



*Childhood and
Cultural
Despair*

A Theme and Variations
in Seventeenth-Century Literature

Leah Sinanoglou Marcus



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Jesus parvulis oblati imponit manus, et benedicit eis. Mat. 19. Mar. 10. Luc. 18.

Jesus blessing the children. Jan van der Straet (Johannes Stradan). Bibl. nat. Paris



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UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH PRESS

Published by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15260

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Feffer and Simons, Inc., London

Manufactured in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Marcus, Leah.

Childhood and cultural despair.

Bibliography: p. 275

Includes index.

1. English poetry—Early modern, 1500–1700—History and criticism. 2. Children in literature. 3. Children (Christian theology) 4. Children in Great Britain—History. I. Title.

PR545.C45M3 821'.009'352 77-15733

ISBN 0-8229-3367-5

Grateful acknowledgement is here made to *English Literary Renaissance*, edited by Arthur F. Kinney, for permission to reprint portions of the author's article, "Herick's *Noble Numbers* and the Politics of Playfulness," *ELR*, 7 (1977), 108–26; and to Louis L. Martz for permission to quote James M. Osborn's manuscript of Traherne's "Select Meditations."

*Publication of this book was assisted
by the American Council of Learned Societies
under a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.*

For David



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Preface

This study is not about literature in itself, but about literature in its interaction with social and cultural history. When I began the project in 1970, I envisioned it as a standard piece of literary criticism, embellished, perhaps, with a few insights out of Philippe Ariès. As I worked on the seventeenth-century poets, however, it gradually became clear to me that their use of the theme of childhood was closely tied to a number of political and religious issues, and that to separate the poetry entirely from its historical context would be to lose much of its intended significance. The history of childhood and the family is a flourishing new field which should prove immensely helpful to students of literature and scholars in other disciplines. If the present study can demonstrate some of the rewards (and, alas, probably also some of the pitfalls) of such cross-disciplinary endeavors, I shall feel that it has been worthwhile.

The bibliography represents something more than a list of works cited and considerably less than a record of works consulted. It includes those books and articles which proved most useful to me in the preparation of the project. The references in the bibliography are in some cases fuller than those in the notes; articles from *Festschriften* and other similar collections, however, have in most cases not been listed separately from the larger work of which they form a part.

I should like to offer my warm thanks to all the friends and colleagues who have helped during the course of my research and writing. Particular thanks go to Joseph A. Mazzeo, P. Jeffrey Ford, Michael Lieb, Judith Kegan Gardiner, and Mary Carruthers:

each of them has read at least one version of the manuscript in its entirety; their valuable criticisms have saved me from many errors of youth and overenthusiasm. For those faults which remain, however, the responsibility is entirely mine. I owe a great debt of gratitude, which to my regret I cannot now repay, to the late James M. Osborn, for having allowed me access to the typescript of Thomas Traherne's "Select Meditations" at the Beinecke Library. My thanks also to Louis L. Martz, who gave permission for the direct quotations from that manuscript. I am indebted to Stephen Parks of the Beinecke, and to the staffs of the Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary Libraries, the New York Public Library, the Bibliothèque nationale, and the British Library, for their kind assistance, often beyond the call of duty. The project has been generously supported at various stages, first by a Woodrow Wilson Dissertation Fellowship, later by a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend and a grant from the Research Board of the University of Illinois. Without this aid, I should have had great difficulty in bringing my work to fruition. Finally, the warmest thanks of all must go to my husband David, for his unfailing encouragement and patience.

Childhood and Cultural Despair



Childhood and Social Class

If any one shal tell vs of our childishnes, or call vs by the most opprobrious name of boyes, wee hold it a great disgrace, a foule shame and disparagement to ourselues; for wee seeme so farre to dislike their sports, that wee scorne to conuerse with them.

Godfrey Goodman, *The Fall of Man*

In 1695 Gregory King estimated that forty-five percent of the population of England was children. About seventy percent of all households in preindustrial England contained children. As Peter Laslett has pointed out, "There were children everywhere—playing in village streets and fields, hanging around and getting in the way. The perpetual distraction of childish noise and talk must have affected everyone almost all the time." And yet, Laslett remarks, "These crowds and crowds of little children are strangely absent from the written record."¹ We must immediately ask what "written record" Laslett is referring to: fairly extensive discussions of children and child care can be culled out of seventeenth-century diaries, educational writings, and religious manuals. But the major literature, particularly by comparison with that of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, does appear strangely silent on the subject of children and childhood: it is a commonplace of criticism that childhood as a major theme was discovered by writers of the romantic era, that in earlier literature children were portrayed not at all or as miniature adults.²

To look carefully at this commonplace is to raise a host of questions: perhaps the most intriguing is what such a shared per-

ception can tell us about ourselves and our own social and intellectual assumptions. If we are to explore the subject of childhood in literature of a previous era, we must first divest ourselves of our own cultural prejudices about what children should be like. Observers from medieval times to the present seem generally to have agreed about the basic sorts of behavior toward which young children are naturally inclined: they love to play, they appear irrational, they have limited powers of verbal expression, they tend to be oblivious to the trials and responsibilities of adulthood. But people of disparate times and places have by no means agreed about the extent to which such tendencies should be indulged or held in high esteem. Attitudes toward childishness are a most sensitive cultural barometer. Rather than marvel at the paucity of children in earlier writing, we would perhaps do well to ponder their prominence in our own: for if premodern European cultures appear to us to have undervalued such an important stage of life, it could be argued that we in the strongly child-centered western society of the twentieth century tend to the opposite extreme. A sixteenth-century humanist might well be as shocked by our indifference to the wisdom of old age as we are by his contempt for the pleasures of boyhood. His writings propose to transform children with insistent speed into models of gracious eloquence, youngsters with the finesse and intellectual development of educated adults. But if we cast off our own cultural blinders, we may find his haste no more inherently peculiar than our tardiness, our own society's tendency to keep children insulated as long as possible from the mores and requirements of adulthood.

To understand how childhood themes function in literature before the romantic period, we must consider the place of childhood in preindustrial English society. In the nearly two decades since the first appearance of Philippe Ariès' pioneering *Centuries of Childhood: A Society History of Family Life*, the historical study of childhood and family life has become a rich, complex, and controversial field. The patterns described by Ariès himself have recently received important revision and qualification, particularly on the

basis of Ariès' failure to distinguish adequately among three separate levels of generalization: first, the image of childhood set forth in the major literature; second, more widely articulated attitudes; and third, actual social behavior.³ If we blur these important distinctions we lose an extremely valuable analytic tool—we cannot measure one level of generalization against another. By looking at the handling of child subjects in imaginative literature against a background of more generally expressed beliefs and actual social behavior, we will learn a great deal about a given author's intent and add a significant new dimension to our understanding of his artistic achievement.

Such a critical endeavor has several major drawbacks. Determining how children were treated is a major problem because the evidence about actual behavior toward children in medieval and Renaissance England is conflicting and fragmentary at best. The present study will deal almost exclusively with the first two levels of generalization: the major literature and more widely articulated attitudes. Although I have not been able to avoid the third level altogether, I have attempted to base any claim about the actual place and condition of children in premodern society on the best available evidence. Another vexing methodological problem is what the second level of generalization—the rather nebulous category of commonly expressed attitudes—really means. Social historians have recently begun to address the problem of how to relate common cultural assumptions, assumptions which are “in the air” at a given time, to people's actual beliefs.⁴ To attempt any such inquiry here, however, would carry us far beyond the boundaries of the present study. For the purposes of this brief survey, I am assuming that the views encountered repeatedly in the work of moralists, educators, and other writers appealing to a wide audience are at least a rough indicator of the attitudes, preoccupations, and aspirations of a significant portion of that audience. Whether the audience in question actually put such common beliefs into practice is, of course, an entirely separate question.

As we survey commonly expressed attitudes toward childhood

in preindustrial times, one explanation for the relative paucity of child motifs surfaces regularly. When Montesquieu wrote in the 1720s, "Tout ce qui a quelque rapport à l'éducation des enfans, aux sentimens naturels, nous parôit quelque chose de bas & peuple," he was expressing a very basic notion, as valid for England as for France, which we will encounter repeatedly in the course of the present study: until well into the eighteenth century, upper-class people regarded children as lower-class. To sentimentalize childish traits or show particular concern for the day-to-day realities of child-rearing was considered inappropriate among the wellborn and characteristic of the lower social orders.⁵ Of course the lower orders—everyone not classifiable as gentry or nobility—comprised the vast bulk of the English population. But they were a majority whose sentiments and ambitions were seldom reflected in the major literature until the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, when the bourgeoisie became an important part of the reading public. Before then, as long as English culture was dominated by the attitudes of an aristocratic elite, humble childhood was understandably peripheral to the world of letters.

That is by no means to say that no aristocrats or gentry took any interest in their children—we know that many did. To the extent that they expressed such interest in writing, however, they were setting themselves against a dominant current of relative indifference. Writers before 1700 did occasionally emphasize the value of childhood and childish traits, but they generally did so with a specific purpose in mind: they were either aiming their works at the uneducated, child-centered lower classes or striving to express an ideal of religious humility and anti-intellectualism. In many cases they were doing both at once.

Most writers, of course, have been content to recast in their work the dominant assumptions of their age. Shakespeare, for example, has sometimes been seen as strangely unrealistic in his portrayal of children because the young princes in *The Winter's Tale* and *Richard the Third* appear impossibly precocious: Mamilius jests about the cosmetic artifice of women, the little Duke of

York taunts his uncle Gloucester with "sharp-provided wit," and Prince Edward speaks with some sophistication on the origins and preservation of Julius Caesar's fame.⁶ Yet we know that sixteenth-century children of all social classes were expected to acclimate themselves to the company of adults from a very early age, and that upper-class children in particular were encouraged to put away childish things and acquire the classical learning and social finesse which would be essential to them in later life. Intelligent children placed under the humanist regimen often did reach a formidable level of accomplishment in relatively few years. Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, went off to Oxford in 1595 at the age of twelve, already proficient at logical disputation and advanced in the study of Greek. That he was by no means exceptional is attested by numerous other historical examples and the plea of the pedagogue John Brinsley that children be *prevented* from entering the university until the age of fifteen.⁷ Clearly, Shakespeare's young princes are not monstrous aberrations, but accurate reflections of the best that sixteenth-century education could accomplish. If he chose to portray children as wise beyond their years, it was not out of insensitivity or incapacity, but through allegiance to a cultural ideal sometimes attained in reality.

But the very fact that English Renaissance writers and educators tended to value precocity and advocate the early abandonment of childish traits makes more provocative the case of those few writers who advocated returning to such a lowly and undignified stage of life. This study will concentrate on the views of a group of seventeenth-century poets united by a common interest in the pursuit of childhood. From our own youth-centered post-Wordsworthian perspective, this interest may appear unremarkable. But if seen, as it should be, within the cultural context of its own time, when children were not highly regarded and childishness was often held in contempt, such poetic emphasis may strike us as somewhat more extraordinary and profoundly significant. For only by measuring seventeenth-century literary evocations of the childhood theme against more widely held attitudes and actual

social behavior will we recognize the magnitude and intended impact of what can be called a poetic revolt: to advocate childishness in an age when most educators and parents alike seem to have been doing their utmost to eradicate it early was to offer a strong repudiation of perceived seventeenth-century social realities and the cultural ideals inherited from sixteenth-century humanism.

Two of the poets discussed—Henry Vaughan and Thomas Traherne—have often been singled out as lonely precursors of romanticism, isolated from their own times by their “modern” attention to childhood.⁸ But this viewpoint, widely held among critics, cannot account for the important ties linking Vaughan and Traherne with other poets of their day. The two did not versify in a solipsistic vacuum, spinning out theories from within their own heads like Bacon’s spider. They are best understood as part of a continuum of six poets writing over a period of some thirty years around mid-century: George Herbert, Robert Herrick, Richard Crashaw, Vaughan, Traherne, and Andrew Marvell. All of these were university men, members by education if not by birth of an intellectual elite, yet drawn to the humble subject of childhood. In a review of Edmund Blunden’s study of Vaughan, T. S. Eliot passed off Vaughan’s emphasis on childhood retreat as a form of regression:

It does not occur to Mr. Blunden that the love of one’s childhood, a passion which he appears to share with Lamb and Vaughan, is anything but a token of greatness. We all know the mood; and we can all, if we choose to relax to that extent, indulge in the luxury of reminiscence of childhood; but if we are at all mature and conscious, we refuse to indulge this weakness to the point of writing and poetizing about it. We know that it is something to be buried and done with, though its corpse will from time to time find its way up to the surface.⁹

But the poetic “regression” of a significant number of intellectuals cannot be dismissed as only weakness or self-indulgence. By reading all six seventeenth-century poets against a background of

wider social and intellectual attitudes, we will become more attuned to larger resonances behind the poetry, more sensitive to the depth and implications of a pessimistic malaise perhaps best termed cultural despair.¹⁰

Henry Vaughan's brother Thomas complained, "A Child, I suppose, in puris Naturalibus, Before education alters him, and ferments him, is a Subject hath not been much consider'd, for men respect him not, till he is company for them, and then indeed they spoil him."¹¹ First, I will briefly survey medieval, Renaissance, and eighteenth-century opinion on this "not much consider'd" subject—not only because the ebb and flow in attitudes is fascinating in itself, but also because a firm sense of the lower-class and anti-intellectual connotations of the childhood theme is so essential to our reading of the poetry. Beyond that, I will sketch the poetry's more immediate context in the seventeenth-century controversy over the moral valuation of childishness and the momentous implications of that controversy for English church and state. The main body of the study will explore the theme of childhood and its political and religious ramifications in the work of the six poets who did give it more than passing consideration, committing themselves to some variation of George Herbert's proposition that "childhood is health."

1

We may safely assume that in every society there have been people attentive to children, experienced in dealing with childish traits, and well aware of the different stages of development children pass through as they grow. But the major art and literature of Europe have not always reflected any such attention and experience. Classical Greece and Rome left Europeans a legacy of relative indifference toward juvenility. Except for brief glimpses, like the *Iliad's* description of Hector's little son frightened then enraptured by the sight of his father's plumed helmet, portrayals of familiar mythological figures like Eros in the *Greek Anthology*, and

discussions of childhood in educational writings, children rarely appear in classical literature. An occasional epigram or epitaph may commemorate the frail delicacy of an infant, but real praise is generally reserved for the *puer senex*, the youth set apart from his peers by his premature gravity: in the *Aeneid* 9. 311, the boy Iulus is lauded for his manly spirit; Valerius Maximus honored Cato's possession in early years of the dignity of the senator; Silius Italicus noted approvingly of a boy that "in sagacity he equaled old age."¹² Similarly, except for child gods, winged angel-cupids, and an occasional school scene, children are seldom prominent in classical art. Even the Roman portraits and busts of actual children tend to depict them with a rigid formalism analogous to literary commendations of the *puer senex*.¹³

We are dealing, of course, on a level of grossest generalization: careful study of classical culture would undoubtedly reveal complexity and variety in Greek and Roman attitudes. Nevertheless, the most influential philosophers set forth a view of childhood which roughly parallels the major literature and art. Children too young to follow the dictates of reason were not yet classifiable as human. According to Plato, "Of all animals the boy is the most unmanageable."¹⁴ The eighth book of Aristotle's *History of the Animals* begins with a discussion of the similarities between children and beasts, the major difference being that human offspring have the potential for developing into mature and reasoning people, while animals do not. Pliny bemoaned the state of human infancy: "Alas, the folly of those who, having such a beginning, think they have been begotten to high estate. The first hope of strength and the first gift of time make man like a quadruped."¹⁵ Children inhabited a no man's land in the great chain of being, joining the realm of animals to that of human beings but not really belonging to either group.

