HAMRICK, FORREST, M.A. Venus' Frown: The Paradox of Chaste Marriage in the Dedicatory Poems to *Salve Deus Rex Judæorum.* (2013)
Directed by Dr. Michelle M. Dowd. 30 pp.

This thesis paper examines how Amelia Lanyer uses classical mythology in the dedicatory poems to *Salve Deus Rex Judæorum* to comment on early modern concepts of marriage. By examining her poetry within historical and cultural context, I demonstrate how Lanyer attempts to synthesize marriage with an early modern emphasis on celibacy, piety, and devotion. To substantiate this claim, I will examine how Lanyer creates an imaginative celibate space in the dedicatory poems "To all vertuous Ladies in generall" and "the Authors Dreame to the Ladie *Marie*, the countesse Dowager of *Pembrooke."* The space is inhabited by celibate and virginal mythological figures and mirrors a monastic society. After establishing a celibate realm, Lanyer introduces the married Lady Sidney and praises her as an emblem of chaste marriage, which synthesizes the monastic life with the married life. Running counter to the poem's chaste images are the non-celibate goddesses and the image of Juno's Chariot, which disrupt the realm and signal the dangerous and inevitable nature of early modern marriage. The classical images, when taken with historical and cultural context, create a tension within the poems that is centered on marriage. Lanyer seems uneasy with the lack of choice available to women after the Reformation, and she uses the space accorded to her by classical mythology to explore the tension within early modern marriage. However, she is unable to resolve the tension completely, and her final conclusion about the state of marriage is ambiguous.

HAMRICK, FORREST, M.A. Christ's Humoral Irony in George Herbert's "The Sacrifice." (2013)
Directed by Dr. Christopher Hodgkins. 28 pp.

This thesis examines how George Herbert's "The Sacrifice" portrays the physical body of Christ and how Christ's portrayal undermines a reading of the poem as a medieval Catholic meditative poem. Instead, Herbert ironically uses the traditional poetic structure of a meditative poem to emphasize the impossibility for man to recreate Christ's suffering. I examine how Herbert incorporates early modern concepts of the physical body into his depiction of Christ in order to undermine the genre of medieval meditative poetry on the Passion. To substantiate this claim, I establish the physical nature of Christ within the framework of the early modern body by using the concepts of galenic humoral theory, the semi-permeable nature of the body, and the body's communal aspects. Herbert integrates those concepts into "The Sacrifice" and uses the format of a medieval Catholic meditative poem on the Passion to help the reader identify with and partly relive the pain of Christ. However, Herbert overloads the poem's medieval structure with Christ' refrain "Was ever grief like mine?" and His physical pain, which reveals the impossibility of humanity recreating the Passion sequence. This paper demonstrates how Herbert uses the medieval structure of the poem ironically on both a physical and spiritual level, and how it positions the poem as a Protestant work written in opposition to Catholic meditative modes.

VENUS' FROWN: THE PARADOX OF CHASTE MARRIAGE IN THE DEDICATORY POEMS TO *SALVE DEUS REX JUDÆORUM* AND CHRIST'S HUMORAL IRONY IN GEORGE HERBERT'S "THE SACRIFICE"

by

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VENUS' FROWN: THE PARADOX OF CHASTE MARRIAGE IN THE DEDICATORY POEMS TO *SALVE DEUS REX JUDÆORUM*

Amelia Lanyer's dedicatory poems to *Salve Deus Rex Judæorum* (1611) take place in the middle of an evolving debate about marriage in early modern England. After the Protestant Reformation there were many changes to women's lives both in and out of marriage, including the closure of convents and added expectations of piety and devotion. One of the biggest changes was a move away from virginity and celibacy as the highest virtues to chaste marriage being the highest virtue for women during the time. Lanyer is trying to come to terms with the collapsing space of celibacy and the residual importance placed on it in Protestant society while integrating it into marriage. In an attempt to synthesize these two worldviews, Lanyer turns to classical mythology in order to conceptualize the abstract quality of virtue and chaste marriage. She uses classical mythology because it was a predominant cultural aspect in early modern culture and therefore apt for use in the discussion. She uses mythological figures to examine how the collapsing space of celibacy and the inevitability of marriage cause tension for early modern women. I will be focusing specifically on the poems "To all vertuous Ladies in generall" and "the Authors Dreame to the Ladie *Marie*, the countesse Dowager of *Pembrooke"* because Lanyer focuses on classical mythology in these poems.

Scholarship about Lanyer's connections to the marriage debate has appeared in the works of Kari McBride. She focuses on Lanyer's use of biblical imagery and allusion to comment on marriage during the early modern period (68). McBride sees Lanyer's use of biblical figures as a proto-feminist move and points to the five biblical characters found in "To the Vertuous Reader" who are Deborah (l. 34), Jael (l. 35), Hester (l. 36), Judeth (l. 38) and Susanna (l. 39). All of these women have, as McBride puts it, "one negative quality: their purpose is unconnected to generation and lineage" (67). The women selected by Lanyer are praised for their bravery, cunning, or faith, but not because of their childbearing ability or any other "womanly" act. According to McBride, Lanyer shows women in a light other than childbearing, which makes a case for her own ability to succeed in non-domestic areas, such as poetry. Following in McBride's vein of criticism, I intend to broaden the discussion by examining how Lanyer uses classical myth as a cultural and intellectual touchstone in an attempt to work through the tensions within early modern marriage. Lanyer attempts to deal with the changes to marriage and the escalating expectations placed on women for a pious and devout life in the dedicatory poems to *Salve*. I will trace how Lanyer uses mythology to create a realm of celibacy within her poems. From this position, she examines how both virgin goddesses and fertility goddesses interact with the celibate world and help to create a space for chaste marriage within a celibate world. Finally, I will look at Lanyer's attempt to synthesize the early modern ideas of celibacy, piety, and devotion with the reality of matrimony, which creates a tension in the poems played out by the classical goddesses.

The need to focus on classical goddesses and their relationship with marriage in Lanyer's poetry is crucial because it has been absent from the majority of scholarly research. Instead, scholars have focused on Lanyer as one of the first female writers to pursue patronage and to publish in early modern England. Scholars such as Barbara Lewalski in "Re-writing Patriarchy and Patronage" and Leeds Barroll have focused on Lanyer's position as one of the first women writers to seek patronage and her choice of exclusively women patrons[1]. Erica Longfellow builds on their work and attempts to recalibrate the discussion about Lanyer's desire for patronage and place it in context of both male and female poets (61). Myth is overlooked by much of the scholarly work on Lanyer because it does not further studies in patronage. By examining classical mythology in Lanyer's poems, we can get a fuller view of how marriage was understood in post-Reformation England. By using mythology, Lanyer creates an intellectually safe space to discuss marriage in an open but discrete way. I will shift the focus from the production of poetry and Lanyer's search for patronage to what the content of the poems say about early modern marital life. The cultural force of marriage during the time inundates the writings. Lanyer is trying to come to terms with marriage in her poems by using classical goddesses to explore different avenues of virtue and womanhood, while navigating the difficult area of piety and devotion.

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[1] Barroll, Leeds. "Looking for Patrons." Ed. Marshall Grossman. *Aemilia Lanyer: Gender, Genre, and the Canon*. Lexington: University of Kentucky, 1998. 60-82.

I will begin by looking at how Lanyer came into contact and used classical sources. Lanyer grew up with a semi-privileged upbringing; her father was a court musician, which made her part of the minor gentry (Woods 8), and she received a humanist education (10). During her studies she came into close contact with classical works, including Ovid, either through translations, which were common by the 1580's, or in their original language. Woods points out that "the ease and ubiquity of Lanyer's references to classical figures and stories strongly suggest she encountered them in their original language" (13). Lanyer demonstrates her mastery of classical myth in the dedicatory poems, and inundates them with predominantly female figures from classical mythology. Her knowledge of Ovid prepares her for writing the dedicatory poems, which use his mythology to create an imaginative space to discuss a woman's place in marriage and devotion.

The imaginative space Lanyer creates comes to fruition in the poem "the Authors Dreame." She establishes a realm of celibacy in her poetry and then demonstrates how chaste marriage can still fit into that world. The poem begins by moving the reader between two different locations: "Me thought I pass'd through th' *Edalyan* Groves, / And askt the Graces, if they could direct / Me to a Lady whom *Minerva* chose, / To live with her in height of all respect" (ll. 1-4). The Edalyan Groves is a mountain city in Cyprus sacred to Venus and it is home of the Graces. Venus and the Graces were goddesses of love and fertility. They also tended to be presented in a sexualized light. The speaker travels through the Edalyan Groves to the realm of Minerva. Minerva, alongside Diana and Vesta, is one of the three primary virgin goddesses of myth and her dominion reflects

that crucial aspect. When the speaker travels between the two realms she is moving from the realm of love and fertility, which signifies a form of womanhood contingent on sexuality and family, to Minerva's realm of celibacy. The movement is also a physical shift that establishes the celibate realm of Minerva as a physical place. Minerva's space mirrors the concept of a convent, which is a physical place inhabited by virgins and set aside for celibacy and spiritual devotion.

