which Vaughan

often attempts to reconcile his material disgust with his earlier spiritual veneration.

Sometimes, as in "The Lampe," Vaughan's meditations go uninterrupted and he

maintains a pure spiritual poetic; but when he does pause to survey the world around him,

he never entirely loses himself to the negative emotions he attaches to it. One can see this

model at work by close reading several of Vaughan's most notorious 'worldly' poems—

"The World," "The Constellation," and "White Sunday"—and by parsing them with

reference to historical circumstance. Such interpretive weddings are sometimes devalued,

but, in the case of Vaughan, such a strategy is vital: less than both Herbert and the Bible,

but more than any other competing influence, historical intertexts shape the fabric of

Silex Scintillans.

On 13 April 1640, Charles I convened parliament. He required the parliament to

provide additional monies for his ongoing conflict in Scotland—the so-called Bishop's

Wars of 1639 and 1640. Parliament, however, having not sat since 10 March 1629, was

much more interested in addressing the topic of Charles's eleven years of personal rule,

and on 5 May 1640, some three weeks after it was convened, Charles dissolved

parliament and adjourned the session. However, when the aptly dubbed Short Parliament

closed, the Convocation of English Bishops did not; this group—traditionally and

conventionally tethered to the parliament since its members sat in the House of Lords—

remained seated and during this time drafted the *The Constitutions and Canons*

Ecclesiasticall of the Church of England. This document, a definitive statement of church

policy, was deeply Laudian, and, therefore, English-Arminian and contrary to the

reformed theology that had characterized the Elizabethan and Stuart Church. This act

included provisions for the maintenance of the episcopacy, and, moreover, implicitly

devalued the laity; it was a fairly direct response to the rise of presbyterianism in

Scotland, and was viewed as an affront to the parliament that had sympathized with

Scotland's cause.

Without the financial backing of parliament, Charles was eventually left with no

choice but to withdraw his army from Scotland. The cost of surrender forced Charles to

convene another session of parliament on 3 November 1640, and this parliament quickly

passed an Act stipulating that parliament could only be dissolved following a motion

carried by a majority of the members from both Houses—an Act which Charles himself

(albeit after some delay and almost surely with some reluctance) signed into law. In the

autumn of 1641 Charles was in Scotland hoping to gain support from the Scottish

Assembly. The second Bishop's War had only just ended, and Charles wished to smooth

things over in the north. In order to accomplish this, he, among other things, conceded the

Scottish Assembly's wishes to adopt a Presbyterian church rather than an Episcopalian

one. Although approved by Parliament, the concession was unpopular, and suspicions

arose in England that Charles intended to reform the whole of the English Church in a

similar style—ironically forgetting the fears of recusancy that had dogged Charles since

his marriage to Henrietta Maria. However, while in Scotland, Charles wrote in a letter to Edward Nicholas, his acting secretary of state, that he was determined to maintain the structures of the Church "established by Queene *Elizabeth* and my Father"; this letter was quickly published as *King Charles his Resolution, Concerning the Government of the Church of England, being contrary to that of Scotland* (qtd in Wilcher 85). And while Charles enjoyed moderate success in Scotland, the domestic ramifications of the two successive Bishop's Wars saw the king and parliament effectively estranged.

Charles's military campaign in Scotland had been largely shaped by Sir Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford. Strafford (as he is known) was to be the first significant casualty of the so-called Long Parliament. On 11 November 1640, he was charged with treason, in an act that Robert Wilcher describes as "the first major offensive against the administration of Charles I" (42). In the weeks that followed, John Pym—Charles's greatest parliamentary adversary—and his allies effectively stripped Charles of his political support in the Houses. Most notably, Sir Francis Windebank, then Secretary of State, was forced to flee to France after accusations of Catholic sympathizing arose; Archbishop Laud was dispossessed and impeached; and Lord Keeper Finch found himself attached to the Ship Money scandal and fled to The Hague (42). But it was the trial of Strafford in January of 1641 that was to be the most significant. Aggressive propaganda campaigns robbed Strafford of public support, and his answers to his charges were withheld from the public (55-56). However, at trial, with Charles in attendance, Strafford's answers were heard, and the tenuousness of the case against him was made apparent as his accusers' perjuries were revealed; on the *morning* of 10 April the case against him was dismissed. That Strafford should be found innocent by a court was

unacceptable to Pym, and in the *afternoon* of 10 April, Pym's supporter, Sir Arthur

Haselrig presented parliament with a Bill of Attainder calling for the death of Strafford.

Having been absolved by the judiciary, Strafford now faced death at the hands of the

legislature. The parliament which had hitherto been a relatively banded and organized

political body united behind the vigour of Pym suddenly found itself divided. George

Digby, up until then a friend and supporter of Pym, castigated the Commons for

"committing murder with the sword of justice" (qtd in Wilcher 58). There now existed in

parliament a Royalist party, and civil war was on the horizon.

The conflict in Scotland pertaining to church government eventually lead to civic

conflict in England; with Parliament adjourned, the Convocation of Bishops was left to

craft England's response: England was to remain obstinately episcopal and the

Parliamentarian preference for presbyterianism was discarded outright. (This is not to say

that Parliament was radically Puritan from the beginning—indeed, King and Church had

their support in both houses—but the houses, especially the Commons, certainly trended

in an identifiably republican direction.) If religious dispute and civic conflict were not

effectively conflated at this point, they certainly were following the detentions and deaths

of Laud, Strafford, and Charles; the banning of *The Book of Common Prayer*; and the

subsequent publication of *Eikon Basilike*, a book purportedly written by Charles while

imprisoned by the Parliament. *Eikon Basilike: The Povrtaictvre of His Sacred Maiestie in

His Solitvdes and Svfferings* is, in all likelihood, the most important piece of Royalist

writing published during the seventeenth century, and, given its immense popularity, a

strong candidate for the most (historically and politically) significant work of the century.

The structure of the work is simple: it begins with Charles's justifications for many of his

political policies and ends with a devout prayer in which Charles beseeches God (and,

implicitly, his subjects) to understand his motives. The public, which hitherto had little by

way of Royalist apologia, was given an account of the King's actions which was

remarkably different from the parliament-sanctioned reports which they were used to

reading. The work was immediately popular and appeared in dozens of editions in just

the first year. *Eikon Basilike* began circulating in manuscript form on 30 January 1649,

the day of Charles's execution, and was released to the public very soon thereafter. The

2,000 original editions were in such high demand that booksellers were famously able to

charge the exorbitant price of 15 shillings per copy. By the end of 1649, *Eikon Basilike*

had appeared in 35 English editions. These varied widely in quality and appearance, and

could be found for as little as two shillings and six pence. In his Introduction to the

Folger Shakespeare Library edition of 1966, Philip A. Knachel summarizes the success of

the book, writing that "[a]lthough it would be inaccurate to say that there was an edition

for every purse, certainly a wide choice existed" (xv). In addition to the myriad English

editions that appeared, the work proved popular in translation as well: by 1650, three

editions appeared in Latin, seven in French, seven in Dutch, two in German and one in

Danish, and such figures attest to the book's unquestionable popularity on the continent

as well (xvi). Parliament attempted to stymie the book's popularity; early publishers of

the work, Richard Royston, William Dugard, and John Williams, all faced penalties and

ramifications, but these were remarkably mild. The work was such an astounding success

that Parliament famously failed to censor it for fear of public opposition. Not

surprisingly, then, the Parliament enlisted its most able literary figure, John Milton, to

combat the work, from whence emerged *Eikonoklastes*. That a political biography, the

civic account of a king, should be so sober and pious is a further indication that religious

and political causes were undeniably interwined—and indeed, they were *essentially* so,

given Charles's role as both the secular and spiritual authority of the realm. (I.e., English

monarchs are not only heads of state, they are also "defender[s] of the faith" and the

highest authority of the Church of England.) But the question here, especially as it

pertains to Vaughan, is whether or not a work can be primarily religious or primarily

political regardless of the impediments of a densely convoluted social reality that often

allowed for no effectual differentiation.

Between 1640 and 1642, a young Henry Vaughan was in London studying law.

The civil wars were to be a tumultuous time for a staunch royalist like Vaughan, and with

the outbreak of the first civil war in 1642, Vaughan was recalled to his native Brecon in

Wales. While there he was employed as a secretary to Judge Sir Marmaduke Lloyd until

sometime around 1645; and it has been noted that Lloyd's "devotion to Church and King

would have appealed to young Henry Vaughan" (Hutchinson 49). (Although, during this

time, Vaughan seems to have spent rather more time preparing his first collection of

poetry, *Poems, and the Tenth Satyre of Iuvenal Englished*, for publication.) Following his

service to Lloyd, the historical record is somewhat wanting, but in 1947, F.E. Hutchinson

devoted a chapter in his biography of Vaughan suggesting that he was an enlistee in the

Welsh forces of Charles. Vaughan was apparently a reasonably close acquaintance of

Herbert Price (1605-1678), the Member of Parliament for Brecon in both the Short and

Long Parliaments. His family lands, the Brecon priori (excepting the church,) were

notable for their expanse, and the estate house was less than three miles away from

Vaughan's home. The Price estate was without much question a locale of some

importance for Vaughan. In his poem, "Upon the Priorie Grove, His Usual Retyrement,"

Vaughan recalls meeting his first wife, Catherine Wise, while lounging in the Price's

grounds. And in 1645, Price hosted Charles at his estate. Clearly, then, Price was

important to Vaughan, and it is now accepted that Vaughan was among Price's forces at

the Battle of Rowton Heath—a battle led directly by Charles himself, and occurring just

two months after Charles's visit to Price's estate. Such understandings of Vaughan's

military life follow from the work of Hutchinson and are now widely accepted; so much

so, for instance, that mentions of Vaughan's military involvement are often referred to as

common knowledge. It is useful, I think, to parallel Vaughan's life with historical

circumstance in order to gloss many of his poems, and this is a useful exercise since

Vaughan, despite his turn to religious verse, was unable entirely to distance himself from

his historical goings on.

Before looking at *Silex Scintillans*, however, it is worth discussing *Olor Iscanus*.

Finished in 1647, it was not published until 1651. Often considered Vaughan's second

work for this reason, the volume has attracted rather a lot of attention for its delayed

publication. *Olor Iscanus* is worth mentioning because it is Vaughan's most explicitly

political work. In it, Vaughan includes a number of elegies for Royalist friends and

acquaintances who perished in the civil wars as well as a number of panegyrics dedicated

to Cavalier poets and playwrights such as William Cartwright, John Fletcher and

Katherine Philips and other reputable persons. And while, in the introductory poem, "*ad

Posteros,*" Vaughan denies committing bloodshed on behalf of his beliefs in the civil

wars, such poems made it certain that his readers would know to which party he

belonged; and his translations of Boethius describing the vicissitudes of Fortune would

have only contributed to this understanding. However, the publication history of the

volume has often been a topic of debate for scholars: Vaughan's reasons for publishing

Olor Iscanus in 1651 when it was seemingly complete in 1647 remain unclear, but there

has been no shortage of speculation. It is generally agreed that hints to this publication

anomaly occur in the short prose introduction, "The Publisher to the Reader." Here it is

made explicit that the work was published without Vaughan's consent—the poems of

Olor Iscanus are likely the poems Vaughan was speaking of in his 1655 "Preface" when

he recalled that some had "escaped"—but still questions remain. The anonymous

publisher has been variously understood as being Vaughan's friend, Thomas Powell, or

his brother, Thomas Vaughan—the latter being accepted as the more likely candidate.

However, this seems to matter very little; no significant inferences depend on the text

being published by one or the other. E.L. Marilla believes that "The Publisher to the

Reader" was meant to protect Vaughan. He suggests that Vaughan's personal disavowal

and the publisher's confession that the text was stolen from its author would shield

Vaughan from parliamentary reprisals. James Simmonds, however, has contested this

suggestion. Examining *Mount of Olives* and *Flores Solitudinis,* Simmonds notes that a

supercilious disregard for Parliament (and the associated repercussions) pervades

Vaughan's religious manuals ("Publication of *Olor Iscanus*" 404-05). Simmonds

concludes that "[w]ith this evidence of Vaughan's temerity before a distinct likelihood of

severe persecution, we can only infer that he did not himself seek by any subterfuge to

avoid the possibly disastrous consequences of publishing *Olor Iscanus*" (408). Jonathan

Nauman speculates that *Olor Iscanus* was originally conceived as a "Cavalier celebration

of '*Love*' and '*War*'" to be released in 1648, before the edition underwent substantial

editing by the volume's publisher ("Toward a Herbertian Poetic" 93). Moreover, Nauman

indicates that only two of the *Olor Iscanus* poems are known to have been composed

following the death of Vaughan's younger brother, William Vaughan (99); indeed,

William's death appears (again) to signal the end of Vaughan's explicit interest in the

Cavalier cause, but this will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Two. Building

directly upon Simmonds's argument that *Olor Iscanus* does not diminish the force of

Vaughan's conversion, Nauman has suggested that the publication of *Olor Iscanus*

directly contributed to the intense religious rigorism of the 1655 Preface (94). It should

be apparent, then, *pace* early commentators, that the publication of *Olor Iscanus*

emphatically does not diminish the apparent genuineness of Vaughan's religious turn.

The Interregnum was a difficult time for Vaughan and his circle. A number of his

closest friends and family members faced persecution. In England, the Commission of

Triers and Ejectors was generally unable to effect the religious reforms instituted by

Parliament, since public support for the Prayer Book proved to be more widespread than

initially suspected. In Wales, however, the "Act for the Better Propagation and Preaching

of the Gospel in Wales" was much more successful, and some 278 Anglican clergymen

were ejected. Matthew Herbert, Vaughan's childhood tutor, was ejected from his living at

Llangattock; Thomas Powell and Thomas Lewis, both friends of Vaughan, and persons

honoured by Vaughan in verse, were ejected from their livings in Cantref and Llanfigan,

respectively; and Thomas Vaughan, Vaughan's twin brother and, in all likelihood, his

chief literary confidant, was ejected from his living in Vaughan's own parish of

Llansantffraed [*sic*].[3] Vaughan's neighbor, Rowland Watkyns, who will be discussed

later, was also ejected. The responses from these figures were varied: at extremes,

Thomas Vaughan was to split his time between Oxford and London where he was to

establish himself as a marquis English alchemist—before eventually being killed by an

explosion in his laboratory in 1666; and Matthew Herbert continued serving his

parishioners, even going so far as suing several for not paying tithes, before his efforts to

serve were eventually thwarted.

The result of the "Propagation Act," as it is often called, was that many Welsh

parishes were left without ministers. Those that were actually replaced were often

criticized and derided as incompetent. This failure to replace clergy with competent

alternatives was owed to the Puritan belief that a university degree was not necessary to

administer the Word; rather, they believed, divinely inspired laypersons could more

effectively guide congregants. Thus, while itinerant Puritan ministers, the most famous of

whom was Vavasor Powell, attempted to make their spiritual rounds across Wales, many

congregations were left without sanctioned clergy. Watkyns unapologetically lambasts

the authority of the laity in his poem "The New Illiterate Lay-Teachers," in which he

writes of them that, "This is mere Hocus-Pocus; a strange slight, / By putting candles out,

to gain more light" (15-16).[4] Watkyns is not content to criticize by abstractions, and

proceeds to catalogue how members of secular professions had served church services:

> Mad men by vertue of this propagation,
> Have Bedlum left, and preach't for Reformation.
> And they might well turn preachers, for we had
> Many that were more foolish, and more mad.
> The Tinkar being one of excellent mettle,
> Begins to sound his doctrine with his kettle.
> And the laborious ploughman I bewail,
> Who now doth thresh the Pulpit with his flail.
> The louzy Taylor with his holy thimble
> Doth patch a sermon up most quick and nimble.
> ....
> ....

> The Chandler now a man of light we find,
> His candles leaves a stinking snuffe behind.
> The apothecary, who can give a glister,
> Unto a holy brother or a sister;
> Hath one dram of the spirit, and can pray,
> Or preach, and make no scruple of his way.
> Thus false coyn doth for currant money passe,
> And precious stones are valued lesse than glasse.
> Not disputation, but a rigid law
> Must keep these frantick sectarists in aw. (17-38)

One can see in these lines that Watkyns makes explicit reference to the Propagation Act

(17), the myriad deficiencies of the lay clergy (21-34), and, moreover, he notes that that

which is truly holy is now devalued (35-36). Churches and their congregants are no

longer ruled by holiness or an earnest will to receive the Word, but are strictly enforced

by law (37). That Watkyns could be so revolted by the Presbyterian structure of worship

is made clear by the poem's epigraphic use of the Greek "*Εκας, εκας εστε βεβηλοι*" (Far

off, far off, O profane ones). Watkyns, and, likely enough, other 'Anglican survivalists'

found themselves unable to cope with these church reforms. Such attacks occur

frequently in Watkyns's *Flamma sine Fumo*, safely published in 1662, but most viciously

in the poem "The Presbyterian Covenanter." Here Watkyns declares that "The

Presbyterian, as wise men may see, / Hath little knowledge, less of honesty" (1-2). And

he continues:

> In Scotland he was bred, a place too wild
> To breed an honest, or a civil child:
> Let Presbyterians be to Scotland sent,
> I wish them no more plague; or punishment.
> Than pleasant flowers will in Gods garden sprout,
> When these unwholsom weeds are rooted out. (15-20)

Vaughan, too, was wont to criticize Parliament, Puritans and Propagators, although,

publishing in the 1650s, he was much less free than Watkyns. The poems of *Olor Iscanus*

are thoroughly Royalist, but these lack the vitriol that one might expect. Vaughan does

point mockingly in their direction in *Olor Iscanus*, but he does so in a rather self-

congratulatory manner and seems more interested in exhibiting cavalier pomp than in

deeply wounding his political enemies. But that being said, Vaughan was more than

capable of being scathing, and a notable example occurs in his hagiographic effort,

"Primitive Holiness, Set Forth in the Life of Blessed Paulinus, the most Reverend, and

Learned BISHOP of NOLA," appearing in his *Flores Solitudinis*. Readers of Vaughan

have often seen echoes of him in the work, and early on he writes that "[Paulinus]

preferred the indignation and hatred of the multitude to their love, he would not buy their

friendship with the losse of Heaven, nor call those Saints and propagators, who were

Devills and destroyers" (346). This passage addresses, again, the propagators as well as

the 'New Saints,' as the Fifth Monarchists in Wales had taken to styling themselves;

moreover, Vaughan's disdain for the "multitude" is apparent.