For didactic writers of the Christian Middle Ages, the classical notion of childhood as less than fully human was reinforced by Apocryphal and Old Testament parallels between children and animals: "An unbroken horse becometh stubborn and a son left at

large becometh headstrong. Cocker thy child and he shall make thee afraid" (Ecclus. 30:8-9). As early as an Anglo-Saxon schoolbook, children asked why they desire learning reply, "Because we do not want to be like beasts, who know nothing but grass and water"; and as late as a fifteenth-century text, boys are still repeating, "Withoute connyng we ar as rude bestes which know not goode fro evyll."¹⁶ But didactic writers insisted with much greater unanimity on the Old Testament's pairing of children and fools: "Foolishness is bound in the heart of the child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Prov. 22:15). Throughout the Middle Ages, didactic writers tended to place children too young to take a useful place in society and fools by nature incapable of assuming adult responsibility in the same category. If the fool was diverting, he was also morally suspect since his heedless antics declared his incompetence for the serious business of this world and the attainment of salvation in the next. Bartholomaeus Anglicus' mid-thirteenth-century account of childhood is unusual in its length but characteristic in its rationalist distrust for the indiscretions of the foolish years:

Children be nesh of flesh, lithe and pliant of body, able and light to moving, witty to learn. And lead their lives without thought or care. And set their courages only of mirth and liking, and dread no perils more than beating with a rod: and they love an apple more than gold. When they be praised, or shamed, or blamed, they set little thereby. Through stirring and moving of the heat of the flesh and of humours, they be lightly and soon wroth, and soon pleased, and lightly they forgive. And for tenderness of body they be soon hurt and grieved, and may not well endure hard travail. Since all children be tatched with evil manners, and think only on things that be, and reck not of things that shall be, they love plays, game, and vanity, and forsake winning and profit. And things most worthy they repute least worthy, and least worthy most worthy. They desire things that be to them contrary and grievous, and set more of the image of a child, than of the image of a man, and make more sorrow and woe, and weep more for the loss of an apple, than for the loss of their heritage. And the goodness that is done for them, they let it pass out of

mind. They desire all things that they see, and pray and ask with voice and with hand. They love talking and counsel of such children as they be, and void company of old men. They keep no counsel, but they tell all that they hear or see. Suddenly they laugh, and suddenly they weep. Always they cry, jangle, and jape; that unneth they be still while they sleep. When they be washed of filth, anon they defile themselves again. When their mother washeth and combeth them, they kick and sprawl, and put with feet and with hands, and withstand with all their might. They desire to drink always, unneth they are out of bed, when they cry for meat anon.¹⁷

Didactic writers frequently saw in childhood folly the mark of original sin. Lydgate's "Testament" offers a catalogue of the follies and evils of childhood by describing, in the manner of St. Augustine, his own early years: "Lyghtly turnyng, wylde and selde sad, / Wepying for nowȝt, and anone after glad," preferring cherrystones over church, habitually disobedient, apt for petty thieveries, and above all, utterly wanting in reason.¹⁸

As has often been noted, children seldom appear in medieval imaginative literature; when they do appear they tend to be precocious. Cuchulinn, the mythical Irish Achilles, was almost always represented as a mere boy. Sir Beves of Hamtoun, at the age of seven, upbraided his mother as a whore and vowed to avenge his father's murder. Sir Aldingar in the ballad of that name was felled by a four-year-old boy who cleverly contrived to cut off his legs at knee height.¹⁹ Child saints were not to be outdone by their secular counterparts. Taking their precedent from the three biblical children who sang in the fiery furnace, they were often little models of adult piety. St. Nicholas refused his nurse's milk on fast days; St. Quiricus, an infant martyr of three years, scratched the face of his mother's persecutor and was thrown after her into the pit; St. Elizabeth, though raised amid kingly wealth, spurned childishness and enacted, even while playing, her adoration of God; St. Pancratius, shortly before his decapitation at the age of fourteen, declared, "In body I am a child, but I bear a man's heart."²⁰ Similarly, until the thirteenth

century, artists nearly always depicted children with the shape and muscular structure of men, only smaller. Even the Christ Child appeared in the Byzantine manner as the grave Incarnation of Divine Wisdom, clad in a toga and obviously capable of engaging the Virgin in theological disputation, as He often does in medieval hymns and carols.²¹

On the basis of such literary and pictorial evidence, historians of the family have tended to infer that medieval people were generally indifferent or hostile toward children and childish behavior.²² But in periods of widespread illiteracy, the major literature is a most untrustworthy guide to social practices or even pervasive beliefs. Medieval epics were intended not to mirror the humdrum reality of ordinary existence, but to celebrate the marvelous and extraordinary deeds of a warrior class cut off from it. Art, until relatively late in the Middle Ages, was ecclesiastical in origin, ritual in function, and anything but realistic in intent. Luckily, however, an occasional encyclopedia or saint's life offers reassuring evidence that those who actually dealt with children—mothers and nurses, in particular—were quite able to recognize and respond to the special physical and emotional needs of their young charges.²³

Much of the little we know about the actual treatment of children in medieval times does appear quite repressive: the usual remedy prescribed in sermons and tracts for childhood waywardness was the proverbial rod which could not be spared without spoiling the child, and it would indeed appear that throughout the Middle Ages, beating was an accepted method of social control.²⁴ Until the thirteenth century, children could be given as oblates by their parents and placed under monastic discipline.²⁵ In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and probably earlier as well, children were commonly farmed out as servants or apprentices in other households from the ages of seven or eight. Whatever his theoretical rank, a page in a noble household was a servant: he was expected to stand ready to serve at mealtimes, greet the head of the household by kneeling and bowing the head, bring food and

drink when bidden, and sit down to his own meal only when allowed by his master.²⁶

In the upper classes at least, even a child's parents were to be kept at a courteous distance and addressed with elaborate marks of respect. The *Pueriles Confabulatiunculae* advises schoolboys returning home each day that even if their fathers fail to notice their arrival, "you ought to come vnto him, of your owne accord, and to bow your knee to him, with your head bare, and to salute him reuerently."²⁷ Letter form followed suit. A daughter of the Paston gentry began a 1459 missive to her mother, "Right worshipfull and my most entierly belovde moder, in the most louly maner I recomaund me unto your gode moderhode, besekeyng you dayly and nyghtly of your moderly blissing" and subscribed it "by your humble doughter."²⁸ Such respectful formalities were by no means *mere* form—Margaret Paston rebuked her son when he omitted them—but dutiful acknowledgments of the respective status of parents and children in the social hierarchy.

But we can by no means assume a direct and uncomplicated continuity from such social forms to the indifference or hostility toward childhood which dominates the major literature and treatises of didactic writers, for alongside this major current there existed another set of attitudes which implicitly contradicted it. The very obliviousness of untutored children and fools to the social order and their place at the bottom of the social hierarchy or even outside it made them, from a different point of view than that of the standard didactic writers, innocents untainted by the world's corruption. In the Middle Ages, young children seem to have shared something of the vague aura of sanctity surrounding the fool, whose much despised simplicity placed him under the special protection of the Deity. The Festival of the Innocents on December 28 and the Feast of St. Nicholas, patron saint of children, were frequently celebrated as tamer copies of the ribald Feast of Fools, where "adult" order and decorum were briefly abandoned for the braying of asses and the bleating of sheep; the feast's keynote from the Magnificat suggested a sacred meaning in

this ritual overthrow of the usual social hierarchy: *Deposuit potentes de sede: et exaltavit humiles.*²⁹

The innocence of childhood is as much a medieval commonplace as its proverbial waywardness. In medieval legends, children are often the first to see miracles and revelations "by reason of their cleanness and purity of heart."³⁰ Sermons and poems often repeat the sentiment of the Pearl poet, urging adults to imitate the spotlessness of childhood "Harmlez trwe, and vndefylde, / Wythouten mote oþer mascle of sulphande synne" (XIII, 725-26). Indeed, the widespread medieval custom of whipping children on Holy Innocents Day, however punitive it may appear to us, was apparently not intended as a punishment for childhood waywardness. It was termed by at least one contemporary authority a reenactment of the Slaughter of the Innocents.³¹ Evidence for the second current of opinion can be found as far back in medieval writings as we care to look, but it seems to have gained prominence as part of a reaction against scholastic theology. St. Paul claimed, "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are" (I Cor. 1:27-28). This inversion of the judicious sapience of moralists and rationalists is a dominant strain in the writings of St. Bernard, but was given much wider currency by the followers of St. Francis of Assisi.

Taking literally St. Paul's "We are fools for Christ's sake" (I Cor. 4:10), the early Franciscans called themselves *mundi moriones* and stressed a humble ingenuous approach to God, in direct opposition to the intellectualism and doctrinal controversies of the major theologians. Paul Sabatier quotes St. Francis himself:

Suppose that you had subtily and learning enough to know all things, that you are acquainted with all languages, the courses of the stars, and all the rest, what is there in that to be proud of? A single demon knows

more on these subjects than all the men in this world put together. But there is one thing that the demon is incapable of, and which is the glory of man: to be faithful to God.³²

In demonstration of their holy humility, the Franciscans sought to infuse Christianity with a childishly playful spirit branded as folly by more strait-laced church authorities. St. Francis asked, "What are the servants of the Lord if not His minstrels who should raise the hearts of men and move them to spiritual joy?"³³ His biographers record that he would pick up sticks from the ground, rest one on the other like a bow on a viol, and sing in French a joyful song of the Lord Jesus. The early Franciscans celebrated Christianity with a mingled gaiety and reverence which was, at least for some members of the order, quite consciously childlike in its spontaneity and lack of decorum and, for that reason, quite suspect among authorities who followed St. Augustine and the mainstream of medieval moralists in considering *play* a term of condemnation.³⁴

Not the least important aspect of the Franciscan movement was its chosen audience: the laymen whom earlier monastic devotionism had almost inevitably failed to reach. The Friars Minor traveled from town to town singing songs, telling tales, and attempting to bring new warmth to the religion of the common people. They made a practice of dramatizing events from sacred history in order to emphasize their realistic and human aspects and tap for Christianity reservoirs of joy, pity, and tenderness in the spectators. The nativity was especially popular with the Franciscans. St. Bonaventura records that three years before his death St. Francis received permission from authorities of the town of Greccio to celebrate Christmas by making a nativity scene complete with ox and ass, calling the people to stand before it, and preaching "unto the folk standing round of the Birth of the King of poverty, calling Him, when he wished to name Him, the Child of Bethlehem." The saint was moved to tears of love and pity for the Christ Child, and "a certain Knight, valorous and true . . . declared that he beheld a little Child right fair to see sleeping in that

manger, Who seemed to be awakened from sleep when the blessed Father Francis embraced Him in both arms." Thomas of Celano records that the saint's "compassion for the Child, which flooded his heart, made him even lisp words of sweetness, as infants do." Far from scorning puerility, he made himself "a child with the Child."³⁵

Karl Young has shown that St. Francis was not the first to set up a nativity scene.³⁶ Nor was he the first to see the theological mystery of the incarnation as a tenderly human event. As a youth, St. Bernard had a compelling vision of the Christ Child; every Christmas he delivered moving sermons in contemplation of the nativity to the monks and novices of Clairvaux. But St. Francis and his followers, through their circulation among the common people and their tireless emphasis on the humanity of the Babe of Bethlehem, helped to create a broad new current of sentimental realism in medieval portrayals of the Christ Child.

The *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, attributed to St. Bonaventura but written by an anonymous Franciscan friar to a Poor Clare at the end of the thirteenth century, is one of the masterpieces of Franciscan spirituality and one of the most popular works of the Middle Ages. Its author admonishes the reader:

Be a child with the child Jesus! Do not disdain humble things and such as seem childlike in the contemplation of Jesus, for they yield devotion, increase love, excite fervor, induce compassion, allow purity and simplicity, nurture the vigor of humility and poverty, preserve familiarity, and confirm and raise hope. We cannot rise to the highest things, because that which seems foolish to God is most wise to men, and what is weak to Him is most powerful to us (I Cor. I:25). Therefore, as I said, be a child with the Child, while with Him who begins to grow, you become older, ever maintaining humility.³⁷

The reader is to enter imaginatively into the life of Christ, to identify with him as a baby, and to grow spiritually as Christ grows in years. Christ's nativity is presented with an attention to concrete detail that brings the scene to life and arouses the com-

passionate instincts of the reader. Nicholas Love's translation preserves its tender realism better than any modern version:

[The Virgin] deuoutly enclynande with souereyne ioye toke hym in her armes and swetely clipping and kessyng leyde hym in hir barme and with a fulle pap as sche was tauzt of the holy goost wissed hym al aboute with hir swete mylk and so wrapped hym in the keuerchiefes of hir heued, and leide hym in the cracche. And anone the Oxe and the Asse knelynge doun leyden her mowthes on the cracche brethyng at hir nes es vpon the child as they knewen by resoun that in that colde tyme the childe so symply hiled had nede to be hatte in that manere.³⁸

The account of Christ's childhood includes such homely incidents, some of them from the New Testament Apocrypha, as the four-year-old Jesus' carrying of clothes to and from the homes of people for whom Mary sewed and their occasional refusal to pay him. Always the greatest emphasis is placed on bringing the Son of God to life as a winning human child. The reader is invited to enter into the scenes being described as the friend and confidant of Jesus, for "these seemingly childish things are very valuable for meditation."

The *Meditations on the Life of Christ* was by no means an isolated phenomenon in medieval devotional literature. From the beginning of the thirteenth century, the childhood of Jesus was portrayed with increasing frequency and realism. Latin nativity hymns from the fourth to twelfth centuries are nearly all abstract treatments of doctrine just as visual depictions of the Christ Child from that period display him with hieratic formalism as the grave Incarnation of Divine Wisdom or the sacrificial Victim of the mass.³⁹ But in the vernacular carols of the Franciscan Jacopone da Todi (1228–1306) the new affective spirit bursts forth. Jesus is "our sweet little brother," called by the endearing diminutives "Bambolino" and "Jesulino."⁴⁰ Franciscan carols, which were often sacred parodies of the worldly and amorous songs of the people and often retained the gaiety of secular dance tunes, were

very popular in Italy by 1300. The new form soon spread to England where the fourteenth century saw a great flowering of sacred carols. Remembering the amorous ditty "Com hider, love, to me"⁴¹ sung by Chaucer's Pardoner, we can recognize a possible secular prototype for one playful fourteenth-century nativity carol in which Mary bore a son "Bytyxte an oxe and an asse" and

When she her deare Sonne se,
She set him on her kne
And song, 'Hydder to me—
 Cum basse thy mother, deare.'
On her lap she him layde,
And with her pappe he playde,
And euer sang the mayde,
 'Come basse thy mother, dere.'⁴²

The tender humanity of the nativity carols also appears in many vernacular poems not directly part of the carol tradition. One such poem is an intensely compassionate evocation of the sufferings of Mother and Son in the cold winter night:

Ihesu, suete, be nout wroth,
I haue neiþer clut ne cloth
þe inne for to folde;
I ne haue but a clut of a lappe,
þefore ley þi feet to my pappe
& kep þe fro þe colde.⁴³

Unless we recognize the utter abasement implied by the King of Heaven's descent to impoverished human infancy, we will miss much of the bitter poignancy of these lyrics.

The movement toward sentimental realism in portrayals of the Christ Child was not limited to literature. According to Erwin Panofsky, iconographical motifs of an emotional and intensely human nature beyond the range of all earlier art had been intro-

duced and elaborated by the fourteenth century in Italy; the same artistic transformations took place in France and England, clearly under Franciscan influence.⁴⁴ The Infant Jesus leapt out of his Byzantine impassivity and became recognizably infantile, laughing, sucking the pap, or playing with fruit and toys. The nativity scene lost its hieratic formalism and became a tender evocation of everyday life. Gradually painters went beyond the Infant Jesus and depicted the childhoods of the Virgin, St. John, and other saints.

In literary works, too, portrayals of holy childhood soon extended beyond Jesus. The Innocents are commemorated in several fourteenth-century carols, one of which shows an amusingly realistic parallel between them and the Christ Child:

Crist crid in cradil, 'Moder, ba ba!'
 The childer of I[s]ral cridyn, 'Wa wa!'
 Fore here merth hit was aga
 When Erod fersly cowth hem fray.⁴⁵

Already in the thirteenth century, the vernacular *South English Legendary* had offered realistic vignettes of the lives of child saints. But legends of the next two centuries tended to place much greater emphasis on the childishness of their martyred subjects. Lydgate practically wallows in pity for the infant St. Robert of Bury:

Slayn in childhood by mortal violence,
 Allas! it was a pitous thing to see
 A sowking child, tendre of Innocence,
 So to be scourged, and naylled to a tre;
 Thou myghtyst crie, thou spake no woord, parde

Fostrid with mylk and tendre pap þi foode
 Was it nat routhe to se þi veynes bleede?⁴⁶

When Chaucer's Prioress tells her legend of a martyred "litel clergeon" seven years old who attends a "litel scole" and learns to

sing *O Alma redemptoris* even though he does not know what it means, she seems so taken with the smallness of her subject that she comes close to creating an unwitting parody of the Franciscan love for endearing diminutives.⁴⁷

The wide current of sentimental realism in late medieval portrayals of holy childhood seems to have found some sympathy among people of all ages and in all walks of life. John Mirk claimed, in fact, that Christ had deigned to become a child precisely because children inspire almost universal affection: "For whyll a chyld ys zeong and wythout synne, hit ys more amyable þen hit ys aftyr, when he comyth to man-state."⁴⁸ But devotional emphasis on the concretely human as opposed to the abstractly theological was considered particularly appropriate for women (we will recall the taste of Chaucer's Prioress and the fact that pseudo-Bonaventura's *Meditations* were written to a Poor Clare) and for "lewed" townspeople and villagers. In the great households of medieval territorial magnates, children's behavior was governed by formal rules; day-to-day supervision was delegated to nurses and other retainers and was seldom a central concern for their noble parents. But lower down the social scale, particularly among the emerging bourgeoisie, households were smaller and more intimate, and parents were much more likely to be directly involved in their children's upbringing.⁴⁹ The growing emphasis on child life in religious art and literature after the thirteenth century is very closely tied to the gradual broadening of their audience from the monasteries and chapels of the great, where they had remained under the firm control of the celibate clergy, out into the world of ordinary married laypeople. Itinerant preaching friars captured the ears of their town audiences by anchoring their teachings firmly in the solid practicalities of everyday existence. Significantly, as G. R. Owst has demonstrated, it is in vernacular sermons, most of them still in manuscript, that *exempla* drawn from common experiences of child-rearing and vignettes of ordinary child life, as opposed to the deeds of young saints or heroes, enter medieval English literature.⁵⁰

As medieval townspeople became prosperous enough to finance their own art, they tended to mold Christianity in their own family-centered image, and childhood themes became even more prevalent. Millard Meiss has pointed out that the early fourteenth-century emphasis on the infancy and childhood of Christ in the art of Florence and Siena was a reflection of burgher values: many such paintings were actually commissioned by married couples for their own private devotion. Guilds and lay brotherhoods attached to churches also contributed to the artistic dissemination of childhood themes. The French confréries of mothers, for example, usually took St. Anne as their patron saint and sponsored numerous images illustrating the childhood of the Virgin.⁵¹ In England lay domesticization of Christianity is evident in late medieval plastic art, but most vividly captured in the Corpus Christi plays which were so often staged by guildsmen and other townspeople.