Immediately upon entering the realm of Minerva, the speaker is greeted by the Muses described as "nine faire Virgins" (l. 11), as well as the goddesses Bellona (l. 33) and Dictina (l. 45), other names for Minerva and Diana respectively. Diana is a goddess known for her protection of virginity. In one myth she turned her follower Daphne into a laurel tree to save her from being raped by Apollo. In another story she punishes one of her supporters who fell from celibacy. Callisto, who was found to be with Jupiter's child, was forcefully cast out of her group and transformed into a bear so her son would hunt her (Ovid 2:464). Minerva was a protector of maids and was also known as Athena Parthenos in the Roman pantheon. The title meant Virgin Athena, a term for her virginal state and role as a protector of sexual modesty. In "the Authors Dreame" the speaker discovers Lady Sidney among the virgins in an elevated state: "Their course where this most noble Lady sate, / Whom all the virgins with due reverence / Did entertaine, according to that state / Which did belong unto her Excellence" (ll. 29-32). The location is one of flattery for Lady Mary Sidney, for whom the poem is written, endowing her with beauty, wisdom, and purity, but it also a places her into a space of celibacy. She is not only among the virgin goddesses but is elevated above the goddesses of the arts, and

she is at least equal with some of the greater goddesses. However, it is odd that a married woman would be so highly honored in Minerva's realm. Her station above the virgins in a celibate space pushes against the classical and the Catholic position that virginity is the highest virtue. The high view of virginity was held before the Reformation and is supported by St. Paul who wrote, "Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do." (*King James Version* 1 Corinthians 7:8). Celibacy was expected of priests and nuns in England until the Protestant Reformation. Lanyer begins to supplant celibacy as the highest virtue, and replaces it with chaste marriage by placing a married Lady Sidney above the goddesses of virginity in a celibate realm.

Even if Lady Sidney is placed among or above the goddesses as a married woman, there is still a strong amount of reverence for the virgins. In early modern England there was a shift to see marriage as a higher virtue than celibacy, but there was still a residual honor and virtue accorded to a celibate lifestyle in poetry of the period. The goddesses and the retinue of virgins stand out in an almost saint-like way when they are decked with "borrowed light" ("the Authors Dreame" l. 53). The glorification of the virgins is a powerful image showing the almost holy stature of the women: "She deckt her selfe with all the borrowed light / That *Phoebus* would afford from his fair face, / and made her Virgins to appear so bright, / that all the hils and vales received grace" (ll. 53-56). That the light is borrowed from Phoebus suggests a high level of honor given to the virgins because Phoebus Apollo often appears as a threat to women in mythology. The honor accorded by Phoebus is mirrored by the Graces in an even more stunning display. The Graces humble themselves at the feet of the Lady Sidney, and the speaker describes

her graceful reaction: “Wherein me thought I tooke no small delight. / To see how all the Graces sought grace here, / And in what meeke, yet princely sort shee came; / How this most noble Lady did imbrace her, / and all humors unto hers did frame” (ll. 40-44). The Graces are the handmaidens of Venus and represent gracefulness and fertility and, like Venus, they have sexual connotations. The desire of the Graces to humble themselves to the virgin court demonstrates the supremacy of the chaste group.

To further understand the importance of Lady Sidney in the celibate realm of Lanyer’s “Authors Dreame,” it is necessary to look at how piety, virtue, and religion affected the daily lives of women. During the early modern period, women were often seen as the most effective agents of piety. Some preachers during the time thought that it was the “frequent danger of death in child-birth” (Crawford 73) that forced a stronger relationship with God, and it is true that the lives of women were much more involved with both public and private religious acts. Because of their perceived superiority in terms of piety, their role in society became more and more contingent on their spiritual devotion. The emphasis led to a level of authority and respect in the community (Mendelson 230). The mixture of social cache and the strong Protestant emphasis on an individual’s piety and relationship with Christ made piety and devotion more central parts of women’s lives. Their commitment to piety played out in many ways. Publically, even though for both sexes “public attendance at church services was required” (Crawford 77), women outnumbered men in many congregations (78). Godly women also participated publically through publishing where “nearly half of the total of publications by women for the period between 1600-1700 were works of piety, prayers, meditations, godly

advice, prophecies, Quaker warnings, admonitions, and lamentations" (93). Women were given a limited amount of public space to enact piety other than those outlets, because the majority of devotion was expected to be private.

The significance of private devotion was an important subject for early modern women because of the expectations that surrounded them. Women were mostly kept at home when they were not at church and, because of that, private devotion had to be done primarily at home (79). Patricia Crawford describes the multiple expectations placed on the archetypical "good woman" and defines one as "a godly matron, obeying her husband, caring for her children and servants, and spending her spare time in private devotion" (39). The expectation was that spare time would be spent towards devotion; however this caused a certain amount of tension because of its necessary secrecy. Crawford writes that, "since no-one was suppose to know about the prayers, religious meditations, or godly activities of the truly pious women, it was a secret life. This created a tension, because godliness was also to be an example for emulation" (78-9). Piety was relegated to inside the home, and the emphasis on piety explains in part the large number of women writers focusing on religious matters. If the expectation was for a woman's extra time during the day to be turned towards pious activities, then the works they produce during that time would take on a pious nature. Writing bridges the gap between private and public devotion because it is done in private but is then released into the public sphere. Since Lanyer was writing her dedicatory poems to the nobility, it is important to note how their relationship to piety differs from the common woman. The importance of piety became even more pronounced in the nobility where women had

more time to devote themselves to private piety (Crawford 74). The conflict between a robust spiritual life and the centrality of the family led to a divided loyalty in the minds of some women, but it also explains Lanyer's focus on piety and chastity in poems written to noble women. She understands the expectations of those women and writes about issues important to them. The public expectations of piety mixed with the more pronounced Protestant ideals of a private devotion caused tension within women's spiritual lives.

The virgins in Lanyer's poetry mirror the religious roles of the early modern women she is writing to. Lanyer mimics the devotional pattern of women in "the Author's Dreame" where she writes, "Bellona and her virgins doe attend; / In virtuous studies of Divinitie, / Her pretious time continually doth spend" (ll. 146-8). The studies of divinity in the poem mirror the devotional time that was central to a woman's position in the house historically. In "To all vertuous Ladies in generall," an earlier dedicatory poem, Lanyer begins by focusing on the devotional practice of noble women with a call for the ladies to spend their time "in Virtue" (l. 1) to beautify their souls (l. 2). The call to spend their extra time in pious devotion mirrors the expectations of the noble woman. Also, the command in the beginning of the poem for the ladies to put on their "wedding garments" (l. 9) for Christ the bridegroom and to "fill your Lamps with oyle" (1. 13) recalls the importance of virginity still in the minds of Protestant women. The lines are in reference to the Gospel of Matthew and the Parable of the Ten Virgins. The moral of the parable is to prepare oneself for the coming of Christ the bridegroom. The imagery of the wedding and virginity continue to give a residual amount of weight to virginity over marriage. The

focus on virginity by both the biblical and mythological figures of the poem adds credibility to a celibate life. Unfortunately, that kind of life was no longer available in England for women.

The rise of Protestantism brought along anti-monastic sentiments, and this led to the closure of convents and monasteries in England. After the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII between 1536-1541, there was no longer a physical space set aside for a woman to devote herself to God, and this was partly because of the Protestant views about celibacy (Haigh 143). The practice of piety "was especially important for women, because there were few other avenues through which they could legitimately express their faith" (Crawford 75), but with the dissolution of the monasteries there was no longer a public and visible place to enact piety. The lack of public space for women was partly caused by an increase in male authority over their lives. The Reformation brought new ideas about equality and especially individualism. The individual believer became responsible for his or her own salvation, rather than the church. However, even with such a belief in individual equality there was still a belief within Protestant culture "in female inferiority and subordination" (Crawford 41). The husband and the father had increased authority within the household and over a woman's life. This was due to the belief in the inferiority of women and "an alteration of views about human sexuality" (40). The change was from an authority outside of the home during Catholic England, where the priest had power over women, to authority from within the home where men were the spiritual leaders.

The lack of public space for piety for women after the Reformation caused a move towards private piety, which was partly built upon the changing view of women's sexuality. Protestant leaders saw "the dedication of a woman's life to the ideal of celibate chastity as a denial of the purpose for which she was made" (Crawford 46), and in England there was "no lawful avenue for an unmarried woman with a religious vocation" (46). Since Protestants looked upon celibate chastity with distaste, they began to view all unmarried women with suspicion (47). With the closing of nunneries and monasteries there was no longer a place where a woman could devote herself fully to a life of piety and spirituality outside of marriage. Instead, a devotional life took place within marriage, which could cause divided loyalty between the family and God. Many women attempted to fully devote themselves to spiritual matters but found that their piety interfered with their family life (Crawford 90). As mentioned above, women were expected to devote themselves to their families and what little extra time they had was to be spent on private devotion, which was made difficult by the lack of physical space.

The situation became even more difficult for unmarried women. Unmarried women "were distanced from opportunities to express their spirituality after the monasteries were closed" (Crawford 47). The lack of a physical place for devotion outside of a family experience was a big change in the early modern era, and Lanyer's awareness of the lack of space caused her to create an imaginative place for piety in her poems. In a society that no longer had the outlet of monastic orders for women, compounded by the pressure placed upon noble women to marry, the idea of remaining a maid devoted to Christ became highly improbable. It is the tension between family life

and spiritual life that is depicted in the poems. The focus on sexual purity in marriage and the creation of an ideal pious woman are introduced in "To all vertuous Ladies in generall" and more fully expanded in "the Authors Dreame to the Ladie *Marie*, the Countess Dowager of *Pembroke*."