As noted, Charles Walbeoffe, Vaughan's cousin and close friend, had accepted an

offer of employment from the new administration. It is generally accepted that Vaughan,

too, was offered some appointment, but, unlike Walbeoffe, refused it. This is understood

to be the topic and source of Vaughan's poem, "The Proffer." Vaughan begins the poem

by admonishing Commonwealth republicans, declaring: "Be still black parasites / Flutter

no more" (1-2). And Vaughan is adamant in his rejection; he will have nothing to do with

such shallow, worldly appeasements. He declares:

> No, No; I am not he,
>   Go seek elsewhere.
> I skill not your fine tinsel and false hair,
>   Your sorcery,
> And smooth seducements: I'll not stuff my story
>   With your commonwealth and glory. (31-36)

It is important to note that Vaughan's poetry is constantly negotiating the tensions between worldly goings on and spiritual rewards. Here, for instance, Vaughan has resolved that surrendering his principle and accepting the appointment would be spiritually detrimental. Moreover, when the poem appeared in the 1655 *Silex Scintillans*, there would have been no indication to Vaughan, or other Royalists, that in a mere five years Charles II would return from exile in France and restore the monarchy. This makes Vaughan's refusal all the more poignant since he was potentially consigning himself to a lifetime of difficulties. For someone like Vaughan, who had so thoroughly wed his religious identity with his political loyalty, to compromise the latter was effectively a sinful violation of the former. Vaughan's poems are certainly worldly, but they are always depictions of the world relative to what might come next. If Vaughan is overtly political, it is because he is concerned with Heaven and God's gifts for the Faithful, and these were not won with worldly compromise.

When *Silex Scintillans* appeared in 1650, its cover page identified its author as one Henry Vaughan, *Silurist*. Because his first book, *Poems*, identified him as "Gent.," it is worth noting that Vaughan chose to abandon titular reference to his social rank. Silurist identified Vaughan as a member of the Silures, an ancient Welsh tribe which inhabited Vaughan's native Breconshire and who were renowned for their military prowess. Vaughan also used the title for *Olor Iscanus* as well, and it is probable that Vaughan first used it here (recalling that the volume was likely finished around 1647, but left unpublished until 1651). This was a curious connection for Vaughan to make, especially given the material of *Silex Scintillans*. Vaughan, as an exceptionally competent Latinist— even by the standard of the time (Cheek 69)—was likely familiar with the Silures from

reading Tacitus's *Annals*. Tacitus refers to the Silures on several occasions in the twelfth

book of this work, but the picture he paints of them remained consistent. Speaking of the

invaded Britons, Tacitus notes that "when a few who were beginning hostilities had been

slain and the rest pardoned, [they] settled down quietly; but on the Silures neither terror

nor mercy had the least effect; they persisted in war and could be quelled only by legions

encamped in their country" (§ 32); he says of them generally that they were "a naturally

fierce people" (§ 33).

Alhough Welsh, Vaughan participated in an English social culture. Rudrum has

commented on this irony, writing that "on the one hand [the Welsh] belonged to what

was historically conquered and annexed territory; on the other, they were of the same

nation as the English royal family." Discussing the title page of *Poems*, Rudrum notes

that "[a]s 'gentleman' [Vaughan] claimed membership in a class recognizable to the

English, as part of the hierarchy by which they were ruled" (355). Following the

abolishment of the monarchy—and with it, a rigidly enforced social hierarchy—Vaughan

would have had little reason to claim membership in this group. The title Silurist allowed

him to do more: he could declare obstinate rejection of the current social order by

abstractly appealing to another, more ancient, one. As Rudrum writes,

> We should not underestimate the volte-face involved in the turning from
> gentleman to Silurist, though it clearly had its own logic after the death of
> Charles: it implied a recognition of the death of a range of hopes and aspirations.
> The Anglican and Royalist lived on, but Vaughan's sense of what could be hoped
> for from those loyalties was utterly changed. Poetry was no longer a way of
> making a claim upon the world and what the world could offer; it fell back upon
> that function it had of old among the Welsh, of asserting undefeatedness in the
> midst of defeat. (358)

The bardic tradition in Wales is important to note in concert with Vaughan because, as

Rudrum notes, he does seem to invoke it by adopting the moniker of Silurist. Welshness

in sixteenth and seventeenth century England was a complex social identifier. Speaking

Welsh—as Vaughan was able to—precluded one from attaining to any office, and

because of this it was extremely important for the Welsh gentry to familiarize themselves

with the English language. Robert S. Babcock, however, has written on Welshness in the

context of Shakespeare, and he has attempted to articulate how Welshness was

understood. Most importantly, in distinguishing Welsh from English, is an emphasis on

historical consciousness; Babcock notes, for instance, that "[n]o character in *Henry V* is

more aware of history than Fluellen; no one refers to it more often nor more precisely"

(198).[5] Vaughan's adoption of the title Silurist, then, can be seen as an additional instance

of this consciousness. Those interested in caricaturing Vaughan will find themselves

immediately drawn to Thomas Grey's iconic Bard, who is described as follows:

> Robed in the sable garb of woe,
> With haggard eyes the Poet stood;
> (Loose his beard, and hoary hair
> Stream'd, like a meteor, to the troubled air)
> And with a Master's hand, and Prophet's fire,
> Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre. ("The Bard" 17-22)

The Interregnum Vaughan does seem to be a somewhat pitiable figure. Whether Vaughan

ever wore hoary hair and a loose beard is impossible to say since he has left no portrait

behind. But *Silex Scintillans* betrays Vaughan's impulse to strike "the deep sorrows of his

lyre." The text achieves moments of spiritual ecstasy, and during these moments

Vaughan's tone becomes, not surprisingly, elated, joyful, and triumphant. However, large

expanses of *Silex Scintillans*'s textual landscape are dour and grim; and it is not

surprising that Vaughan should clad himself in the "sable garb of woe." This insight is

exceptionally apparent when one peruses some of Vaughan's more distinctly worldly

poems, such as "The World," "The Constellation," and "White Sunday."

There is another problem with clearly separating politics and religion in *Silex Scintillans*, and that is that Vaughan speaks politically about his religious enemies in much the same way that he speaks religiously about his political ones. Not surprisingly, at this point, such a rhetoric is clearly intentional and is clearly a product of the times. It is worth noting that, following the death of Charles, Vaughan's enemies were themselves hardly an organized body of religious and political reformers. In Wales, the Fifth Monarchists, lead by the itinerant preacher Vavasor Powell, continued to be a source of frustration for Vaughan. Along with Vaughan, however, Powell and other Fifth Monarchists continued to be a thorn in the side of Cromwell; notable Fifth Monarchists had even gone so far as to identify Cromwell with the seven-headed dragon in Revelations, typically identified as Satan himself (Bradstock 124). In addition to these defamations, Powell said of Cromwell that he was the "dissemblingest perjured villain in the world" (qtd in Bradstock 124). This characterization complicates the discussion of Vaughan because it becomes important to identify specifically whom he is addressing in his various closeted attacks. Indeed, Cornelius Lettinga has even suggested that a significant contributor to the failure of the Commonwealth was that it united Anglicans and forced them to clearly define who they were, while simultaneously driving various Puritan groups further and further apart (292). However, Vaughan's apparent and even unapologetic worldliness ought not to be conflated with irreligiousness or secular polemicizing. In *Ceremony and Community from Herbert to Milton: Literature, Religion and Cultural Conflict in Seventeenth-Century England*, Achsah Guibbory offers an insightful interpretation of the problem facing Vaughan and his contemporaries. Speaking of Robert Herrick's *Hesperides,* she notes that Herrick's secularism (and, at times,

ostensible paganism,) demarcates him as an Anglican poet—and more specifically, an

Anglican poet rooted in the Laudian, *viz.,* ceremonialist and sacramental, tradition. And

there is some precedent for comparing Vaughan and Herrick: both were Cavalier-turned-

religious poets, though few think of Vaughan the Cavalier, and fewer still think of

Herrick the pietist; and in a recent, influential article, Claude J. Summers has compared

the projects of the poets in the context of Interregnum "Anglican survivalism." It seems

fair, then, that Guibbory's commentary on Herrick can be considered valid here. Puritan

writers of the seventeenth century established an absolute dichotomy between God and

the world. Herrick's poetic appropriation of paganism and his apparent salacious

merriment is a staunch rejection of this ontological divorce:

> Whereas Puritan ideology, with its spirit/flesh dualism, criticized the 'carnality' of
> ceremony, the English defenders of ceremony insisted that ceremonies such as
> kneeling or bowing are outward 'expressions of internall devotion,' intimately
> connected to the spiritual. The corporeal, outward aspects of worship can
> represent and even sustain the inward because, in the ceremonialist mentality, the
> physical and spiritual planes of existence, like the body and soul of the human
> being, are interconnected. (*Ceremony and Community* 92)

If, therefore, Vaughan sometimes seems Janus-faced staring between God and the world,

spirit and flesh, it is because he recognizes a complex interrelatedness that his enemies do

not, and because he is attempting to navigate the challenges of life in-between. For

Vaughan and those like him, accustomed to the liturgy of the Prayer Book and the

traditions of the Anglican Church, these challenges were mediated by the various rituals

of church ceremony and sacrament.

"The World" is much lauded for its beautiful opening stanza, and it is likely

Vaughan's most commonly anthologized poem. In this stanza is all the elaborate

obfuscation of the metaphysical mode. The first two lines, "I saw Eternity the other night

/ Like a *Ring* of pure and endless light," lead into an elaborate meditation on the

complexities of eternity. The second stanza, however, abandons this heightened

inspiration and turns, rather abruptly, to the 'darksome statesman,' Oliver Cromwell. This

shift has long made readers of Vaughan uneasy, and E.C. Pettet notes that, beginning

with Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, a number of anthologies have printed only the first

stanza. "This drastic surgery," he confesses, "produces a quite attractive, if somewhat

obscure poem" (193). But despite this concession, he laments the effect this habit has on

the lay reader who likely knows no other Vaughan than what is presented in these first

fifteen lines. And "this abridgement is to be regretted since it conceals a tough, coarse

textured rhetorical manner of writing that is fairly common in *Silex Scintillans*" (194).

James D. Simmonds mirrors this displeasure. He remarks upon the irony of criticizing a

poem called "The World" for being so topically material (*Masques* 15-16). Not

surprisingly, in a poem largely about Cromwell, though, Vaughan never glamorizes the

world; rather, he does just the opposite. Vaughan writes of Cromwell:

> The darksome States-man, hung with weights and woe,
> Like a thick midnight-fog, mov'd there so slow,
>   He did nor stay, nor go;
> Condemning thoughts—like sad eclipses—scowl
>   Upon his soul,
> And clouds of crying witnesses without
>   Pursued him with one shout.
> Yet dig'd the Mole, and lest his ways be found,
>   Workt under ground,
> Where he did Clutch his prey, but one did see
>   That policie,
> Churches and altars fed him, Perjuries
>   Were gnats and flies;
> It rain'd about him bloud and tears, but he
>   Drank them as free. (16-30)

Here Vaughan accuses Cromwell of myriad offences. These are so many, notes Vaughan,

that surely "Condemning thoughts … scowl upon / His soul" (19-20). Vaughan also

identifies Cromwell with a mole—a symbol traditionally linked with Mammon. And

indeed, later in the poem, Vaughan continues this critique, referring to Cromwell as a

"fearful miser on a heap of rust" (31; C.f., *Faerie Queene* II.vii). But what, then, is

Cromwell's greatest offence? Vaughan has an answer: "The down-right epicure plac'd

heav'n in *sense*" (emphasis added, 33). Recalling the Puritan dichotomy separating the

world from Heaven, Vaughan's critique here is scathing: Cromwell, he suggests, has

conflated Heaven and sense—that is, he has wholly collapsed the Heaven-Earth

distinction so important to the Puritan camp which Cromwell's government ostensibly

depended upon. Unlike Herrick, who would suggest that the world can serve as a tool for

devotion, Cromwell, according to Vaughan, as identified the world as the object of

worship. While Vaughan has Cromwell in mind here, it is also important to note that

Vaughan is simultaneously speaking much more generally; Vaughan uses this darksome

statesman as a synecdoche, and this allows him to address his political enemies *en masse*.

Vaughan recalls the opening lines of "The World" to begin the final stanza. He

writes that "some, who all this while did weep and sing, / And sing, and weep, soar'd up

into the ring" (41-42). But Vaughan laments that many will not direct their attentions

wholly toward God:

> O fools (said I,) thus to prefer dark night
> > Before true light!
> To live in grots and caves, and hate the day
> > Because it shews the way,
> The way, which from this dead and dark abode
> > Leads up to God,
> A way where you might tread the Sun, and be
> > More bright than he.
> But as I did their madnes so discusse,
> > One whisper'd thus,

This ring the Bride-groome did for none provide,
But for His bride. (41-55)

The ring of "pure and endless light" that Vaughan recalls seeing in the opening lines of

the poem is here identified: it is the wedding ring symbolizing the union of Christ and

Church. This connection is a common one in the New Testament, and Vaughan could

easily expect his readers to be familiar with it. Vaughan's main point in the poem is that

those who reject God or the church—those who choose the world—refuse the betrothal

of Christ. These people "live in grots and caves" rather than the paradise promised to

them. Vaughan's criticism of Cromwell and those of his party is not that they are evil *per*

se, although he acknowledges the blood and tears of the civil wars (29); instead, Vaughan

resents them because their worldly ambitions have robbed not only themselves but the

country of God's grace. Vaughan's poem, "The World," then, is not so much about the

world as it is about the dangers of choosing the world before God. Vaughan illustrates

this religious danger by referencing the worldly preoccupations of his political enemies.

Similarly, Vaughan's poem "The Constellation" begins with the speaker

reflecting on the ordered, rhythmic movements of the stars. The constancy of the cosmos

is juxtaposed with the mutability of human endeavours. The motions of the stars, which

Vaughan calls "fair, order'd lights" (1), is associated with Heaven, and, occasionally (as

with the stars), echoes of this cosmic order are felt on Earth (2-4). Categorically opposed

to this rigid discipline, though, is humankind. The stars may be characterized by "exact

obedience" (5), but man [*sic*] is not: "He grops beneath ... with restless Care" (17).

Humankind may desire the "obedience, order, [and] light" of the stars of their

prelapsarian forebears, but now they must settle for stifling political trifles:

But here commission'd by a black self-wil

> The sons the father kil,
> The Children Chase the mother, and would heal
> The wounds they give, by crying zeale. (37-40)

Vaughan's complaint here is clever and would speak to his Royalist readers. Vaughan has

rather overtly referenced the political theory of Sir Robert Filmer and his *Patriarcha, or*

the Natural Right of Kings. Filmer based his political theory upon the Biblical

commandment to honour one's father and mother. The literal meaning of this

commandment is not lost on Filmer, but he is much more interested in interpreting Father

and Mother as the King and Church. To defy either of these, then, is to defy the

Commandments of God. Were one to use the *Patriarcha* as a gloss for the text, the "sons

the father kill" would refer rather obviously to the execution of Charles. Moreover,

Vaughan identifies the banishment of the Anglican liturgy when he writes that the

"children chase the mother, and would heal / The wounds they give, by crying zeal."

Vaughan's readers would also have found themselves directed to the Book of

Revelations, in which a woman "clothed with the sun" is eventually forced to flee into the

wilderness (12:1, 6.) Biblical exegeses variously identify this woman as Israel or the

Church, but what is important is that she is universally recognized as symbolizing God's

faithful (or His chosen). Vaughan has consciously and deliberately appropriated this

intertext in such a way as to cast disenfranchised Anglicans in this role; the Puritans,

then, are implicitly seen as harbingers of the apocalypse. The Puritan strictures of the

parliament were justified with a language of piety that Vaughan clearly rejects. Vaughan

ends this poem not by censuring his enemies but by suing for peace. Civic unrest, he

laments, is a remnant of the Fall. His enemies may have launched the country into

unnecessary conflict, and he may personally resent them for this, but he also recognizes

that their failures are owed to their Lapsed natures. "Thus by our lusts disorder'd into

wars / Our guides prove wandring stars" (45-46), Vaughan writes, and I would like to

emphasize his use of the first-person *our*. Vaughan might disdain, loathe, and blame his

political enemies for the personal injustices he feels he has suffered, but he

simultaneously recognizes that blame does not wholly rest there. Vaughan ends "The

Constellation," then, not with a prayer for him and his, but with a prayer for all

humankind. He beseeches God to "Settle and fix our hearts, that we may move / In order,

peace, and love" (53-54); and indeed, Vaughan wishes for God's help in becoming an

"humble, holy nation" (56). What is one of Vaughan's most frank confessions of political

and religious affiliation, becomes, at the end, almost a benediction. Humankind is

condemned to be disordered—and to suffer all the negative things that word connotes—

and only God can successfully order it. Vaughan uses similar language in "Affliction

[1]," in which he describes humankind as a cacophonous symphony, before asking God

to "*key* disordered man" and to "[make] the whole most musical" (35, 40).

"White Sunday" belongs to a group of poems, including "St. Mary Magdalene"

and "The Proffer," that explicitly attack Vaughan's enemies on religious and moral

grounds. "White Sunday," writes Philip West, "is carved out of Vaughan's negative

emotions: hatred, enmity, bitterness, revenge, a strong dark side of Vaughan's poetry

which was long overlooked as an embarrassing slip in artistry" (*Scripture Uses* 150).

West praises the work of Jonathon Post and Stevie Davies for acknowledging that the

poem deserves attention that it historically did not receive. Moreover, the poem appears

early in 1655 edition of *Silex Scintillans* amidst a number of poems lamenting the

illegality of a number of Church rituals and ceremonies ("Ascension-day," "Ascension-

hymn," etc.). Traditional Christmas observances had been banned as early as 1645, and

bans on Easter, Whitsun, and Rogationtide followed in 1647. For Vaughan, and those like

him, these legislations reek of blasphemy (West, *Scripture Uses* 148). The radical

rejection of Church ceremony—with its emphasis on the *Prayer Book* liturgy—and the

official campaigns of iconoclasm would have been seen by Vaughan as a terrible and

wickedly self-serving approach to religion. In "White Sunday," Vaughan does not

hesitate to accuse to the Puritans of eisegesis—or, of consciously misinterpreting the

Bible for self-serving ends. Holly Faith Nelson has noted that this was a major fear for

both Anglicans and Puritans during the civil wars and during the Interregnum. Nelson

notes that the Bible was understood to be immutable, and as a result, it was accepted as a

moral authority. Unfortunately, however, Anglican-Royalists and Puritan-Republicans

had a mutual claim to this authority. Neither side could combat the Bible as a source of

authority, so they needed, then, to deny the legitimacy of each other's readings of the

Bible. Nelson declares that it is "this very polyvalency of Scripture that fostered the fear

of eisegesis" (31). Vaughan believed the Word to be easily understood and intuited by

those who would read it. In "White Sunday," however, he spews venom at those who

would mislead innocents in their reading of the Bible—and not surprisingly, it is his

Puritan enemies he accuses of this practice. "White Sunday" relies on a complicated set

of biblical intertexts to make its point. The second stanza depends on the reader's

familiarity with the Acts of the Apostles in which we are told that "suddenly there came a

sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where [the

Apostles] were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it

sat upon each of them" (2:1-4). This visitation of the Holy Ghost allowed the disciples of

Christ to speak and prophesy in all the languages of humankind. Vaughan begins the

second stanza of "White Sunday" by asking: "Can these new lights be like to those, /

These lights of Serpents like the Dove?" (9-10). 'New Lights' was one of the chosen

titles for the Fifth Monarchists in Wales, so Vaughan is issuing a fairly pointed criticism

in this poem. He then moves on to write that

> Yet while some rays of that great light
> Shine here below within thy Book,
> They never shall so blinde my sight
> But I will know which way to look. (17-20)

In these lines Vaughan addresses those who would use the Bible to mislead others. In

addition to Acts, Vaughan invokes the Book of Romans in which those "Professing

themselves to be wise ... became fools" (1:22). And the first chapter of Romans spends

considerable time discussing those who would pervert the Word of God, those "Who

changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the

Creator" (1:25). Because of his access to the Bible, and his ability to read it correctly

himself, Vaughan cannot be swayed by the myriad Puritan interpretations that are

available. Indeed, Vaughan flatly declares his ability to "discern wolves from the sheep"

(24). And Vaughan again targets what he sees as conscious and self-serving

interpretations of Scripture in "The Day of Judgment" where he writes

> But what is highest sin and shame,
> The vile despight done to thy name;
> The forgeries, which impious wit
> And power force on Holy Writ,
> With all detestable designs
> That may dishonor those pure lines. (33-38)

Clearly, Vaughan seems to believe that his enemies are willfully deceiving others with

regard to the Word of God. The Bible is a holy, sacred book, and Vaughan views it as the

ultimate (and, indeed, the only legitimate) textual authority in the world; unfortunately, though, Vaughan is cognizant of the fact that not all readings of the Bible are themselves holy, sacred, legitimate, and authoritative—even when these readings declare themselves to be precisely these things. The New Lights, who sometimes refer to themselves as the New Saints, are in Vaughan's eyes vain teachers less concerned with holiness than with their own personal concerns. Vaughan again takes aim at them in "St. Mary Magdalene," when he writes that those "who Saint themselves, they are no *Saints*" (72). New Lights, New Saints, and Welsh Saints alike represent, for Vaughan, a blight upon the spiritual and physical landscape he inhabited.