At least some of these plays were written by clerics, and many figure forth theological doctrines; but nearly all give their didactic message concrete form by emphasizing its human dimensions and linking dogma to the tangibles of everyday life. The most popular subject would appear to have been the sacrifice of Isaac, which survives in no fewer than six versions. Nearly all of these lay great stress on the father-child relationship: little Isaac's mingled love and respect for Abraham, his obedient resignation to his father's commands despite his pitiful fear of death ("i-wys, fader, I am but a chyld"⁵²), and Abraham's anguish over the deed he must perform. The Dublin text, as though the story were not steeped enough in domestic pathos, introduces Isaac's mother and her terror for her young son's life. Another popular episode was the Slaughter of the Innocents, embellished with pitiful maternal complaints. The Baxteres Pageant of the York Cycle begins with Christ's blessing of the little children—a subject almost unknown in earlier iconography.⁵³ But the most important and most strongly sentimentalized of dramatic children was, of course, the Infant Christ of the nativity and adoration plays.

Like vernacular carols and popular devotional manuals, the nativity plays bring the Christ Child to life as the best and loveliest of children, the "little brother" of mankind whose birthday, a day for celebration, is the prototype of all human birthdays. All the cycles demonstrate the devout layman's proper response to the Babe of Bethlehem by dramatizing the non-Biblical episode of the offering of the shepherds. The shepherds of the adoration plays address the Child in a soul-piercing blend of pity for his poverty, awe for his divinity, and affectionate baby talk, offering suitably childish presents: hazelnuts, spoons, pipes, hoods, balls. The Chester Play adds four shepherd boys who accompany their elders to honor the newborn Christ and bring pragmatic gifts:

Nowe, chyld, although thou be comen from God,
and bee thyselpe god in thy manhoode,
yett I knowe that in thy chyldhood
thow will for sweetmeat looke.
To pull downe apples, payres, and ploomes,
ould Joseph shall not neede to hurte his (thombes),
because thow haste not plentye of cromes,
I give thee here my nut hooke.⁵⁴

The cycle adoration plays represent the highest tide of pro-childishness in late medieval English literature. They were designed to appeal to a very wide audience—people "grete and smale," "lernerd and lewyd"—and depended for their artistic impact on popular sentiment for the "lytyll tyné mop" and "derlyng dere" portrayed as just born among Englishmen.⁵⁵

2

The sixteenth century in England brought two strong dampeners of late medieval sentimental realism: the Protestant Reformation and Renaissance humanism. By banning devotional images, gradually suppressing the cycle plays, and abolishing the preaching orders, the reformed English church effectively blocked the

chief sources of fifteenth-century emphasis on holy childishness. The mainstream of Renaissance literature was aimed not at the common run of humanity but at an intellectual elite well read in the classics, and was dedicated to the cultivation of the highest human physical and mental powers. Except for narrative poetry and the drama, the Elizabethan literary genres allowed for the appearance of childhood only in the case of Cupid, whose blindness, playful antics, and infantile form emblemized the folly of love,⁵⁶ or in occasional verse, usually in commemoration of the birth or death of a nobleman's offspring. Such poems generally show scant interest in the fact that their subjects are children, but center on praises of their parents, hopes for their maturity, or laments that they died too early to make a mark on the world. Similarly, sixteenth-century dedicatory epistles to young people tend to follow the pattern of that heading Erasmus' *Colloquies*, addressed to the eight-year-old John Froben and urging him to "match your growth in years by advancement in sound learning and good morals."⁵⁷ That is not to say that no Elizabethan writer ever regretted the lost pleasures of youth. Surrey's poem with the self-explanatory title "How no age is content with his own estate, and how the age of children is happiest, if they had skill to understand it" expresses an Elizabethan commonplace, but one generally stated without elaboration.⁵⁸

When children do appear in sixteenth-century literature, they are, more often than not, aristocratic revivals of the classical ideal of the *puer senex*. Pleusidippus in Robert Greene's *Arcadia* is a noble youth raised incognito among shepherds. Even in the cradle his fiery looks declare his high birth and frighten weak beholders as did the might of infant Hercules. By the age of five, he is king over the sports of the shepherd children, "imitating honourable justice in his gamesome exercise of discipline," and praised for "so exceeding magnanimity in so little a body."⁵⁹ Young boys in the plays of Shakespeare are also admired for wisdom far beyond their years: the "little prating" Lord of York in *Richard III* of whom it is said, "So cunning and so young, is wonderful," and *Cymbeline's*

Posthumus Leonatus, who had been "A sample to the youngest, to th' more mature / A glass that feated them; and to the graver / A child that guided dotards."⁶⁰ The few children's portraits which survive from the Elizabethan period also portray their young subjects as grave and self-assured.

Nor do sixteenth-century religious writings display any particular sympathy for childishness, except in one context to be discussed in the next chapter. In the work of the very early humanists Erasmus and Sir Thomas More, we find a fascinating blend of enthusiasm for classical learning and distrust, inherited from late medieval affective piety,⁶¹ for what the human intellect can hope to accomplish. On the one hand Erasmus wrote the highly ambivalent *In Praise of Folly*; on the other hand, in his New Testament paraphrases, required by law to be placed in every church in England, he glossed Matthew, chapters 18 and 19 to mean that children are "farre from all affeccions of ambition and envye, symple, pure, and lyving after the onely course of nature," yet "we ought not to tarie long with them, but to make spede to thinges of more perfection."⁶² Later in the sixteenth century, we find occasional references to the innocence of childhood, but little patience with its simplicity. Richard Hooker wrote, as though in direct rebuttal of late medieval advocates of simple affective piety, "An opinion hath spread it selfe very farre in the world, as if the way to bee ripe in faith, were to bee raw in wit and judgement; as if reason were an enemy vnto Religion, childish simplicities the mother of ghostly, and diuine wisdomes."⁶³ Even the Elizabethan translator of Cornelius Agrippa felt obliged to counter his author's violently anti-intellectual praise for the simplemindedness of childhood in a preface advising readers that insofar as Agrippa condemned reason itself rather than its misuse, he was walking in the darkness of ignorance.⁶⁴ For the mainstream of Elizabethan humanism, reason was an essential complement to faith: the Christian had to believe, but he also had to understand, for there could be no moral responsibility without understanding. Spenser's description in Book II of the *Faerie Queene* of Ruddymane, a child

playing in its dead mother's blood, is an emblem of the inadequacy of mere innocence and simplicity:

Als in her lap a louely babe did play
 His cruell sport, in stead of sorrow dew;
 For in her streaming blood he did embay
 His little hands, and tender ioynts embrew;
 Pitiful spectacle, as euer eye did view.

Sir Guyon picks up the baby,

Who with sweet plesaunce and bold blandishment
 Gan smyle on them, that rather ought to weepe,
 As careless of his woe, or innocent
 Of that was doen, that ruth emperced deepe
 In that knights heart, and wordes with bitter teares did steepe.⁶⁵

Spenser's infant has all the sweet playfulness of a medieval Christ Child, but none of the sympathetic appeal: in human society, where good and evil are inextricably mixed, innocence without understanding is more to be pitied than emulated.

For the humanists of the sixteenth century, whose ideals were so profoundly social and intellectual, childhood was not so much innocent as ignorant. They took a passionate interest in education, the child's passage from ignorance to experience in the world. But classical training was more than a key to social success—it was, in the eyes of major educators, a key to the very gates of heaven. When at Erasmus' suggestion a picture of the Christ Child was placed over the high master's chair in Colet's school, it depicted not the Infant Jesus, but the young teacher in the temple. In Erasmus' colloquy "The Whole Duty of Youth" a child prays that "he who as a boy of twelve, sitting in the temple, taught the doctors themselves will be pleased to illuminate my understanding for the learning of good letters, which I may use to his glory." Sir Thomas Elyot quoted Lactantius: "Of cunning cometh virtue, and of virtue perfect felicity is only engendered." William

Kempe argued for the necessity of removing the “pestilent errors arising out of the puddle of ignorance,” and claimed, “If thou looke for any fauour or preferment in our Court, nay, if thou look for any seate or resting place in the Court of heauen, seeke for it by learning.”⁶⁶

Sixteenth-century pedagogic writings often appear hopelessly optimistic over the amount of learning little children can absorb. Thomas Becon’s catechism, for example, begins with a father’s assurance to his son, “Thy age is young, thy years are few, thy continuance in study is small, for as yet art thou not six years old. Therefore my mind is only at this present to talk with thee, not of things which far exceed both thy age and capacity, but of such matters as be meet for children to know.”⁶⁷ The child embarks, nevertheless, on a learned discourse 400 pages long, including minute doctrinal questions and much quotation from the Fathers Latin and Greek. Similarly, F. Clement’s *The Petie Schole* proposes a method by which children can be taught to “reade perfectly within one moneth,” and his discourse to the petty scholar (the pre-grammar-school student) is written in flowery language liberally interspersed with Greek—not out of the misapprehension that youthful pupils could understand it, but in order to whet their appetites “to the speedier obtaining the excellent treasure of learning.”⁶⁸ If such educational miracles were to be accomplished, children would need intensive formal training.

The grammar schools of the sixteenth century appear to have been more rigorous and more standardized than schools of the Middle Ages. The Renaissance brought a vast influx of newly discovered Latin and Greek authors, greater emphasis on reading and writing skills, and a new insistence on classical training even for children of the aristocracy.⁶⁹ A child of seven entering grammar school was assumed to know how to read and write English already: classical learning would be his full-time job. A typical school day would last nearly twelve hours, beginning at six in the morning and ending about five-thirty, with only brief intermissions for meals and recreation. Studies continued for ten or eleven

months of the year at most schools.⁷⁰ Of course, not all children who received a humanist education were trained in the grammar schools. Similar training at home under a tutor could be equally rigorous and begin at an earlier age.

Since children were expected to spend such long hours at study, it is not surprising that the ideal of the *puer senex* occasionally came close to being realized. John Evelyn's description of his son Dick, a model of piety and diligence, gives us one of the best accounts we have of what a child of talent actually accomplished under the humanist regimen:

At 2 yeare & halfe old he could perfectly reade any of the *English, Latine,* french or *Gottic* letters; pronouncing the three first languages exactly: He had before the 5t yeare or in that yeare not onely skill to reade most written hands, but to decline all the *Nounes*, Conjugate the verbs, regular, & most of the irregular; learned out *Puerilis*, got by heart almost the intire *Vocabularie* of *Latine & french* primitives & words, could make congruous *Syntax*, turne *English* into *Lat:* & *vice versa*, construe & prove what he read & did, the government & use of *Relatives*, *Verbs Transitive*, *Substantives* &c: *Elipses* & many figures & tropes, & made a considerable progresse in *Commenius's Janua*; began himself [to] write legibly, & had a strange passion for *Greeke*: the number of *Verses* he could recite was prodigious, & what he remembred of parts of playes, which he would also act: & when seeing a *Plautus* in ones hand, he asked what booke it was, & being told it was *Comedy* &c, & too difficult for him, he wept for sorrow: strange was his apt and ingenious application of *Fables & Morals*, for he had read *AEsop*, & had a wonderful disposition to *Mathematics*, having by heart, divers propositions of *Euclid* that were read to him in play, & he would make lines & demonstrate them.⁷¹

To modern readers such single-minded diligence in one so young may appear somewhat monstrous: we learn almost with satisfaction that young Dick died in his sixth year and attribute his early demise to overwork. But countless such prodigies did in fact manage to reach fruitful adulthood. All education must mediate between the needs of the child and the demands of the society he

is about to enter: humanist educators were by no means unaware of the former, but they stressed the latter and were rewarded by much higher levels of accomplishment in intelligent young pupils than we are likely to consider possible.

Though the pattern of English education had changed significantly since the Middle Ages, social doctrine had not. In the sixteenth century children were still placed at the bottom of the social hierarchy and expected to behave with humility and reverence toward parents and other superiors. Elizabethan theorists paralleled the microcosm of the family and the macrocosm of the state, arguing on the authority of Aristotle's *Politics* I:12 that a father should be to his children as a king to his subjects. Hierarchy and degree were to operate in the individual household as in the kingdom at large. Both the Norton Catechism and Calvin's *Institutions*, widely used as a catechism in sixteenth-century England, extended "Honor thy father and mother" to encompass all of higher rank—whether parents, preachers, magistrates, or monarch—and reminded children that according to Exod. 21:17 any rebellion against due authority was punishable with death.⁷²

The theory, then, was clear. And evidence suggests that at least among the gentry and aristocracy, theory was actually practiced. Children were expected to greet their parents with formalized demonstrations of respect. John Donne considered proper respect for parents a peculiarly English virtue: "Children kneele to aske blessing of Parents in England, but where else?"⁷³ Lady Falkland (1585–1639) always knelt when speaking to her mother, "sometimes for more than an hour together, though she was but an ill kneeler and a worse riser."⁷⁴ In many upper-class households such deference would seem to have been fostered by parental aloofness and inaccessibility. Children were farmed out as pages long into the seventeenth century, and, as a boy in one of Corderius' dialogues complains, even if they lived at home, they were likely to associate only with servants unless summoned by their parents.

Educators felt obliged to cite such exalted models as Socrates, Emperor Octavius Augustus, and Sir Thomas More to convince

upper-class fathers that their children's upbringing was not a matter beneath their notice,⁷⁵ and if the Marquess in Dekker's *Patient Grissil* is at all representative, noblemen were self-conscious over open displays of fatherly affection:

Giue me this blessed burthen, pretty foole
 With what an amiable looke it sleepes,
 And in that slumber how it sweetly smiles,
 And in that smile how my heart leapes for ioy:
Furio Ile turne this circle to a cradle,
 To rocke my deare babe: A great *Romaine* Lord,
 Taught his young Sonne to ride a Hobby-horse.
 Then why should I thinke scorne to dandle mine.⁷⁶

Among the aristocracy at least, such domestic sentimentality on the part of fathers was considered somewhat suspect because it was regarded as womanish and lower-class. Renaissance educators inveighed with monotonous regularity against motherly coddling and overindulgence, a weakness which stemmed from the deficiency of unregulated nature. Fathers were presumed to be more rational and thus more likely to recognize the necessity for maintaining awe and respect in their offspring.⁷⁷ Parental doting was satirized by contemporaries as endemic also among upwardly mobile yeomen and townspeople, for whom the careful nurture of children could prove a passport into the gentry class.⁷⁸ Despite the sweeping intellectual changes which passed over England from the late thirteenth to the sixteenth century, the class implications of child-centeredness remained much the same: the women and townspeople whose child-centeredness was ridiculed by Renaissance social critics were precisely the same groups at whom medieval Franciscans had aimed their child-centered devotionism.

3

As the title of Louis B. Wright's useful book has reminded us, there was such a thing as *Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan En-*

gland; but the prevailing value system of the sixteenth century was that of the landed aristocracy. During the next hundred years, however, there was a distinct shift away from the rigid hierarchical formalities which had structured upper-class family life since the Middle Ages. John Aubrey describes his own impatience as a young man with the extremely wide distance still assumed between parents and children early in the seventeenth century. Upon recovering from an attack of smallpox at the university, he notes, "my father sent for me into the Country again: where I conversed with none but servants and rustiques and soldiers quartred, to my great grieffe, for in those dayes fathers were not acquainted with their children." But in the course of the century, as Aubrey's words imply, the distance narrowed and upper-class parents *did* begin to become better acquainted with their children. Writing about 1670, Aubrey waxed indignant over the treatment accorded children before the Civil War and related it, precisely as Elizabethan theorists had, to the authoritarianism of earlier English society in general:

From the time of Erasmus till about 20 years past, the learning was downright Pedantry. . . . The conversation and habitts of those times were as stiff and starcht as their bands and square beards: and Gravity was then taken for Wisdome. The Gentry and the Citizens had little learning of any kind, and their way of breeding up their children was suitable to the rest: for wheras ones child should be ones nearest Friend, and the time of growing-up should be most indulged, they were as severe to their children as their Schoolmasters; and their Schoolmasters, as masters of the House of correction. The child perfectly loathed the sight of his parents, as the slave his Torturor. Gentlemen of 30 or 40 years old, fitt for any employment in the Common wealth, were to stand like great mutes and fools bare headed before their Parents; and the Daughters (grown woemen) were to stand at the Cupboards side during the whole time of the proud mothers visitt, unless (as the fashion was) 'twas desired that leave (forsooth) should be given to them to kneele upon cushions brought them by the servingman, after they had done sufficient Penance standing.⁷⁹

Even if Aubrey's sarcasm moved him to some exaggeration, he was describing a change which can be documented from other sources as well and which deserves considerably more attention than it has received thus far from historians of childhood and the family: the precipitous seventeenth-century decline of the feudal values and mores which had set the dominant tone for English culture since the Middle Ages.⁸⁰

Lawrence Stone has argued that the period between 1580 and 1620 was the real watershed between medieval and modern English society. The old semipublic upper-class households, with their scores of servants and retainers and their ostentatious displays of hospitality, gradually gave way to a more sequestered form of opulence. The all-purpose medieval hall was replaced by private dining rooms and bedrooms. In Elizabethan times, as in the Middle Ages, noblemen had commonly kept a hundred men in livery; but by the mid-seventeenth century, most large households had been whittled down to thirty to fifty members. The landed classes were refashioning their way of life along lines of family intimacy already familiar among the bourgeoisie. At the same time, James I's and Charles I's wholesale selling of aristocratic titles was creating new disrespect for the peerage, the traditional hierarchy, and the elaborate forms of deference which had reinforced its authority.⁸¹ All of these factors must have contributed to the upper-class transformation in parent-child relations noted by Aubrey and other observers: from the traditional great households where children were part of a very large community and governed in their relationships with parents and other superiors by an elaborate formal code, to smaller and more intimate units, much more closely approximating the modern nuclear family, in which parents and children interacted more freely as individuals and even perhaps as friends.