The tension between the need for a devotional space outside of marriage and Protestantism's dislike of convents and celibacy appears in Lanyer's poetry as she tries to work through the competing ideas. First, in "To all vertuous Ladies in generall" Lanyer extols the virtue of celibacy by referencing the Parable of the Ten Virgins (l. 13), and then she turns to mythology to ask the noble ladies to follow in the footsteps of the celibate goddesses. The scene in stanza four, lines 22-28, calls the ladies to a celibate life:

> Adorne your temples with faire *Daphnes* crowne
> The never changing Laurel, alwaies greene;
> Let constant hope all worldly pleasures drowne,
> In wise *Minerva's* paths be alwaise seene;
> Or with bright *Cynthia*, thogh faire *Venus* frown:
> With *Esop* crosse the posts of every doore,
> Where Sinne would riot, making Virtue poore. (l. 22-28)

Lanyer inundates her writing with images of celibate goddesses. The selection begins with Daphne, whom Diana transformed into a laurel tree to protect her virginity from Apollo (Hamilton 115). Daphne is followed by references to Minerva, the virgin goddess of war and protector of maids, and Cynthia (Diana), whose devotion and violence in protecting her and her handmaidens' virginity is one of her central qualities. The poem's speaker asks the recipient to follow in their paths that are defined by virginity and celibacy and places them in contrast with Venus, who is the goddess of love and mother

of Eros. As the goddess of love and sex, a celibate command is contrary to the views Venus champions, and Lanyer's inclusion of the line "thogh faire *Venus* frown" (l. 26) demonstrates Venus' displeasure with the celibate lifestyle. The speaker calls on the virtuous women to "alwaies be seene" (1. 25) in the paths of Minerva and Cynthia, and she urges them to be devoted to purity. The command instigates a conflict between the celibate goddesses and Venus. However, the simple question of why Venus frowns at the trio of virgin goddesses is difficult to answer. Venus is the goddess of love and beauty, as well as a fertility goddess, and, as the mother of Eros, she has strong ties to lust and pleasure. In the context of the passage, the frown of Venus comes as a sign of disapproval in response to Minerva and Cynthia's arrival. The disapproval of Venus seems to rest on the pursuit of celibacy, which is endorsed by both the biblical images of the virgins waiting for Christ, and the myths of Daphne and the other virgin goddesses.

The centrality of celibacy in these lines is problematic because the poem is addressed to noble ladies and, as mentioned above, society no longer saw celibacy as a realistic path for women. The virtuous ladies that Lanyer is writing to are nobles who are most likely married, widowed, or soon to be married. The speaker is asking them to turn away from Venus and by extension away from realms of love and passion, both of which are important to marriage. Also, celibacy precludes the possibility of children. Childbearing was an important aspect of marriage to the nobility and defined a noblewoman's life "more significantly than middle-class women's" (McBride 67). Childbearing was important to the nobility, but there is also a movement in Reformation England of sexual pleasure being an accepted part of marriage and love; as Peters writes,

early modern society was "prepared to go beyond a basic tolerance of sex as a means of procreation to argue that sexual pleasure could also be an adequate justification" (331). Venus is the goddess of sexual pleasure and by asking women to turn away from her goes against contemporary Protestant thought. This issue is further complicated in the context of the later dedicatory poem "the Authors Dreame" that honors the married Lady Sidney within the celibate realm of Minerva. Even though Lady Sidney is married she does not get the same treatment as Venus. Instead, she is welcomed and honored within the celibate realm.

So, what makes Lady Sidney different from Venus? Both are married but their reaction to the celibate realm is entirely different. Their greatest difference is in how their marriages work. Lady Sidney was married to the Earl of Pembroke and is the only married figure in the retinue of virgins. Venus was married to Vulcan, but much of her mythological history focuses on her adulterous nature, most notably with Mars. The infidelity was spotted by the Sun God in Ovid's version of the myth who was "supposed to have been the first to spy the affair / between Mars and Venus" (4.171-2). He reported it to Vulcan who later had his revenge on them (4.176-7). Mars and Venus' tryst is one of the better-known acts of her infidelity but there are many others, including the mothering of Aeneas with Anchises. In contrast to Venus' lascivious actions, Lady Sidney encapsulates the early modern idea of a chaste marriage that is different than a celibate life. Chastity denotes a commitment to a pious and devotional life, while celibacy simply implies a lack of sex. In "the Authors Dreame," Lady Sidney is shown to have a chaste marriage, while Venus demonstrates an unchaste marriage.

Lady Sidney embodies the concept of chaste marriage in the early modern period, and it is necessary to place chaste marriage in its historical context to understand how Lanyer uses it. The changes in authority brought on by the Reformation altered how celibacy was viewed. Marriage was seen as an "honorable estate, not a poor substitute for celibacy" (Crawford 39). The archetypal Protestant woman entered into marriage where she was expected obey her husbands, take care of the children, and enact a spiritual life in solitude. With the loss of convents, there was no longer a safe place for unmarried women. The Protestant Reformation viewed women as having sexual needs, desires, and ultimately being temptresses (43). The only way to partially escape the stigma was now in marriage. If a woman wanted a spiritual life she was forced into marriage because there was no longer an unmarried space to devote oneself to piety. The combination of marriage and devotion led to the concept of chaste marriage. Chaste marriage was derived from both medieval tradition and the Reformation in England. With the added limitations to women in marriage there were also changes to what made a marriage chaste. During the medieval period the concept relied on a restriction of sex and only having intercourse during appropriate times during the church's calendar and only for procreation (Upchrurch 205). This idea changes in England during the Reformation. Sex within marriage begins to take on a more liberated attitude with pleasure being an acceptable end (Peters 331). However, moderation was still required. William Gouge, author *Of Domesticall Duties* published in 1622, viewed marriage as a remedy for adultery and that a "defect or excess" of sex was potentially harmful (qt. in Peters 331). In essence, the ideal form of marriage was a chaste marriage that included some

limitations on intimacy and spiritual devotion to God and spouse. In Lanyer's poem, Lady Sidney fulfills these criteria as a married woman in the center of a sacred and celibate realm. She is not cut off from "the purpose for which she was made" (Crawford 46) but she is still within a spiritual retreat. Celibacy was no longer the highest virtue. Instead, it was replaced by a concept of chastity that shifted the emphasis from limited sexual activity to pious devotion and purity. The loss of the monasteries and a specific space for devotion, united with the added emphasis on spirituality for women in the household, led to a complicated idea of how women should act within a marriage. There was still a residual honor and virtue given to the monastic orders, but it was being torn down by Protestant England.

Minerva's realm serves as a solution for both the lack of monastic orders for women and their need for piety and devotion. In "the Authors Dreame" Lanyer makes Minerva's realm exceedingly different than the early modern household in how it relates to devotion. First, Minerva's realm is a physical place that must be traveled to. To experience piety, a religious woman must travel away from the realm of Venus, which is a realm of fertility, sexuality, and infidelity, to Minerva's realm, which is the haven of virgins and the chaste. The physical space runs counter to early modern ideas of a pious woman who, as mentioned above, was expected to find spirituality inside the home. Instead, Minerva's realm is a physical and safe place for virgins seeking pious devotion, and it correlates to convents because they were also refuges for virgins seeking sanctity. The difference that Lanyer portrays in Minerva's realm is that it includes those in a chaste marriage and living a chaste life. Lady Sidney is married and resides in Minerva's

realm of piety and devotion, and, unlike in a convent, a married woman is able to participate in the community. Lanyer builds the images of Venus as an unchaste wife to demonstrate the difference between her and Lady Sidney.

I have already discussed an underlying tension found in "To all vertuous Ladies" that is based on Venus' dislike of celibacy, and now I will focus the acts of aggression and the disruption of the sacred realm that begins with Aurora in "the Authors Dream." Aurora, the goddess of the dawn, is often depicted in a sexual light by poetry, and she is also a married goddess. She famously married Tithonus who was given immortal life but not immortal youth by Jupiter (Hamilton 290) and, like Venus, her marriage is beset by infidelity. In one myth she abducts Cephalus to be her lover, but he will not succumb to her advances because of the love he has for his wife (Ovid 7.700-10). His refusal angers Aurora and she ultimately causes his wife's death. Lanyer's choice of Aurora and her lascivious history makes her a good foil for Lanyer's figures of chastity. In "the Authors Dreame," Aurora is woken up by the bright light cast from the virgins: "That *Phoebus* would afford from his faire face, / And made her Virgins to appeare so bright… / *Aurora* rising from her rosie bed, / First blusht, then wept, to see faire *Pheobe* graced" ("the Authors Dreame" ll. 54-62). As with Venus' frown, Aurora's reaction to the virgin figures requires closer scrutiny. The first description of Aurora Lanyer uses is the image of the goddess rising from a "rosie bed" (l. 61). Rising from bed is the traditional way of depicting Aurora as the dawn, but given the strong emphasis on virginity in the previous stanzas where Lanyer recounts the humbling of the Muses and the Graces, the saffron bed

emphasizes her sexuality and lack of virginity. Her blushing and then weeping in response to Diana further reinforces her sexuality.

There is an element of shame in Aurora's actions, displayed partly through Cynthia's (Diana) usurping her place as herald of the light but also by Aurora's blushing. As the goddess of the dawn she is often depicted as blushing, but the blushing here comes directly from the glorification of the virgins and Cynthia. When confronted by the virgin court, Aurora, as a goddess partially known for sexuality, blushes out of embarrassment or shame. The reaction continues to reinforce the moral superiority of the chaste over the unchaste. Aurora's shame and jealousy cause her to formulate a plan to dim their light: "And unto Lady *Maie* these wordes shee sed, / Come, let us goe, we will not be out-faced" (ll. 63-4). The introduction of Maie continues to set the characters of the poem in a sexualized light. Maie was the goddess of flowers, spring, and love (Zimmerman 107), and she was often depicted with Aurora and Titon, who are mentioned earlier in the poem ("the Author's Dreame" 13).