Potter's argument that Royalist writers necessarily adopted a policy of secrecy implicitly indicts Vaughan and the poetry of *Silex Scintillans*. Indeed, she suggests, religious intertexts were often used to code Royalist writings. The problem with Vaughan, at least in so far as Potter is concerned, is that his biblical intertexts are ambiguously used. In the context of subversive political poetry, Vaughan ranges, unannounced, between innocuous religious lyric and polemic. Potter asks of Vaughan whether "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). The poetry of *Silex Scintillans* affords its readers no answer to this question. Vaughan may indeed use his religious poetry to score political points, but it has hopefully been demonstrated that this is hardly his primary objective. Despite the work of some who would prefer to emphasize political intrigue, such angst remains, in most of Vaughan's *Silex* poems, a secondary or tertiary motive. Vaughan often shifts his gaze away from the grandeur of Heaven, but he always works his way back again. In a complicated socio-literary reality

where authority and allusion were both located in the Bible, Vaughan undertook the challenge of situating himself in the middle; biblical referents may allude to worldly goings on, but they also refer to Vaughan's personal handling of these events and indicate that his preferred method of coping during this period was primarily religious. It has been suggested here that Vaughan would have found himself ill at ease with his contemporary environment. What was needed in these dark times was a Christian poet, modeled after the recently deceased George Herbert, who could direct the nation toward holiness. It will be argued shortly that Vaughan had a personal conception of the office of Christian poet and that this office entailed a great deal more than secular groaning; and, moreover, *Silex Scintillans* represents Vaughan's best effort to volunteer himself for that role.

Chapter Two

A "true, practick piety": Henry Vaughan's Religious Poetics

> Ah Lord! and what a purchase will that be
> To take us sick, that sound would not take thee!
> —"The Pursuit"

It seems odd, perhaps, that there is a need to argue that a volume such as *Silex*

Scintillans is primarily a religious document. Given its subtitle—*Sacred Hymns and*

Private Ejaculations—nothing should be more obvious. The subtitular "ejaculation"

would have spoken directly to the seventeenth-century reader who understood the word

to mean "the putting up of short earnest prayers in moments of emergency" (*OED*,

"Ejaculation" 3.b); and while the word is commonly understood as an ejection or an

emission, it is important to note this specialized usage in order to accommodate the

accidental prurience of the modern reader. Moreover, the subtitle would have reminded

Vaughan's original readers of George Herbert's *The Temple: Sacred Hymns and Pious*

Ejaculations. This intertextual acknowledgement is important since it would have

contributed greatly to the volume's success. Given the continued popularity of *The*

Temple up to and during the civil wars, readers of both Anglican and Puritan sympathies

would have been reminded of Herbert's text. And while the 1655 edition of *Silex*

Scintillans was to make Vaughan's indebtedness to Herbert clear, this subtitular reference

was the only indicator in the 1650 edition to make this connection, although readers, then

as now, would likely have recognized that the titles of several of Vaughan's poems are

identical to Herbert's. With its unapologetic reference to George Herbert, *Silex*

Scintillans would have appealed to readers seeking after a similar collection of religious

verse. To further interest in the text, its cover made use of an obscure emblem; and

"*Authoris (de se) Emblema*," the Latin poem explaining the title page's emblem,

identified the work as a piece of conversion literature—a genre very much in vogue when

it was entered into the Stationers' Register on 28 March 1650. "Moriendo, revixi; / *Et

fractas jam sum* ditior *inter* opes" (15-16)—In *Dying*, I live again; / And in the midst of

my *shattered means* I am now *richer*—declares "*Authoris (de se) Emblema*"; and this

avowal, coupled with the volume's dedicatory sonnet to God, firmly placed *Silex

Scintillans* amid a myriad number of similarly styled works.

The titular emblem featured a flinty heart crying or dripping drops of blood; the

hand of God is portrayed striking the flinty heart with an iron rod, and fire is seen igniting

from the top of it. The curious reader, opening the volume to its first page, would have

been met with the explanatory Latin poem "*Authoris (de se) Emblema*." This poem

identifies the *Silex Scintillans* of 1650 as the work of a man who had undergone a severe

refocusing of his religious sensibilities. Given the religious furor of the age, such a work

was hardly novel. But the conversion of Vaughan remains a popular topic for scholars.

He abstracts his conversion in "*Authoris (de se) Emblema*," but he makes it clear that a

considerable change has come over him:

> *Surdus eram, mutusq;* Silex: *Tu, (quanta tuorum*
> *Cura tibi est!) aliâ das renovare viâ,*
> *Permutas Curam: Jamq irritatus* Amorem
> *Posse negas, & vim,* Vi, *superare paras,*
> *Accedis propior, molemq, &* saxea *rumpis*
> *Pectora, sitq;* Caro, *quod fuit ante* Lapis. (5-10)[6]

One can see in these lines that Vaughan was not a willing or enthusiastic convert. He

refers to his stony heart that God alone could transform into flesh. Vaughan's

seventeenth-century readers, versed in the Bible as they were, would have recognized in

these lines God's promise in the Book of Ezekiel: "And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh" (36:26). Moreover, Lois Potter, in her seminal work *Secret Rites and Secret Writings*, has indicated that emblems (and emblem books) were more often than not the works of those loyal to King and Church (45-49). These two camps are popularly conflated—and indeed, it was unlikely for Royalists not to be High churchmen and churchwomen, and *vice versa*—but I will here suggest that a finer degree of thematic demarcation needs to be acknowledged.

The interpretive debate hitherto alluded to—*viz.*, whether Vaughan ought chiefly to be recognized as a deeply religious poet or as a political polemicist—is one which must now be seen as central to discussions of Vaughan. To begin, it is worthwhile to examine the "conversion" of Vaughan (though the term is misleading) and thence proceed to establish a foundational understanding of his faith. Following this discussion, I will describe the office of the Christian poet as understood by Vaughan. And, *vis-à-vis* Herbert, I will discuss Vaughan's purpose in composing *Silex Scintillans*. It is not without reason that critics of Vaughan find themselves treading historicist territory; Vaughan was socially aware and politically passionate, and he deeply felt the impact of the "late and dusky" days of the English civil wars. F.E. Hutchinson has famously remarked that this worldly consciousness or political temper, at times, even "disturb[s] the remote air of *Silex Scintillans*" (44), but I will argue, *pace* many recent critics, that these political interpolations do not detract from the volume's essential religiousness. Rather, this apparent thematic conflict represents an important component of Vaughan's meditative and consolatory project.

Looking at "The World"—and *Silex Scintillans* generally—Hutchinson declares:

"[h]ere is authentic poetry of such arresting quality as had not been apparent in the *Poems* of 1646 or would be found in the *Olor Iscanus* of 1651" (99). Whatever happened to Vaughan between 1642, at the outset of the civil wars, and the publication of *Silex Scintillans* in 1650, the effect was readily observable in his poetry as well as in his disposition. Like Robert Herrick, the young, rollicking Cavalier Vaughan was transformed into a stern and somber adult—bitter, and suddenly ill at ease with the world. Vaughan had become a man for whom the world offered little in the way of consolation. Between 1650 and 1657, however, Vaughan's publishing record was prodigious. And with the exception of *Olor Iscanus*—which will be discussed shortly—these works were almost entirely religious or medical texts. What fueled this sudden change is a common topic for scholars of Vaughan, and it is worth touching upon here. In a supplementary footnote in his article, "Toward a Herbertian Poetic," Jonathan Nauman writes that he uses the term 'rigorism' [*sic*] rather than 'conversion' when discussing Vaughan's religious development "because [he does] not think that Vaughan's remarkable changes in religious seriousness included any substantial changes in religious belief" (100); and I would like to endorse this distinction where possible. Semiotically, however, "conversion" has a number of advantages over "rigourism," which frustrates this distinction. For this reason, conversion will sometimes be used where necessary, but the 'rigorist' approach presented here will be implied by such usages. And this terminological conflation is hardly novel; indeed, Rudrum has noted that "[w]riters on the seventeenth century ... have generally agreed to use the word 'conversion' to indicate not the turning from a different belief system to Christianity, but rather the deepening and intensification of the religious sense that Christianity became 'true'" ("God's Second

Book" 202).

Conversion was obviously an important theme for Vaughan. The first poem of

Silex Scintillans, "Regeneration," depicts a figurative journey (pilgrimage) toward God—

properly understood as a metaphor for Vaughan's own conversion. "Regeneration" is also

notable since it has received rather a lot of critical attention from Vaughan scholars.

Philip West has noted that the poem's "allegories, emblems and soteriology have

delighted and taxed its readers, and given it one of the richest legacies of critical

interpretation among Vaughan's poems" (30). Rudrum, also, has properly referred to

"Regeneration" as a "difficult but rewarding poem, rightly placed at the entrance of

Vaughan's first fully achieved book" ("God's Second Book" 206), and while I do not

share Rudrum's dismissal of Vaughan's earlier material, his description is otherwise apt.

In 1957 Robert Allen Durr said of the poem that, when one understands it, it "cast[s] its

light out over all [Vaughan's] lovely landscape" (15); and the poem remained such a

source of fascination for Durr that he spent considerable time in his 1962 book *On the*

Mystical Poetry of Henry Vaughan parsing it. Both of these sources contain much that is

helpful when approaching the poem for the first time—they provide an excellent

introductory gloss—and Durr's conclusion in both, that the poem signifies a journey

toward Hermetic awakening or enlightenment, was current when he was writing.

However, while Vaughan was certainly well read in the literature of Hermeticism, thanks

in no small measure to his brother Thomas, the most accomplished British mystic of the

day, recent studies of Vaughan have tended to dismiss him from the Hermetic camp;

"Regeneration," then, requires further attention. West notes that "[h]istorians and literary

critics have tended to pigeonhole Vaughan as a mystical poet, whether in contrast to the

churchier George Herbert, or under the tow of Thomas Vaughan's alchemical tracts...." I think West quite right when he shortly thereafter concludes that Vaughan "seems to have made a principled decision *against* the possibility of knowing God in this life" (165)—in response the mystic's idea that God could be "unveiled" and subsequently known. Therefore, "Regeneration" continues to demand (and arrest) scholarly attention.

Pilgrimage is an important metaphor for those seeking to describe the Christian experience. In his book *Pilgrimage and the Literary Tradition*, Philip Edwards quotes a Lollard tract which serves as a good initial gloss for the poem: "Euery citizen of the hevenli countre is a pilgrime of this world for al tyme of his present lijf" (6). In Vaughan's *corpus*, however, pilgrimage represents a figurative search for God; it represents Vaughan's quest to secure his own salvation. "Regeneration," the first proper poem of *Silex Scintillans,* establishes this:

> A ward, and still in bonds, one day
> > I stole abroad,
> It was high-Spring, and all the way
> > Primros'd, and hung with shade;
> > Yet, was it frost within,
> > > And surly winds
> Blasted my infant buds, and sinne
> > Like Clouds eclips'd my mind. (1-8)

Vaughan's metaphor for searching for God is stealing abroad. Durr has excellently noted that Vaughan "is a ward who lives in the thraldom of his 'body' (*psyche*)"; and this condition is furthered by "his egotistical sense of separate existence with all its lusts and anxieties, in ignorance of Christ and the freedom of the the spiritual life he may realize through Him" (82). Of "Regeneration," Edwards says that the "pilgrim here refers both to the worldly person committed to his journey and the Christian who knows it is taking him away from his God" (81). However, Edwards indicates a number of issues with

"Regeneration" being read as a pilgrimage poem. Most significantly, Vaughan never finds God by searching in the poem; it is only when he stops his journey and listens that he finds God—or finds some understanding of what the Christian life entails. Vaughan discovers that he need not search extrinsically for God; rather, he must search intrinsically. Journey for Vaughan is futile and redundant, or, as Edwards suggests in his reading of the poem, "an obsolete concept" (80). When Jerome undertook to translate the Bible into Latin, he was (doubtlessly) beset by a number of linguistic challenges. Among these, Latin has no word for one who journeys to a sacred place or one who journeys for a sacred cause. The word chosen, *peregrinus* or *peregrination*, denotes wanderer, traveller, or alien—but importantly, connotes an exile. *Peregrinus*, in Germanic and romance vernaculars became *pèlerine* (French), *Pellegrino* (Italian), *pilger* (German), and finally, *pilgrim* (English) (Edwards 6). This etymology is important for Vaughan, whose poetic use of pilgrim would seem to depend on this connoted exile.

"The Christian in Vaughan's poetry is indeed a pilgrim, but pilgrim as exile" writes Edwards: "[b]eing a Welshman estranged from his own people, an Anglican utterly opposed to the changes imposed on his church, living in seclusion by his beloved river Usk, Vaughan knew on his pulses the alienation of which he wrote" (80). Edwards spends a great deal of time discussing the nature of pilgrimage in Vaughan's poetry. Referencing Vaughan's "The Resolve," Edwards concludes that pilgrimage means something quite different for Vaughan than it did for most poets:

> ...[T]here is
> > An ancient way,
> All strewed with flowres and happiness,
> > And fresh as *May*;
> There turn, and turn no more; let wits
> > Smile at fair eies,

> Or lips; but who there weeping sits,
>   Hath got the *Prize*. (21-28)

Here, too, Vaughan reveals that if one wishes to seek for God, one must seek within.

Edwards concludes that Vaughan was not a poet of motion, but of standing still.

Referencing many of Vaughan's more overtly Neo-Platonic poems, Edwards describes

pilgrimage for Vaughan as a "travelling *back*" to the simplicity and divine understanding

of childhood (83). This is a common theme for Vaughan—even more so than it is for

Thomas Traherne and William Wordsworth, who are often associated with the notion.

For Vaughan, this journey inside was also a journey backwards: and this belief finds

biblical support in the Gospel of Matthew in which Jesus tells his assembled disciples

"[v]erily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall

not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (18:3). What is to be acquired from an

understanding of "Regeneration," then, is a sense in Vaughan that one is sufficiently

capable of intuiting holiness; one must first seek holiness within before endeavouring to

seek for it without. Vaughan's preferred symbol for such genuine religious experiences in

Silex Scintillans is tears—"who there weeping sits, / Hath god the prize"[7]—and Vaughan,

it seems, had reasons of his own to cry; and these reasons, it will be shown, were to have

a profound influence on him and his 'conversion.'

There are six untitled elegies in the *Silex Scintillans* of 1650 and three more in the

augmented 1655 edition; these poems are merely identified with a titular pilcrow— ¶—

but they represent some of Vaughan's most impassioned, personal verses. These are

understood to have been written for Vaughan's youngest brother, William, who died in

July of 1648—often conjectured to have perished as a soldier in the King's service. It is

acknowledged, though, that "[Joy of my life! While left me here]" from *Silex* Part I, and

"[Fair and yong light]" from *Silex* Part II, may have been written for Vaughan's first

wife, Catherine Wise. However, since the date of her death is uncertain, such attributions

are generally tentative at best (Hutchinson 107; Martz, *George Herbert and Henry*

Vaughan 497). Despite these allowances, it is worth noting that it is common to see all of

the elegies as dedicated to William, and indeed, his death certainly seems to have played

an important part in Vaughan's conversion. For instance, in *Henry Vaughan: A Life and*

Interpretation, the authoritative biography on Vaughan, Hutchinson spends most of his

chapter on Vaughan's conversion speaking to the death of William Vaughan. He makes

the argument that William's death drove Vaughan to the Bible: "It seems ... more

probable that the shock of his brother's death or some other cause that made him 'hurt or

sick' brought him to a renewed study of the Bible." He finishes this thought by

suggesting that, "there must ... have been a cause which drove him back to the Bible"

(106). Hutchinson's commentary is valuable, but the importance of William's death is

made apparent when one looks at the poems themselves. In the first elegy of *Silex*

Scintillans, "[Thou that know'st for whom I mourne]," Vaughan credits William's death

for his conversion. Addressing God—the "thou" of the first line—Vaughan writes

> But 'twas my sinne that forc'd Thy hand
> > To cull this *Prim-rose* out,
> That by Thy early choice forewarn'd
> > My soule might looke about. (9-12)

It might make the modern reader uneasy to see Vaughan suggest that William's death

was God's way of directing Vaughan toward spiritual rebirth. Philip West has remarked

that such "unabashed selfishness may now shock," and this seems fair. However, West,

apologizing for Vaughan, suggests that it was an "inevitable consequence of the

providentialist world-view of that Reformed Christianity which in its most extreme form

produced the 'experimental' Puritan practice of sifting every event in one's life for sign

of election (or, indeed, reprobation)" (84). Vaughan's 'selfishness,' though, continues

throughout the whole of the poem. Vaughan is critical of himself and humanity when he

writes:

> Dull, wretched wormes! that would not keepe
> > Within our first faire bed,
> But out of *Paradise* must creepe
> > For ev'ry foote to tread!
> Yet had our pilgrimage bin free,
> > And smooth without a thorne,
> Pleasures had foil'd Eternitie,
> > And *tares* had choakt the corn.
> Thus by the Crosse Salvation runnes;
> > Affliction is a mother
> Whose painful throws yield many sons,
> > Each fairer than the other.
> A silent teare can pierce Thy throne,
> > When lowd Joyes want a wing;
> And sweeter aires streame from a groan,
> > Than any arted string.
> Thus, Lord, I see my gaine is great,
> > My losse but little to it[.] (37-54)

George Parfitt has said of Vaughan that he is "not really equipped to describe grief,"

delineating explicitly his elegiac failures *vis-à-vis* the successes of Ben Jonson; but Parfitt

eventually concedes that Vaughan can nevertheless "write quite effectively about loss"

(qtd in Davies 83). Stevie Davies, though, deriding Parfitt's initial claim, indicates that

Vaughan "writes unsurpassedly about loss; it is the symphonic theme of his works" (83).