Even in the eighteenth century great preoccupation with one's offspring was considered somewhat *basse classe*. In the 1732 *Gentleman's Magazine*, an article entitled "Foolish Fondness" observed:

The Common people generally express more Fondness for their Children than persons of Rank and Distinction; the good Sense of the latter prevents their Affection from being troublesome, whereas the other, thro' want of Consideration, are continually plaguing Company with a Detail of the Beauty, Wit, and Spirit of the Child, and are affronted, if you are not as much delighted with its Impertinencies as they are. In Consequence of this Fondness they indulge their Children in all their Follies and extravagant Humours.⁸²

But already in the Restoration period, such child-centeredness was clearly superseding traditional aristocratic indifference as the preferred upper-class model. John Locke was a gentleman writing to gentlemen in his immensely influential *Thoughts Concerning Education* (1690), but he was nonetheless willing to take keen interest in the problems of supervising the young. He insisted that children be kept in the company of their parents and away from servants, that they be disciplined mildly and allowed to play as freely as possible, and that they be advised by their parents as by friends of more experience. Locke's essay discusses the minutest aspects of children's lives—different types of crying and their remedies, the problem of costiveness, and the benefits of frequent cold baths. Underlying his essay is an assumption which would have appeared quite foreign to upper-class Englishmen of a century before—that no aspect of a child's life is too humble and mundane to merit the active concern of both parents, however high their social station.

In medieval art and literature, lower-class interest in child subjects had been vented only in a clearly religious context, usually in literature aimed at a wide audience, and usually in sublimated form as devotion for the Infant Jesus or some youthful saint. But by the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, the English bourgeoisie had gained sufficient education, prosperity, and independence for its child-centeredness to become prominent in secular art and literature. To be sure, no particular interest in childhood is to be found in the neoclassical poetry of Dryden and

Pope, which followed traditional hierarchical standards of decorum and allowed for the appearance of child subjects only in "low" poetic genres like satire and the pastoral. Dryden in "Mac Flecknoe" and Pope in his *Dunciad* use to great effect the satiric device of disparaging opponents by reducing them to the level of blubbing, blundering children. The *Dunciad* cuts one of the offspring of Dulness down to size in a few quick slashes by calling him "child and man the same; / Bounded by Nature, narrow'd still by Art, / A trifling head, and a contracted heart."⁸³ Pope tartly remarked of Ambrose Philips, who wrote several occasional poems to children, that "he thinks all childish things belong to him, and he'll take it ill to be taught that one may write things to a child without being childish."⁸⁴ The sole significant appearance of a child in Pope's nonsatiric poetry is in his "Messiah," modeled on Virgil's Fourth Eclogue and celebrating the birth of Christ in such heroic terms that its readers are invited to forget its subject's actual age.

But the traditional indifference which dominated the major Augustan poetry was far from dominant in literature aspiring to a much wider reading public, particularly in the novel and in those chatty guides to eighteenth-century manners and morals, the periodicals. *The Spectator* often discusses "the most important Circumstance of Life, even the Care of Children," ridicules boorish and brutal parents, and gives its highest praise to fathers and sons who live in real friendship: "It is the most beautiful Object the Eyes of Man can behold, to see a Man of Worth and his Son live in an entire unreserved Correspondence. The mutual Kindness and Affection between them give an inexpressible Satisfaction to all who know them."⁸⁵ *The Tatler* lauds a family in which the children's "Father is the most intimate Friend they have, and they always consult him rather than any other, when any Error has happened in their Conduct through Youth and Inadvertancy."⁸⁶ Nestor Ironside, Esq., of *The Guardian* steeps himself in sentimentality for childishness, recording his supreme pleasure in the songs of a "numerous and innocent Multitude" of charity children, re-

calling nostalgically the "tender images" of his own boyish years, and expressing unqualified satisfaction in the contemplation of child-coddling womanhood:

I went the other day to visit Eliza, who, in the perfect Bloom of Beauty, is the Mother of several Children. She had a little prating Girl upon her Lap, who was begging to be very fine, that she might go Abroad; and the indulgent Mother, at her little Daughter's Request, had just taken the Knots off her own Head, to adorn the Hair of the pretty Trifler. A smiling Boy was at the same time caressing a Lap-dog, which is their Mother's Favorite, because it pleases the Children; and she, with a Delight in her Looks, which heighten'd her Beauty, so divided her Conversation with the two pretty Prattlers, as to make them both equally cheerful.

As I came in, she said with a Blush, Mr. Ironside, *though you are an Old Bachelor, you must not laugh at my Tenderness to my Children*. I need not tell my Reader, what Civil things I said in Answer to the Lady, whose Matron-like Behaviour gave me infinite Satisfaction; Since I myself take great Pleasure in playing with Children, and am seldom unprovided of Plums or Marbles, to make my Court to such entertaining Companions.⁸⁷

Steele established Mr. Ironside as a benevolent character by making him a lover of children—a tactic also frequently employed in the novel. By the mid-eighteenth century, sentimentality toward childishness had become a generally accepted attitude in literature, even an infallible touchstone for natural goodness of heart. Squire Allworthy was moved to forget his usual punctiliousness by the sentiments of compassion with which he beheld the foundling Tom Jones. He "was so eager in contemplating the Beauty of Innocence, appearing in those lively Colours with which Infancy and Sleep always display it, that his Thoughts were too much engaged to reflect that he was in his Shirt when the Matron came in."⁸⁸ In *Joseph Andrews* Mr. Wilson asks Parson Adams, "Perhaps, sir, you are not yourself a father; if you are not, be assured you cannot conceive the delight I have in my little ones. Would you not despise me, if you saw me stretched on the ground and my children playing round me?" But Adams replies,

to his eternal credit, "I should reverence the sight."⁸⁹ Boswell recorded of the often surly Dr. Johnson that his "love of little children, which he discovered upon all occasions, calling them 'pretty dears,' and giving them sweetmeats, was an undoubted proof of the real humanity and gentleness of his disposition."⁹⁰

Predictably enough, given moralists' time-honored complaints that women tend to be hopeless pamperers of their offspring, delight in childishness is particularly prominent in works aimed at a largely female audience. Samuel Richardson, who read portions of his works to women before publishing them and kept up a voluminous correspondence with female admirers, made family life and child care central to the second volume of *Pamela*. Its heroine punctuates her conversation with exclamations of motherly fondness, writes an extended critique of the educational opinions of Locke, and shirks from the very thought of physical punishment: "Just now, dear Sir, your Billy is brought into my presence, all smiling, crowing to come to me, and full of heart-cheering promises; and the subject I am upon goes to my heart. Surely I can never beat your Billy!—Dear little life of my life! how can I think thou canst ever deserve it, or that I can ever inflict it?"⁹¹ After mid-century, the concerns and feelings expressed by this paragon of the early English novel began to be reflected in poetry as well.⁹²

It is not only in eighteenth-century imaginative literature that we find sentimental tolerance for childishness becoming more generally acceptable. British painting of the period is so dominated by evocations of playful imps and their affectionate mothers that the eighteenth century has been called the century of women and children. Toys have existed in at least rudimentary forms since time immemorial, but in the eighteenth century, for those who could afford them, they became very elaborate—beautifully furnished dollhouses and Noah's arks complete with full sets of animals. In the 1740s John Newberry began publishing the first books expressly for the enjoyment of children, like *A Little Pretty Pocket Booke intended for the instruction and amusement of little Master Tommy and pretty Miss Polly*. As his popularity grew, Newberry

even wrote advertisements directed toward his youthful consumers, in which he announced the publication of "important volumes, bound and gilt, and hereby invites all his little friends who are good to call for them at the Bible and Sun, in St. Paul's Churchyard, but those who are naughty to have none."⁹³ For John Newberry and his many imitators, not only was children's play acceptable, it had become big business.

In the writings of eighteenth-century educators and moralists, traditional protests over the vapidity and bestiality of children are but seldom encountered. Pedagogical writers argued that child's play was not to be scorned and repressed as mere foolishness, but encouraged as essential to health and proper physical development. The eighteenth century had its share of young prodigies, but the humanist regimen, by which children "commence their career at three, become expert linguists at four, profound philosophers at five, read the Fathers at six and die of old age at seven,"⁹⁴ had come under massive attack. The grammar schools which had been the pride of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century had deteriorated badly by 1700, attended only by farmers' and tradesmen's sons and an occasional younger child of a gentleman. Locke had little patience for the pedantic and "vulgar method" of the grammar schools, their inhumanity, and their emphasis on dead languages to the detriment of living social concerns.⁹⁵ He urged that children be taught at home under the kindly eyes of parents and tutors, and consistently placed strict formal education as the last and least crucial aspect of the training of children. Locke's opinions were echoed frequently in the eighteenth century until Rousseau's much more radical attack on traditional pedagogy in *Emile* made Locke seem obsolete.

Wordsworth and Coleridge have often been credited with discovering childhood for English letters—with recognizing for the first time that this stage of life could be made a fit subject for serious literature and originating the notion that children's natural inclinations are worthy of the scrutiny and appreciation of adults. But given the gradual but steady *embourgeoisement* of En-

lish culture in the century and a half before they wrote and the corresponding turnabout in dominant cultural attitudes, we must recognize that the romantic poets, however compelling their portrayals of childhood and its "white designs," were as much a culmination as a beginning. The child-centeredness of their poetry and of so much more recent literature was the ultimate product of a most fundamental shift which had become evident by the mid-seventeenth century in England. In 1600 prevailing upper-class opinion held that the requirements of a hierarchical social code had to take precedence over affective ties in the conduct of parent-child relations: the family was a microcosm of the English state; the relationships between the head and those lower in the hierarchy were to be regulated by a set of formal rules and gestures. After 1660, the hierarchical model became less prominent and affective ties received more emphasis: it became more generally acceptable to regard one's children as friends and one's family, to use the phrase Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* proudly applied to his own, as a little republic; traditional social patterns were, in theory at least, loosened to offer greater accommodation of the child's natural needs and behavior. I have argued that to the extent that this transformation in dominant cultural assumptions reflected actual practice, it reflected the practice of the middle classes and gradually spread upward to the aristocracy. In fact, the reality was probably a bit more complicated than that: even as middle-class child-centeredness became more dominant in English art and letters, the middle-class family itself was very likely in the process of evolving away from hierarchical patterns of interaction as well. We will note that John Aubrey implicated the "Citizens" as well as the gentry in his indictment of pre-Civil War mores. In order to be sure just how the social transformation under question came about, we must await future historical work on what family life was actually like below the level of the upper classes. Nevertheless, as a comparative statement, our guiding generalization holds true: at least from the thirteenth century until well into the eighteenth, particular interest in child

care and child themes was much more characteristic of the lower orders than of the upper.

In making our survey, we have left a rather large gap: we have identified a fairly clear-cut set of attitudes still dominant around 1600 and another set beginning to gain prominence after 1660. But what of the transitional years in between? In many areas of early seventeenth-century secular culture we do indeed discover an unprecedented emphasis on childishness which seems clearly to parallel the transformation in upper-class mores described by Aubrey. Children's portraits were much more numerous than in Elizabethan times, and began to depict their subjects at play instead of rigidly posed. Funeral effigies of children had occasionally been placed on the tombs of their parents in the sixteenth century, but by the seventeenth, children were being given their own tombs, effigies, and epitaphs. Epigrams commemorating the youth and delicacy of departed children became a literary vogue.⁹⁶ Jacobean and Caroline occasional verse and dedicatory letters to children frequently follow the Elizabethan pattern, addressing their subjects as the noble and learned adults it was hoped they would one day become. But often a new note was struck. The dedicatory epistles to the first and fifth books of Thomas Fuller's *A Pisgah-Sight of Palestine* (1650), for example, express the confidence that the author's "nursery" of infant patrons, however incapable of appreciating his prose, will at least enjoy the maps. Fuller discusses the advantages infancy can boast over manhood and closes with a graceful apology for such a "long Letter to a little Lord."⁹⁷ Similarly, Robert Herrick's poem on the birth of Prince Charles makes his infancy the center of the compliment instead of attempting to overlook it. The poem is cast in the "low" form of a pastoral dialogue, and the little prince is regaled with gamboling lambs and lullabies. The chorus sings, "*Pan* pipe to him, and bleats of lambs and sheep, / Let Lullaby the pretty Prince asleep!"⁹⁸ Erasmus and other sixteenth-century educators had crusaded for gentleness, humanity, and the abolition of corporal punishment in the education of children. But seventeenth-century

pedagogical writers insisted with much greater force and unanimity than their Elizabethan forebears on the necessity for gauging texts to the pupil's capacity and banishing scarecrows from wisdom's gardens by teaching through "sport and merry pastime." John Brinsley's argument for leniency is particularly noteworthy for the analogy it draws between the traditional Proverbs, chapter 23 school of child discipline and political authoritarianism: "Which of vs is there that would willingly liue vnder such a gouernment of any sort, that our state should be as the people, vnder their Taske-Masters in Egypt, that wee should be smitten continually for euey little fault?"⁹⁹ But despite the considerable evidence for a new child-centeredness in secular writings, in the first half of the seventeenth century, as in the Middle Ages, childhood and childishness were most consistently emphasized in the prose and poetry of religious devotion.

It would be tempting to argue that Herbert, Vaughan, Traherne, and the other poets to be discussed in this study offer by their literary attention to the pursuit of childishness yet further documentation for the seventeenth-century abandonment of late-feudal values, and to suppose that in crafting verbal artifacts about such a traditionally lowly stage of life they were expressing their allegiance to the new looser model which was replacing the old hierarchical formalism. But here we encounter an interesting paradox. The poets did indeed borrow from the new, but only to affirm the old: they gave childhood a poetic emphasis unprecedented in earlier English verse, but they did so out of loyalty to the essentially late-medieval social order which was so obviously crumbling about them. The mainstream of sixteenth-century English humanism had been fired by the conviction that there was no contradiction between the highest uses of the mind and faithful service to church and state: learning was the surest path to the court of the king of England and to the Court of Heaven; social institutions, human talents, and ultimate realities could be understood as part of a single complex whole. But the seventeenth-century poets we will be discussing by no means

shared such optimism. Looking out upon a nation torn by the rabid controversialism and social breakdown which preceded and accompanied the English Civil War, they perceived clear connections between the unfettered applications of human intellectual powers—especially as practiced by Puritan pamphleteers—and the ever-worsening erosion of respect for the traditional hierarchical authority of church and state. Since adult rationality appeared irreconcilable with obedience, and obedience to traditional authority appeared necessary if order were to be maintained at all, they expressed their loyalty to the old order and to the God who had ordained it by advocating a return to the lowly simplicities of childhood. For artistic purposes at least, the poets were not chiefly interested in young people per se. As the next chapter should make clear, bourgeois child-centeredness appears most prominently in seventeenth-century writings as part of the very Puritan ideology which the poets opposed. For them childhood was a rich and complex symbol, not only for humility and anti-intellectualism, but for a whole range of values associated with an England of the past and rapidly disappearing under Puritan attack in the divided England of their own time.



Childhood and Seventeenth-Century Ideology

And as the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself! And David said unto Michal, it was before the Lord, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel: therefore will I play before the Lord. And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou has spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour. Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.

II Sam. 6:16-23

It is hardly surprising that in seventeenth-century England, where nearly half of all published books related to matters of faith, childhood was seen in a predominantly religious context. But religious controversialism was a way of fighting out issues we would no longer consider religious. The moral value of childishness had always been a matter of some dispute among theologians; in the decades before the Civil War it became a focal point for two sharply polarized social ideologies. To call the two poles Puritan and Angli-

can is, of course, to oversimplify: there were nearly as many shades of religious and political belief as there were believers. Yet we can distinguish two distinct and contrasting patterns of thought which this study will designate under those admittedly inadequate labels: the first fostering values we tend to think of as modern—progress, individualism, commercial enterprise—and the second attempting to preserve a closed, static, collective agrarian world outlook which historians associate with medieval times and anthropologists with preindustrial society in general. The child has been called an initial and a terminal figure—it can embody a past lost to adulthood, or a future the adult will not live to see.¹ For seventeenth-century Puritans, their children were the best hope for a better England to come. For conservative Anglicans, childhood was a symbolic link with an idealized England gone by.

Seventeenth-century Puritans, with their vehement insistence on the ravages of original sin, could not have been further from regarding childishness as any sort of ideal. Nor were they willing to tolerate liturgical and festival survivals of medieval Christianity. Traditional ceremonialism, even in its toned-down Anglican form, was unacceptable because it was, in a very precise sense of the word, childish. The Puritans were strongly oriented to the future—toward conquering past corruption in their personal lives and in society at large. As Archbishop Laud complained of their views, "If any thing be ancient, it smells of Antichrist."² But antichildishness did not make them antichildren. By exalting the family and the close ties which should unite it, by making their children fellow-comrades in the struggle for the New Jerusalem, and by producing a large body of educational material in which the everyday lives of children figure prominently, the Puritans displayed a solicitude for the well-being and success of their offspring unequalled in earlier writings. Their emphasis on the needs and capacities of individual children, even as it contributed to the eventual cultural triumph of bourgeois child-centeredness, helped seal the demise of the medieval collectivism regretted by nostalgic seventeenth-century Anglicans.