The three gods are associated with the May Day tradition that celebrates spring and fertility. The festival was strongly disliked by the Puritans of the time due to its pagan nature (Anderson 128). Since it was a fertility festival, there was a strong sexual connotation to the May Day celebration. Robert Herrick famously comments on the celebration later in his poem "Corinna's Going A-Maying." He opens the festivities of the poem with a reference to Aurora: "Aurora throwes her faire / Fresh-quilted colours through the aire" (Herrick ll. 4-5). He mentions Maie and Titon as well, and his poem is an attempt to get Corinna out of bed and into the sexualized festivities of the May Day

celebration. In "the Authors Dreame" Maie and Aurora invoke the May Day festival with Maie filling "their laps / with floures" (ll. 68-9) and Aurora usurping Cynthia's place: "Thus did *Aurora* dimme faire *Phoebus* light, / And was reciev'd in bright *Cynthiaes* place, / While *Flora* all with fragrant floures dight, / Pressed to shew the beauty of her face" (ll. 73-76). Aurora only dims Cynthia's light and is not given equal prominence to her. The use of flowers, while working to link the image to the May Day celebration, also ties the festivities to the senses. The goddesses create the May Day celebration, which the speaker thinks is a "verie pleasing sight" (l. 77), but instead of joining the festivities, all of the "Worthies" turn and leave the festival for the "sacred Spring where Art and Nature striv'd" (l. 81). The turn away from the festival demonstrates the ascetic commitment of the ladies. As mentioned above, the May Day festival is based on the senses and it is filled with the sights and smells of spring; there are the bright colors and the smell of flowers, as well as a sexualized atmosphere. The Ladies are not turning away from just the sexualized atmosphere of the festival but also the sensory aspects. This coincides with the ascetic expectation of a chaste lady during the early modern period: "Through the regime of piety many women developed a personal asceticism which enhanced their spiritual awareness" (Crawford 92). Their ascetic life included fasting and limitations on sleep (92). The May Day celebration's failure to lead the women away from an ascetic and pious life reaffirms the women's commitment to a chaste life.

The festival is not the only place where Lanyer displays the importance of asceticism to the concept of chastity. In "To all vertuous Ladies" the reader is told to turn

away from worldly pleasures and be like the virgin Muses: "And let the Muses your companions be, / Those sacred sisters that on *Pallas* wait; / Whose godly labours doe avoyd the baite / Of worldly pleasures, living always free" (ll. 29-33). Lanyer uses mythology to create an imaginative space for celibate devotion by linking the virgin goddesses with a turn away from worldly sensation. As mythical figures, the goddesses are detached from the physical world and Christian thought by their very nature. The distance created by the goddesses allows Lanyer to discuss the problems and triumphs of marriage in purely spiritual or ethereal ways. It is within this space that she can work through the ideas of chaste marriage and try to come to terms with England's emphasis on the virtue of virginity, while maintaining its lack of a monastic orders. All of the work takes place outside of the reality of early modern England where Lanyer contemplates the inevitable quality of early modern marriage.

Lanyer uses the mythological image of Juno's chariot to address the impracticality of a celibate space and marriage's inevitable quality throughout the poems. Juno's chariot makes appearances throughout the dedicatory poems and is introduced in Lanyer's first dedicatory poem "To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie." Juno is the protector and goddess of marriage, and she uses her chariot in a warlike fashion. Lanyer describes Juno's militaristic use of her chariot in the poem: "the Sylvane Gods, and Satyres every one, / Before your faire triumphant Chariot fall" (ll. 21-22). The Satyres are gods of the forest, followers of Pan and Bacchus, and specifically known for their "orgies and lasciviousness" (Zimmerman 234). They are gods of unnatural sexuality and the

goddess of marriage destroys them. The image of Juno protecting women from the lascivious gods places her as a protector of chastity and a destroyer of sexual depravity.

The chariot that was used to destroy the Sylvane gods and Satyres is then loaned a few poems later to Minerva in "the Authors Dreame." The chariot is described as borrowed (l. 36) and by the end of the poem the reader is told that it is "lent by *Joves* faire Queene" (l. 176). The introduction of Minerva and the chariot changes the atmosphere of the poem and it is necessary to examine the image. The speaker arrives in Minerva's realm and, after being greeted by the Muses, looks up into the sky:

> And gazing up into the troubled skie,
> Me thought a Chariot did from thence descend,
> Where one did sit repleat with Majestie,
> Drawn by foure fierie Dragons, which did bend
> ……
> When bright *Bellona,* so they did her call,
> Whom these faire nymphs so humbly did receive,
> A manly mayd which was both faire and tall,
> Her borrowed Charret by a spring did leave. (ll. 25-36)

Lanyer gives the reader a multilayered image in these few lines that builds a complex model of chaste marriage. I will begin with the image of the goddess Bellona, which is another name for Minerva. Minerva has a unique relationship with marriage because her birth was not the result of marital sex. Instead, Jupiter (Zeus), in defiance of his wife Juno, birthed Minerva (Athena) from his own head: "But Zeus himself produced, from his own head, / Grey-eyed Athena" (Hesiod ll. 927-8). In "the Authors Dreame" a lasting image is of the virginal and motherless warrior Minerva driving Juno's warlike chariot of marriage. The ironic image encapsulates the paradoxical idea of a chaste marriage. The

purity associated with virginity, but not virginity itself, remains inside of the confines of marriage. The purity that was once associated with a celibate lifestyle is now expected of early modern women inside marriage where there is no possibility of virginity. Instead, the emphasis shifts to chastity, and chastity becomes defined by a woman's piety.

The image of Minerva driving the chariot can also be read as the collapsing space of celibacy in England. Before the Protestant Reformation a woman could enter a convent, remain a virgin, and devote her life to Christ. The spiritual significance of the act was often called a marriage. Lanyer references the connection between celibacy and a marriage to Christ in her own poetry, such as in the reference to the Parable of the Ten Virgins. The belief has a long history in Christianity and a celibate space was needed for the relationship. St. Paul wrote about the spiritual difference between a virgin and a wife: "There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband" (1 Cor. 7: 34). Paul recognizes the spiritual benefit of a celibate life, and convents were created as a place for women to remain celibate within the confines of a marriage-like institution. The image of Minerva can be read as a virgin remaining in the confines of marriage (the chariot). If it is interpreted this way, then Minerva's abandoning of the chariot signals the end of celibacy within marriage. Right after the chariot lands she abandons it: "Her borrowed Charret by a spring did leave" ("the Authors Dreame" l. 36). When read in this context the chariot recalls the idea of a collapsing space for celibacy and explains why Minerva abandons the chariot. The fall of a space for celibacy is inevitable because of the

borrowed status of the chariot. Minerva will need to return the chariot and there will no longer be space for celibacy within a marriage-like structure.

Lanyer is trying to synthesize the ideals of celibacy, the idea of purity, devotion, and commitment, with the reality of matrimony in both readings. First is the specter of Juno's chariot throughout the poems. The image of Minerva and the chariot seems to be an acceptance of marriage that combines the ideal of celibacy within marriage, as well as an acknowledgement of the collapse of the monastic system. However, there is also a definite sense of danger when the chariot arrives. The speaker looks to the sky in "the Authors Dreame" and finds that the previously clear sky has turned violent: "[The sky] was overcast / and duskie clouds, with boyst'rous winds great store, / foretold of violent storms which could not last" (ll. 22-24). The next stanza is the arrival of Minerva in Juno's chariot. The tranquil nature of the clear sky disrupted by the arrival of the chariot gives the impression that marriage is dangerous and undesirable, and, like the weather, it cannot be controlled. The chariot itself is frightening, being led by "foure fierie Dragons" (l. 28). These images create ambiguity about marriage because the chariot is a powerful and threatening force in the poem; however the married Lady Sidney continues to be held in high esteem. The inevitability of marriage is commented on shortly after the chariot lands with Aurora usurping Cynthia and her virgins. There is a quotidian quality in the dawn overtaking the moon, but, given the sexual nature of the passage, it also suggests that the realm of celibacy is temporary and the dawn rising each morning will cause the chaste moon to fall.

Juno's chariot marks the end of the celibate life outside of marriage and so does the physical setting of the world, which becomes ambiguous after turning away from the pleasures of the May Day festival. The sacred spring where Pallas and the court travel is called Pergusa: "Behold those woods, those groves, those bowers rare, / by which *Pergusa*, for so hight the name / of that faire spring, his dwelling place & ground" (ll. 107-9). The lake Pergusa, or Pergus, is located near the town of Henna in Sicily, and it is known for the abduction of Persephone (Proserphina) (Ovid 5. 384-6). Ovid describes the scene in a similar way to Lanyer: "Not far from the walls of Sicilian Henna you'll come to a deep lake, / Pergus by name… / The water is wreathed all around by a garland of forest, ... / a flowery carpet of Tyrian purple; and spring is eternal" (Ovid 5. 384-91). Lanyer identifies the spring with Pergusa and, by doing so, draws associations with Persephone. Zimmerman defines the Greek word Persephone as maiden (200), and this places her in the retinue of mythical virgins surrounding Minerva and the Lady Sidney. In "Calliope's song: the Rape of Proserphina" from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Ovid recalls many of the sentiments already experienced in "the Authors Dreame" and creates a scene reminiscent of the frown of Venus. When Venus is speaking to Eros she says, "You can see that Minerva and also the goddess of hunting, Diana, / have firmly rejected me. So will the virgin daughter of Ceres, / if we allow it to happen; her hopes are the same as the others" (Ovid 5. 375-7). The quote elaborates Venus' motives for the frown earlier in the poem, because it recalls a desire for solitude and the ability to choose a life outside of marriage. The scene sums up the cause of Venus' frown in "To all vertuous Ladies," while it expands on how Venus will rectify their turn towards celibacy. Persephone

wishes to remain a virgin and unmarried, but Venus, with the help of Cupid, plans her abduction and marriage to Pluto.

The threat of marriage destroying the female community is present in the sacred spring where the chaste community is located. Minerva is a symbol of strength and chastity for women, and she uses the chariot of Juno to protect women from being carried away. Juno's chariot is led by four dragons that could counteract the four black horses of Pluto's chariot used to abduct Persephone (Ovid 5: 360). However, Minerva has emblematically abandoned the chariot next to Pergusa. The chariot impotently sits near the spring, useless without a driver. The chariot is now unable to fulfill its purpose and keep the celibate realm safe from aberrant sexual behavior. Because the chariot is unmanned, the implication is that the maidens can now be carried off into marriage either by force or by other factors. If the chariot of Juno adds a transient quality to the virgin court, then the staging of the court in Pergusa adds another level of danger and inevitability to marriage. This causes a shift back to the idea of chaste marriage. If there is no space for celibacy and religious devotion outside of marriage and a woman's place in society rests on her piety and chastity, then the concept must be reworked into marriage.