It is worth noting, however, that her chosen elegy *par excellence*, "[Silence and stealth of

days]," is more consistent with what one expects when one encounters an elegy. "[Thou

that know'st for whom I mourn]" is important because it indicates Vaughan's need to

make sense of and justify the death of his brother; the only way to clean God's hands of

William's death, in this case, is to find that his own are ensanguined with William's

blood. The poem is much less about William's death than it is about Vaughan's internal struggle with his death. The poem concludes with Vaughan beseeching God:

> Yet something more I must entreate,
>   And only Thou canst do it.
> O let me (like him) know my End!
>   And be as glad to find it:
> And whatsoe'er Thou shalt Commend,
>   Still let Thy servant mind it!
> Then make my soule white as his owne,
>   My faith as pure and steddy,
> And deck me, Lord, with the same Crowne
>   Thou hast crownd him already! (55-64)

Convinced of his brother's goodness and salvation, Vaughan has, therefore, been forced to examine himself and to look within to gauge the sanctity of his own soul. Vaughan takes solace in the realization that his brother's soul has escaped its fleshy prison; William's 'white soul' was provided for by his 'pure and steady' faith. That Vaughan concludes an elegy for his brother by asking God to refine his own soul ought to indicate that he was not optimistic about his particular spiritual wellbeing. Vaughan wishes to die—to 'know his end'—but only after he has made spiritual amends.

If the deaths of his brother and first wife were not enough, the "Author's Preface to the Following Hymns" from the augmented *Silex* of 1655 makes it clear that Vaughan experienced a period of prolonged and serious illness. Vaughan was, he writes, "nigh unto death" and was "still at no great distance from it" when the second *Silex* appeared. Vaughan goes so far as to note that his reader would not be much mistaken if he or she "would judge [the last poems in the book] to be fatherless, and the edition posthume" (392). Vaughan believed that God had postponed his death that he might yet accomplish some *good* or another—and the vehicle for this act of retribution, Vaughan seems to have believed, was to be poetry. The account of Vaughan's illness has been somewhat

impaired by history and requires a modicum of clarification, but it is possible to draw a

reasonably clear picture of it from his various prefatory materials—specifically, those for

his *Flores Solitudinis. Collected in his Sicknesse and Retirement* (1654) and the expanded

Silex Scintillans of 1655. It was once believed that Vaughan's illness coincided with the

death of William Vaughan. But such a claim seems to have been the invention H.F. Lyte

who first undertook to republish *Silex Scintillans* in 1847. Addressing Lyte, L.C. Martin,

and a "swarm of others," James D. Simmonds scoffs at those whose "scholarly

apparatus[es] [have] not been sufficient to withstand the romantic propensity for

tubercular genius fostered by the popular image of Keats" (*Masques* 198). Simmonds

reasonably concludes that Vaughan likely took ill sometime between March and

September—he speculates April—1653 and remained in a state of compromised health

for much of the next year. This refinement is congruous with other discussions of

Vaughan's illness which often merely suggest a date sometime in 1653 (Hutchinson 107;

Pettet 11; *et cetera*). Whatever the nature of Vaughan's illness, it is worth mentioning

since Vaughan himself thought it was spiritually significant. In addition, though,

Vaughan seems to have become increasingly obsessed with George Herbert during this

period, and this was to shape his understanding of what poetry *ought* to do. The

realization (for Vaughan) that poetry should be informed by a religious sensibility was

complemented by his sense that his survival suggested (*via* God's intercession) a second

lease on life. Having already beseeched God—in "[Thou that know'st for whom I

mourn]," and elsewhere throughout *Silex* Part I, for instance—to open his heart, this latest

act of divine charity was likely understood by Vaughan as his final remission; not

surprisingly, then, the "Author's Preface to the Following Hymns" suggests that it was

composed by a man whose scrupulosity had wholly consumed him.

Proving, perhaps, that absolutely nothing is safe from the skewers of academic scrutiny, however, even Vaughan's conversion has been problematized. Most of this debate is owed to the suspicion on the part of Hutchinson (and other early Vaughan commentators) that his conversion was essentially complete before the first *Silex* of 1650; and this will be discussed shortly. However, prior to this discussion, it is worth noting and addressing the New Critical reading of Vaughan's *corpus* undertaken by Frank Kermode. In his (in)famous essay, "The Private Imagery of Henry Vaughan," Kermode muses that Vaughan's sudden shift to religious verse was "rather a poetic than a religious experience" (206). The suggestion that Vaughan's conversion represented a generic experiment rather than a personal religious awakening has been wholly dismissed and derided by Vaughan scholars; but Kermode's fame necessitates recurring rebuttals. His attempt to "appraise" some of Vaughan's poems as "poetry rather than as prayer" is an attractive notion since it ought to validate the aesthetic value of Vaughan's poetry (206). However, my critique of this project stems from Kermode's willful dismissal of Vaughan's own chosen descriptors for his poems. I have already discussed the titular mention of private *ejaculations* denoting, for Vaughan's original readers, prayer. Moreover, it is worth noting that Vaughan attached to the 1655 edition of *Silex Scintillans* an "Author's Preface to the Following *Hymns*" and *not* an "Author's Preface to the Following *Poems*"; such distinctions are, obviously, somewhat threadbare, but when understood in concert with one another, they indicate Vaughan's sense of how his works should be understood. The 'prayers' in *Silex* are without question poems; but they are not meant to serve a purely poetic (i.e., aesthetic) purpose—and the nature of this

purpose provides the bulk of what will follow later. There are, of course, those enduring

strains in Kermode's article which are attractive. That "[p]art of [his] intention … was to

vindicate Vaughan as a poet, pure and simple" merits some praise (225). But for those to

whom Vaughan's poetry speaks passionately and beautifully, I think it not at all unfair to

suggest that no such validation is needed. Kermode also instigated the (now largely

accepted) understanding of Vaughan's use of mystical imagery as being a poetical

practice. Whereas E.C. Pettet has noted that it is "impossible in a limited space to deal

adequately with … Kermode's argument," he nevertheless takes pains to do so with

commendable brevity (17). Speaking of "The Night," Pettet resigns himself to the

occasional futility of academic processes. "If," Pettet says, "Kermode really considers

that *The Night* … is principally the working out of a major image-complex and not also

the expression of some of Vaughan's deepest devotional feelings …, it is unlikely that he

will ever be reasoned out of a one-sided … response to that lyric" (18).

In addition to the problem of Kermode, there is another more pressing issue that

challenges the significance of Vaughan's conversion. The "Author's Preface to the

following Hymns," from the augmented *Silex,* makes it clear that secular poetry is

something which ought to be avoided. Gifted persons, and especially poets, have a duty

to extol the Word of God. Vaughan's catalogue, for this reason, has been problematized

by the appearance of *Olor Iscanus* in 1651. If, as Hutchinson believes, Vaughan's

conversion was essentially complete by 1650 (99), Vaughan would seem to be guilty of

the most profound hypocrisy. The dedication of *Olor Iscanus*, for instance, was

composed at "*Newton* by *Usk* this 17. of Decemb. 1647," and with the exception of "To

Sir *William D'avenant*, upon his *Gondibert*," written sometime after 1650, the rest of the

poems in the volume appear to have been completed around 1647 (Marilla, "Conversion

(1948)" 394). Hutchinson, though, can hardly be blamed for this assumption. When Lyte

published *Silex* in 1847, the "Author's Preface," appeared prominently at the beginning.

And L.C. Martin, whose *Vaughan's Works* in two volumes remains the academic

standard for Vaughan's poetry and prose, similarly saw it fit to place the 1655 preface

inconspicuously at the beginning of *Silex Scintillans*. This arrangment, while clearly what

Vaughan wanted in 1655, is problematic for modern readers of the text; Vaughan's

indictment of secular poetry seems to appear before the publication of *Olor Iscanus*. In

the 1655 "Preface" he laments and disowns his own secular poetry. Recalling that he

once wrote in the mode he now condemns, Vaughan writes:

> And here, because I would prevent a just *censure* by my free *confession*, I must
> remember, that I myself have for many years together, languished of this very
> *sickness*; and it is no long time since I have recovered. But (blessed be God for
> it!) I have by His saving assistance suppressed my *greatest follies*, and those
> which escaped from me, are (I think) as innoxious, as most of that *vein* use to be;
> besides, they are interlined with many virtuous, and some pious mixtures. What I
> speak of them is truth: but let no man mistake it for an *extenuation* of faults, as if I
> intended an *Apology* for them, or my *self*, who am conscious of so much *guilt* in
> *both*, as can never be expiated without *special sorrows*, and that cleansing and
> pretious *effusion* of my Almighty Redeemer: and if the world will be so
> charitable as to grant my request, I do here most humbly and earnestly beg that
> none would read them. (390)

And while editions of Vaughan's poetry uniformly place *Olor Iscanus* prior to *Silex*

Scintillans—owing largely to the belief that *Silex* is 'special,' and that it indicates a

radical departure from Vaughan's previous poetic inclination—this arrangment is clearly

still a problem. E.L. Marilla notes that such editing decisions have "unwittingly place[d]

Vaughan in the role of thoroughgoing hypocrite conniving in a scheme to promote the

benefits of his duplicity" ("Conversion (1948)" 397). It is not surprising, then, that

modern editions, such as those by Louis Martz (1986), have placed the "Preface" before

the appended material of 1655. The "preface," in such editions, appears in the middle of

the volume, and what results is an organizationally confused collection, but one which is

interpretively much more helpful to readers not familiar with the text's editorial history.

The "Publisher to the Reader" of *Olor Iscanus* makes it clear that "*The* Author

had long agoe condemn'd these Poems *to* Obscuritie" (36), and it seems to be this work

Vaughan has in mind when writing his "Preface" to the 1655 edtion of *Silex Scintillans*.

But the questions surrounding *Olor Iscanus* remain. Marilla proposes, I think correctly,

that Vaughan's religiousness was subject to refinement and evolution throughout the

1640s, and that it peaked sometime around 1654 ("Conversion (1945)" 16). However,

Marilla's inferences are problematic. His suggestion that Vaughan's religiousness

oscilates around the political goings on of the 1640s and 1650s taxes somewhat the

current discussion. It is not, I think, an indictment of Vaughan to suggest that his temper

softened after the Restoration. Indeed, for the reasons mentioned here—the death of

friends and family, persecution, and personal infirmity—it is hardly surprising that

Vaughan should look despairingly at the world. Vaughan, like many of his day, both

Puritan and Anglican alike, believed the Last Days had arrived; it is not at all surprising,

then, that he should take pains to assure his own salvation wherever possible. And

indeed, eschatological and apocalyptic readings of Vaughan make up some of the most

interesting additions to the recent scholarly *corpus*. By way of apology, it is worth

quoting Evelyn Underhill, who, speaking of those imbued with innate mystical

inclination, notes that dissatisfaction with the world is often the precursor to intense

religious or mystical conversion. "The most highly developed branches of the human

family have in common one peculiar characteristic," she suggests, and while the apparent

value judgement is unsettling for various reasons, what follows is worth considering in the context of Vaughan. Underhill declares that "[t]hey tend to produce – sporadically it is true, and often in the teeth of adverse external circumstances – a curious and definite type of personality" which she defines as "a type which refuses to be satisfied with that which other men [*sic*] call experience, and is inclined ... to 'deny the world in order that he may find reality'" (qtd in Loloi 37). Vaughan's reasons for turning from the world are many, and Marilla's attempt to assert the primacy of the civil wars, *in lieu* of abounding personal tragedy, seems to be an unsubstantiated valuation of the extant historical and biographical data. As Vaughan himself writes in "The Timber," "He that hath left lifes vain joys and vain care, / And truly hates to be detain'd on earth, / Hath got an house where many mansions are" (29-31). Indeed, personal and political causes likely colluded to instigate Vaughan's rejection of the material world. It is important to remember that Vaughan passed away on 23 April, 1695: he survived Charles I by over 46 years, and he lived some 35 years after the Restoration of Charles II. Vaughan's longevity would have demanded increased moderation as the Restoration continued unmolested by notable civil conflict.

As noted, the "Author's Preface to the following Hymns" of 1655 makes it clear that Vaughan had, by that time, adopted the belief that gifted persons, and specifically, poets, ought to use their talents to praise God. He makes his disdain for his previous mode of poetry clear, and he resolves to only write poetry expressing the Word and his debt to it. Vaughan derides those of talent who choose 'low' topics for their pens. He says of them that, "[w]here the sun is busy upon a dunghill, the issue is always some unclean vermin" (389). Clearly, when poets or 'gifted persons' expend themselves upon trivia,

even the most competent amongst them is merely extolling scat; Vaughan seems to think

that he and others can reach much higher with their verses than this. Referring to writers

of secular verse, Vaughan notes that "to persist so to the end, is a wilful despising of

God's sacred exhortations"; and more, he laments that "a constant, sensual volutation or

wallowing in impure thoughts and scurrilous conceits ... both defile their authors, and as

many more as they are communicated to" (389). Vaughan expands on this notion further,

and it is worth quoting in full, since it seems to capture his sense of the dangers of 'idle

verse':

> If *every idle word shall be accounted for*, and if *no corrupt communication should
> proceed out of our mouths*, how desperate, I beseech you, is their condition, who
> all their life time, and out of mere design, study *lascivious fictions*: then carefully
> record and publish them, that instead of *grace* and *life*, they *may minister sin and
> death* unto their readers? It was wisely considered, and piously said by one, *That
> he would read no idle books; both in regard of love to his own soul, and pity unto
> his that made them, for* (said he) *if I be corrupted by them, their Composer is
> immediately a cause of my ill: and at the day of reckoning—though now dead—
> must give an account for it, because I am corrupted by his bad example, which he
> left behind him: I will write none, lest I hurt them that come after me; I will read
> none, lest I augment his punishment that is gone before me. I will neither write,
> nor read, lest I prove a foe to my own soul: while I live, I sin too much; let me not
> continue longer in wickedness than I do in life.* It is a sentence of sacred
> authority, that *he that is dead is freed from sin*; because he cannot in that state,
> which is without the body, sin any more; but 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 ever he did in his *life*; which very consideration deserves to be a
> sufficient *Antidote* against this evil disease. (389-90)

Vaughan's theory on literature here is as interesting as it is unknown. Rather than

building a lasting monument as Horace suggests in his *Odes* (III.30), the poet creates

another body which can save or condemn the poet after death. This thought shows

Vaughan's ability to synthesize ideas from several sources. In this case, it is the Bible and

Owen Feltham's *Resolves: Divine, Moral and Political* (1623), a book which, like

Herbert's *The Temple*, was very much in vogue. Passages likes this abound in Vaughan's

1655 preface, and they illustrate a theory of poetics which very much emphasizes praxis; indeed, Vaughan, like John Milton, had a conception of the office of Christian poet, and it is possible to discern in his writings an understanding of what this office entailed. However, whereas Milton clearly codified this office, Vaughan did not, and in establishing Vaughan's project we must briefly turn our attentions toward his model, Herbert.

In his poem "Obedience," Herbert, addressing God, writes: "O let thy sacred will / All thy delight in me fulfill" (16-17). Herbert ends the poem with the admission and hope that his verse will find and speak to his readers. Herbert is interested in those readers who are receptive to the Word as well as those of hard hearts that can be reached by his example. He writes: "How happie were my part, / If some kinde man would thrust his heart / Into these lines" (41-43). When, in 1633, Herbert composed these lines, he could not have imagined the enthusiastic and zealous response he was to receive from Vaughan less than two decades later. Herbert's call in "Obedience" is directly answered by Vaughan in his poem "The Match" from the 1650 *Silex*:

> Dear friend! whose holy, ever-living lines
> > Have done much good
> > To many, and have checkt my blood,
> My fierce, wild blood, that still heaves, and inclines
> > But is still tam'd
> By those bright fires which thee inflam'd[.] (1-5)

As with the subtitular *Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations*, Vaughan here too relies on his reader's knowledge of and familiarity with Herbert's *The Temple* in order to piece together an intertextual conversation between the poets. In the "Author's Preface" of the 1655 *Silex*, however, Vaughan was much more overt in acknowledging his debt to Herbert. Here, quoting the Book of Daniel, Vaughan says: "they that turn many to

righteousness shall shine like the stars for ever and ever" (KJV 12:3). Following this

laudation, Vaughan declares his debt to Herbert, and credits Herbert with his conversion.

Referring to him as "that blessed man," Vaughan writes touchingly of "Mr. George

Herbert, whose holy life and verse gained many pious converts, of whom I am the least"

(391). Hutchinson—vocationally an Herbert scholar before taking religious orders in the

Anglican communion—has flatly declared that "there is no example in English literature

of one poet borrowing so extensively from another" (102-3). This intense reverence is

even more interesting when one considers that Vaughan and Herbert were actually

distantly related.[8] Whatever the nature of Herbert's influence, it seems safe to suggest

that he played an integral role in defining the office of Christian poet as Vaughan would

have seen it; indeed, Joan Bennett has said, "whatever influences combined to make

[Vaughan] a religious *man*, Herbert was largely instrumental in making him a religious

poet" (75).

   As Herbert spoke to Vaughan, so Vaughan wished to speak to others; he wished

to be the poet-proselyte consoling those whose faith was deterred, damaged and/or

diminished during the trials of the civil wars. Donald R. Dickson interprets the preface to

the 1655 *Silex* as being essentially a demarcation between 'fashion' and 'force'—*viz.*,

religious artifice versus practical religious counsel (390). Herbert is great because of the

'perfect' balance he strikes between the two: Vaughan tells us his "*measure* was

eminent" in the 1655 preface (390). Vaughan, suggests Jonathan F.S. Post, is more

interested in force. "As 'conversion' or 'regeneration' is his personal theme, so Vaughan

came to see 'turning' others as the urgent subject of his age," summarizes Post, and he

notes that this was "a subject made urgent ... by the evidence of destruction everywhere

around [Vaughan]" ("Civil War Cleavage" 27). To this end, Vaughan was successful in

the person of Nathaniel Wanley, whose *Scintillulae Sacrae* (ca. 1655-1667) has often

been understood as owing much to Vaughan. And while West has recently suggested that

Wanley, like so many others, owes more to Herbert than to Vaughan, he nevertheless

notes that "there is plenty of evidence that Wanley was an early reader of Vaughan—one

of only a handful traced to date" ("Wanley" 339). The point here is to indicate that

Vaughan saw the Christian poet as one who incited action. This suggestion does not at all

constitute a call to arms, but rather indicates that the Christian poet, in practical terms,

aids in the reception of the Word. That his own successes in effecting action—

'conversion' or 'regeneration'—are impossible to speculate upon matters little; what is

important here is articulating Vaughan's intent, and more, in understanding what that

intent entailed.