The Church of England was by no means committed to the notion that children are innocent. But whatever their church's views on original sin, many Anglicans refused to consider childishness, at least in its religious connotations, as synonymous with reprobation. For Church of England conservatives, the shared celebration of liturgical worship and traditional holiday customs was childish in a very positive sense—a remnant of the simple, unchanging unity which had been England's glory before she was sullied by social and intellectual divisions. The Anglican vision of England's almost mystical unity was, of course, more construct than reality—an idealized image which receded more and more into the past whenever theorists sought to pin it down to any specific time. But insofar as they were trying to salvage something which had actually existed, conservative Anglican and royalist theorists in the decades before the Civil War were attempting to shore up surviving remnants of the medieval feudal order against the challenge of new ideas and new social patterns. They advocated childish submission by all Englishmen in order to restore an idealized—and very selective—vision of what medieval England had been. For many Anglicans, childhood was a compelling symbol for the childhood of the nation—a symbol so compelling that the most extreme among them, quixotically abandoning their church's orthodoxy out of devotion to an image of her past, denied or diluted her teachings on original sin and even went a considerable distance toward undoing the English Reformation.

1

The controversy over childishness was far more than theological quibbling: it was a clash between two mutually exclusive outlooks on life. But it was solidly grounded in doctrine. The conflict of opinions begins, of course, with the Bible itself. References to children in the Old Testament are often negative: "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Prov. 22:15). In the Gospels, however, Christ

frequently commends childhood as a model for adult emulation. Three of the four Gospels recount with minor variations an incident in which little children were brought to Jesus to be blessed. Upon the disciples' objections, Jesus commanded, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein" (Mark 10:14-15). On another occasion, recounted in three of the four Gospels but most fully in Matthew, the disciples came to Jesus asking, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me" (Matt. 18:1-5). The other accounts end with this commendation of the lowliness of children, but Matthew goes on to emphasize their faith as well: "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned" (Matt. 18:6). And a little later, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18:10).

Lest anyone should interpret Christ's sayings too generally, St. Paul pointed out their limitations: "In malice be ye children, but in understanding be men" (I Cor. 14:20). Throughout the first letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul uses metaphors of birth, childhood, and manhood. Upon their conversion new Christians are born in Christ: "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel" (I Cor. 4:15). They are babes in Christ who have not yet achieved manhood: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat, for hitherto ye were

not able to bear it" (I Cor. 3:1-2). St. Paul emphasizes the necessity of growing to spiritual maturity: "When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (I Cor. 13:11). The word *children* is often used in Scripture not as a literal reference to age, but as a term expressing filial relationship. All Christians, according to St. Paul, are the children of God and joint heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17), but they are children of God as Christ in the fullness of His powers was the Son of God: as joint heirs with Christ they will inherit His heavenly glory but must also have the adult strength and steadfastness to suffer His earthly trials.

The early eastern fathers greatly expanded St. Paul's interpretation of the Gospel passages. For them children were imitable not only for their humility and freedom from malice, but also for innocence, candor, and simplicity.³ St. Augustine, however, denied that children are free even of malice. He testified, "Myself have seen and known even a baby envious; it could not speak, yet it turned pale and looked bitterly on its foster-brother. Who knows not this?" The *Confessions* paints a vivid picture of his own infantile narcissism to counter the belief that children are innocent. "What then was my sin? . . . Was it then good, even for a while, to cry for what, if given, would hurt? bitterly to resent, that persons free, and its own elders, yea, the very authors of its birth, served it not? that many besides, wiser than it, obeyed not the nod of its good pleasure? to do its best to strike and hurt, because commands were not obeyed, which had been obeyed to its hurt? The weakness then of infant limbs, not its will, is its innocence." As he grew to boyhood, his depravity increased along with his physical powers:

What was more foul than I was already, displeasing even such as myself? with innumerable lies deceiving my tutor, my masters, my parents, from love of play, eagerness to see vain shows and restlessness to imitate them! Thefts also I committed, from my parents' cellar and table, enslaved by greediness. . . . I often sought unfair conquests, conquered myself mean-

while by vain desires of pre-eminence. And what could I so ill endure, or, when I detected it, upbraided I so fiercely, as that I was doing to others? and for which, if, detected, I was upbraided, I chose rather to quarrel than to yield. And is this the innocence of boyhood? Not so, Lord, not so; It was the low stature then of childhood which thou our King didst commend as an emblem of lowliness, when Thou saidst, Of such is the kingdom of heaven.⁴

St. Augustine reduces the New Testament commendation of childhood to its most restricted possible meaning: the Christian must be lowly in spirit as the child is low in stature and station. Biblical passages praising "little ones" refer not to actual children, but to adults who humble themselves in spirit.

Later Catholic commentators could not ignore the *Confessions* entirely, even though it seemed to conflict with St. Paul. Cornelius à Lapide, the great Jesuit commentator, argued that Christians should be like little children "who commonly do not envy others, nor court the great, but are simple, humble, innocent and candid." But he hastened to explain that he said "commonly" because St. Augustine had testified that he was well acquainted with the envy of infants.⁵ In the writing of the Protestant reformers, however, St. Augustine returned in full force. John Calvin pointed out that Christ's injunctions to his disciples are not "stretched generally to all things. We know that in children many things are corrupt." Calvin followed St. Augustine in interpreting most New Testament references to children or little ones as metaphorical allusions to St. Paul's children of God—the adult faithful of the church who "frame themselves to modesty and subjection."⁶

Calvin's distrust for childhood was based squarely on his conception of original sin. The eastern fathers and much of the medieval western church had held that original sin was basically a deprivation of grace. Unbaptized children could not go to heaven because they had not been made "children of God" through baptism, and they could not suffer torments equal to those of damned adults because they had as yet committed no actual sin on their

own: they were consigned to a middle state like the limbo where Dante puts them in Canto 4 of the *Inferno*. But Calvin followed St. Augustine and St. Fulgentius, the *duri infantum patres*, in denying the existence of a middle state and insisting that unbaptized children must be damned to hell. For Calvin, as for St. Augustine, original sin was not just a deprivation, but a *depravatio*—actual evil. Calvin called it a “perversenesse and corruption of our nature, powred abroad into all the parts of the soul” and insisted, “This perverseness never ceaseth in us, but continually bringeth forth new fruits, even the same workes of the flesh that we have before described: like as a burning furnace bloweth out flame and sparkles, or as a spring doth without ceasing cast out water.” Early eastern fathers and much of the medieval western church had tended to define sin as evil acts. But Calvin emphasized not the “flames and sparkles” of sinful deeds, but their source in the inherent depravity of human nature since the Fall. Even infants too young to know the meaning of sin and too young consciously to enact it merited damnation, for they were by nature just as corrupt as the most hardened adult evildoer: “The very infants themselves, while they bring with them their owne damnation from their mothers wombe, are bound, not by anothers, but by their owne fault. For although they have not as yet brought forth the fruits of their owne iniquitie, yet they have the seede thereof enclosed within them: yea, their whole nature is a certain seede of sinne: therefore it cannot be but hatefull and abominable to God.”⁷

The Church of England officially followed the Calvinist doctrine of original sin. The Ninth Article, though a masterpiece of ambiguity, states clearly enough that original sin is not simply a lack of rectitude, but an active evil.⁸ For Anglicans writing in the Augustinian tradition, children’s behavior could yield almost endless emblematic proofs of the lapse of Adam. Godfrey Goodman cited the manner of childbirth, “with our heads forwards, as it were stumbling into life, which vndoubtedly argues our fall, for our birth is a *praecipitium*, a break-neck, as if we were cast head-

long downe frome Some mount." Children play in mud: "See then (of all other places) how they make choice of the basest! the sinke, the chanell, the chymnie, wallowing in the mire, all daubde on with durt; that were it not to signifie the vncleannesse of mans conception and birth, I should much maruaile at natures intent herein." They are particularly prone to the first sin of Adam: "As soone as our strength serues vs, then wee begin to rob orchards, to rifle aple-lofts, [feasting] upon forbidden fruits, as if we could not leaue our ould haunt." Even the child in the womb, according to John Donne, already demonstrates its fallen condition by feeding on its mother's blood: "There in the *wombe* we are taught *cruelty*, by being *fed with blood*, and may be *damm'd*, though we be *never borne*."⁹

The official Anglican position on the fate of unbaptized children, however, was not clearly Calvinist. Such children were commonly buried along with suicides in the north side of the churchyard—facing the Devil's kingdom;¹⁰ the *Book of Common Prayer's* text for the "Administration of Baptism" points out that "all men be conceived and borne in Sinne" and asks God that children be "delivered from thy wrath" and receive remission of their sins through baptism. But the "Administration of Baptism" also commends infants for their "innocencie" and the church remained officially silent as to the spiritual destination of those who died without that sacrament; even John Donne, for whom original sin was such a constant obsession, hedged on the question, saying that we cannot know what God's mercy might accomplish.¹¹

For most seventeenth-century Puritans, however, the issues were much clearer: it was not baptism which mattered, but religious conversion. Children, before they came to a realization of their sinful condition, were not innocent, but wicked heirs of hell. The term *Puritan* is, as Christopher Hill has remarked, an "admirable refuge from clarity of thought,"¹² yet too necessary, if only for its seventeenth-century ubiquitousness, to be avoided here. Puritanism cannot be defined as adherence to the Calvinist interpretation of the doctrine of original sin; such a definition would

embrace staunch Anglicans like John Donne and Godfrey Goodman. Rather, the Puritans are distinguished by their views about how original sin could be overcome. They insisted that the Christian's search for moral regeneration was hindered rather than helped by the traditional liturgy and ceremonials of the established church, and that, insofar as anyone could influence his own spiritual destiny, he or she could do so only through a life of strenuous individual effort toward righteousness.

To help themselves and one another along the hard road toward regeneration, the Puritans developed a new genre of spiritual autobiography modeled on St. Augustine's *Confessions* and laying great stress on the sinful years of childhood. John Bunyan recounts, "It was my delight to be taken captive by the Devil, *at his will*, 2 Tim. 2. 26. being filled with all unrighteousness: The which did also so strongly work and put forth it self, both in my heart and life, and that from a child, that I had but few Equals (especially considering my years, which were tender, being few) both for cursing, swearing, lying, and blaspheming the holy Name of God."¹³ Oliver Heywood's memories of his childish depravity moved him even to rewrite St. Paul:

I cannot remember the time or age, state or place, wherein I was free from sin or perpetrating thereof. I remember how proud I was of any little coveted excellency, how fond I was of trifles, how backward to good exercises, how forward to sinful practices, how tractable to follow bad examples. the time was when with children in playing I vented my selfe in many barbarous ways, yea undoubted oathes. —when I was a child I spake as a child, yea rather like a devil incarnate, oh the desperate wickedness of my deceitful hart.¹⁴

The Puritan portrayal of human life as a struggle away from its polluted beginnings led them to place much greater emphasis, however negative, on the years of childhood than had appeared in earlier British biography and autobiography.

But the Puritans were less interested in the wickedness of chil-

dren than in the possibility of their redemption. They saw the religious education of the young as a matter of great urgency—spiritual life and death—and interpreted Christ's "Suffer the little children to come unto me" as biblical proof that children are capable of becoming responsible moral agents. James Janeway (1636–1674) asked, "Are the Souls of your Children of no Value? Are you willing that they should be Brands of Hell? Are you indifferent whether they be Damned or Saved? You see that they are not Subjects uncapable of the Grace of God; what ever you think of them, Christ doth not slight them; they are not too little to die, they are not too little to go to Hell, they are not too little to serve their great Master, too little to go to Heaven; *For of such is the Kingdom of God.*"¹⁵ Motivated by real concern for children's spiritual welfare, writers like Janeway insisted that young people strive to follow the strenuous adult conversion pattern of coming to a recognition of their own worthlessness, despairing of their salvation, passing through a period of intense spiritual struggle, and finally reaching a certitude of their personal election.

Puritan autobiographies characteristically emphasize not only the wickedness of unregenerate children, but also their remarkable precocity in realizing their sinful condition. Bunyan records how God sent him fearful dreams and visions, how he was afflicted by thoughts of the terrors of hell, and how "these things, I say, when I was but a child, about nine or ten years old, did so distress my Soul, that then, in the midst of my many sports, and childish vanities, amidst my vain companions, I was often much cast down and afflicted in my mind therewith."¹⁶ Other children came to an even earlier awareness of their spiritual state. James Janeway tells several stories of childhood religious experience. One young saint was "admirably affected with the Things of God, when he was between two and three Years old," but the case of Sarah Howley is more typical. She was brought to a recognition of her sin on hearing a sermon when she was eight or nine years old; at the age of fourteen she "broke a Vein in her Lungs" and in the ensuing illness was very uncertain about her spiritual destiny. A

few days before her death her struggles ceased and she became sensible of her salvation. She pleaded with other children to think to the good of their souls: "You are young, but you know not how soon you may die; and, O to die without a Christ, it is a fearful thing: O redeem Time! O Time, Time, Time, precious Time!" She asked that at her funeral, a sermon be preached "concerning the Preciousness of Time, O that young Ones would now remember their Creator!"¹⁷ Time *was* all important, since a child might well die young and to die unregenerate was to be damned forever. Janeway's book is adorned with tiny woodcuts, one showing a child beside a coffin, another depicting a boy in prayer while three more careless companions play with a top. Even the youngest child was urged to desert play, particularly on the Sabbath, for the serious moral effort of the awakened soul.

Janeway's *A Token for Children*, written about 1670, is an early example of a brand new genre—a religious book specifically designed for children. Children before the latter half of the seventeenth century were obliged to plow through the catechism or adult religious manuals for written religious sustenance. But the Puritans wrote books tailored to their limited understanding and world view. Janeway prefaces his series of the lives of exemplary children with a simple, compelling exhortation to his young readers: "Are you willing to go to Hell to be burn'd with the devil and his angels? Would you be in the same Condition as naughty Children? O Hell is a terrible place, that's worse a thousand times than whipping; God's anger is worse than your Father's anger." "I would fain have thee one of those little Ones, which Christ will take into his Arms and Bless."

John Bunyan's *A Book for Boys and Girls or Country Rhimes for Children* casts its didactic message in more appealing poetic form. It begins rather forbiddingly with a recapitulation of the Puritan pattern of conversion: the first poem is a paraphrase of the Ten Commandments, the second is "The awakened Childs Lamentation," and the third teaches through "Meditations upon an Egg" that the soul must be rehatched in Christ. Most of Bunyan's po-

ems speak to children in their own language, using simple, striking emblems to carry home the didactic message. Number 31, "Of the Child with the Bird at the Bush," tells how a child tries with winning words and loving promises to attract a wild bird into his care, but the bird flies away, just as human beings fly Christ's promised redemption. Number 47, "Upon the Boy and his Paper of Plumbs," is an emblem of those whose joys lie in ephemeral earthly vanities:

What hast thou there, my pretty Boy?
Plumbs? How? Yes, Sir, a Paperfull.
I thought 'twas so, because with Joy
Thou didst them out thy Paper pull.

The Boy goes from me, eats his Plumbs,
Which he counts better of then Bread:
But by and by he to me comes,
With naught but Paper and the Thread.¹⁸

The genial tone and trivial subject matter of many of Bunyan's poems are deliberately adopted to wean children from sin. Bunyan declares in his preface that he will play the child to gain real children for Christ: "by their *Play-Things*, I would them entice, / To mount their Thoughts from what are childish Toys, / To Heav'n, for that's prepar'd for Girls and Boys."

Puritan distrust for "childish Toys" was based on their concept of original sin, but intensified by their Pauline ideal of the Christian life as a perpetual combat. St. Paul compares the Christian to an athlete in the public games—a wrestler who strives for an incorruptible crown and never shrinks from strict training—and to a soldier armed with the armor of God. At the end of his days, St. Paul rejoiced, "I have fought a good fight" (II Tim. 4:7). It was said of the *wicked*, "They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men" (Ps. 73:5). Though John Milton was far too capacious a thinker to be categorized as Puritan, his *Areopagitica* offers the most stirring seventeenth-century statement of Puri-

tan educational goals: "Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather: that which purifies us is triall, and triall is by what is contrary. That vertue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evill, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank vertue, not a pure; her whitenesse is but an excrementall whitenesse."¹⁹ The excremental whiteness of original sin was conquerable only by trial in the world of experience: by wandering through the wilderness, encountering temptation, and triumphing over it like the struggling children of *Comus*.

But children were not expected to make their way through the wilderness of vice unaided: Puritan spirituality undoubtedly placed a heavy psychological burden on the young, but it placed an even heavier burden on their parents. For Puritan theorists, the institution of marriage had been created by God expressly to insure the good and godly education of youth: the family, not the church, was the center of Puritan religious life, and parents were the chief agents of divine grace for their offspring. Oliver Heywood warned them, "Remember God will call you to account, what Answer will you give, when he shall say? where is the Childs Soul, that I committed to thy trust? what care hast thou taken of it? where are thy Tears, Prayers, Groanings, Earning of Bowels for thine own Bowels? didst thou not know that thy Child had a Soul? that its Soul was polluted with Sin? that it must be born again not only of Water but of the Spirit; or could not be Saved?"²⁰ Puritan diaries allow us to watch conscientious parents at work with their children's souls. Heywood's *Memoranda* describe a day of particular intensity:

On June 9 1666 being a saturday when my maid was gone to Halifax market, and my too sons and I kept the house, in the chamber I set them both a praying and then I went to prayer my selfe, my son John kneeled by me, and wept very sore, when I had done I asked him whether he understood me, he said yes, then I fel a discoursing with them about the state of their soules, we all three wept sore, they were much affected with

their state by nature, &c it was a melting season, who knows but some buddings may appear afterwards, they that sow in teares shal reap in joy—oh how many teares haue been shed for them, they are dedicated to the lord, oh for a little grace for their poore soules.²¹

Whatever our response to such domestic emotionalism, we must recognize its distance from traditional aristocratic indifference. Already in act II, scene iii of Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (1630), great solicitude for child education and welfare was satirized as characteristically Puritan. Rather than alienating them from their offspring, the doctrine of original sin would appear to have cemented family ties among the Puritans and increased the likelihood of intimacy between parents and their children. Seventeenth-century Puritans tended to come from the artisan, yeoman, and merchant classes—the very groups which had been distinguished since the fourteenth century by an unusually child-centered outlook on life. Puritan theology must have intensified this outlook: child-centeredness could not be seen as a matter of individual choice, but had become an urgent spiritual imperative.