The uselessness of the chariot, Pluto's abduction of Persephone, and Minerva's abandonment of the chariot all center on Lady Sidney. She is the recipient of the poem and its focal point. The virgin goddesses give her esteem even though she is a married woman. She embodies the reality of chaste marriage by being intellectually and spiritually in the celibate realm of Minerva but physically in an early modern marriage.

The physical nature of marriage does not allow for celibacy. Instead, the celibate cloister's devotion is transplanted into the married woman. The ideal of celibacy is no longer tenable in early modern England, and Lanyer is trying to fuse the conflicting expectations placed on women together in her poetry.

Lanyer captures the tension in early modern society between changing notions of piety, virtue, and the reality of married life. The dedicatory poems to *Salve* create an imaginative realm where celibacy is still an acceptable pathway for women, and Lanyer does this through her use of virgin goddesses and the speaker's emphasis on emulating the goddesses. She creates a tension between the emphasis on celibacy and virginity and contemporary early modern society that no longer accepts a life of celibacy. Lanyer inserts Lady Sidney into the poem in an attempt to confront the incongruous expectations placed on women and work through the competing ideas of celibacy and marriage. The working solution for Lanyer is the concept of chaste marriage that combines the virtue of celibacy with the reality of marriage. Lanyer praises a chaste marriage, embodied by Lady Sidney, over the marriages of Venus, Maie, and Flora. The three goddesses demonstrate unchaste marriages and are used as foils to Lady Sidney's chaste marriage. The supremacy of chaste marriage over virginity and unchaste marriage is made apparent, but there is still a sense of danger in the poem. The chariot of Juno, an image of marriage, causes fear when it comes crashing down from heaven. Minerva's abandonment of the chariot, a symbol of celibacy abandoning marriage, opens up the opportunity for the maid Persephone to be stolen by Pluto. All of the imagery and classical mythology creates ambiguity about marriage, although it still strongly suggests

that marriage is inevitable for early modern women. Lanyer identifies the lack of choice available to women after the Reformation and seems uneasy with her discovery. Lanyer uses the space accorded to her by classical mythology to explore the shifting concepts of marriage in early modern England, and she leaves her final conclusion about the state of marriage ambiguous.

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CHRIST'S HUMORAL IRONY IN GEORGE HERBERT'S "THE SACRIFICE"

The early modern era was a time of discovery and rediscovery as scientific, geographic, and religious knowledge quickly expanded. With advancements in science and medicine came changes in how people understood the body and how it interacted with the world. In the midst of this rediscovery, George Herbert wrote *The Temple* (1633), one of the greatest works of devotional poetry produced in the early modern period. Herbert created this work during a time when concepts of the body were developing out of Andreas Vesalius' medical research, the public interest in dissection, and a plethora of theories about the body and soul. Bodily concepts came to influence Herbert's work, and I will be looking how it specifically influences the poem "The Sacrifice." There is a long critical history of viewing the poem within the medieval tradition of meditative poems about Christ's Passion. In this tradition, the poet would place himself or herself within the physical act of the Passion and attempt to relive the physical and emotional pain of Christ. The writer would do this as an act of penance in order to repay Christ's sacrifice. In response to these claims, Ilona Bell's argues that "The Sacrifice" is not a medieval and Catholic meditative poem but only uses the structure and formula of the medieval poems ironically to emphasize one's inability to experience the physical, emotional, and spiritual pain of Christ. I will continue to work from Bell's article "Setting Foot Into Divinity" (1977), which refutes "The Sacrifice" as a serious

meditative work in the medieval vein, and broaden the discussion by engaging with recent work on the early modern body by scholars such as Gail Kern Paster, Michael Schoenfeldt, Caroline Bynum and Jonathan Sawday. The research by these scholars on how the early modern culture conceived of the body has broadened the conversation around the body in early modern literature. These discoveries need to be taken into account when dealing with Bell's refutation of "The Sacrifice" as a medieval meditative poem. I intend to integrate the recent scholarship into the argument in order to give a fuller view of how Herbert undermines the medieval tradition he is mimicking. Herbert uses his knowledge of early modern bodily concepts, such as Galen's humoral theory and the porousness of the body, to create an identifiable Christ in early modern bodily discourse. He is then able to draw the reader into the extreme pain of Christ in order to stress the inability of man to reenact or repay Christ's sacrifice.

I will examine how Herbert incorporates concepts of the physical body in early modern England into his depiction of Christ. First, it is necessary to establish Christ's body as a physical object within "The Sacrifice" and not an abstract concept. Once Christ's body is established, it is possible to examine early modern ideas and concepts about the body that are not incorporated by Bell's argument. These include Galenic humoral theory, the semi-permeable nature of the body, and its communal ramifications. Herbert then integrates those concepts into "The Sacrifice" and helps the reader identify with the pain of Christ only to reveal the impossibility of humanity recreating the Passion sequence, which undermines the purpose of the medieval meditative poem. Herbert uses the medieval structure of the poem ironically on both a physical and spiritual level, which

makes it impossible for humanity to imitate Christ's Passion. Finally, I will show how the weight of Christ's grief causes the poem to collapse with the augmented refrain "Never was grief like mine" ("The Sacrifice" l. 252).

"The Sacrifice" has a long tradition of being viewed as a medieval and Catholic meditation poem about Christ's Passion, and it is necessary to situate the poem in that critical history. Critically, Scholars have given significant effort to situating "The Sacrifice" among the tradition of medieval and Catholic meditative poetry. Rosemond Tuve in *A Reading of George Herbert* (1952) gave an explanation of "The Sacrifice" that viewed the poem as conceived in the medieval and Catholic tradition of meditative poetry (Wilcox 94). In this tradition, the author wrote the poem in order to seek communion with Christ through His pain (Bell 224). The reader saw the attempt to commune with Christ through His pain as penance, in which one could feel the pain of Christ in order to thank or repay Him for His sacrifice. A number of scholars followed Tuve including Bell, who figures most importantly in my own research. In her article "Setting Foot into Divinity" Bell traces Herbert's use of medieval meditative poetry in *The Temple* and, unlike scholars before her, comes to the conclusion that Herbert's "The Sacrifice" is not a simple reenactment of "Christ's Crucifixion according to medieval and Catholic devotional and poetic traditions" (240). Instead, she views Herbert's use of the medieval tradition as intentionally ironic in order to emphasize the "unbridgeable gap between [the speaker's] present suffering and Christ's past Passion" (240). Bell acknowledges Herbert's belief in man's inability to pay off the debt owed to Christ. She makes the assertion that Herbert was not writing to further the tradition of the Catholic meditative

poem but was undermining it instead. Yet, for Herbert there are benefits to imagining the crucifixion, and Bell identifies that one of Herbert's reasons for writing the poem was to understand the crucifixion more fully: "His imagined presence at the Passion brings a feeling of direct, physical communion with Christ, enabling him to understand and trust in the present benefits of Christ's sacrifice" (Bell 225). What Bell fails to acknowledge is how early modern concepts of the body also came to affect the poem's ironic leanings in "The Sacrifice" and how Herbert presents Christ's body in identifiable early modern terms. Herbert can make the point of man's inability to repay God even more explicit by creating a more visceral representation of Christ on the cross for early modern readers,

In order to understand how concepts of the body affect Herbert's representation of Christ in the poem, it is necessary to establish Christ as a corporeal figure in the poem and not an abstract idea. Christian doctrine holds that Christ was incarnated as fully human and, as such, he experienced a human life. The reader needs a constant visceral reminder of His physical existence during the Passion. There is a temporal distance between early modern England and the time of Christ, as well as a movement away from physical representations of Christ in the Protestant Church. Herbert uses the tradition of reliving the pain and experience of Christ in "The Sacrifice" to make Christ identifiably human and to examine the possibility for man to repay Christ's sacrifice. Herbert retells the Passion story from the perspective of Christ, and it is the only poem he writes entirely from Christ's point of view. The perspective of the poem creates space for an intellectual and visceral reliving of Christ's pain, following the format of the medieval meditation poem. The reader experiences the Passion from Christ's point of view and, because of

that, is able to experience a stronger emotional connection than in a third person point of view. Placing oneself within the mind and body of Christ during the Passion sequence is not new to the Passion story but is a continuation of medieval meditative practices. Herbert imitates the practices in an attempt to recreate the full range of physical and emotional pain and grief experienced by Christ, but he is ultimately unable to come close to or even comprehend the depth of the sacrifice.

The physical body of Christ starts at the incarnation where God undergoes a physical transformation. His descent into the world, by way of the incarnation, takes place in the visible, corporeal spectrum and through sight and the senses. Church doctrine holds that Christ is both fully man and fully God: "for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (*King James Version* Col. 2:9). In the first stanza of "The Sacrifice," Herbert reminds the reader of Christ's transition into a human: "Oh all ye, who passe by, whose eyes and minde / To worldly things are sharp, but to me blinde; / To me, who took eyes that I might find you finde" (l. 1-3). Christ takes on a physical form, but note that the speaker is also reminding the audience about man's forgetfulness of Christ's physicality. Herbert opens the poem by reminding humanity that even though they are conscious of the physical world they continually overlook Christ. The opening stanza sets the tone for the entire poem: the poem will be about Christ trying to make the reader no longer "blinde" to Him and His physical existence and trials.