In 1662, a pamphlet entitled *A Brief Account of the New Sect of Latitude Men*,

attributed only to S.P.—now believed to be Symon Patrick, the then Bishop of Ely—

attempted to justify the appointments of conformist ministers. These preachers who were

promoted during the Interregnum and kept their appointments only by swearing loyalty to

Charles II, were, not surprisingly, popularly derided. Patrick's pamphlet is important

because, in attempting to apologize for or justify the offices of these clerics, he articulates

an understanding of Anglicanism that remains current even today. The Latitudinarian was

one who affirmed "that vertuous mediocrity which our Church observes between the

meretricious gaudiness of the Church of Rome, and the squalid sluttery of Fanatick

conventicles" (7). Patrick's language, by modern standards, seems to lack moderation,

but his point is, I think, clear: the English (British) Church is at its best when it skirts

these two extremes. In his poem, "The Preparative," Thomas Traherne notes that the holy

mind of a child is an "Empty and a Quick Intelligence / Acquainted with the Golden

Mean" (64-65). And while Patrick, a 'Cambridge Platonist,' may not be the best indicator

of Vaughan's faith—recalling that Vaughan attended Oxford, and that his brother,

Thomas Vaughan, found a particularly nasty literary nemesis in Thomas More, the

Cambridge Platonist—there remains an interpretive value in his delineation. Patrick's

reconciliatory tone describes a 'middle path,' which was not readily apparent in the

religious polarization of the civil wars; his 'vertuous mediocrity' was meant to soften

extremist understandings of what exactly the Anglican Communion was. Patrick was

attempting to assuage the positions of the 'meretricious gaudiness' of the Anglicans and

'squalid sluttery' of the Puritans. (This, of course, refers to the language which each

group used to refer to the other.) In addition, therefore, to providing us with a working

definition of the English Church, it provides the historical reader with a sententious (or,

perhaps, caricaturized) summation of the religious extremes which were to be found

during the civil wars. Not surprisingly, then, when one reads Vaughan, one is presented

with the former image: Vaughan felt a strong attachment to those Catholic remnants

which survived in the Anglican liturgy.

The Wales in which Vaughan grew up was one deeply touched by Catholicism.

Wales had long been associated with Cistercian monasticism—and monasteries, though

fallen into disuse, continued to dot the landscape even in the seventeenth century. The

Welsh have never forgotten the Catholic favours they received when English kings were

deaf to their complaints. The Puritan ransacking of St. David's Cathedral, then, would

have been well known to Vaughan, and one can speculate assuredly that he would have

looked upon it with revilement. St. David's had been a source of pride for the Welsh

since William the Conqueror visited and prayed there in 1081—declaring afterwards that

it was a holy and sacred place. This pride was intensified in 1123 when Pope Calixtus II

awarded Papal privilege to the cathedral, declaring that just two pilgrimages to St.

David's were worth one to Rome, and that three were worth as much as a pilgrimage to

Jerusalem itself. Even today—despite the advent of Methodism in the eighteenth century,

for which the Welsh are perhaps best known—these events are well ingrained in the

Welsh consciousness, and they continue to inform a sense of Welsh nationhood. It is,

therefore, hardly remarkable that a sort of latent (Anglo-)Catholicism should find a voice

in the writing of Vaughan. Moreover, "from 1655 on to the Restoration, Church of

England men [*sic*] were under the Penal laws, and had a taste for five full years of all the

disabilities which English Catholics underwent …" and continued to undergo (Guiney

qtd in Nauman, "Hutchinson and Guiney" 144).

In 1884, in one of the first critical biographies of Vaughan, J.C. Shairp wrote that,

"Vaughan belongs to that small band of Royalist poets of the Caroline era who stand

discriminated from the host of dashing, rollicking, cavalier lyrists, by being essentially

religious poets" (120). Shairp's conflation, here, of Anglican and Royalist poetics is

deeply problematic; certainly, there is some thematic overlap, but this is not sufficient to

conflate these projects. However, Shairp continues immediately by suggesting that

"[w]hat attracted them to the Royal cause was not its worldly splendor; but they

identified it with that refinement of feeling and that deep and sober piety which seem to

have descended… from Catholic ages" (120). Clearly, the poets Shairp lists—Vaughan,

Crashaw, Sandys, Herbert, Herrick (121)—identified such feelings with the *Church*; and

while the English monarch is also the head of the church, it is rightly understood that the

Monarchy and the Church are two distinct offices. Certainly, these poets were all

likewise Royalists, but they made a conscious and principled decision to write religious

verse, and this demands a degree of demarcation which Shairp does not recognize. But a

nonchalant disregard for the Recusancy Laws appears throughout Vaughan's Interregnum

corpus. Appearing throughout *Silex Scintillans,* both the 1650 and 1655 editions, are

poems such as "Easter-day," "Easter Hymn," "The Holy Communion," "Ascension-day,"

"Ascension Hymn," "White Sunday," and "St. Mary Magdalene" which recall the Anglo-

Catholic calendar and the veneration of Mary Magdalene which was so repugnant to

Puritan sensibilities. Moreover, Vaughan's 1653 *Mount of Olives; or, Solitary Devotions*

included a translation of St. Anselm's *Man in Glory.* And his *Flores Solitudinis: Certain*

Rare and Elegant Pieces Collected in his Sickness and Retirement includes translations of

such works as *Of Temperance and Patience* and *Of Life and Death* by the Jesuit writer

Johannes Eusebius Nierembergius; *The World Contemned* by Eucherius, a fifth century

Bishop of Lyons; *Primitive Holiness[:] The Life of Blessed Paulinus...Bishop of Nola* by

a Jesuit, Francesco Sacchini. Vaughan was clearly remarkably familiar with Catholic

literature. (He also borrows from Hermetic sources, and, surprisingly, Puritan ones.) It is

not surprising, then, that Louise Guiney, interested largely in recusant literatures, would

have found Vaughan congenial. However, it is not my intention here to suggest in some

way that Vaughan was a covert Catholic—nor was it Guiney's—but rather to illustrate

that he identified with those enduring strains of Catholicism that survived in his beloved

Church.

    Vaughan was a thoroughgoing Anglican, but there is little in his writing that

suggests a definite theological position. Whereas a poet like Milton, for instance, at different times of his life, identified with Calvinist and Arminian orientations, no such frankness occurs in the work of Vaughan. Vaughan's poetry, like Herbert's, "leans towards practical rather than controversial topics in theology," and "the reader who attempts to separate out entire theological positions is easily frustrated" (West, *Scripture Uses* 120). Despite this ambiguity, Rudrum has illustrated how Vaughan and Milton, in asserting the salvation of the creatures, would have offended orthodox Calvinist soteriology. And it is known that Vaughan was familiar enough with Beza's Latin translation of the Bible that he was strategically able to use these translated passages in such a manner as to highlight Calvinist discontinuity ("Ecology of the Hereafter" 50-51). Moreover, in a similarly styled essay, Rudrum has elsewhere suggested that Vaughan's opposition to Calvinism is somewhat more extreme than is often assumed ("Liberation of the Creatures"). Whether Vaughan was, strictly speaking, opposed to Calvinism out of theological principle, or whether he merely associated it with the Commonwealth government, is too broad an issue to be adequately covered here. But given how deeply affected Vaughan was by the "Act for the Better Propagation and Preaching of the Gospel in Wales," passed by the Rump Parliament in February 1650, with its emphasis on radical Calvinism, it seems not at all unlikely that Vaughan would conflate Calvinism with his enemies; and the Commission of Triers and Ejectors, established in 1654, whose office explicitly consisted of normalizing Calvinist teachings in British parishes, would have only furthered this resentment. It is worth noting that such actions led to many parishes in Wales—including Vaughan's—being left without ministers. Whatever his precise view, however, Vaughan was attracted to the sacredness of the Anglican liturgy. And the

Puritan disdain for this mode of religious expression—emphasized in the banning of the

prayer book and the official policies of iconoclasm—would have outraged Vaughan.

Whereas Vaughan's contemporary poet Milton was explicit in defining the office

of the Christian poet, Vaughan was rather more ambiguous. In his essay "The Making of

a Christian Poet," Milton defines and elaborates on what this office entails. He writes that

the purposes of the real Christian poet are fivefold: he (or she?) must communicate

virtue, attempt to moderate the passions, praise the glory of God, celebrate the deeds and

sufferings of Christians, and finally, oppose recusancy in the English church (594-95).

Vaughan would likely agree with these, although, as noted, the ease with which he

interacted with Catholic literatures suggests that safeguarding the Church against the

terrors or recusancy was somewhat less important to Vaughan than defending it against

the terrors of Puritanism. However, I would like to draw attention here to a passage in

Vaughan's 1655 "Preface" which has not attracted a lot of attention. Vaughan expresses

his wish, like "Hierotheus and holy Herbert," to write a "true hymn." Vaughan says of

writing a true hymn, that

> To effect this in some measure, 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 *publick*, as it hath been to me in *private*. (392)

One can see here that Vaughan hopes that the poems of *Silex Scintillans* can serve a

public purpose. The process of writing them and reflecting on his favoured themes has

been, in some sense or another, a consolation in a time of crisis. Vaughan, though,

recognizing that he is not alone in these sufferings, has attempted to reach out to his

fellow Royalist Anglicans. Civil wars are particularly devastating since they cast 'brother

against brother'; certainly, therefore, it was a time of emotional duress for Vaughan and

for many others. Given that he was to become a country doctor of good success, an impulse to aid can, I think, be attributed to the post-war Vaughan who seems to have been humbled during that period. During the 1650s, as noted, Vaughan published a number of translations, and several of these texts were of a medical nature. And Pettet thinks it not insignificant that two of the four 1651 medical translations he published dealt explicitly with mental health. There is, writes Pettet, "the possibility that he suffered some kind of mental breakdown" (12). Whatever the state of Vaughan's wellbeing— recalling that he also experienced significant illness throughout the 1650s—it seems safe to suggest that he intended to aid those similarly devastated by the wars. For this reason, I would like to suggest that Vaughan's poetry belongs to a Christian tradition of (what will here be termed) consolation literature.

Works of this nature are a generic staple in the West. They typically combine autobiography with fantasy: the indolent protagonist, overwhelmed by some affliction, is visited by a revered phantasm that teaches him or her to overcome their trials. The essential literary mode, then, is that of the dialogue with the author assuming the role of student. And this manner of writing is exemplified by Boethius in the *Consolation of Philosophy*, in which an imprisoned Boethius is visited and consoled by Lady Philosophy. This model was adopted by Francesco Petrarch in his *My Secret* in which the narrator is despairing at his *acedia*, and is subsequently visited and consoled by St. Augustine. Whether Vaughan was sufficiently familiar with Petrarch to know *My Secret* is not worth speculating upon here, but Vaughan knew Boethius, and he knew his *Consolation of Philosophy* intimately. Vaughan's *Olor Iscanus*, for instance, contains many verse translations of Lady Philosophy's songs—and the central metaphor of the

text, the wheel of fortune, seemed to be an enduring interest for Vaughan.

In *The Anxiety of Influence*, Harold Bloom has suggested that the history of poetry consists of authors creatively reinventing the works which they have inherited. This, he writes, is ultimately a process of externalized self-discovery; the poet novitiate finds him- or herself in the poetry of others (25-26). This is obviously the case of Vaughan vis-à-vis Herbert, but it also describes his relationship with poetic *consolatio*. It is an integral part of his poetic process. The precise nature of Vaughan's consolatory process will be covered later, but for now, it is sufficient to say that Vaughan's interest in consolation informs and explains the frequent worldly concerns which recrudesce throughout *Silex Scintillans*. As Vaughan was to write in his poem, "On Sir Thomas Bodley's Library, The Author Being Then In Oxford," "Afflictions turn our blood to ink" (21). Vaughan's trials—both personal and political—during the civil wars made him an authoritative speaker on the horrors of the times; similarly displaced Anglicans would have recognized in Vaughan's poetry the pathos of their own distress. It is from these shared foci of tragedy that Vaughan and other writers of the 'Anglican survivalist' mode were able to assert genuine religious crises, and were subsequently to work out their faith in fear and trembling. Even casual readers of Vaughan will notice that he only very rarely indulges in explicit dialogue or dialogic poetry, which would seem to complicate the generic model suggested here. Vaughan understood the office of Christian poet as being primarily a position of service: service to God and service to the faithful. In *Silex Scintillans*, the reader is presented with a dialogue between Vaughan and Christ in which only the voice of Vaughan is discernable. One cannot hear words of Christ in Vaughan's poetry; but one can hear Vaughan addressing and responding to the consolations of Christ

which *he* heard, and which he had internalized through careful and frequent readings of the Bible.

The poetry of *Silex Scintillans* was intended to provide practical devotional counsel. As Sir Philip Sidney suggests in *An Apology for Poetry*, poetry can be a fine dress for a difficult topic. "The poet is food for the tenderest stomachs, the poet is indeed the right popular philosopher" (337), writes Sidney, and this would seem to describe Vaughan's purposes in composing the volume. Vaughan consistently defines his product negatively; to wit, he is careful to tell his readers what he is *not*. Referring to inauthentic religious poets of his day, though offering no names, Vaughan writes: "they had more of *fashion* then [*sic*] *force*. And the *reason* of their so vast *distance* from [Herbert], besides differing *spirits* and *qualifications* ... I suspect to be, because they aimed more at *verse*, than *perfection*; as may be easily gathered by their frequent *impressions*, and numerous *pages*" (391). Vaughan's indictment is clear: writing for the sake of writing, these poets lacked proper religious fervor and were not to be taken seriously. "Hence sprang those wide, those weak, and lean *conceptions*, which in the most inclinable *Reader* will scarce give any nourishment or help to devotion; for not flowing from a true, practick piety, it was impossible they should effect those things abroad, which they never had acquaintance with at home" writes Vaughan (391). But Vaughan, it seems, is writing from a genuine religious conversion. By distinguishing himself in such a way, Vaughan, is able to assert that *his* religiousness is owed to a "true, practick piety."

Vaughan's emphasis on practical theology is made clear in his poem "The Hidden Treasure." This poem is perhaps most interesting for Vaughan's brief meditation on "Man's favourite sins" (19), but it has nevertheless been ignored by scholars of Vaughan.

Echoing the Book of Ecclesiastes, Vaughan declares that "all is vanity" (10), and scoffs

at "[t]hose secret searches, which afflict the wise" (11). There is a stink of anti-

intellectualism in these lines that may surprise readers familiar with Vaughan's reputation

as a "bookish" poet; but they illustrate Vaughan's interest in extolling the Word to a

theologically Lay audience. Rowland Watkyns, in "To the Reader" from his *Flamma sine

Fumo* (1662), declares that "Ways, which are fair, and plain can nere displease" (6).

Watkyns, the ejected Lanfrynach clergyman, was a neighbour of Vaughan, and their

views are often congenial. It is worth noting that a devaluation of obfuscated theology

similarly informs Milton's *Paradise Lost*. During the Interregnum, Anglicans like

Vaughan were without proper (liturgical) means of worship. Vaughan, who wished his

poetry to be as "useful now in the public, as it hath been ... in private," was attempting to

aid as many as he could. Simmonds has said, following the defeat of the Royalist and

Anglican causes, that Vaughan "appointed himself a lay preacher in the 'underground'

church, his pulpit the press and his congregation anybody who would read" (*Masques*

13). Rudrum, emphasizing the private importance of the volume for Vaughan, suggests

that "he was forced ... to carry around his Anglicanism in his head. *Silex Scintillans* may

be seen, at least in part, as the record of Vaughan's attempt to be his own priest, 'to unite

with God personally'" ("Paradoxical Persona" 367). This can be said, I think, of

Anglicans generally. As a final insult, High-Church Anglicans like Vaughan were forced

to become radically protestant in order to satisfy their particular religious needs.

Herbert's *The Temple* begins with a lengthy poem entitled "The Church-porch."

The 77-stanza poem details explicit steps to holy living, and, by virtue of this, readers of

The Temple, before reading anything else, are presented with what is effectively a

liturgical manual. Stanley Stewart has said of "The Church-porch" that it is "[s]tiffly proverbial in language, didactic in intent, [and] [it] lacks the intensity of the Herbert lyrics so admired by critics" (97). In *Silex Scintillans*, Vaughan includes a similar poem entitled "Rules and Lessons." This poem is likewise 'stiffly proverbial and didactic,' and borrows from Herbert an identical stanza-structure and prosodic rhythm. Vaughan's poem explains how the true Christian ought to spend a single day; and this is reinforced by the poem's 24-stanzas. Formally, "Rules and Lessons" is an important poem because it appears in the precise, literal centre of the 1650 *Silex Scintillans*. Louis Martz notes that the poem comes "exactly in the center of the 1650 volume, as though the advice there given formed the center of the volume's devotional life." Martz makes the excellent observation that the poem includes no references to churches or church life (43). Indeed, Vaughan's own church, the parish at Llansantffraed, was literally vacant and empty between 1650 and 1658; his twin brother, Thomas, the priest, was slanderously evicted from his living by Propagators, and no new minister was appointed.[9] West notes that Vaughan's *Mount of Olives* is his most instructional book, but he thinks it not insignificant that the preface of this volume directs "those who would be regular in their lives and worship to the less evidently didactic *Silex*" (*Scripture Uses* 131). Times were hard for Anglicans and Royalists alike. Vaughan sums up his religious message in the final stanza of "Rules and Lessons":

> Briefly, *doe as thou would'st be done unto*
> *Love God, and love thy Neighbour; Watch, and Pray.*
> These are the *Words*, and the *Works* of life; This do
> And live; who doth not thus, hath lost *Heav'n's way.*
>   O lose it not! Look up, wilt Change those *Lights*
>   For *Chains of Darknes and eternal Nights?* (139-144)

Vaughan's counsel here is clear: live a holy life in this world or risk losing Heaven later.

Vaughan's practical religion consciously recalls Jesus's dictum that "Thou shalt love the

Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the

first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy

neighbour as thyself" (22:37-39). If one wishes for Heaven, one must look towards it.

Vaughan advises looking up. But he could not entirely resist looking around.

Chapter Three

"A sweet, revengeless, quiet minde": Anglican Passivity and Vaughan's Hermeneutics of Suffering

> Thus doth God *Key* disorder'd man
>   (Which none else can,)
> Tuning his brest to rise, or fall;
> And by a sacred, needfull art
> Like strings, stretch ev'ry part
> Making the whole most Musicall.
>   —"Affliction [I]"

It has been shown that Henry Vaughan, in the poetry of *Silex Scintillans*, had what

can only be called a political temper. But I have also attempted to demonstrate that a

political temper was not the only contributing voice to Vaughan's volume, nor was it in

any meaningful way the *sine qua non* of his poetic project. Rather, *Silex Scintillans* is a

book composed with the intention of consoling those who were exiled, figuratively and

literally, by the civil strife of mid-seventeenth century England (and Britain, as a whole).