In *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine, and Reform 1626–1660*, Charles Webster has demonstrated convincingly that Puritan eschatology was a significant force behind seventeenth-century scientific advancement: human ruination since the fall had to be repaired by strenuous effort toward new knowledge and new empirical techniques for controlling nature.²² We can perhaps see Puritan involvement with children as an aspect of this linkage between doctrine and empiricism. Puritan educators placed a great deal of emphasis on the need for convincing children inwardly of their faults, not battering them into submission according to the Proverbs, chapter 23 school of discipline. Reproof, to be effective, had to be carefully gauged to the age and intent of the offender and the seriousness of the offense. Puritan belief in the corruption of the unregenerate child's nature led them to investigate that nature with a shrewdness of psychological insight unprecedented in earlier educational writings.²³

Even in the area of health, there is some evidence that doctrine may have had a favorable influence on children's physical well-being. Because they believed that corrupt influences could be imbibed along with the milk of a pernicious nurse, writers of Puritan domestic manuals placed particular emphasis on breastfeeding by mothers—a practice which would heighten a mother's involvement with her children, space their births more widely since lactation inhibits conception, and therefore increase their chances for survival. What evidence we have suggests that maternal breastfeeding was indeed a standard practice in Puritan households; there is even some evidence that seventeenth-century Puritans were beginning to use more active methods of birth control to limit the size of their families and improve the prospects of each individual child.²⁴ Calvinist teachings on the pollution of infancy, however jarring to modern sensibilities, moved seventeenth-century Puritans toward reforms in education and child care which those same modern sensibilities would applaud: Puritan preaching and practice on the importance of direct involvement with one's offspring clearly influenced the opinions of Locke and eighteenth-century essayists and played an important role in making such opinions generally acceptable.

But the conquering of original sin had a more exalted purpose than the welfare of any one child. Puritans saw careful education as the best means for the reformation of all of English society. "The house is the fountaine and spring of societie: As it is, and is kept pure, so runnes the water: As the Family is improved (for thence Colonies are sent abroad) so it proves with the *Parish*, with the *Church*, with the *Colledge*, with the *Schoole*, with the *Ward*, with the *Whole City*."²⁵ Domestic manuals frequently reminded readers that, in Richard Baxter's words, "the happiness or misery of families, churches, cities, kingdoms, and of the world, lieth most eminently on parents' hands," and that "the great means of the welfare of the world must be the faithful and holy endeavours of parents, and the willing teachableness and obedience of children."²⁶ This link between the young and future social regenera-

tion was embodied in naming customs. Puritan nomenclature served in part to differentiate the faithful from a more corrupt society at large. But by naming a child Peace or Zeal-in-the-Land, parents also imaginatively projected the child into a time when all their pains in its training would be rewarded and all of society freed from persecution and error to shine forth as the long-awaited New Jerusalem. Those led to Massachusetts in pursuit of this vision argued that they had emigrated primarily for the sake of their children. As Samuel Willard admonished New Englanders in 1682, "The main errand which brought your Fathers into this Wilderness, was not only that they might themselves enjoy, but that they might settle for their Children, and leave them in full possession of the free, pure, and uncorrupted libertyes of the Covenant of Grace."²⁷

Puritan child-centeredness was strongly anchored in Calvinist doctrine and just as strongly aimed at general social reform. But with the passage of time, domestic affection came to dominate the dogma and world view which had fostered it. Already in the Puritan concern for education we can detect a quite un-Calvinist motion away from the doctrine of predestination. In theory, educators acknowledged that only God designated the recipients of his mercy, and that if a child was chosen by God, its parents were at most the channels through which his grace could flow. But in practice, they attributed almost miraculous powers to proper training and were most unwilling to accept the possibility that a given child might remain forever recalcitrant despite the best efforts of its parents. Covenant theology, with its promise of grace by genealogical succession, was a further departure from strict interpretation of the doctrine of original sin. Puritan writers were all too well aware that the covenant did not always operate—that the children of godly parents occasionally died under visible tokens of divine wrath. But preachers held out the hope that those who died young and without undergoing the conversion process might nevertheless be granted grace. Cotton Mather advised the faithful, "You may be satisfied concerning your *Children Departed*

in their Infancy, *That the Alsufficient God, will according to His Promise, be a God unto them, throughout Eternal Ages.* My Brethren, this *Blessing of Abraham* is come upon you, by the Lord Jesus Christ. You may inscribe upon their Gravestone, that *Epitaph*, OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN: or that *Epitaph*, RESERVED FOR A GLORIOUS RESURRECTION: or that *Epitaph*, GONE, BUT NOT LOST."²⁸ In Massachusetts, where so much Puritan teaching received the ultimate test of unimpeded social practice, family sentiment very soon triumphed over religious principle. As Edmund S. Morgan has so persuasively argued, the failure of Massachusetts Puritanism was based on the unwillingness of the regenerate to recognize that the sons and daughters upon whom they relied to fulfill their vision of godly utopia were incapable of the task. Rather than seek new converts from outside their membership, they spent all their powers on the religious conversion of their young; and with their young's failure to embrace the strenuous individual struggle which was the essence of Puritanism, Puritanism itself became no more than a name. Whatever hostility doctrinalists among them expressed toward childishness, and however narrowly their commentaries circumscribed Christ's gospel commendations of childhood, in everyday life the Puritans proved finally incapable of resisting his consolation that heaven belonged to their children.

2

Among people of very different religious stamp than the Puritans, Matt. 18:1-5 was greatly expanded in meaning. Our main interest here will be in the child motifs which entered England from the devotionalism of the Continental Counter Reformation. But we must take brief note of the opinions of radical sects like the Anabaptists. The most wholehearted advocates of childishness hailed from the far-left wing of the Protestant Reformation and took Christ's commendations of childhood as a mandate for anarchist license. Ephraim Pagitt's *Heresiographie* offers a horrified descrip-

tion of a sixteenth-century Continental Anabaptist sect called the *pueres similes*:

Mr. Bullinger in his first booke against *Anabaptists*, nameth others as some of them under pretence of childish innocency, played many odde pranckes: one having kept his excrements in store many dayes, powred them out in the street, & turned himself naked into them, saying, *unlesse we be made like little children, we cannot enter into the Kingdome of heaven.* Others for the same reason would ride upon sticks and hobby-horses like children in great companies, and women would run naked with them, and then in pure innocency they lay together, and so in the end it proved childrens play indeed.²⁹

The seventeenth-century English Ranter leader Abiezer Coppe exploded the New Testament commendations of childhood against Puritan advocates of family-centered devotion:

Give over thy stinking family duties. Give over, give over, or if nothing els will do it, I'l at a time, when thou least of all thinkest of it, make thine own child, the fruit of thy loines, in whom thy soul delighted, lie with a whore—before thine eyes: That that plaguy holinesse and righteousnesse of thine might be confounded by that base thing. And thou be plagued back again into thy mothers womb, the womb of eternity: that thou maist become a little child, and let the mother *Eternity, Almightynesse*, who is universall love, and whose service is perfect freedom, dresse thee, and undresse thee, swadle, unswadle, bind, loose, lay thee down, take thee up, &c. And to such a little child, undressing is as good as dressing, foul cloaths, as good as fair cloaths—he knows no evil, &c.—And shall see evill no more, —but he must first lose all his righteousnesse, every bit of his holinesse, and every crum of his Religion, and be plagued, and confounded (by base things) into nothing.³⁰

For extreme Ranters and Anabaptists, the kingdom of heaven could be attained only after private morality and public order had been crumbled into atomies through the unfettered gratification of childish impulse.

At the other end of the colorful sixteenth- and seventeenth-century spectrum of religious opinion, the Counter Reformation advocated a form of childishness designed to reinforce established authority rather than destroy it—a simple, ingenuous faith which shunned the wandering mazes of reason and clung to the protective bosom of the church. The Jesuit meditative tradition demanded rigorous intellectual discipline. But devotional writers appealing to a much wider audience quite consciously revived the humble spirit of medieval Bernardine and Franciscan piety to counteract militant Protestantism. Catholic devotionalists frequently likened the Christian believer to an infant nourished at the breast—a comparison which goes back at least as far as St. Bernard but was given wide currency in the Renaissance through the writings of St. Teresa. Her *Way of Perfection* describes the “Prayer of Quietude”:

The soul is like an infant still at its mother’s breast: such is the mother’s care for it that she gives it its milk without its having to ask for it so much as by moving its lips. That is what happens here. The will simply loves, and no effort needs to be made by the understanding, for it is the Lord’s pleasure that, without exercising its thought, the soul should realize that it is in His company, and should merely drink the milk which His Majesty puts into its mouth and enjoy its sweetness. The Lord desires it to know that it is He Who is granting it that favour and that in its enjoyment of it He too rejoices. But it is not His will that the soul should try to understand how it is enjoying it, or what it is enjoying; it should lose all thought of itself, and He Who is at its side will not fail to see what is best for it. If it begins to strive with its own mind so that the mind may be apprised of what is happening and thus induced to share in it, it will be quite unable to do so, and the soul will perforce lose the milk and forgo that Divine sustenance.³¹

In St. Teresa’s treatise, the self-abandoning infantilism of the “Prayer of Quietude” is only the second of four ascending stages, a level which many Christians attain and few succeed in tran-

scending. But devotionalists aiming at the many rather than the few set forth the "Prayer of Quietude" as a spiritual goal in itself.

St. François de Sales, for example, was convinced that Ignatian meditation, with its emphasis on intellectual rigor, was more hindrance than help to the devotion of the uneducated. Seeking to recapture the homely affective piety of his medieval namesake from Assisi, he frequently likens the Christian to an infant or little child. *An Introduction to a Devout Life* urges the reader to stretch his hand out to God "as a little child doth to his Father, that he may conduct thee," and compares His spiritual favors to sugared candies a mother puts into her child's mouth. If "Thou wilt not be simple, plaine, and without guile, as a little child is: Thou shalt not then enjoy these spiritual comfits given only to Gods little children." St. François often employs St. Teresa's simile of the quiet, complacent nursing infant because of its "innocencie and puritie." Significantly, in view of the age-old assumption that child motifs were especially attractive to the female sex, he elaborates at great length on the "Prayer of Quietude" in his *Treatise of the Love of God*, which was aimed particularly at women.³² His gentle, affable brand of Christianity verges dangerously on the saccharine at times, but judging by the enormous popularity of his works, it must have struck a responsive chord with many readers, in England as on the Continent.

The childishness advocated in Salesian manuals was given even wider currency in England through the illustrations in emblem books. Alexander Grosart felt obliged to supply new emblems for his sumptuous nineteenth-century edition of Francis Quarles because he judged the originals from Hermann Hugo's *Pia Desideria* as "(to say the least) childish even when adults are necessary to the 'moral' of the verse."³³ But as Quarles had recognized, the emblems depict the believer as a little child to emphasize the virtue of simple, trusting dependence. Book IV, emblem 3 (figure 1) shows a lumpy little form struggling toward Christ with the help of a child's go-cart and beseeching him:



*O. hold thou up my goings in the
paths, that my footsteps slippe
not. Psal. 27. 5.*

P. 98.

Figure 1. The soul learning to walk. Hermann Hugo, *Pia Desideria*, and Francis Quarles, *Emblemes*.

Great All in All, that art my rest my home;
My way is tedious and my steps are slow:
Reach forth thy helpfull hand, or bid me come;
I am thy child, O teach thy child to goe:
Conjoin thy sweet commands to my desire,
And I will venture, though I fall or tire.³⁴

In Octavio van Veen's *Amoris Divini Emblemata* (Antwerp, 1615), the Christian is even more youthful—a mere infant modeled after the well-known figure of Cupid. Veen's emblem of hope (figure 2) depicts the child-believer nourished at the breast. Another emblem, undoubtedly conceived as a sacred analogue to the secular pictures of the schoolboy at his lesson so common in Renaissance treatments of the "ages of man," decries intellectual searching by showing a lesson under the only teacher human beings need—divine love (figure 3).

Medieval advocates of affective piety had urged the believer to "become a child with the Child Jesus." Their emphasis on the infancy of Christ was renewed and intensified in the art and literature of the Counter Reformation. From the beginning of the seventeenth century, Continental religious art gave considerable prominence to representations of the Infant Jesus by himself—apart from the Virgin or the Holy Family.³⁵ Continental emblem books often feature a little winged cupid with a halo who acts as a guide to the human soul. In Octavio van Veen's *Amoris Divini Emblemata*, the heavenly cupid is clearly identified with the Christ Child. One engraving depicts the annunciation in the background and the Divine Child embracing a winged human soul in the foreground (figure 4). The inscription urges the devout reader to love the Child who wished to be born solely that he might love us. One of Hermann Hugo's emblems shows a nursery complete with child's cradle and go-cart, and an adult figure holding the winged Christ Child (figure 5). The accompanying poem is based on a conflation of the Song of Songs 8:1 and St. Paul's description of Christians as "joint-heirs with Christ." The speaker hopes that he and Christ can



Figure 2. Hope nurturing the soul. Octavio van Veen (Otto Vaenius), *Amoris Divini Emblemata*.



Figure 3. Love as teacher. Octavio van Veen (Otto Vaenius), *Amoris Divini Emblemata*.



Figure 4. The soul giving itself to the Christ Child. Octavio van Veen (Otto Vaenius), *Amoris Divini Emblemata*.



*O that thou wert as my brother, that
sucked the breasts of my mother; when I
should find thee without, I would kiss thee,
yet I should not be desjus'd. Cant. 8. 1.*
P. 116.

Figure 5. The Christ Child as younger brother. Hermann Hugo, *Pia Desideria*, and Francis Quarles, *Emblemes*.

be brothers. If Jesus were his older Brother, He might despise him; but the Child Jesus will feel nothing but love for him:

Still I must wish we had *one Parent-line*.
 Nor wou'd I have thee grown to those brisk years
 When first the budding downy beard appears;
 But still an *Infant*, hanging on the breast,~

Then, *Dear*, vouchsafe a *second Birth*, that I
 May rock thy Cradle with a *lullaby*.
 Children have pretty, pleasant, gaining arts,
 Above the *elder sort*, to win our hearts;
 And tho each age wou'd its own merit prove,
Childhood is still most prevalent in *Love*.³⁶

Hugo's poem uses much the same method as the medieval *Meditations on the Life of Christ* attributed to St. Bonaventura, stimulating the devotional impulse by bringing Jesus to life as an engagingly human infant and inviting the reader to a sentimental response.

A more demanding devotion to the childhood of Christ was preached by the French Oratorians, following the teachings of their founder Pierre de Bérulle, leader of the "ecclesiastical armada" which accompanied Queen Henrietta Maria to England in 1625.³⁷ Through the incarnation Christ had made himself a victim, annihilating his divine nature to assume that of a humble human child. By contemplating the infancy of Christ, the devout soul was to learn the necessity for its own spiritual annihilation. As the Oratorians multiplied during the first half of the seventeenth century, the devotion was propagated with great success. There sprang up visionaries specializing in the childhood of Christ.

The bizarre case of Sister Marguérite de Beaune (1619–1648) was particularly prominent. Sister Marguérite was a Carmelite nun unusually small in stature who considered herself married to the little Christ Child. He had appeared to her saying, "I have chosen thee for the bride of my cradle." She received moving visions of her Spouse on numerous occasions. Once "the divine

might of the Child Jesus in the Crib impressed itself on her in such a manner that in a moment she was brought to be as the Holy Child was in His Crib. . . . For several days she remained lying on the ground, unable to rise, uttering now and then little infantile cries, with her face and features all conformed to the image of a new born infant. . . . Each Sister who beheld her was united and linked with this mystery [of the infancy of Christ] by the state demonstrated by this little soul."³⁸

The ecstatic infantilism of Margu rite and other mystics gave tremendous impetus to the new devotion. As it spread, colleges and religious societies were dedicated to the mystery of the Infant Jesus. Medieval saints who had taken even a tenuous interest in the childhood of Christ enjoyed new prominence. The case of St. Anthony of Padua, an early Franciscan, was by no means exceptional. After his death, a citizen in whose home he had once spent a night reported that he had peeked into the saint's bedroom and seen him holding the Child Jesus in his arms, kissing Him repeatedly. Since this was a single incident of doubtful authenticity, it was given no special prominence in the Middle Ages; St. Anthony was renowned chiefly as a powerful preacher against the Manicheans and his emblems were a book and a lily. But in the seventeenth century, he was transformed into a contemplative, and the lily was replaced by an image of the Infant Jesus. The childhood of Christ was considered his devotional specialty, and he was frequently portrayed surrounded by floating cherubs with the Christ Child in his arms.³⁹

Many Englishmen shared Thomas Fuller's contempt for "Popish pictures, placing [Jesus] in his mother's arms, and keeping him in his constant infancy."⁴⁰ The Christ of Milton's *Paradise Regained* recalls, "When I was yet a child, no childish play / To me was pleasing, all my mind was set / Serious to learn and know, and thence to do / What might be public good."⁴¹ Seventeenth-century Puritans, their imaginations stirred by the thundering Old Testament God of Battles, were particularly hostile to Counter-Reformation emphasis on the childhood of Christ. As William

Crashaw complained, "There is one impiety of late broched by one Iesuit, and approoued by all, so horrible and hainous, as I want words to expresse it. for would a man imagine that those who professe themselues the seruants of Iesus Christ aboue other men, should conceiue of him, speake to him, and play with him, as with a sucking child in his mothers armes?"⁴² But Continental enthusiasm for the Infant Jesus crossed the Channel first in the poetry of Robert Southwell and later in the immensely popular works of Francis Quarles. Quarles's address to the Virgin in "On the Infancie of our Saviour" recaptures the playful sentimental realism of medieval descriptions of the Christ Child, but substitutes a florid extravagance for their simplicity:

O! what a ravishment 't had beene, to see
 Thy little *Saviour* perking on thy *Knee!*
 To see him nuzzle in thy *Virgin* Brest!
 His milke-white body all unclad, undrest;
 To see thy busie Fingers cloathe and wrappe
 His spradling Limbs in thy indulgent *Lappe!*
 To see his desprate *Eyes*, with Childish grace,
 Smiling upon his smiling Mother's face!
 And, when his forward strength began to bloome,
 To see him *diddle* up and downe the Roome!⁴³

The diddling Christ of Francis Quarles was designed to evoke ecstatic unthinking love—a response at the furthest remove from the understanding and strenuous moral effort stressed among Puritans. Quarles used an adapted version of Hugo's nursery scene (figure 5) for his own *Emblemes* and wrote his own verses in praise of the "blessed Infant" Jesus.