The poem focuses on the pain and grief of Christ's human life in an attempt to help the reader experience the Passion sequence. Once Christ enters the world through the incarnation, He begins interacting with the physical world in "The Sacrifice." First,

Christ is manipulated in a physical way by the world. He is captured, attacked, and sold by the Jews. Judas sells His body like an "Egyptian slave" (l. 15), which recalls the physical trials and labor of the Jewish people in Egypt. Like them, He is now bound and subject to the law: "They binde, and leade me unto Herod" (l. 73). Herod was the Roman client king over Judea. "The Sacrifice" presents Christ as a physical body, which exists and can be hurt. Second, the poem places Christ in a state of physical pain and suffering. Once sentenced to death He is whipped: "Ah! How they scourge me! Yet my tendernesse / Doubles each lash" (ll. 125-6). The soldiers beat and degrade Christ: "They buffet me, and box me as they list, / who grasp the earth and heaven with my fist" (ll. 129-30). The instances of physical pain serve as a reminder to the nature of Christ as human, as well as a sacrifice. The pain he experiences is real, but Christ also makes it known that He is more than human. The pain of the lashes is doubled due to Christ's physical and theological tenderness (Wilcox 107). The punishment Christ receives is for the entirely of humanity and, as such, is much more intense and extensive than anticipated. The reminder that He has power over heaven and earth further reinforces His position as a sacrifice. Finally, His mortality and materiality lead to His crucifixion and death ("The Sacrifice" l. 249). Herbert recounts the visceral nature of each episode and the emphasis on the bodily harm, pain and grief of Christ to mirror traditional medieval and Catholic meditation poems (Bell 222). The reader lives through the pain of Christ vicariously, and goes through each step of the Passion. All of this establishes Christ as a physical entity to the reader and places his suffering in identifiable terms of bodily harm.

Bell's article focuses on how Herbert uses the structure of the Catholic meditative poetry ironically. Overlooked in her article is how the changes to early modern concepts of the body affected Herbert's representation of Christ in the poem. These bodily changes allow for a deeper level of irony to be read in the poem. First, I will look at the changes that occurred in the concept of the early modern body, and then discuss how the changes made the body more identifiable to an early modern reader, allowing for the possibility of a stronger connection to Christ. The perception of the body saw rapid changes in the early modern period, and this was mainly due to the work of Andreas Vesalius, an anatomist who wrote *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* (On the Fabric of the Human Body) in 1543 (Sawday 65). The book is a medical text equipped with full illustrations of the dissected body, and it outlines the different systems and functions of the body. The book helped spark an increased interest in the body, both medically and publically. During this time, public dissection became a general practice and a source of entertainment. The dissections were not scientific but theatrical as Jonathan Sawday writes, "Anatomies were performed in public, then, as ritualistic expressions… rather than as scientific investigations in any modern sense" (63). During the winter months, anatomists performed dissections publically. The public dissections were common throughout the early modern period and took place in the city's theatres with the bodies of executed criminals being used (57). Herbert lived when the popularity of public dissection was at its height, and the dissection theatre no doubt influenced his ideas about the body. Knowledge about the body was expanding as a result of the public's interest in the body

and the opportunity to learn more about the inner workings of the body in the public arena. Herbert takes the era's interest in the body and integrates it into his own work.

The physical body on display in England was not the only thing to influence Herbert. The early modern era also saw a revival of medical theories about the body, including humoral theory and the concept of the body as a semi-permeable entity. Galen's humoral theory was "the classical theory of the four humors upon which ancient biology and hence the practice of medicine [was] based for centuries" (Paster, *The Body Embarrassed* 2), and was considered the dominant medical theory during the early modern period. The theory consisted of the four fluids called humors – blood, phlegm, choler, and black bile – that moved in and around the human body causing physiological and psychological changes (7-8). Mental and physical health was determined by how the humors behaved within the body. The humors negatively affected health when they became out of balance, which resulted in disease (Paster, *Humoring the Body* 17). People believed that health rested on a "state of internal solubility" (Paster, *The Body Embarrassed* 8) where one humor was able to change into another humor without difficulty. Problems arose when too much of one humor resided in the body, causing an imbalance. The humors were difficult to regulate because early modern medicine considered the body to be a semi-permeable entity that allowed both internal and external substances to affect it (9). The body was an "irrigated container in which humors moved sluggishly" (8), and it was critical how the container allowed for both the entry and exit of the humors. Ultimately the only way to normalize the body was through regulating the substances entering and exiting the body.

Herbert integrates humoral concepts into Christ's body as well. There is a regular exchange of fluids in and around Christ's body. In "The Sacrifice" there is a constant expulsion of tears (ll. 25, 149-150), blood (ll. 22, 105, 150, 158), and spit (ll. 133-5, 181) as Christ goes through the Passion sequence. Christ's body is continually leaking a mixture of fluids out into the world, which signals an excess of humors, and all of those fluids are reducible to blood in the body. As Paster writes, "Galenic physiology proposed a body whose constituent fluids, all reducible to blood, were entirely fungible… blood, semen, milk, sweat, tears, and other bodily fluids turn into one another" (*The Body Embarrassed* 9). Christ has an excess of humors at the beginning of the poem, and the mixture of gall and vinegar that enters His body pushes Him over the edge. The only thing Christ consumes during the Passion sequence is a mixture of gall and vinegar: "They gave me vinegar mingled with gall, / but more with malice: yet, when they did call, / With Manna, Angels food, I fed them all" ("The Sacrifice" ll. 237-9). Helen Wilcox identifies gall as "a bitter-tasting substance, an emblem of the opposite extreme to sweetness" (107). The gall and vinegar mixture is physically displeasing to the taste, and Christ takes the bitter mixture into His body, causing a further imbalance of the humors.

The act of maintaining humoral balance depended on what a person consumed, and Herbert was consciously aware of how different substances affected the body's humoral balance. In the article "George Herbert's Consuming Subject" (1994), Schoenfeldt traces how Herbert's conception of the regulated body came to affect the poet's life. Schoenfeldt defines the regulated body as "the exercise of increasing discipline over the substances that enter and exit the body – food, drink, saliva, tears,

urine, feces, blood" (117). The reason for regulating the body was to control the humoral balance and lead a healthier life. Bodily regulation increased during the early modern era as the world became increasingly "civilized," which translated into more regulations on when, where, and how bodily substances enter and exit the body. Herbert was aware of the humoral effects of food and liquid in the body and was troubled with how substances entering and exiting the body affected the inner spiritual and humoral life (106). Schoenfeldt convincingly shows how Herbert was affected by the notions of humoral theory through Herbert's stress on what was consumed. It is easy to see how Herbert's attentiveness to the regulated body becomes integrated into his depiction of Christ consuming the gall and vinegar mixture.

Christ's body is in a state of humoral imbalance, and He needs to have the excess of humors purged. The poem maintains the early modern view that the expulsion of waste and excess humoral fluids is a way to prevent illness (*Bodies and Selves* 61). Schoenfeldt outlines a conventional way Herbert viewed the body in response to fluids:

> Herbert here imagines the self as a principle of containment amid a series of fluid influences on conduct. Underpinning this vision is the Galenic concept of the four humors, the predominant medical model of the early seventeenth century. This physiology endowed physical and mental illness with material causes, either in the shortage or surplus. ("Consuming Subject" 112)

The body is a container for the different bodily fluids, and it was part of proper Renaissance courtesy to keep those fluids in check and within the body. However, sometimes it became necessary to adjust the fluids in the body, either because of excess or shortage. Christ clearly has a humoral imbalance caused by an excess of humors in

"The Sacrifice," and the influx of gall and vinegar exacerbates the problem. According to humoral theory, on a physical level the fluid mixture Christ imbibed went through an intricate process that transformed it into blood (Paster, *The Body Embarrassed* 70). The added blood continues to unbalance the humors of Christ. When discussing the humoral body Paster writes, “People imagined that health consisted of a state of internal solubility to be perilously maintained, often through a variety of evacuations, either self-administered or in consultation with a healer” (8). One of the most widely used medical practices in early modern Europe to accomplish bodily evacuation was bloodletting. In the practice of bloodletting, a physician would try to balance the internal body through the evacuation of blood (*The Body Embarrassed* 73). The evacuation of blood was thought to balance the humors and Herbert places an emphasis on it when dealing with Christ’s expulsions. The poem leaves Christ with an excess of blood, on the material level, after the influx of gall and vinegar, and sin on the spiritual level, which casues an internal imbalance. In order for Christ to regain a humorally balanced body, He will need to undergo a bleeding on the cross. The instability of Christ’s body requires a purgation of the harmful fluids and Herbert uses a metaphorical bloodletting to accomplish the purge.

None of the instances of Christ releasing blood and other fluids into the world can be called an intentional bleeding until He is on the cross. The greatest moment of expulsion in Herbert’s poem happens after Christ’s death: “Nay, after death their spite shall further go; / For they will pierce my side, I full well know; / That as sinne came, so Sacraments might flow” (“The Sacrifice” ll. 245-7). The piercing of Christ on the cross

mirrors the bleeding process, and releases the mixture of blood and water in an attempt to return His body to a humorally balanced position. The attempt fails because Christ has already died, but it is still useful to view Christ as experiencing a bleeding in order to understand its spiritual significance. As mentioned above, the act of bleeding was either self-administered or done in consultation with a physician. During the scene on the cross, Christ willingly allows the soldiers to harm Him and to ultimately pierce His side. The piercing of His side, which releases blood and water (John 19:34), is a self-administered act because He came willingly down to earth and He has the ability to stop the torture at any point: "Yet for twelve heav'nly legions I could call" ("The Sacrifice" l. 55). He is also considered a physician in both the poem and the Bible. A few lines before the piercing of Christ, the soldiers mock Him saying, "Now heal thy self, Physician; now come down" ("The Sacrifice" l. 221) to which Christ responds "Alas! I did so" (l. 222). The bleeding is done in consultation with a healer, which Christ embodies, making it fit within early modern concept of a bleeding. The Bible compares Christ to a physician many times. For example, the Gospel of Matthew shows Christ traveling to different cities healing the sick: "Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people" (Matt. 9: 35). The bleeding is performed in order to balance Christ's body but, due to His death, it is unsuccessful. Instead, the physical concept of a humoral bleeding is used to describe the metaphysical concept of justification. Herbert uses the well-known physical models of the early modern era to

help make the spiritual ramifications of Christ's death more easily understood to an early modern audience.