Vaughan, a triple exile—Welsh, Royalist, and Anglican in Puritan-controlled

Interregnum England—was seemingly well equipped to handle this theme. Whereas

Chapter One illustrated the much-noted political bias operating within the poetry of *Silex*

Scintillans, Chapter Two argued that Vaughan intended for those same poems to serve a

practical religious purpose. The current chapter will elaborate on the previous, and will

define the method and parameters of Vaughan's literary *praxis*. For Vaughan, there is an

absolute distinction between writing and living, and emphasis is always placed upon the

latter. Consider, for instance, Vaughan's prayer in "Anguish":

> O! 'tis an easie thing
>   To write and sing;
> But to write true, unfeignèd verse

> Is very hard! O God disperse
> These weights, and give my spirit leave
> To act as well as to conceive! (13-18)

In the final line, acting is juxtaposed with conceiving; living is distinct from creating. In situating these terms in apparent conflict, or, at least, in isolation from one another, Vaughan has (in all likelihood, accidentally,) rendered them ontologically complementary. This is the relationship articulated in the Gospel of John when we are told that, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (KVJ 1:1). In summarizing the Divine *Fiat* of Genesis in such a way, John situates the entire act of creation with the Word—*logos*; Being (*esse*) and conceiving are theologically indistinct (Frye 18). Indeed, in creating humankind in His image, God created, not a fleshy *imago*, but a creative creature. Vaughan is implicitly interested in the power of language to direct one back to God. He wishes to reach out to similarly disenfranchised Anglicans of the period by giving voice to a collective social dis-ease. For Vaughan, at least in so far as *Silex Scintillans* is concerned, the banning of the Anglican liturgy is the most egregious of the interregnum offences. In the absence of the Anglican communion, Vaughan's counsel is twofold: he consoles the Anglican faithful and stresses the importance of passive resistance. In *Silex Scintillans* and his prayer book, *The Mount of Olives*, Vaughan constructs for his fellow despairing Anglicans an ersatz *Prayer Book* (Wall); *Silex Scintillans* is, for Vaughan's readers, a means by which to maintain their faith in an environment actively hostile to it. But Vaughan was not alone in this project.

Beginning in the 1640s, Anglicans began taking Puritan criticisms of the Church increasingly seriously. Up until this time, Anglican theology existed piecemeal; it was a

tenuously grafted synthesis of Erasmian humanism and Lutheran reformed theology. This

multifarious theology worked well as a religious catchall for a church that needed to

appeal to and accommodate an entire population. However, not surprisingly, this did not

equip Anglicans with a strong theological base upon which to dispute Puritan attacks,

and, as a result, Anglican apologetics were much less developed than the reformed

complaints they faced. In response to this shortcoming, the Anglican Church restructured

and redeveloped itself throughout the Interregnum; while the fissiparous nature of radical

Protestantism tore the Puritan camp apart, the Anglican Church solidified and

consolidated itself. This chapter will explore the extent to which Henry Vaughan's *Silex*

Scintillans responds to these changes in Church doctrine—if at all—and will discuss in

detail his understanding of how Anglicans ought to cope with their absentee Church.

Between Henry VIII's 1534 "Act of Supremacy," declaring him the head of the

English Church, and the civil wars of the mid-seventeenth century, the Anglican Church

underwent many changes. Founded on the theology of Thomas Cranmer, Henry's

Archbishop of Canterbury, the Anglican Communion was centred around the practical

Humanist Christianity of Erasmus and the Protestant teachings of Martin Luther. This

foundation was well equipped to recruit educated English men and women, but it was

"fundamentally unstable" (Lettinga 16). However, during Cranmer's tenure as

archbishop, English parishes were uniformly equipped with an English Bible, Erasmus's

Paraphrases, twelve standardized homilies, and, following 1549, *The Book of Common*

Prayer (27). But the Church still lacked an official declaration of belief. Various efforts

were made in 1536, 1537, 1539, 1543, and 1552 to accomplish this consolidation; but it

was not until 1563, during the reign of Elizabeth I, that the Thirty-Nine Articles of the

Anglican Church were passed by the Convocation. By this time, though, Calvinist

Reformed theology was an increasingly popular alternative in the arena of English

religious discussion. This was so much the case that in 1570, when Alexander Nowell

published the official church catechism, it was thoroughly Calvinist (Lettinga 56). These

foundational fault lines were held together by the will of those involved, but one can see

that the seeds of fissure were sown prior to the Bishops' Wars with Scotland. That even

today within the global Anglican church there are Evangelical and Anglo-Catholic

congregations demonstrates just how deeply entrenched these two voices are—and it

recalls Symon Patrick's scathing criticism of those within the Church whose orientation

was, one way or the other, radical. With the rise of Protestant theology in the Anglican

Church, though, there obviously emerged a simultaneous interest in Presbyterianism. And

it was precisely this threat that spurred Richard Hooker, in 1594, to begin publishing his

Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie. Cornelius Lettinga has referred to this work as the

mature expression of the Humanist voice of the Anglican tradition (66). And while it was

largely ignored in the century following its publication, it would become a seminal work

in the Anglican tradition during the Restoration (67).

Hooker's major achievement is the recognition that biblical laws differ in type,

and that there "are in men [*sic*] operations some natural, some rational, some

supernatural, some politic, some finally Ecclesiastical" (Hooker 125). Hooker's text,

Humanist as it was, emphasized the individual's ability to distinguish between types of

laws, and lauded Reason as the ultimate moral arbiter; where the Bible is unclear,

humankind is endowed with a sufficient rational capacity for reaching a conclusion

amicable to God—a conclusion which, being reached through the use of reason, was

wholly consistent with God's plan. Similar discussions continued to occur throughout the

reigns of Elizabeth I and James I, obviously, but they enjoyed periods of relative religious

ease—particularly since recusancy continued to dominate the religious fears of their

reigns. Such strands of thought continued even into the early years of Charles's reign. For

instance, Thomas Hobbes, in the often ignored Third and Fourth books of his *Leviathan*

suggests that "we are not to renounce our senses and experience, nor that which is the

undoubted word of God, our natural reason" (325). In "The Translator To the Ingenious

Reader" affixed to Vaughan's translation of Henry Nollius's *Hermetical Physick*, he

makes clear his commitment to Truth. He writes that, "For my owne part, I honour the

truth where ever I find it, whether in an old, or a new Booke. […] I wish we were all

unbiased and impartiall learners, not the implicite, groundlesse Proselyts of Authors and

opinions, but the loyall friends and followers of truth" (548). Vaughan's commitment to

both truth, and the effectiveness of reason for discovering it, suggests at once a man

belonging to the church that Hooker sought to build. There is no reference to Sir Thomas

Browne in the works of Vaughan—although Thomas Calhoun, in his monograph *Henry*

Vaughan: The Achievement of Silex Scintillans, references him generously throughout—

but given the immense popularity of Browne's *Religio Medici* throughout the 1640s, it is

possible Vaughan was familiar with it; he would doubtlessly have known *of* it. It is

certain that Vaughan was a partisan, and had no reservations about mindlessly lambasting

his political and religious enemies. But in his more reflexive (and reflective) moments, he

would have found congenial large portions of Browne's *Religio Medici*. For instance,

given his prefatory remarks to his translation of *Hermetical Physick*, it is probable he

would be of one mind with Browne when the latter writes that

> I observe according to the rules of my private reason..., neither believing this, because *Luther* affirmed it, or disapproving of that, because *Calvin* hath disavouched it. I condemn not all things in the Councell of *Trent* nor approve all in the Synod of *Dort*. In briefe, where the scripture is silent, the Church is my Text; where that speakes, 'tis but my Comment; where there is joynt silence of both, I borrow not the rules of my Religion from Rome or Geneva, but the dictates of my owne reason. (8-9)

Such a position would have been amicable to Vaughan who was familiar with Seneca—

whom he addresses as "Rare Seneca" in "On Sir Thomas Bodley's Library, The Author

Being Then In Oxford" (17). In one of his epistles to Lucilius (XXXIII), Seneca makes a

similar claim: responding to a criticism about his familiarity with Epicurus—popularly

portrayed as the antithesis of the Stoic spirit—Seneca suggests that he will not dismiss

the value of the text because of the author (78). Likewise, Vaughan will entertain a host

of ideas from myriad sources. Whereas Browne identifies the Church as a potential aid in

the delineation of what constitutes a holy life, however, Vaughan could only refer to his

Church *in absentia*. However, like Hooker (and Browne) Vaughan is committed to the

use of Reason to define the parameters of one's extra-biblical religious experience.

Following Hooker, Charles's own Archbishop, William Laud, however, began to

emphasize the mystery of God and to extol the importance of the sacraments and rituals

of the Anglican liturgy. Laud's changes to Church of England liturgical practices—

stressing that the sacraments were a point of contact between God and man—were

bitterly received by those in England who favoured a much more strict, Reformed-

Calvinist approach to worship. And because James had sent official delegates to the

Synod of Dort (1618-19) with instructions to support the Calvinists over the

Remonstrants (the Arminians)—except for the Calvinist doctrine of limited Atonement

(Lettinga 110)—Calvinism in England was at its zenith when Charles took to the throne.

While not in any significant way opposed to the humanist ethos inherited by earlier

Anglican discourse, Laud's excessive sacramentalism and Charles's marriage to

Henrietta Maria, a French Catholic—whose status as Queen allowed her to maintain

Catholic escorts and personal clergy—immediately hinted to many that Charles himself

was a closeted Catholic and that he intended to realign England with Rome. English men

and women, wary of Catholicism following the reign of Mary I, the "gunpowder plot,"

and many assumed Catholic conspiracies, were easy targets for Charles's enemies who

immediately began to raise cries of recusancy. This, in concert with the issues addressed

in Chapter One, ultimately contributed to instigating the English civil wars.

In 1644, during the first of the two civil wars, Henry Hammond published his

Practical Catechism. Although neither a religious polemic nor a theological tract, strictly

speaking, it implicitly critiqued Calvinist preachers and Roman Catholic priests for

failing to present the gospel of salvation—the process by which lapsed men and women

were restored before the Father through their faith in Christ. The volume was immensely

effective because it articulated an understanding of the covenant of Grace that was based

upon English legal concepts (Lettinga 160). The covenant of Grace, according to

Hammond, was a contract between God and humankind: God made possible the course

of reconciliation, but humans were expected to live holy, Christian lives. Faith alone was

not sufficient to secure Grace; one had to live a life extolling the virtues of the Christian

faith. Obviously, failures were to be expected, but what mattered was a continued

commitment to this end. For this reason, the strength of the volume is that it "told ... how

to be Anglican without a state church, without a king, and without an official prayer

book" (Lettinga 160). Hammond, who was godfathered by Charles's brother, Henry, the

eldest of James's children (before contracting typhoid fever), was undoubtedly a

Royalist. In 1643, for instance, prior to publishing his *Practical Catechism*, he was forced

to flee from his living at Penshurst after The Parliamentary Army issued an award for his

arrest; Hammond had aided Charles's war effort and was forced to seek asylum at Oxford

(162).

Because the *Practical Catechism* denied the Calvinist doctrine of total depravity

and limited election, human action mattered a great deal. As noted, his conception of

salvation was contractual, and it therefore placed obligations on both parties, God and

humanity; the former would supply the means for salvation if certain conditions were

met, and the latter would endeavour to meet those conditions by living a life of active

Christian charity, or, *agape*. Hammond's biographer, John Fell, notes that Hammond was

apparently an effective preacher; he preached daily rather than on Sunday, Wednesday,

and Friday, and his parish's poor box was so generously given to that he was able to help

the poor in neighbouring parishes (Fell). Hammond's theology stressed practice over

right doctrine, and this allowed his followers to emphasize the importance of doing good

(Lettinga 338). For instance, Francis Cheynell spoke against the volume at Merton and

several Oxford colleges, before eventually instigating a correspondence with Hammond.

The two seem to have had an extended communication with Hammond defending himself

against Cheynell's disgust at the *Practical Cetechism* not once mentioning the Trinity;

Hammond's response was that it was a *practical* catechism and that "speculative

mysterie" was not topical (Packer 51-52). Hammond was hugely influential to Gilbert

Sheldon, the first Restoration archbishop appointed by Charles II, and Richard Allestree,

the provost at Eton, who is believed to have written *The Whole Duty of Man,* a bestseller

that advanced Hammond's emphasis on active religion. Moreover, it was to shape the

attitudes of many Restoration Latitudinarians (Cragg 63). These Restoration clerics had

"seen enough of the havoc wrought by religious controversy" (84), and the active piety

espoused by Hammond and his supporters gave them a framework with which to handle

matters of religious dispute amicably. The rejection of the doctrine of *sola fides*—the

belief that salvation was attained by faith alone—espoused by both Luther and Calvin

cannot be easily ignored; and the transformation of Anglicanism into a Christian religion

centred around good works rather than on faith alone is a matter of church policy that

distinguishes the Anglican Church from others even today.

There is, quite frankly, no way of attributing knowledge of the *Practical*

Catechism to Vaughan. If he knew it, no direct reference appears to it in his writing. But

one will recall the "Author's Preface" appended to the augmented *Silex Scintillans* of

1655, in which Vaughan advises the cultivation of "true, practick piety." It seems vaguely

fair that a bookish poet like Vaughan, and one intimately interested in the topic, would be

at least passingly aware of such discussions happening. At least one scholar has remarked

on Vaughan's surprisingly deep familiarity with contemporary Puritan literature (West,

Scripture Uses 114), which would seem to suggest, at least circumstantially, that

Vaughan was not completely divorced from the contemporary intellectual goings on in

England. Moreover, Vaughan discusses his contemporary print culture in his poem "The

Agreement":

> Most modern books are blots on thee [God]
> Their doctrine chaff and windy fits:
> Darken'd along, as their scribes be,
> With those foul storms when they were writ;
>> While the mans zeal lays out and blends
>> Onely self-worship and self-ends. (25-30)

Most books are composed to advance the author's own reputation (his or her "self-ends").

Vaughan emphatically disparages such publications, so much so that, contrary to the

publishing standard of the time, Vaughan refused to preface *Silex Scintillans* with

laudatory prefatory material from his contemporaries. Most significantly, Katherine

Philips's poem, "To Henry Vaughan *the Silurist: upon these and his former* Poems,"

which Vaughan included in his *Thalia Rediviva* (1678), was likely composed for *Silex*

Scintillans. Moreover, Vaughan acknowledges that he intends his volume to have a

practical purpose in consoling those whose stations in life were similarly compromised

by the civil wars. Vaughan hopes that the poetry of *Silex Scintillans* will be "as useful

now in the public, as it hath been … in private" (392). Vaughan's practical religious

purpose in the poetry of *Silex Scintillans* is to console those similarly disenfranchised by

the civil wars. Vaughan, as noted several times, keenly felt the sting of loss during the

Interregnum. The socially ambitious Cavalier makes for a particularly interesting case

study on the psychology of class inversion; it is not surprising that Vaughan should look

to God, and find comfort there when the world ceased to provide him with a hope for the

future. Social aspirations dashed, a younger brother killed, the death of a beloved wife,

his own prolonged illness, and a host of other difficulties likely expedited Vaughan's turn

toward God. Such stories are seemingly common enough, and it is worth noting that

references to Job abound in both editions of *Silex Scintillans* (although, not with the

regularity of Genesis, the Psalms, the Gospels, or Revelations—Vaughan's favourite

biblical sources.) The poems of *Silex Scintillans*, then, can largely be placed within the

tradition of consolation literature. Indeed, "Vaughan's instructions for a holy life do not

so much enjoin strict obedience to Cranmer's liturgy as succour those dismayed by its

passing" (West, *Scripture Uses* 131). Vaughan's precise method of effecting such

consolation will be explored here; but not surprisingly, his method rests on a tenuously

crafted paradox of nostalgia and expectation. Vaughan's eschatology continues to be a

popular topic for critics—especially given the relative sparsity of Anglican eschatological

poetry vis-à-vis Puritan poetry of the era. Vaughan, it will be argued, was deeply

committed to the tradition of Anglican 'survivalism,' and much of his writing is centred

around the social reality of necessitated furtive worship and closeted devotion. Rather

than promote active rejection of the established order of the Interregnum, Vaughan

counseled passive resistance centred around Christian perseverance.

Vaughan's reading habits were wide and eclectic, and no complete catalogue of

his sources—accidental or intentional—has been compiled. While in London, he was an

avowed Son of Ben, and his *Poems* (1646) betrays a significant and unsurprising debt to

Ben Jonson. Poets such as William Habington and Thomas Carew impressed themselves

upon Vaughan; and, more topically, Vaughan is known to have read John Donne and

George Herbert, and it is their influence, especially Herbert's, which contributed,

poetically, to the construction of *Silex Scintillans*. But Vaughan was also familiar with a

number of classical and religious sources. In one of his book-poems, "On Sir Thomas

Bodley's Library, The Author Being Then In Oxford," Vaughan acknowledges Caesar,

Seneca, and Lucilius (15, 17, 23). Philip Macon Cheek has identified references to many

and various Latin sources including Horace, Persius, Juvenal, Catullus, Virgil, Lucan,

Ovid, Nemesianus, Plautus, Seneca, Cicero, Petronius, Livy, Pliny, and Manilius (78);

and in addition to these, he also finds references to a number of medieval (and early

Renaissance) writers and divines, such as Prudentius, Jerome, Gregory, Cyprian, Thomas

à Kempis, Macarius, Marcellus, Petrarch, Bisselius, Augurellus, Drexelius, Joseph

Grunbeck, Stobaeus, Baudouin Calilliau, Marcellus Palingenius, Alanus de Insulis, and

Henricus Cornelius Agrippa (85-86). Moreover, Vaughan translated works by Juvenal,

Ovid, Boethius, Claudian, Mathias Casimirus, Maximus Tirius,[10] Don Antonio de

Guevera, Nierembergius, Eucharius of Lyons, and Henry Nollius. Surprisingly, Vaughan

was even fond of Puritan tracts such as those by Lewis Bayly and Robert Bolton (West,

Scripture Uses 114). This brief catalogue contributes to the understanding of Vaughan as

a bookish poet, and, with the exception of Nollius's work, fails to mention the Hermetical

works Vaughan is known to have had contact with through his twin brother, Thomas. For

this reason, Carol Gesner has remarked that a "critical study of Vaughan's poetry cannot

fail to impress one with the wide range of his reading and the effect that this background

had upon his work" (172).

Vaughan's goal of providing his readers with a volume of consoling poetry with

the aim of advancing Christian passivity was well-sourced—by authors both within and

without his own specific religious and political orientation. Vaughan's inspiration for

undertaking such a project might very well be Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, a

volume which Vaughan knew well and to which he seems to have found a great deal of

recourse. Indeed, much of *Olor Iscanus* (1951) and parts of *Thalia Rediviva* (1678) are

verse translations of the *Consolation*. Vaughan's translations of Boethius have often been

dismissed as filler or as bad translating. However, Jonathan Nauman notes that

Vaughan's "feeling for Boethian philosophy ... seems to have gone well beyond the

contemporary status of the *Consolatio* as standard intellectual equipment" ("Boethius"

194). Attempting to rescue Vaughan's translations from a critical tradition that has

openly (and often) disparaged them, Nauman declares that he knows no finer translation

of Boethius's work than Vaughan's conclusion of the first *metrum* of the *Consolation*'s

first book: "Why then, my friends, judg'd you my state so good? / He that may fall once,

never firmly stood" (192). The main value of Nauman's article, however, is his re-

evaluation of Vaughan's translations. Vaughan's generous use of interpolation might

seem problematic for those looking for a strict translation, but what Nauman effects to

argue throughout his article is that the translations represent Vaughan's attempt to

reconcile himself to his own world in a manner "not incompatible with Boethius's

philosophical advice"; and recalling that *Olor Iscanus* was not intended for publication,

Nauman reminds readers that this was a "private exercise" (199). Vaughan's work is not,

however, founded upon dialogical process, as was Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*

or Petrarch's *My Secret*. Rather, the only voice in the volume's in Vaughan's—or, the

voice of the persona Vaughan presents to his reader[11]—and, as in Donne's "The Flea," it

is up to the reader to fill in the pieces of conversation that are withheld. In this sense,

then, the tone of *Silex Scintillans*—both in terms of its private and public affectations—is

a volume very much like St. John of the Cross's meditation on the *Dark Night of the*

Soul. Claude J. Summers excellently speaks of Vaughan (and Robert Herrick) with

reference to what he calls an "Anglican hermeneutics of suffering."