Medieval sentimental realism had seldom extended beyond the Christ Child and other saints: although theologians had commonly considered ordinary children innocent, at least after baptism, their supposed innocence had not entitled them to special consideration in literature and art. After the Protestant Reformation, however, the innocence of childhood became a battle cry for

anti-Calvinists. The Council of Trent officially repudiated Calvin by adopting a semi-Pelagian view of original sin. Ecclesiastical art reflected doctrine: Christ's blessing of the children became a subject of unprecedented popularity, linked in the work of Catholic devotional writers with the ideal of childhood innocence.⁴⁴ Indeed, we might not be far afield in interpreting the charmingly playful *putti* so ubiquitous in Counter-Reformation painting as so many tangible refutations of Calvinist belief in the pollution of infancy.

In England, too, Puritan stress on original sin created a backlash of emphasis on original innocence. Richard Baxter recalled of his ministry in the early 1640s, "I remember what an outcry was once against me in this town, for saying, that children by nature, considered as sinful and unsanctified, were as hateful in the eyes of God, as any toads or serpents are in ours; so that the people railed at me as I went along the streets."⁴⁵ Not a few railed in print. Owen Feltham exclaimed, with a rather obvious side glance at the Puritans, "How blacke a *heart* is that, which can give a *stabbe*, for the innocent *smiles* of an *Infant*."⁴⁶ Thomas Fuller's *Infant's Advocate* took issue with Calvinist narrowing of gospel commendations of the "innocential qualities" of children: "Such make strange interpretation of the words, who exclude the *Original*, and only admit the *Copy*; let in such as are like to children, and shut out children themselves from the kingdom of heaven."⁴⁷ In direct answer to the Calvinist Westminster Assembly, Jeremy Taylor wrote a much more thoroughgoing rehabilitation of childhood:

But it is hard upon such mean accounts to reckon all children to be born enemies of God, that is, bastards and not sons, heirs of hell and damnation, full of sin and vile corruption, when the holy scriptures propound children as imitable for their pretty innocence and sweetness, and declare them rather heirs of heaven than hell. "In malice be children;" and, "unless we become like to children, we shall not enter the kingdom of heaven;" and, "their angels behold the face of their Father which is in heaven." Heaven is theirs, God is their Father, angels are appropriated to them; they are free from malice, and imitable by men. These are better words than are usually

given them; and signify that they are beloved of God, not hated, designed for heaven, and born to it, though brought thither by Christ and by the Spirit of Christ: not born for hell; that was prepared for the devil and his angels, not for innocent babes. This does not call them naturally wicked, but rather naturally innocent, and is a better account than is commonly given them by imputation of Adam's sin.⁴⁸

In his enthusiasm for original innocence, Taylor overturns the great chain of being: children are not a step below man, down with brute beasts, but above him, alongside the angels of God.

While strict Calvinists tended to view the playfulness and obliviousness natural to childhood as outward signs of original sin, anti-Calvinists sometimes interpreted childish behavior as an angelic foreshadowing of the joys of paradise. Thomas Fuller addressed the infant Earl of March, "Now that your Honour cannot be taxed with any actual offence, your tender Moneths not as yet compleating a Year, do sufficiently evidence. Whose innocence is the most entire Relique of our Primitive integrity, and most perfect pattern of our future felicity. Yea some admiring what motives to mirth Infants meet with in their silent and solitary smiles, have resolved (how truly I know not) that then they converse with *Angels*, as indeed such cannot amongst mortals finde any fitter Companions."⁴⁹ We could argue that Fuller was merely flattering the family of his diminutive patron. And yet seventeenth-century intellectuals made even more sweeping claims for childishness: that no worldly experience could compensate for the loss of angelic innocence; that growing to maturity was a totally negative process. One of John Hall's *Emblems with Elegant Figures* (London, 1648) refutes the humanist faith in arts and letters as a means toward spiritual enlightenment. It depicts a cherub pointing out to two adults, dressed in classical garb and crowned with laurel and a symbol of the world, how playful little children are climbing a direct road to heaven (figure 6). Hall accompanies the emblem with a quotation from St. Augustine: "The unlearned rise and take heaven by violence; and we with our learning without



Figure 6. The path to heaven. J[ohn] H[all], *Emblems with Elegant Figures: Sparkles of Divine Love*. Courtesy of the British Library.

affection, behold! where we wallow in flesh and blood!" John Earle's character "A Childe" is a yet stronger repudiation of the assumptions of educators. Given prominent first place in his *Micro-cosmographie*, it neatly reverses the pattern of Milton's *Areopagitica* and Puritan pedagogical works: knowledge and trial in the world do not teach virtue; they only pollute the child's radiant beginnings:

A Child is a Man in a small Letter, yet the best Copie of *Adam* before hee tasted of *Eue*, or the Apple; and hee is happy whose small practice in the World can only write his Character. Hee is natures fresh picture newly drawne in Oyle, which time and much handling dimmes and defaces. His Soule is yet a white paper vnscrubbed with obseruations of the world, wherewith at length it becomes a blurr'd Note-booke. He is purely happy, because hee knowes no euill, nor hath made meanes by Sinne, to be acquainted with misery. He arriues not at the mischiefe of being wise, nor endures euils to come by foreseeing them. He kisses and loues all, and when the smart of the rod is past, smiles on his beater. Nature and his Parents alike dandle him, and tice him on with a bait of Sugar, to a draught of Worme-wood. He playes yet, like a young Prentice the first day, and is not come to his taske of melancholly. His hardest labour is his tongue, as if he were loth to vse so deceitfull an Organ; and hee is best company with it, when hee can but prattle. Wee laugh at his foolish sports, but his game is our earnest: and his drummes, rattles and hobby-horses, but the Emblems, & mocking of mens businesse. His father hath writ him as his owne little story, wherein he reades those dayes of his life that hee cannot remember; and sighes to see what innocence he ha's out liu'd. The elder he growes, hee is a stayre lower from God; and like his first father, much worse in his breeches. He is the Christians example, and the old mans relapse: The one imitates his purenesse, and the other fals into his simplicitie. Could hee put off his body with his little Coate, he had got eternitie without a burthen, and exchange'd but one Heauen for another.⁵⁰

We may assume that Earle's witty defense of original innocence was not meant to be subjected to the test of actual educational practice. As an intellectual stance, however, such preference for child's play over the sober business of adulthood appeared again

and again in the seventeenth century. Mere child's play was a serious issue in the England of Earle's day: if playful innocence marked the early years of individual life, it also seemed to many conservative Anglicans to have marked a purer and merrier past in the life of the nation. In celebrating childhood innocence, seventeenth-century Anglicans were reacting not only against Puritan preoccupation with the doctrine of original sin, but also against the forward-looking, future-oriented philosophy of existence toward which Puritanism was impelled by that doctrine. They were fighting—however belatedly and ineffectually—against the passing of medieval England.

3

Johan Huizinga has called play "a free activity standing quite consciously outside 'ordinary' life as being 'not serious,' but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in a orderly manner."⁵¹ The first sentence of Huizinga's description would be enough to indict play in the eyes of Puritan moralists since, as Richard Baxter warned his readers, "to get well to heaven, is a business and not a play."⁵² Puritan writers drew a strict dichotomy between work and play: work was that activity, including the practice of one's professional calling, which led to spiritual profit; play, except for the recreation needed for health and renewed ability to work, was a dangerously foolish waste of the gift of time. Phillip Stubbes gave typical expression to a teaching we have already encountered in the writings of Puritan educators: "We must giue accounts at ye day of iudgment of euery minut and iote of time, from the day of our birth to the time of our death: for there is nothing more precious, then time, which is giuen vs to glorifie God in good woorks, and not to spend in luxurious exercises after our owne fantasies and delights."⁵³

Anyone objecting to such condemnation of play could point to the example of St. John who sported with a tame partridge, or King David dancing before the ark of the covenant, or Socrates, who was not ashamed to be caught at games with children. But the best way to answer the Puritans was to deny their distinction between work and play: under the eye of God, no human activity can be taken quite seriously; all of our precious projects and ambitions are child's play, could we but realize it. Echoing John Earle's "his game is our earnest," John Hall wrote:

We laugh at children that can when they please
 A bubble raise,
 And when their fond Ambition sated is
 Again dismisse
 Thee fleeting Toy into its former aire:
 What do we here
 But act such tricks?⁵⁴

This view of human activity, often repeated in Renaissance writers, probably had its ultimate origin in the famous passage from Plato's *Laws*: "God alone is worthy of supreme seriousness, but man is made God's plaything, and that is the best part of him. Therefore every man and woman should live life accordingly. . . . What, then, is the right way of living? Life must be lived as play, playing certain games, making sacrifices, singing and dancing, and then a man will be able to propitiate the gods, and defend himself against his enemies, and win in the contest."⁵⁵ For Plato even religion must be seen not as work, but as play consecrated to the Deity.

Medieval Christianity was rich in play forms of worship. St. Bernard cited the dancing of David before the ark of the covenant as a foreshadowing of the Christian life, lived as sacred game:

I should, then, be able to take to myself the word of the Prophet: *After having been exalted I have been cast down and filled with confusion* (Ps. lxxxviii. 15, VULG.), and this, *I will play and will be yet more vile* (2 Sam.

vi 21, 22). Yes, I will play this foolish game that I may be ridiculed. It is a good folly, at which Michal is angry and God is pleased. A good folly which affords a ridiculous spectacle, indeed, to men, but to angels an admirable one. Upon the eyes of all we produce the effect of jugglers and tumblers, who stand or walk on their hands, contrary to human nature, with their heads downward and feet in the air.⁵⁶

For St. Bernard the very baseness of such child's play was a token of divine grace, since God had promised the highest rewards of heaven to those practicing the lowliest earthly humility. The Franciscans, too, placed particular emphasis on play forms of worship: we will recall St. Francis' singing to the accompaniment of his stick violin. The Franciscans were noted for their organization of joyous popular festivities, like Christmas carol dances in honor of the Christ Child, as demonstrations of lay piety.⁵⁷

Medieval ecclesiastical authorities did not necessarily encourage such demonstrations as compatible with religious devotion; in fact, they generally fought quite vigorously against the intermingling of holiday festivities and religious observance. But an occasional writer did argue that traditional holiday customs, if practiced with moderation and decency, were commendable extensions of the cycle of liturgical worship. The late-medieval tract *Dives and Pauper*, for example, defends Sunday and holiday sports and dances as expressions of religious joy. Not only did the prophet say, "This is the daye that god made, make we nowe merye and be we gladde"; not only did King David "play and daunce" before the ark of the covenant, but the Christian faithful will sport in the afterlife, a time of "endless myrthe betokened and figured by temporal myrth in the holy day."⁵⁸ According to *Dives and Pauper*, the festival observances woven through the fabric of medieval parish life were an acceptable "playing before God," an earthly imitation of the endless festival of eternity.

The most important play figure in medieval Christianity, however, in terms of Huizinga's definition, was the liturgy itself. The liturgy assumes a view of religious experience diametrically op-

posed to that which was to be emphasized by Protestant reformers: it removes its participants from everyday life and draws them into its own special timeless realm. Its participants are enthralled and uplifted not through struggle toward a clearly perceived goal, but by their total separation from the world of struggle. Medieval liturgists were by no means unconscious of the ludic nature of their worship. Amalarius of Metz and others termed the mass a sacred drama, and in the Middle Ages the connection between play as drama and play as recreation was much more than linguistic. Plays were so called because they were enacted in play—an identity clearly established by the *Ludus Coventriae*'s promise that its viewers will see "this game wel pleyd in good a-ray."⁵⁹

A characteristic trait of traditional preindustrial societies, according to Claude Lévi-Strauss, is their subordination of history to system: they fight change by attempting to assimilate it into a timeless ceremonial model.⁶⁰ Medieval ritualism seems to have served precisely this function. For liturgists of the high Middle Ages, as Emile Mâle has demonstrated, the rites of the church encapsulated and symbolized the order of the Christian universe. Just as thirteenth-century theologians fashioned a grand intellectual construct encompassing all the world under one system of thought, so the liturgy united things of the body and things of the mind, days, seasons, God and man in a great recurring cycle of figural representation.⁶¹ The popular late-medieval treatise "Vertewis of the Mass" attributed to St. Augustine the teaching that the faithful would not age during the hours they spent at mass—a notion based on belief in the liturgy's timelessness and separation from the mutability of everyday life. Mircea Eliade has offered a modern analysis of how the liturgy functions to insulate its participants against change:

The Christian liturgy for a given Sunday is one with the liturgy for the previous Sunday and the Sunday following. The sacred time in which the mystery occurs of the transubstantiation of bread and wine into the Body

and Blood of Christ is different not only in quality from the profane succession from which it is detached like a space enclosed between the present and the future; not only is the sacred time linked with that of the Masses preceding and following it, but it can also be looked on as a continuation of all the Masses which have taken place from the moment when the mystery of transubstantiation was first established until the present moment.⁶²

That is not to say, of course, that religious ceremony *can* always insulate a society or social group against change, but only that it tends to serve such a function. Historians have suggested that the remarkable proliferation of rituals and ceremonies of all kinds in late-medieval society was in itself a sign of social breakdown: as change became more visible and undeniable, people sought more insistently to insulate themselves against it through ceremonial observance.⁶³ Whatever their actual deviation from earlier practice and whatever their disagreement about precisely what that practice had been, medieval artists and thinkers habitually justified their work by appealing to the authority of the past—a preconceived, mythicized past made continually present through the revitalizing power of ecclesiastical and social ritual.

The Protestant Reformation, however, represented a distinct and self-conscious break from the immediate past. Sixteenth-century reformers agreed that the essence of the liturgy and other rituals was timeless play, but they argued that such childishness was inappropriate to adult religious experience. For Martin Luther, at least as he expressed himself in "The Exhortation to the Clergy at Augsburg," ceremonialism was defensible only as an aid to the young and ignorant:

If these things had been kept as play for the youth and for young pupils, so that they would have had a childish game of Christian doctrine and life, in the same way that we must give children dolls and hobby-horses and other toys; and if the custom had been allowed to stay at that, as we teach the children to fast for the sake of the Christ-Child and of St. Nicholas, so that they may give them presents on their nights (for it was

thus, as we can see, that our ancestors meant it to be); if it were to be left at that, the palm-ass, the ascension and many things of the kind could be tolerated, for then they would not lead anyone's conscience astray. But for us old fools to go about in mitres and clerical finery, and take it seriously,—so seriously, indeed, that it becomes an article of faith,—so that whoever does not adore this child's play must have committed a sin and have his conscience tortured by it,—that is the very devil!⁶⁴

In words which recall and repudiate St. Bernard's commendation of Christian folly, Calvin condemned the Catholic mass as the tricks of *jongleurs* and a wanton, apish imitation of Christian truth.⁶⁵ The Calvinist wing of the Reformation, even more than the Lutheran, took the scornful position of Michal toward all medieval play-forms of worship. That does not mean that they saw themselves clearly as innovators; rather, they were recovering the original purity of the church. But with regard to the medieval past, they saw themselves as adults bound to "put away childish things" and give up practices which had long been traditional under Catholicism.