So far, this reading has focused on the physical aspects of early modern bodily theory in order to demonstrate the theories working within Herbert's poem. "The Sacrifice" leads the reader through a very visceral and violent retelling of Christ's experience during Holy Week, which concludes with Christ's death. Herbert does this to create an identifiable and easily understood early modern body for the reader. The poem presents Christ's body as a common early modern body, including the less than ideal leakiness. The use of bodily systems shows the pain in an approachable way understood by the contemporary reader, and the systems make it possible for the reader to form a stronger connection with the trials and tribulations of Christ. This is one of the goals of medieval meditation poetry, which focused on reenacting the physical suffering of Christ. According to Bell, making Christ identifiable and understandable was precisely the aim of medieval meditative poetry as she writes, " [the] imagined presence at the Passion brings a feeling of direct, physical communion with Christ" (225). Herbert mimics this structure in his poem, but instead of using it as the tradition dictates, as a vehicle for coming closer to Christ's death and pain, he uses the overwhelming suffering of Christ ironically, which causes the poem to collapse if read as a serious attempt at a meditation poem. Herbert builds a conscious awareness of Christ's physical punishment, and a reading of the poem purely on a physical level collapses under the punishment's weight.

Herbert uses early modern concepts of the body to draw the reader further into the poem. The reader is able to identify Christ as an early modern body and understand the

similarities of Christ's body and the reader's own body. Christ's physical body, displayed in early modern terms, positions Him in a more understandable and identifiable way. However, after this movement Herbert spends "The Sacrifice" tearing down the fallacy that Christ's suffering is anywhere near a human level or could be understood by the reader. Herbert undermines what appears to be a medieval Catholic meditation poem attempting to recreate the physical and emotional experiences of Christ. The purpose of that style of poetry was to cause grief and remorse in the believer by dwelling on the physical pain of Christ. Herbert leads the reader along the same path, raising feelings of grief and reliving the physical pain, which he then takes to a traumatic extreme. During the course of the poem, Herbert paints an incredibly bleak picture of the Passion where he punctuates each beating, injury, or moment of pain with a refrain "Was ever grief like mine?" The poem's continued refrain peppers the stanzas with what Ilona Bell calls a "completely conventional" phrase that was "frequently attributed to Christ in Medieval poetry" (226). His intention is not to have a believer work his or her way through the physical pain of Christ, but come to the recognition that it is physically impossible to accomplish that goal. The reader has been led through a physical reenactment where Christ asks the question, "Was ever grief like mine?" in a legitimately searching way. For the reader who wishes to treat the poem as a medieval meditation poem, and attempts to place his or her body through the trials of Christ, there is the opportunity after each question. A person can relieve the physical pain in certain instances of the poem, but the readers are not able to experience the full weight of the pain. The poem asks the question

sixty-one times and the weight of all of those questions becomes overwhelming. The refrain resonates in the reader's mind until the only answer is no.

Herbert attempts to overload the poem with physical pain in order to test the boundaries of the medieval meditative structure, and, by using bodily concepts, he expands the ironic structure of the poem in a more robust way than Bell realized. The poem combines the physical experience of Christ with the spiritual significance of the early modern body in order to create an ironic strain in the poem. The combined physical and spiritual aspects of the poem make the possibility of man re-creating the suffering of Christ as an act of penance impossible. It is now important to examine how the spiritual implications of the early modern body continue to undermine a meditative reading of the poem.

Early modern concepts of the body add a deeper spiritual level to the poem, which Herbert exploits to overwhelm the reader further. As mentioned above, the humoral theory and the semi-permeability of the body were common concepts in early modern England, and Herbert uses them to convey deep spiritual meaning. There are many instances of the expulsion of tears, blood and spit in the poem. Schoenfeldt describes the expulsions of Christ as "salutary leakiness," which is "Christ's own gracious outpouring of bodily fluid" ("Consuming Subject" 117). Christ undergoes willingly the physical torment of the cross, and the result of His pain is a constant leakage. His bodily discharge takes on a spiritual meaning and "The Sacrifice" describes it as having sacramental and saving qualities. His blood has a metaphysical and healing quality in "The Sacrifice" that

lies outside of a purely physical reading of His body. After being sold by Judas, Christ describes the affects of His blood:

> Therefore my soul melts, and my hearts deare treasure
> Drops bloud (the onely beads) my words to measure:
> O let this cup passe, if it be thy pleasure:
> Was ever grief like mine?
> These drops being temper'd with a sinners tears,
> A Balsome are for both the Hemispheres:
> Curing all wounds, but mine; all, but my fears:
> Was ever grief like mine? (ll. 21-28)

Christ's blood causes real and meaningful change in the physical world, and His blood embodies the idea of salutary leakiness. The community takes in the expulsion of Christ's blood, which failed to balance His physical humoral life, in order to heal itself. Christ's porous body allows it to move in and throughout the community because the porous body is open to the world and, by extension, other people. The fluids leaving His body take on a salutary quality that the community absorbs, causing a physical and spiritual change. Herbert turns the bodily image of humoral leakiness from a purely physical concept into a spiritual reimagining of the sacrifice.

The blood of Christ continues to have spiritual significance throughout the rest of the poem and specifically in His position as a blood sacrifice. Christ acknowledges the sacramental aspect of His blood in "The Sacrifice" and calls Himself the "readie Paschal Lambe of this great week" (ll. 59). The sacrificial lamb is a recognizable feature of atonement for a Christian audience, and it is specifically part of the Holy Week, where the spilling of the lamb's blood has sacramental and saving properties as in the Hebrew

Passover in Exodus 12. Christ positions Himself as the Passover lamb, which is a consistent concept throughout all sects of Christianity. As Caroline Bynum describes it, "for all the vitriolic polemic and sophisticated religious controversy between and among Catholics and Protestants – Christians did not disagree that the crucifixion was a blood sacrifice" (228). Christian understood the sacrifice of Christ and the spiritual and salutary significance of His blood. The breaking of Christ's physical container and the outpouring of His sacramental blood are spiritually meaningful events in Eucharistic terms. The Holy Communion mirrors the sacramental nature of Christ's blood by remembering His body and blood as the sacramental bread and wine: "And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me" (1 Corn. 11: 24). "The Sacrifice" describes Christ's body as bread (l. 7), and He references His blood dripping as wine when the crown of thorns is placed forcibly on his head: "then on my head a crown of thorns I wear: / For these are the grapes Sion doth bear, / Though I my vine planted and watred there" ("The Sacrifice" ll. 161-3). The grapes of Sion are turned into the wine of the Eucharist. Herbert inserts Christ's blood, as part of the Holy Communion, to remind the reader of the spiritual importance of His sacrifice. It also serves to return the reader to an early modern way of experiencing the Passion spiritually instead of physically.

Christ's leakiness throughout the poem causes physical and spiritual change in the lives of believers, and He releases a broad range of fluids into the world. In the Garden of Gethsemane, after He accepts the cup of God's wrath, Christ weeps tears that take on a salutary leakiness ("The Sacrifice" ll. 25-7) and can heal the physical wounds of the

believer. The healing and saving nature of Christ's fluids continue further down the poem where Christ heals a blind man with his spit: "Who by my spittle gave the blinde man eies" (l. 134). Christ's physical nature also has metaphysical properties and simply touching his coat can cause healing: "My coat, the type of love, which once cur'd those / who sought for help" (l. 242). Ultimately, the salutary effects of his blood are spiritual in nature. Christ's blood takes on properties that are outside the natural world, but the poem depicts its transference into other bodies through the natural early modern idea of the porous body. This causes His sacramental fluids to move in and throughout the community.

Humoral theory also accounts for the communal aspects of Christ's body. The semi-permeable quality of Christ is not limited to His leakiness, but also how He interacts within the community. The early modern body was a communal body because if a body is porous then it is open to others. Bodily regulation arose in an attempt to limit the harm an open body could do to others and safeguard the community. Paster comments on this aspect of the body in her book *The Body Embarrassed*: "the cultural meaning of that openness remains indeterminate... For the humoral body, all boundaries were threatened because they were – as a matter of physical definition and functional health – porous and permeable" (13). Christ's body is also open to the world and Herbert demonstrates this in his poetry. "The Thanksgiving" calls Christ the "King of wounds" (l. 3) and describes his body as a "doore" (l. 6). The wounds and the semi-permeable nature of Christ create a door for both blood and a metaphysical connection to God to move through. The body, as a door, is open to the world and is not "a closed completed unit" (Paster 14). Christ's

fluids spill out into the community causing change. Christ is not a complete and static unit, but a flowing and changing body that changes the human community. In His death, Christ creates a spiritual rebirth within the community that is spawned from His blood sacrifice.

The most important overlap of early modern notions of the body and Christ's spiritual significance takes place, unsurprisingly, at the moment of Christ's death on the cross. It is during the crucifixion that Christ experiences "a final and wholly human death" (White 118). Christ's experience of a completely human death reinforces the familiar doctrinal point that Christ descends into hell and experiences the full range of human pain: "Christ really does die, and descend to hell, before rising. He experiences to the full, and beyond it, our experience of suffering and death, and this in a most humiliating form" (118). Christ experiences the spiritual damnation of humanity and overcomes it. The central act of His crucifixion combines both the physical Christ, situated in early modern bodily theory, and the spiritual significance of His death on the cross. As mentioned above, the soldiers pierce Christ's side and the act mirrors a physician's bleeding of a body. It can be read humorally as an effort to balance the body and rid it of excessive humoral fluids. On a spiritual level, the piercing of Christ is an act of balancing His spiritual body. The imbibing of the mixture of gall and vinegar comes to represent an influx of sin into the body. During the Passion, Christ takes on the sins of humanity. Christian history often describes the sin Christ takes on as bitterness, which coincides with the use of gall. The influx of sin results is a diseased body. The only way

to remove the sin from Christ and humanity is to bleed it out and for Christ to experience a truly human death.