In Herrick's *Noble Numbers*—his collection of religious poetry appended to his

secular and jocund Cavalier collection, *Hesperides*—he early on includes two poems

about persecution. "Persecutions Profitable" and "Persecutions Purify" make similar and

complementary points: God refines in miseries. Herrick writes in the latter of these

poems: "So where [God] gives the bitter pills be sure / 'Tis not to poison, but to make

thee pure" (3-4).[12] Vaughan plays on the same metaphor in his poem "Day of Judgement"

when he writes that "That pill, though bitter, is most deare / That brings health in the

end" (35-36). This belief in the recuperative power of affliction seems to be the crux of

their hermeneutics of suffering. Speaking of Herrick (but with Vaughan ever in mind),

Summers suggests that "he clings to a faith that the pain he and other dispossessed

Anglicans must undergo in their season of adversity will serve as a kind of medicine to

strengthen them and heal the nation" (57). Saint Augustine, in *The City of God*, writes

that

> Wherefore, though good and bad men [*sic*] suffer alike, we must not suppose that
> there is no difference between the men themselves, because there is no difference
> in what they both suffer. For even in the likeness of the sufferings, there remains
> an unlikeness in the sufferers; and though exposed to the same anguish, virtue and
> vice are not the same thing. For as the same fire causes gold to glow brightly, and
> chaff to smoke; ... so the same violence of affliction proves, purges, clarifies the
> good, but damns, ruins, exterminates the wicked. And thus it is that in the same
> affliction the wicked detest God and blaspheme, while the good pray and praise.
> So material a difference does it make, not what ills are suffered, but what kind of
> man suffers them. (10-11)

Refocusing on Vaughan, though, one can see how such a project is articulated in *Silex*

Scintillans. In "Affliction [I]," Vaughan comments on the importance of hardship; he

writes that "Were all the year one constant Sun-shine, wee / Should have no flowres" (21-

22). Moreover, there are, I think, echoes of Augustine in Vaughan's lament in "The

Wreath":

> Since I in storms us'd most to be
>   And seldom yielded flowers,
> How shall I get a wreath for thee
>   From those rude, barren hours?
> ....
> But a twin'd wreath of *grief* and *praise*,
> Praise soil'd with tears, and tears again
> Shining with joy.... (1-11)

In these lines Vaughan wonders how he will ever be able to get a wreathe—a symbol of his love—for God. Vaughan is distressed because he "in storms us'd most to be / And seldom yielded flowers." There is a latent suggestion in these early lines that praise can only emerge from peaceful spiritual reflection. However, one witnesses a maturation and refinement of Vaughan's doxological consciousness. Vaughan realizes that singing praises amidst his grief loses none of its value; he is able, he realizes, to present God with a wreath of grief *and* praise. Indeed, West has said: "[Vaughan] felt tears should be the constant companions of prayer; his poetic pairings of prayer and tears are more frequent than those of any other devotional poet of the period" (*Scripture Uses* 95). In his "Holy Sonnet X," Donne asks God to "Batter [his] heart" (1). Donne's rationale for this wish is shortly afterwards expanded upon: "That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend / Your force, to break, blow, burn and make me new" (3-4). Vaughan, too, believes in praising God amid affliction since God refines the faithful in their tribulations.

It is, perhaps, a cliché to suggest that Vaughan is largely interested in the recuperative power of affliction, but that seems to be the point stressed throughout *Silex Scintillans*. Of course, there are more common tropes, but these work in concert with one another rather than detracting from their shared rhetorical and practical purposes. Likely, the most common image in Vaughan's poetry is that of journeying or searching. Vaughan is frequently searching for answers in his poetry; only very rarely does he arrive at conclusions. Indeed, the active, participatory role of searcher (seeker) seems to be an answer in and of itself: that person constantly seeking without for God will come, eventually, to find Him within. Vaughan prays to God: "I long, and groan, and grieve for thee / For thee my words, my tears do gush" ("The Pilgrimage" 13-14). He compares

himself to a bird whose nest has been destroyed, and, living in some adopted nest, hates

his new food and pines for home (17-20). It may appear that Vaughan is being nostalgic;

however, this is not the case. The sense of the poem is clear: Vaughan's interest here is

emphatically not in of pre-Interregnum England, but rather, his first home, Heaven,

which Vaughan refers to frequently in *Silex Scintillans* with language that latently

suggests (Neo-)Platonic *recognition* (Cf. "The Retreate"). At the end of "The

Pilgrimage," Vaughan, like his readers, fails to find a solution; that is, God has failed to

answer his behests. In "The Search," Vaughan confesses: "all night have I / Spent in a

roving ecstasy / To find my Saviour" (3-5). Vaughan's use of the word "ecstasy" is

important here because its etymological origin sets the interpretive tone for the poem: it

depicts a figurative out-of-body journey. What follows is a catalogue of important Old

and New Testament locales where Vaughan has thought to seek for vestiges of corporeal

Holiness left over from biblical Patriarchs and saints. Vaughan concludes that looking for

Christ in such a manner is ineffectual, and suggests to those wishing to follow after him:

"Search well another world; who studies this, / Travels in clouds, seeks Manna, where

none is" (95-96). West has remarked on Vaughan's frequent use of such images. He

writes that "Vaughan was probably the worst-travelled poet of the seventeenth century"

because he "spent only four of his seventy-four years outside Wales[.]" He suggests that

it is ironic for Vaughan to make use of these images; and more, he comments that, in "an

age of rapidly expanding communications ... Vaughan stayed home, aloof and disdainful,

a spirit too refined for the times" (*Scripture Uses* 58). I think West is correct when he

refers to Vaughan as being disdainful of the world around him, but, *pace* West, I think

this disdain actually explains, in part, Vaughan's frequent use of such metaphors.

Returning to "The Search," Vaughan's speaker, looking around, laments that "So mild

Lamb can never be / 'Midst so much blood and cruelty" (51-52).

Paramount to Vaughan's project is the idea of passive Anglican resistance. It was

illustrated in Chapter One that Vaughan was not above succumbing to hate, anger,

vindictiveness, scorn, pride, entitlement, resentment, and a host of similar emotions

typically disparaged. Indeed, such themes are frequently wedged within some of

Vaughan's finer poems—as one will recall, for instance, in "The World"—but those

interested in emphasizing Vaughan's partisanship have often neglected his absolute

insistence on Anglican patience; if his spiritual kin are in the right, Vaughan is seemingly

content to discover it in the hereafter. Vaughan's Royalist disdain for sedition is so

obstinate that he refuses to engage in it even when presented with what he would have

understood to be an illegitimate government whose existence was actually detrimental to

the commonweal. In "The Stone," for instance, Vaughan admits to temptation and

confesses that he is no stranger to seditious thoughts—what he calls his "dark designs"

(9)—but he nevertheless counsels against such practices. Vaughan's concern is with

privacy:

> But where to act, that none shall know,
> Where I shall have no cause to fear
> > An eye or ear
> > > What man will show?
> If nights, and shades, and secret rooms,
> > Silent as tombs,
> Will nor conceal nor assent to
> My dark designs, what shall I do? (2-9)

Vaughan makes it clear that he fears not the eyes or ears of his fellow citizens; he scoffs

that "Man I can bribe, and woman will / Consent to any gainful ill" (10-11). Rather, he is

worried about the creatures—i.e., the non-human products of creation (whose breadth

Vaughan expands to include stones and other inanimates). These "dumb creatures are so

true, / No gold or gifts can them subdue" (12-13). The obvious question emerges as to

why an omnipotent and omniscient God would need a network of spies, and Vaughan's

answer is clever. God knows and sees all, but he "accuseth none" (29). Instead,

> ...he knows
> All that man doth, conceals or shows,
> Yet will not by his own light
> (Though both all-seeing and all right)
> Condemn men; but will try them by
> A process, which ev'n man's own eye
> Must needs acknowledge to be just.
> 　　Hence sand and dust
> Are shak'd for witnesses, and stones
> Which some think dead, shall all at once
> With one attesting voice detect
> Those secret sins we least suspect.
> For know, wilde men, that when you erre
> Each thing turns Scribe and Register,
> And in obedience to his Lord,
> Doth your most private sins record. (30-45)

This section of the poem is worth discussing for two reasons. First, one can see Vaughan,

like Hammond, discussing man's [sic] duty before God with legal language. God accuses

no person, but relies on a host of witnesses at the moment of judging. Like Hammond,

Vaughan is capitalizing on the popular British conflation of legal precedent with justice

to effect a deeply pragmatic theology. It recalls, as well, both the Welsh reputation for

litigiousness in the period, and that Vaughan himself was a student of law from c. 1640

until the outbreak of the first civil war in 1642. Second, it illustrates an anxiety about

panoptic surveillance.

In his *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Michel Foucault expands

on Jeremy Bentham's conception of the Panopticon: a circular prison, or similar

institution, that enforces complacency with the threat—real or supposed—of constant

surveillance. The cells of the prison are arranged circularly around a central tower, and visual continuity is obstructed in such a way as to allow one to see out of this tower, but not into it; prisoners, then, must constantly suppose they are being monitored (200). The manifestation of this mechanism is obedience. Foucault writes that the purpose is to "induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (201); the internalization of this functioning results in the inmates themselves sustaining this power relationship. But Foucault is not content to suggest that the only role of the Panopticon is that of a prison; rather, it becomes, for him, a metaphor for all power relationships, and he suggests that it "must be understood as a generalizable model of functioning; a way of defining power relations in the everyday life of men [*sic*]" (205). One of the ways this panoptic anxiety is erected as a state apparatus is through the implementation and organization of a centralized police force, which he calls the "most direct expression of royal absolutism" (213). Of course, for Foucault, it is the internalization of this process that matters: the subject must feel him- or herself to be under surveillance—even when they are not. In the case of Vaughan, we might think of the poem as operating in two ways. First, the stones function as reminders of God's omniscience; second, this visible reminder of God's presence is subsequently subsumed by the internalization of this panoptic anxiety. There is, obviously, an issue of theodicy accidentally raised by such a suggestion—*viz.*, referring to Creation as a police state. And while a thorough discussion of this is beyond the scope of the current study, it is, I think, worth mentioning that such suggestions are often present in the language of devotion; consider, for instance, the '*ave Christus Rex!*' tradition that is itself supposed to be reflected in the structure of Episcopal church hierarchy. The agency Vaughan assigns

to dust, stones, and other creatures—as scribes and registers—creates, in effect, a sort of theological (and psychological) police state in which the genuinely seditious are marked and noted. Vaughan is faced with a panoptic religious experience: he cannot see God, but must assume that he is constantly being surveilled. This contributes nothing new to an understanding of Christian earthly experience. What it does do, however, is to illustrate how helpless Vaughan and other Interregnum Anglicans must have felt. Being unwilling to violate a deep, anti-seditious ethos implemented by a state church (and state) no longer extant, the Anglican community found itself rendered impotent by its commitment to its own clandestine religion.

Because God represents, for Vaughan, a pure expression of panoptic power and surveillance, there is a degree of requisite anxiety that must be relaxed and, even, familiarized. For Anglicans, this amelioration is accomplished by emphasizing the importance of steadfastness in their faith; a steadfastness which is illustrated in "true, pracktick piety," and manifests itself as good, charitable Christian living—that is, virtuous *conduct*. The Anglican persona here presented is a novel character in the context of Western literature. Whereas much of Western literature is captured in the antithetical characters of Oedipus and Hamlet—the one, wholly unknowing and all acting, and the other, wholly knowing but incapable of action—our model Anglican faithful has no easy literary demarcation with which to appeal. The Anglican faithful is at once knowing—he or she knows the Anglican liturgy to be *right*—but is spurred to negative action, i.e., Anglican passivity. Inaction becomes the most powerful action available to surviving Anglicans because it precludes the possibility of sinning in the name of their faith. And while Milton was a Puritan, we may here think of his "When I Consider How My Light is

Spent," in which he declares that, "They also serve who only stand and wait" (14).

Vaughan implicitly dismisses utilitarian religious-moralities that would see Anglicans

effect good (i.e., the reestablishment of the state and Church) with sin. To Vaughan, it

matters not whether his "dark designs" induce goodness; they are sufficiently

condemnable. Recall, for instance, the haunting question posed by the Gospel of

Matthew: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his

own soul?" (KJV 8:36). Rather than rebellion, then, Vaughan counsels passive resistance

centred around private maintenance of Anglican worship and the public execution of

goodness—i.e., what is theologically understood as good work.

   The question that obviously emerges here concerns the method and the purpose of

Vaughan's counsel. Answering this question depends on how one reads Vaughan with

reference to the various intertextual processes he is engaged in. Louis Martz, in *The*

Paradise Within: Studies in Vaughan, Traherne, and Milton, suggests that Vaughan's

Silex Scintillans is best understood in Augustinian terms. He reads in Vaughan the three

divine books indicated by St. Bonaventure: The Book of Scripture, the Book of Nature,

and the Book of the Soul. Martz notes that these "three books are, essentially, one: The

Bible shows man [*sic*] how to read, first nature, and then his own soul" (17). This

understanding suggests, at least implicitly, a volume of private meditative poetry

composed for private consumption and recollection. John N. Wall, however, in

Transformations of the Word: Spenser, Herbert, Vaughan suggests that reading Vaughan

with any sort of success depends upon the reader's knowledge of the Bible, Herbert's *The*

Temple, and *The Book of Common Prayer* (301). This reading suggests a much more

public understanding of *Silex Scintillans*. It has been indicated in Chapters One and Two

that the poems of *Silex Scintillans* emerged out of Vaughan's effort to make sense of the

social disorder of Interregnum England. It has also been argued, despite this meditative

origin of the poems, that, by 1655, Vaughan clearly intended for them to serve a public

purpose. I do not want to reduce Martz's suggestion here, since I believe his reading of

Vaughan to be generally good; but it seems important to relegate it to a subordinate order

of interpretive correctness. Robert Duvall has said of Vaughan that "[h]is personal quest

is for purity of heart—the progress of the soul from darkness to brightness ... is worked

out as a unifying, incremental theme in *Silex Scintillans*" (16-17). Duvall is interested in

the connotative values of darkness and brightness, i.e., evil and good, in making this

point. S. Sandbank makes a similar point in a discussion on Vaughan's use of light and

dark imagery in *Silex Scintillans*. Sandbank observes that "[d]arkness, to Vaughan, is not

only the absence of light—and, figuratively, all of the values light stands for. It is also a

necessary condition of light, the background which sets it off" (142). From here, it seems

safe to extrapolate that Vaughan would have come to view the "late and dusky" days of

the civil wars and the Interregnum as the necessary ontological negative which could

only exist in absolute contrast to the light and glory of Heaven. Vaughan's personal

circumstance, then, assumes immense spiritual importance because it provides him with

the basis for recognizing, *ipso facto*, the perilousness of valuing the world at the expense

of Heaven. It is only when his world is turned upside-down that Vaughan realizes that it

was never right-side-up to begin with. For this reason, readers of Vaughan ought to

recognize the importance of worldly frustrations—affliction, illness, disenfranchisement,

et cetera—as a spiritually recuperative act of Providential direction; this is certainly how

Vaughan came to understand it. It is, obviously, necessarily a political act whenever one

criticizes the world with reference to Heaven since it depends upon a deep dissatisfaction with material circumstance. However, in works of genuine political polemic, the emphasis is on changing the material circumstance, and not on changing the self. This is Vaughan's project. In changing himself, Vaughan is obeying God's Providential directive and is rescuing his soul; in writing *Silex Scintillans*, Vaughan is rescuing, or, attempting to rescue, his religious community. It is through this lens that we must approach Vaughan: Vaughan consoles the Anglican faithful by carefully articulating that their salvation is a product of their patience—they are themselves an historically positioned tropological representation of Job, and they would do well to both recognize this and persevere despite it.

At the onset of the first civil war in January of 1642, Vaughan would have been merely twenty or twenty-one years old. When the so-called Cavalier Parliament met in May of 1660, following the Restoration of Charles II, Vaughan would have been thirty-nine.[13] This means, effectually, that the whole of Vaughan's middle age was spent in a religiopolitical climate that was anathema to his conscience; he was hostile to this environment, and he viewed it as being hostile towards him. It is not surprising, then, that large expanses of *Silex Scintillans*, as noted in Chapter One, betray disgust, indignation, scorn, *et cetera*. This should not, quite frankly, surprise readers with a modicum of historical consciousness. Rather, what is worth noting is the extent to which Vaughan attempts to effect passive resistance, and, even, toleration of these apparent interlopers. Indeed, In his poem "Religion," Vaughan suggests that Puritans are symptoms rather than causes of religious dis-ease:

> ...Religion is a Spring
> That from some secret, golden Mine

Derives her birth, and thence doth bring
Cordials in every drop, and Wine;

But in her long and hidden Course
Passing through the Earths darke veines,
Grows still from better unto worse,
And both her taste, and colour staines,

Then drilling on, learnes to increase
False *Ecchoes*, and Confused sounds,
And unawares doth often seize,
On veines of *Sulphur* under ground;

So poison'd, breaks forth in some Clime,
And at first sight doth many please,
But drunk, is puddle, or meere slime
And 'stead of Phisick, a disease[.] (29-44)

Vaughan writes that "Just such a tainted sink we have" (45). In these lines Vaughan

confesses that Religion, as it moves through the Earth, is tainted and corrupted by it. The

festering and rotten product of this transmogrification "at first sight doth many please."

Thus, writes West, "[r]ather than blaming the Puritans as a *cause* of corruption, this poem

begins to understand them as a *symptom* or of a larger malaise" (*Scripture Uses* 161).

Vaughan, then, does not set himself in opposition to Puritans, *per se*, but rather, he

suggests that they are collectively victims of a world in which God's Word has been

abused. What ought to arrest our attention when reading Vaughan is not his scurrilous

and abrasive vindictiveness, but this emphasis on finding God by way of peaceful

consideration. Vaughan is adamant that the path to Heaven is not won with bloodshed.

He asks in "Abel's Blood," for instance, "What thunders shall those men arraign / Who

cannot count those they have slain, / Who bath not in a shallow flood, / But in a deep,

wide sea of blood?" (11-14). In "Righteousness," the poem immediately following

"Abel's Blood," Vaughan lists the qualities of a virtuous person. For Vaughan, that

person is righteous "Who bears his cross with joy / And doth imploy / His heart and

tongue in prayers for his foes" (37-39).