The early modern reader would be able to recognize and appreciate the image of Christ the healer purging His body in an attempt to balance it. Even though He has all the powers of a healer, Christ chooses not to heal Himself in the same way the soldiers want. Instead, He says on the cross "In healing not my self, there doth consist / All that salvation, which ye now resist; / Your safetie in my sicknesse doth subsist" (ll. 225-227). Christ forgoes healing Himself because only in His death can He heal the rest of humanity. His bleeding is actually a healing balsam that spills onto humanity, and Christ desires for His blood to spill into the community: "putting my life among their sinnes and fears, / And therefore wish my bloud on them and theirs" (ll. 106-7). The healing comes out of His physical body, but it is no longer a physical act. Instead, the blood of Christ is used for spiritual healing. The saving sacraments come out of Christ's own sympathy as Schoenfeldt writes, "Herbert's Christ graciously accommodates the corporeal seepage that a sympathetic response to his own suffering demands" ("Consuming Subject" 117-8). Christ is responding to the physical trauma in an identifiable, human way and doing so within early modern notions of the body. The result is a salutary leakiness in His body that moves throughout the community and Christian history. The episode brings the physical and spiritual reality of His death together. Elsky describes the duality of a spiritual and physical crucifixion in another way: "To see Christ 'thus crucifi'd' is continually to adjust one's view inward and outward: to see Christ not only objectively, but also to see the image of his Passion in one's soul. The repentant sinner and the

crucified Christ become mirror images of each other" (81). The spiritual significance of Christ's sacrifice mirrors the transference of fluids between porous bodies. Christ's body is a porous unit that absorbs humanity's bitter sin, causing an imbalance in His body. Christ's saving blood does not stay confined within His own body. Instead, it leaks out of His porous body into the sinner's body, purifying and justifying the believer.

Herbert takes the format of a medieval meditation poem and overloads it with the full weight of Christ's physical pain and spiritual importance. The format ultimately breaks under the physical and spiritual pressure, and it emphasizes to the reader the impossibility of repaying Christ back in either way. "The Thanksgiving" confirms the untenable nature of the medieval format. After spending "The Sacrifice" in an attempt to repay Christ, the speaker continues the task in "The Thanksgiving" and asks, "Shall I weep bloud? Why thou hast wept such store / That all thy body was one doore. / Shall I be scourged, flouted, boxed, sold" (ll. 5-7). The question focuses on the Passion and the physical aspects of Christ's torment. The speaker asks if re-creating the physical trials of the event is enough. In "The Thanksgiving," Herbert calls back to "The Sacrifice" with the lines "Oh King of Wounds! How shall I grieve for thee, / Who in all grief preventest me" (ll. 3-4). Helen Wilcox defines "preventest" as something that literally "goes before; anticipates, surpasses" (113). "The Sacrifice" literally comes right before "The Thanksgiving" in *The Temple*, and the grief of Christ is so powerful and so in-depth that it surpasses and anticipates any attempt at recompense by a follower. Instead, the speaker of "The Thanksgiving" lists the other ways in which he will try to either repay or exceed Christ's sacrifice. He feels guilty about Christ's sacrifice and develops a desire to have

“reuenge” (l. 17) on Christ. He wants to prove that he can be “victorious” over Him (l. 18), and he will use the gifts Christ gave him in an attempt to repay God for the gift of atonement. The act becomes useless later in the poem when the speaker is confronted with the Passion.

The speaker’s words break down after listing all his attempts to do good works and offset any debt he owes to Christ. Herbert writes the poem in a list-like format and, because of this, the poem develops a quick cadence as the speaker acknowledges the gifts God has given him and then states how he will pay back those gifts. The pace is so quick in the poem that it is jarring when the line breaks. The break causes the speaker to stumble when considering the Passion: “Then for thy passion – I will do for that -- / Alas, my God, I know not what” (ll. 49-50). The visible break in the line, which causes a break in the poem’s cadence, is harsh. The poem collapses at the end with the realization that it is impossible to put an event as important as the crucifixion into words or attempt to repay it. It is not only the physical pain of the Passion that must be repaid because physical acts can be repaid the most part, but the spiritual aspects that cannot be repaid, or even fully comprehended.

The speaker of “The Thanksgiving” tries and fails to find words to express the importance of the crucifixion, and, because of that, the poem collapses in the moment of searching. “The Sacrifice” has a similar breakdown in the speaker’s ability to describe the Passion. There is also a sense of rhythm in "The Sacrifice" as the poem repeats the refrain “Was ever grief like mine?” after every stanza. The repetition instills a sense of added importance to the Passion sequence. As mentioned before, Christ states the

questions in a searching manner, but the experience of the repeated question causes the reader to be overwhelmed by it. This ultimately causes the reader to respond wearily with the answer no. Even for Christ, as the speaker, it becomes difficult to express the meaning of the crucifixion verbally, which causes two breakdowns in the refrain. The first augmented refrain comes in reference to the last words Christ spoke in the Gospel of Matthew, but they are left unfinished in the poem: “But, O my God, my God! Why leav’st thou me, / The sonne in whom thou dost delight to be? / My God, my God ---------- / Never was grief like mine” (ll. 213-16). This abandonment by God the Father is not a physical act of pain, but an entirely spiritual one. The influx of sin on the cross causes the abandonment of God, which is the punishment of sin. Since Christ is now filled with the sin of humanity, symbolized by the imbibing of gall and vinegar, God the Father separates Himself from Christ's body. The modified refrain “Never was grief like mine” explicitly states that no one will ever experience the spiritual abandonment that Christ undergoes because Christ is the only Son of God and the final sacrifice for humanity. This makes it impossible for someone to recreate the Passion in an effort of penance.

The final use of the augmented refrain comes at the very end of the poem where Christ recounts His death: “But now I die; now all is finished. / My wo, mans weal: and now I bow my head. / Onely let others say, when I am dead, / Never was grief like mine” (ll. 249-52). The poem uses the modified refrain here in a slightly different manner than in the first selection. Here, the refrain works to remind the reader of the impossibility of reliving the grief of Christ and that He does not wish anyone to attempt it. It also acknowledges the uniqueness of Christ's grief that was suffered for the whole of

humanity's sins (Wilcox 110). He died for the sins of humanity and, because of that, Christians are justified by His death and are no longer cut off from God (Romans 4:25-5:1). The poem breaks its momentum to let both of the theological points sink into the reader, and it points out the inability of man to comprehend or be able to repay the sacrifice of Christ. A person can experience grief like Christ's in certain instances of the poem, and may better appreciate and comprehend the experience, but they are not able to experience the full weight of the pain. The augmented refrain serves to call attention to this point. Just like in "The Thanksgiving" where the poem collapses around the speaker's search for a way to repay the sacrifice; Christ's own voice collapses when talking about the sacrifice. All of this helps to further reinforce the ironic underlining of the poem.

The changing of the final line is the last ironic turn in the poem where Herbert answers the traditional question posed by the medieval meditation tradition: is it possible to experience the Passion of Christ? Herbert answers the question during the final moments on the cross in order to bring the full combined weight of Christ's physical and spiritual suffering down on the reader. The suffering of Christ is at its pinnacle when at the cross where He takes on the magnitude of man's sins. It is also the moment where Christ's blood undergoes a change in spiritual significance and is now capable of covering over the sins of humanity. The physical aspects of Christ, when placed into an early modern framework, help overwhelm the reader. Christ's early modern body draws the reader into identifying with His pain only to realize that the physical pain experienced by Christ is impossible to comprehend. The spiritual significance of Christ's bodily

functions, combined with His physical pain, serve to separate the reader fully from Christ and from any attempt at reliving the Passion through poetry. Finally, Herbert mirrors the revelation of the weight of the sacrifice in "The Sacrifice" and "The Thanksgiving" where the speaker is at a loss for words when confronted by the cross.

In "The Sacrifice" Herbert uses early modern ideas about the body to emphasize man's inability to reenact and repay Christ for His sacrifice. Herbert establishes that the poem needs to be read on a physical level in the first stanza and makes Christ's physicality apparent to the reader. Next he situates Christ within early modern notions of the body. He uses humoral theory, the concept of the body as a semi-permeable entity, and bloodletting to set Christ's body within early modern concepts of the body, which makes Christ more identifiable to an early modern reader. Christ becomes easier for people to conceptualize, which makes the physical pain that Christ undergoes more visceral and lasting. From the position of an early modern body, it is possible to read the poem with a different spiritual emphasis. The concepts of salutary leakiness and Christ's spiritual semi-permeability make His spiritual sacrifice more acceptable to the early modern reader who understands the humoral body. Most importantly he uses the physical events on the cross, where Christ imbibes the mixture of gall and vinegar and then dies, as a spiritual reading of a doctor bleeding the patient. All of these parts work together to emphasize the futility of placing oneself in the place of Christ and attempting to feel His physical pain in hopes of repaying Him, or justifying oneself to God. The physical and spiritual weight in the poems overwhelms the reader, as does the repeated refrain "was ever grief like mine?" Herbert changes the refrain twice to underline the spiritual

importance of the cross and man's inability to comprehend or repay the sacrifice. Herbert places both refrains and the emphasis on the painful nature of the sacrifice in the framework of a medieval meditation poem. He uses the medieval format ironically to overwhelm the reader with Christ's Passion. I have taken the base of Bell's theory and expanded it to include an emphasis on the early modern body, which expands Herbert's use of irony as a way to overload the poem. The emphasis on the early modern body furthers the argument and sets it within current scholarship.

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