The portrait of Vaughan I have attempted to paint here is not the Vaughan of

Rudrum, whose *Silex Scintillans* is a work of unquestionable political propaganda. Mine

is a different Vaughan whose focus has been on consoling his religious cohort through

the trials of religious subjugation. I have hitherto endeavoured to demonstrate that

Vaughan's goal in *Silex Scintillans* is to stress the spiritually recuperative power of

affliction to a religious community whose *raison d'être*—a fully collaborative

religiopolitical apparatus in which Church and State are effectually one—had been

desecrated by the English civil wars. In doing so, Vaughan is not interested in giving

literary weapons to those seeking to emphasize the political dimension of this union, but

rather, is interested in giving succor to those whose soteriological persuasions were

bound to the Anglican liturgy. In "The Men of War," Vaughan is clear that he will not

engage in the villainy of wishing harm upon his enemies. Addressing God, he writes that,

"Thy Saints are not the Conquerors, / But patient, meek, and overcome" (18-19). And,

moreover, that "Thou wouldst no legions, but wouldst bleed" (25). Vaughan maintains

the importance of passive resistance, remarking that God's sword is his Word (26).

Rather than fall victim to his own 'dark designs,'—his seditious impulses—Vaughan

ends the poem with a prayer in which he beseeches Jesus to "Give me humility and

peace, / Contented thoughts, innoxious ease, / A sweet revengeless, quiet minde / And to

my greatest haters kinde" (41-44). Vaughan foregoes his right to lambast his enemies,

and instead asks for the strength to deal with them kindly. It is easy, as has been shown

time and time again, to paint Vaughan as a political radical engaged solely in the process

of ushering in the Restoration. But such a caricature ignores the Vaughan who counsels

absolute passivity—the Vaughan who resignedly scoffs, "If truth be thine, what needs a

brutish force?" ("Rules and Lessons" 39).

Conclusion

"A sad blubber'd story": Closing Remarks

> Then kneel my soul, and body; kneel and bow;
> If *Saints*, and *Angels* fal down, much more thou.
> —"Dressing"

The civil wars of mid-seventeenth-century England were a complicated social phenomenon. Not surprisingly, these conflicts invited myriad responses from all levels of the social strata. Political and religious leaders alike clamored to claim moral authority. As often as not, these groups even borrowed each other's rhetorical and discursive tools. The result was a religiopolitical milieu in which thematic demarcations were blurred and obfuscated; this process has been seen throughout the whole of this project. It is a social reality that influenced Henry Vaughan, certainly, but recently has begun to impinge on the scholarship surrounding his work. I should be clear: it has not been my intention here to suggest that Vaughan's poetry is in any sense apolitical. Rather, I have intended to demonstrate that these frequent (and scathing) political echoes are circumstantial; that is, I think it is hardly fair to suggest that scoring political points was a significant motivation for Vaughan's desire to publish *Silex Scintillans*. This is a point that is easily made when one considers that Vaughan attempted to withhold *Olor Iscanus*—a much more explicitly political volume—from publication. There is a degree of generic conflation that must be acknowledged, and I have been careful to do so. However, I nevertheless maintain that these two poetic projects are not as congenial as they sometimes seem to be. I have attempted, therefore, to expand the interpretive spectrum in such a fashion as to allow for a broader range of functional appreciation. If we wish to speak of Vaughan's aesthetics,

as has been shown, we must speak of them as an aesthetics of *praxis*—and we must

simultaneously question the suggestion that these two terms exist only in

contradistinction to each other.

The generic conflation of politics and religion that has been so often the focus of

this project can be seen clearly and illustratively in an anonymous 1643 poem often

entitled "The Oxford Riddle on the Puritans"—the title being something of an

unfortunate editorial decision that robs the reader of the satisfaction of answering the

riddle him- or herself. The brief four-stanza poem is worth looking at in its entirety, if for

no other reason than the fact that it is so rarely printed:

> There dwells a people on the earth,
> That reckons true allegiance treason,
> That makes sad war a holy mirth.
> Calls madness zeal, and nonsense reason;
> That finds no freedom but in slavery.
> That makes lies truth, religion knavery.
>> That rob and cheat with yea and nay:
>> Riddle me, riddle me, who are they?

> They hate the flesh, yet kiss their dames.
> That make kings great by curbing crowns,
> That quench the fire by kindling flames,
> That settle peace by plund'ring towns,
> That govern with implicit votes.
> That 'stablish truth by cutting throats.
>> That kiss their master and betray:
>> Riddle me, riddle me, who are they?

> That make Heaven speak by their commission,
> That stop God's peace and boast his power
> That teach bold blasphemy and sedition,
> And pray high treason by the hour.
> That damn all saints but such as they are,
> That wish all common, except prayer.
>> That idolize Pym, Brooks, and Say:
>> Riddle me, riddle me, who are they?

> That to enrich the commonwealth.

> Transport large gold to foreign parts ;
> That house't in Amsterdam by stealth,
> Yet lord it here within our gates;
> That are staid men, yet only stay
> For a light night to run away;
>> That borrow to lend, and rob to pay:
>> Riddle me, riddle me, who are they?

The answer to this riddle, one knows from the assumed title, is the various Puritan sects

extant in the mid-seventeenth century. One can see the same exchange and explicit

rhetorical conflation of political and religious imagery that so often characterizes

literature of the period. The pervasive question that has informed much of the preceding

discussion is whether or not one can speak of religious poetry *qua* religious poetry, or

whether the interpolation of political consciousness robs such verses of their intended

divine and meditational aesthetic.

There is commonly supposed to be no difference between Royalists and

Anglicans in mid-seventeenth century England. Being one is sufficient to be declared at

once the other. But this conflation does not serve readers of the period. To suggest this is

the same as suggesting, today, that all women are feminists, that all atheists are liberals,

that all theists are conservatives, or any number of similar assumptions. Obviously, we

assume a degree of conflation, and we generalize and stereotype accordingly. But this is

always done with a recognition that these conflations are not absolute—indeed, that they

are far from it. But in our collective handling of the seventeenth century, we have

willfully suspended this reflexivity. All Puritans are Parliamentarians, all Royalists are

Anglicans, and *vice versa*. One need only examine our understanding of the term Puritan

to see this schema complicated, and, perhaps, deconstructed. The so-called Puritan voice

exists only in opposition to institutionally normative Anglicanism; elsewhere, we must

speak of Puritanism as a series of voices, sometimes amicable and sometimes not;

Puritanism *qua* Puritanism means nothing in contexts where we must differentiate

between radical Calvinists, Quakers, Baptists, Fifth Monarchists, *et cetera*. Nor can we

assume, uncritically, that affiliation with any of these religious groups implies affiliation

with (and endorsement of) Oliver Cromwell and his government. In the case of

Anglicanism and Royalism, the same is true; and while the civil wars and subsequent

Interregnum had a consolidating effect on the Church, as has been shown, it is

nevertheless helpful to maintain this distinction.

The argument here has been for an expansion of the interpretive categories of

seventeenth-century poetry, particularly, in this case, with reference to Vaughan and his

Silex Scintillans. I have advanced this argument in three constituent movements. First, I

began by acknowledging the political savviness of Vaughan's verse. The purpose of this

was to provide the reader with a modicum of contextual appreciation for Vaughan's

political environment. More than this, though, it provided me with an opportunity to

suggest a tripartite reading of Vaughan's religious poetry that I find to be particularly

helpful: many of Vaughan's poems begin with heightened meditations only to regress to

worldly venting. This juxtaposition is stylistically and rhetorically powerful because it

affords Vaughan the opportunity to reconcile these conflicting realities—that is, the

ontological disparity dividing religious ideality and political reality. This attempt at

reconciliation constitutes the third movement of many of Vaughan's poems. And while

these attempts at reconciliation may be rarely satisfying, they nevertheless perfectly

illustrate Vaughan's desire to see past the narrow-sightedness of his political vision.

Obviously, problems arise, such as Alan Rudrum's indication that Vaughan omitted from

Silex Scintillans (1655) an elegy for his friend and cousin Charles Walbeoffe on the

grounds that Walbeoffe was politically moderate ("Breconshire Royalism" 112-13). This

argument, though, ignores Vaughan's elegiac policy in *Silex*; that is, his included elegies

all remember immediate family, and these deaths all contributed to his religious

intensification. Stylistically and thematically, his elegy for Walbeoffe would have seemed

anomalous couched within the poetry of *Silex Scintillans*. Of course, in *Silex Scintillans*

Vaughan advances a voice or a literary persona. Such suggestions need no qualification. I

do not disagree with Rudrum's assessment that Vaughan was an ultra-Royalist—indeed, I

have taken pains to show that in fact he was. Rather, I object to his indication that

Vaughan's ultra-Royalism precludes the possibility that the poetry of *Silex Scintillans*

could be intended to serve a genuine and practical religious purpose. My goal in this

project has been implicitly to question the historically and academically sanctioned

conflation of religion and politics. In doing so, I hope to expand the generic confines that

have limited scholarship of the period. This is not to gainsay or combat scholarship that

has been conducted in this mode, but rather to illustrate and expand our understanding of

the complexities of this discursive phenomenon. In *Silex Scintillans*, Vaughan is certainly

political, but to suggest that he is only political is to do his poetry an injustice.

The second and third parts of my argument are closely related, and, as such, ought

to be looked at together. I began by examining the extent to which Vaughan intended the

poetry of *Silex Scintillans* to be a practical volume of religious consolation; I followed

that by exploring the means of Vaughan's consolatory method. Vaughan acknowledges in

his poetry the unpleasantness of his native environment, and he uses this

acknowledgment to advance his religious agenda. Rather than wishing harm upon his

enemies, Vaughan prays throughout the whole of both editions of *Silex* for the strength to

deal with them kindly and peaceably. It will surprise no one who is familiar with

Vaughan that he is sometimes scathing, hateful, and bitter, but reducing Vaughan's

poetry to these themes betrays a rather narrow critical and aesthetic purview. Vaughan is

never satisfied with these emotions, and he indicates uniformly that his fellow Anglicans

should not be satisfied with them either. *Silex Scintillans* effects to demand from its

readers that they move beyond their petty and personal political hurts. For this reason,

Vaughan counsels patience and passive resistance. With no indication in 1650 or 1655

that the Restoration of Charles II would occur just a few years later, Vaughan hoped to

prepare the Anglican faithful for an extended period of subjugation. Like the Israelites,

Vaughan was hoping for the strength to endure the wilderness for forty years. It is not

surprising, then, that Vaughan should take so many pains to model *Silex Scintillans*

around the *Book of Common Prayer* (Wall 275). We can see this modeling in Vaughan's

rarely examined poem, "Idle Verse," which he concludes thusly:

> Go, go, seek out some greener thing,
>   It snows, and freezeth here;
> Let Nightingales attend the spring;
>   Winter is all my year. (21-24)

The imagery here is clever, and, as is so often the case with Vaughan, conflicting.

Vaughan advises those looking for 'idle verses'—the pompous verses of the Cavaliers or

remnant Troubadours—to search elsewhere. Those seeking for such poems, what

Vaughan calls "greener thing[s]," will not be well served by perusing the poetry of *Silex*

Scintillans. He then contrasts the figurative merriment of spring—which he emphasizes

with reference to the nightingale's song—with the severity of winter. It is the winter

metaphor that I want to focus on here. Winter connotes suffering and death, so it may

seem odd that Vaughan would wish to locate himself and his poetry there. However,

winter also demands work and perseverance, becoming, then, an appropriate metaphor

for Vaughan's poetry: it is not casual and relaxed, but rather is written out of hardship.

With no indication that the so-called Interregnum would soon come to an end, winter

truly was all Vaughan's year. Indeed, his poem recalls an anonymous fourteenth-century

poem, "This World's Joy," that begins with the line: "Wynter wakeneth al my care" (1).

The poet expresses an admiration for the hardship of winter because it reminds him or her

of the frailty of life, and invokes, therefore, the *memento mori* topos so common to

medieval and early modern literatures. By reminding the poet of his or her mortality,

winter simultaneously effects to remind the poet of his or her spiritual obligations. The

poet concludes: "For y not whider y shal, ne hou longe her duelle" (15)—that is, the poet

knows not how long he or she shall "here dwell." This is the topos invoked by *Silex*

Scintillans. The "late and dusky" days of the Interregnum demanded that Vaughan and

his fellow Anglican faithful direct their attentions toward God; the best way to do this

was to periodically survey how unpleasant and mutable all else was.

My suggestion throughout has been, in fact, that the so-called devotional literature

of the period can be appreciated for its religious function. Moreover, such an approach,

rather than depriving the critic of the social and historical consciousness that informs

responsible scholarship, actually contributes to his or her understanding of it. Religious

poetry of the mid-seventeenth century exists at a nuanced intellectual intersection.

Viewing such works as mere political propaganda narrows our scope of the period, and

succeeds only in limiting our ability to interact with it from satisfyingly diverse

perspectives. That these threads have so often been wed together is not an accident, but it

is the role of the critic to unravel them. The aim is not to dichotomize our interpretations, but rather to call into question those readings that allow one perspective to wholly subsume the other. With reference to Vaughan, I have illustrated how political consciousness actually lends weight to the religious *praxis* of his *Silex Scintillans*. Vaughan's political interpolations tell us more about his religious development than they do about his actual political life. Whereas F. E. Hutchinson suggests that Vaughan's political temper succeeds only in marring the "remote airs" of *Silex Scintillans* (44), I believe Vaughan's verse is improved by it. Implicit in this thesis is the suggestion that the politicization of Vaughan's poetry is an attempt to rescue an, at times, stylistically weak poet like Vaughan from obscurity. Certainly, Vaughan needs rescuing if we wish to approach him from a New Critical perspective in which we assign value only to prosody, timelessness, and other aesthetics rooted in ahistoricism. The poetry of *Silex Scintillans* ought to be, as it often is, recognized and appreciated for what it says about its religiopolitical context, the person who wrote it, and the audience for whom it was written; but, in doing this responsibly, we must re-evaluate (and ultimately contest) the post-1970s emphasis on radically politicized criticism. Vaughan's poetic project in *Silex Scintillans*, can, I think, be summarized nicely with reference to his poem "The Timber," in which he writes:

> But as shades set off light, so tears and grief
> (Though of themselves but a sad blubber'd story)
> By shewing the sin great, shew the relief
> Far greater, and so speak my Saviour's glory. (41-44)

Silex Scintillans may be the "sad blubber'd story" of a man emotionally ill-equipped to cope with Interregnum life, but this dis-ease allows him to better speak his Saviour's glory.

Notes

[1] Except where noted, all Henry Vaughan citations are from L.C. Martin's *Vaughan's Works*. When referencing Vaughan's prose, I have given page numbers; when discussing his poetry, I have cited line numbers only.

[2] Richard Lovelace was sent to Gatehouse while William Boteler was sent to Fleet Prison. Lovelace was imprisoned several times throughout the civil wars. However, it was on this occasion that he wrote his poem, "To Althea, From Prison," in which he famously declared that "Stone walls do not a prison make, / Nor iron bars a cage" (25-26). Vaughan's poem, *"To his Learned Friend and Loyal Fellow Prisoner,* Thomas Powel *of* Cant. *Doctor of Divinity*," which appears in *Thalia Rediviva,* has sometimes been taken as evidence that he too was arrested sometime during the civil wars. Vaughan similar meditates on the effect that imprisonment has upon the just:

> 'Tis a kind Soul in *Magnets*, that attones
> Such two hard things as *Iron* are and *Stones*,
> And in their dumb *compliance* we learn more
> Of Love, than ever Books could speak before. (7-10)

[3] In 2008 the town council of Llansantffraed voted to remove the 't' from the spelling of the town name (*viz.* Llansanffraed); this was done in an effort to correct what was understood to be an Anglicization. The new spelling is more consistent with Welsh phonetic standards. I have maintained the spelling of Llansantffraed here, however, since this is the spelling of record in materials pertaining to Vaughan. Of note: Vaughan's grave can still be visited in the churchyard St. Bridget's, Llansanffraed, and was the subject of a post-war meditative poem by Siegfried Sassoon, "At the Grave of Henry Vaughan." On the anniversary of his death, 23 April, Vaughan is remembered with a ceremony at St. Bridget's.

[4] All references to Rowland Watkyns are from Paul C. Davies's edition of *Flamma sine Fumo*. I have cited line numbers only.

[5] There is another connection between Henry Vaughan and Shakespeare's *Henry V*. Vaughan is descendent from Dafydd Gam, who is listed (as Davy Gam) among the deceased nobility following the Battle of Agincourt (4.8.103). Moreover, Dafydd Gam has long been supposed to be Shakespeare's model for the character Fluellen. Henry Vaughan's ancestor, Sir Roger Vaughan, also warred at Agincourt.

[6] [I was deaf and dumb, a *Flint*: You (how great care you take of your own!) try to revive another way, you change the remedy; and now angered you say that *Love* has no power, and you prepare to conquer force with *Force*, you come closer, you break through the *Rocky* barrier of my heart, and it is made *Flesh* that was before a *Stone.*] (Martz, *George Herbert and Henry Vaughan* 248)

[7] The importance of tears in the seventeenth century has often been remarked upon. John Donne, in a sermon "Preached at White-hall, the first Friday in Lent" (ca. 1622), notes

that "Fathers have infinitely delighted themselves in ... the blessed effect of holy teares." And he concludes this thought by recalling "[t]hat our best sacrifice, even prayer it selfe, receives an improvement, a dignity, by being washed in tears" (*Sermons* 175).

[8] The two poets shared an ancestor in Gwladys Gam (the daughter of Dafydd Gam.) Gwladys Gam was at one time married to Sir Roger Vaughan, to whose line Henry belongs; following the death of Sir Roger Vaughan, Gwladys Gam married one William ap Thomas—also known as Sir William Herbert, lord of Raglan—who was to sire the Herbert line to which George Herbert belongs. Both Herbert and Vaughan belonged to the anglicized Welsh gentry, and neither was to inherit aristocratic title. However, "in spite of the remarkable freedom with which the Welsh have extended the degrees of cousinship, [Vaughan] is not known to have claimed [Herbert] as a kinsman" (Hutchinson 5).

[9] A.E. Waite notes in a footnote in his *The Works of Thomas Vaughan*, that Thomas was evicted for "drunkenness, swearing, incontinency, and carrying arms for the king" (x). He comments that the last of these charges was probable—indeed, the biographic record seems to indicate that he, like Henry, participated in the Battle of Rowton Heath. However, he thinks the other charges were owed entirely to his Royalist sympathy. To Waite's credit, no known evidence for such incompetencies are known to me, either.

[10] Vaughan acknowledges, however, that his translations of Tirius are based on Latin translations of the Greek originals.

[11] A possible exception to this is Vaughan's poem, "The British Church." The Church is the speaker in the poem, and it is worth noting that it is Vaughan's only poem to feature a female speaker. Nevertheless, the poem is a clear representation of Vaughan's feelings pertaining to the state of the Church.

[12] All references to Robert Herrick are from the Henry Morley edition. I have cited line numbers only.

[13] Vaughan's date of birth is unknown. It is known that he was born in 1621, however, and that he died on 23 April 1695. Moreover, the inscription on his tombstone indicates that he was 73 years old at his time of death. From this, we can safely assume that Vaughan was born prior to 23 April, but to say more is purely speculative.

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