The reformed English church also condemned some aspects of Catholic ritual as childish: on the authority of Lactantius and Seneca, the homilies of the Church of England denigrated the Catholic use of images:

We (sayth *Seneca*) be not twice children (as the common saying is) but alwaies children: but this is the difference, that we being elder, play the children: and in these playes they bring in before great, and well decked puppets (for so he calleth Images) Oyntment, Incense, and Odours. To these puppets they offer up Sacrifice, which have a mouth, but not the use of teeth. There is a like foolishnesse, and lewdnesse in decking of our images [in England], as great puppets for old fooles, like children, to play the wicked play of Idolatry before, as was among the Ethnickes, and Gentiles.⁶⁶

At the time of the Edwardian Reformation, when religious images and other "idols" were taken down, some were actually given to children to play with as dolls.⁶⁷

The sixteenth-century Anglican church, then, found images unacceptably childish. But Anglican theory and practice by no means followed Calvin in condemning all liturgical worship. Foreign visitors frequently noted that the English liturgy in its outward aspects, particularly as celebrated in cathedrals and royal chapels, was very like the Catholic mass.⁶⁸ The mainstream of Anglican theory was quite conservative by Reformation standards. Richard Hooker affirmed Anglican continuity with the "auncient ordinances, rites, and long approued customes of our venerable predecessors" wherever those rites were not directly forbidden by Scripture. Hooker's argument against novelty made useful innovation almost a logical impossibility: "That which is new, if it promise not much, doth fear condemnation before triall; till triall, no man doth acquire or trust it, what good soeuer it pretend and promise. So that in this kind there are few things knowne to be good, till such time as they grow to be auncient."⁶⁹ The Anglican homily "concerning good Order" is an elaborate hymn to the great chain of being, celebrating the multitude of heavenly and earthly hierarchies which structure the universe and thanking God for preserving England from the "Babylonicall confusion" which would reign if the people lost respect for their "godly, wise, and honourable Councell, with other superiors, and inferiours, in a beautiful order, and godly."⁷⁰ Hooker's defense of church festivals begins with a discourse on time. Times, like all else, exist in hierarchies. The highest are the Sundays and festival days which at once re-create the earth's earliest beginning, when God found all things good, and foreshadow its end in eternity, offering "tastes and saies, as it were of that finall benefite, wherein our perfect felicitie and blisse lyeth folded vp." Such days must be "clothed with those outward robes of holinesse whereby their difference from other daies may bee made sensible."⁷¹ For Hooker, as for medieval liturgists, the comely patterns of church ceremonial were symbolic distillations of the divinely ordered stasis underlying and overarching the flux of everyday life.

Anglican theorists departed from medieval commonplace, of

course, in positing their king rather than the Pope as the head of the church. English church and state were inseparable—one living mystical body of Christ seen under different aspects. Established ritual was a mirror of political as well as religious order, and Nonconformity as much a political as an ecclesiastical offense. Hooker retorted against those arguing for the freedom not to observe Anglican festivals: “Which opinion, al be it applied here no farther then to this present cause, shaketh vniuersally the fabricke of gouernment, tendeth to Anarchie and meere confusion, dissolueth families, disspatcheth Colledges, Corporations, armies, ouerthroweth kingdomes, Churches, and whatsoeuer is nowe through the prouidence of God by authoritie and power vp-held.”⁷² Without ritual order, in the view of Hooker and other Anglican theorists, there would be no English order at all.

By upholding the necessity for ritual observance, even in its toned-down Anglican form, English defenders of the established church opened themselves to attack on the same grounds as those on which Calvin had attacked the Catholic mass. The Elizabethan Separatist Henry Barrow scoffed at the use of the *Book of Common Prayer*:

Shall we think that God hath any time left these his servants so singly furnished and destitute of his grace, that they cannot find words according to their necessities and faith, to expresse their wantes and desires, but need thus to be taught line unto line, as children new weaned from the breasts, what and when to say, how much to say, and when to make an end; to say this collect at the beginning, that at the end, that before, the tother after, this in the morning, that at after noone, *etc.* How like children, or rather like masking fooles, are these great clarkes dressed?

Barrow attacked Anglican reverence for the timeless model of the past as a dangerous refusal to grow up: “What a strange estate is this, that alwaies thus standeth at a stay? The way of the righteous (Salomon saith) shineth as the light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” In the “infancie of his church” God pre-

scribed festivals and ceremonies. But "is the Church of God stil in wardship and such infancie, shut up as under a garrison, that it must have such tutors and rudements?"⁷³

In the seventeenth century—particularly under the pressure of Archbishop Laud's campaign for the restoration of liturgical conformity, the reimposition of crosses, bowing, candlesticks, and even the toleration of images—complaints like Barrow's reached floodtide proportions. Prebendary Smart ridiculed the services instituted by the Laudian Cosin at Durham: "Our young Apollo repaireth the quire, and set it out gaily with strange Babylonish ornaments; the hallowed priests dance about the altar, making pretty sport and fine pastime with trippings and turnings, and crossings, and crouchings."⁷⁴ William Prynne's *Histrio-Mastix* quoted medieval descriptions of the mass as a play; noted the connection between drama and game: "They are rightly called Playes, from playing; because they teach men onely to play away their time"; and castigated those who would make a "common Play or pastime" of the bitter passion of Christ.⁷⁵ Richard Baxter wrote a long list of ceremonial claptrap and complained: "such parcels of devotion, do most heinously dishonour God, and, as the apostle truly saith, do make unbelievers say, 'They are mad,' I Cor. xiv. 23, and that they are 'children in understanding,' and not 'men,' ver. 20. . . as if our God were like a little child that must have pretty toys bought him in the fair, and brought home to please him."⁷⁶ Puritan reformers recognized quite clearly and rejected the liturgy's basic assumption that the highest form of religious experience is "playing before God." By the mid-seventeenth century, Barrow's condemnation of English ritualism as a national form of original sin—a childish corruption which had to be outgrown—had become Puritan commonplace. Even the relatively mild Richard Baxter argued that the festivals imposed on the church in her infancy were unbecoming to her maturity.⁷⁷ Long before the Civil War tore Anglicanism into fragments, Puritan insistence on "putting away childish things" in the life of the nation, as in the life of the individual, created an appallingly evi-

dent rent in the theoretically unchangeable mystical body of Christ.

Anglican leaders reacted to the challenge of Nonconformity by defending the traditional with new intensity. Richard Hooker upheld Anglican ceremonialism against the scoffing of Puritans on grounds of its antiquity: "The things which so long experience of all ages hath confirmed and made profitable, let not vs presume to condemne as follies and toyes, because wee sometimes know not the cause and reason of them."⁷⁸ In their defense of established ceremonies, Anglican theorists did not approach extravagance of a St. Bernard or a St. Francis, but they often cited the "vile" dance of David, to the confusion of Puritan Michals, as a prefiguration of Christian ritualism. For Hooker and later for Archbishop Laud, the liturgy was childish precisely in St. Bernard's sense: a living enactment of the lowliness proper to those chosen for final exaltation as the children of God. Its "foolish" bowings and gestures and repetitions were but outward manifestations of the Christian's inner abasement before the glory of his heavenly Father.

Along with the "child's play" of the liturgy, the traditional holiday sports came under strong reformist attack in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Thomas Fuller claimed that the 1595 publication of Nicholas Bound's *The True Doctrine of the Sabbath* created new respect for the Lord's Day: "On this day the stoutest fencer laid down the buckler—the most skilful archer unbent his bow, counting all shooting beside the mark; May-games and morris-dances grew out of request. . . . Some of them were ashamed of their former pleasures, like children, which, grown bigger, blush themselves out of their rattles and whistles."⁷⁹ The gradual disappearance of the old sports was not merely a question of ideology: the agrarian communities which had particularly fostered them were breaking up under the impact of agricultural innovation and the growth of competitive commerce. But ideology paralleled economics. It was a seventeenth-century commonplace that Protestantism was particularly suited to business and industrial enterprise, and that the "Old Religion" of Catholicism,

with its time-consuming and costly holiday observances, tended to discourage the frugality and hard work required for successful commercial competition. The most consistently vehement protests against the traditional sports came from what Christopher Hill calls the "Industrious Sort of People": the rising yeomen and small shopkeepers who had to trust to their own individual labor for economic prosperity and who were ideologically inclined toward Puritanism.⁸⁰

Puritan controversialists attacked the old Sunday and holiday pastimes on grounds already familiar from our discussion of the liturgy: such child's play was incompatible with the moral earnestness required for genuine spiritual experience and, in any case, a corrupt relic of paganism. David's dancing before the ark had been no standard form of worship, but an extraordinary manifestation of thanksgiving, very seldom used. According to William Prynne, the dances of the Israelites were not really dancing at all, but "*a modest grave and sober motion, much like to walking or the grave old measures.*"⁸¹

When the Puritans fought against the old festivals, the Anglican church fought back. Hooker's insistence on the uniform observance of church festivals, though fired by a theoretical ideal of England, was grounded in cold political pragmatism. The most basic administrative unit of Elizabethan church and state was the parish, a community whose solidarity was cemented through a round of seasonal festivals inherited from medieval times. These traditional May games, Morris dances, mummings, church ales, wakes, feasts and revels, though often traceable to pagan origin, were usually celebrated in connection with holidays of the church. As we have noted, ecclesiastical tolerance for traditional parish celebration was a distinctly minority opinion in medieval times. But the Elizabethan church officially countenanced the old customs: by consolidating parish unity they served as bulwarks against erosion of the much prized mystical concord Anglican theorists predicated of England as a whole. In the seventeenth century, official support for the customs was made even more

explicit: *The Book of Sports*, promulgated by James I and reissued by Charles I at the urging of Archbishop Laud, was aimed directly at "Puritanes and Precisians." It sought to "strike equally on both hands, against the contemners of Our Authority, and aduersaries of Our Church" by urging parish observance of late-medieval holiday recreations "such as dauncing, either men or women, Archery for men, leaping, vaulting, or any other such harmlesse Recreation. . . having of May-Games, Whitson Ales, and Moris dances, and the setting vp of Maypoles & other sports therewith vsed."⁸² Despite its relatively circumspect wording, the *Book of Sports* was much more than a strike against nonconformity. It was an eleventh-hour effort to bring back an idealized "Merry England" of cyclical seasonal celebration, parish cohesion, and general devotion to the *Dives and Pavper* spirit of life lived as sacred game.

But the most basic and constant Anglican defense against the threat of nonconformity was to call for a return to simple childish obedience. Indeed English churchmen often approached the language of the Catholic Counter Reformation in their appeals for subjection to established authority. As early as the homily "against Contention," Englishmen were asked, "O body mysticall of Christ, where is that holy, and happy unity, out of the which whosoever is, he is not in Christ? If one member be pulled from another, where is the body? If the body be drawne from the head, where is the life of the body? Wee cannot by ioyned to Christ our head, except we be glued with concord, and charity one to another." The homily advised, with oblique reference to Christ's Gospel commendations of childhood, "Let us therefore humble our selves under the mighty hand of GOD which hath promised to rest upon them that be humble, and low in spirit."⁸³ Hooker called the Anglican church "that very mother of our new birth, in whose bowels we are all bred, at whose breasts we receyue nourishment." He acknowledged complaints by the "common sort" that in the mere reading of prayers there was "nothing to bee done which a childe may not doe as *lawfully and as well*," and that the prayer

book's emphasis on Christian humility "*carrieth with it the note of popish servile feare, and sauoureth not of that confidence and reuerent familiaritie that the children of God haue through Christ with their heavenly Father.*" But Hooker responded to Puritan protests against childish servility by the repeated advocacy of precisely that servility: the English "can owe no lesse then childlike obedience to her that hath more than motherly power."⁸⁴

In the seventeenth century, calls for childlike submission became even more emphatic.⁸⁵ Even after the Restoration, Anglican leaders were still preaching collective return to the lowliness of childhood as the best road back to the static late-medieval ideal of England set forth in the teachings of her church. In a 1676 sermon before Charles II, Bishop Thomas Sprat pointed out God's "Extraordinary favour" to children, not only in deigning to become one himself, but in singling them out for particular blessing: "When he would prescribe a pattern of Evangelical Purity, and Humility, he declares that little Children, and those Men who most resemble their Nature, are not only capable, but most capable of His Heavenly Kingdom." And then, linking the virtues of childhood with the hierarchical order and stability of the late-feudal social model, Sprat exhorted his noble listeners:

May our men of ripe years, our Men of business, our great Men be intreated to revive, and restore the antient simplicity, and integrity of manners: To practice an inward humility, and lowliness of mind; an outward innocence towards all, condescension to Inferiors, observance of Superiors, submission to Teachers, subjection to Rulers: And to practice all these excellent Virtues, not only as so many moral, or political Duties, but, as indeed they are, as some of the most Christian, most Spiritual, and most Evangelical Graces. Thus for us all to become as Children, is the surest way to preserve where it is, to recover where it was lost, private virtue, publick honesty, and a National piety.⁸⁶

Whether England ever actually possessed the miraculous unity Sprat claimed it had is not at issue here—quite clearly it did not. What is important is the leap of his thought. He explicates in clear

and unvarnished prose an assumption we will discover again and again behind the wit and grace and profound emotional force of the seventeenth-century poets—that in returning to childhood Englishmen would recover the lost concord and stability of an idealized late-medieval past.

To envision oneself returning to childhood involves what we can perhaps call personal historical consciousness: a clear sense of one's early years as past and significantly different from the present. Such consciousness was practically forced upon thoughtful people in the ferment, war, and extraordinarily rapid change of seventeenth-century England. Cultural historians generally agree in pinpointing that century as the period when most intellectuals abandoned the age-old mental habit of subordinating history to system. Instead of trying to validate social and political change by assimilating it into a preconceived order, they began arguing the acceptability of change for its own sake, and even the possibility of progress. The old view of English society as an unchanging organic whole became less and less generally acceptable. New words like *epoch* and *anachronism* entered the language in testimony of a new interest in historical objectivity—in judging England's past by different standards than operated in the present.⁸⁷

This shift was quite compatible with the future-oriented, individualistic ethic of Puritanism, and no doubt given impetus by that ethic. But in more conservative quarters, traditional ideas were not abandoned lightly: many areas of seventeenth-century cultural life were marked by feverish assertions of the validity of dying verities. The myth of a past golden age has exerted an attraction in numerous times and places. But seventeenth-century royalist Anglicans looked back with particularly bitter nostalgia on the golden age of England—a time variously identified as the pre-Reformation period or the reign of the English Astraea Elizabeth or the days of James I or Charles I, but always marked by a primeval innocence, obedience, and order in contrast to subsequent chaos. The period between 1610 and 1640 witnessed a frenetic reaction on the part of the English aristocracy against the

growing erosion of class respect: aristocrats commissioned ambitious family histories, took an almost obsessive interest in heraldry, built ostentatious houses to live in and unprecedentedly large and elaborate figured monuments to proclaim their glory in death. Antiquarianism was almost nonexistent in England before the sixteenth century; in the seventeenth, it became a rage: to preserve physical objects from an earlier England was to conserve a link with that past.⁸⁸ Proponents of the *Book of Sports* set up special exhibitions of traditional martial arts and country pastimes—Robert Dover's annual Cotswold Games are perhaps the best example—in order to encourage their preservation.⁸⁹ Even Laud's revival of practices from pre-Elizabethan English worship can be seen as a form of religious antiquarianism—an attempt to revitalize the ailing church by infusing it with elements from its own past. But for our purposes, the most interesting form of antiquarianism is the emphasis on returning to childhood in seventeenth-century poetry. If we recognize the strong royalist and Anglican resonances carried by so paltry a thing as child's play in seventeenth-century England, we will begin to understand the appeal of childhood as a theme in the literature of the period. A child sporting in blithe disregard of the laws of time and mutability could symbolize a vanished England at play, insulated through ritual observance against accelerated change, social fragmentation, and the turbulence of civil war.

We can speculate, however, that the roots of the theme's appeal may have lain even deeper: that childhood as a literary symbol appealed to conservative seventeenth-century intellectuals for psychological as well as political reasons. (In looking at the work of a given individual we will discover that these two categories cannot easily be separated.) We have noted three periods in the history of European letters before 1800 when the ideal of returning to childhood became particularly prominent: the fourteenth century, the seventeenth, and the beginning of the romantic era. All of these periods were characterized by greater than usual social dislocation and the breakdown of a major intellectual synthesis, or at least its

failure to inspire the continuing allegiance of the thinkers and writers who might be considered its natural heirs. The fourteenth-century emphasis on childhood appeared during a time of decline and decentralization in the authority of the Catholic church and as part of a revolt against the Thomist synthesis. It is no accident that the nominalists were largely Franciscan.⁹⁰ In seventeenth-century England, advocacy of return to childhood paralleled a similar breakdown in the authority of the Anglican church and an intellectual backlash against humanism. Among the first-generation romantics, the exploration of childhood modes of perception served as a way of reasserting the animism of nature and the value of intuition against the social and rationalist goals of eighteenth-century neoclassicism and the mechanism of Newtonian science. During all of these periods, part of the appeal of childhood seems to have come from a recognition of the child's wholeness and unity of mind. For intellectuals who perceived the world they lived in as terribly fragmented and who deplored that fragmentation, the idea of childhood wholeness seems to have exerted a very strong attraction.

Psychologists and psychoanalysts have paid a great deal of attention in recent years to delineating early stages of child development characterized by an absence of self-object differentiation. The child during his earliest years perceives himself as all-powerful, able to control his environment because he does not recognize his separateness from it. Somewhat later, as he begins to recognize the limitation of his actual powers, he characteristically attempts to salvage some of his earlier grandiosity by attributing it to idealized older persons (usually parents) with whom his identity is to some degree merged.⁹¹ Although we might consider the recognition of these stages a product of our own developmentally sophisticated age, we will note that much earlier observers have by no means been unfamiliar with them. However negatively he may have viewed it in his *Confessions*, St. Augustine described infantile grandiosity quite clearly. St. Teresa's "Prayer of Quietude" is based on a remarkable perception of mother-child symbiosis. In *The Prelude* Wordsworth

described the "great birthright of our being"—the infantile wholeness of perception based on a merger with the mother which underlies the adult poet's ability to draw unity out of multiplicity and apparent chaos:

blest the Babe,
Nursed in his Mother's arms, who sinks to sleep,
Rocked on his Mother's breast; who with his soul
Drinks in the feelings of his Mother's eye!
For him, in one dear Presence, there exists
A virtue which irradiates and exalts
Objects through widest intercourse of sense.
No outcast he, bewildered and depressed:
Along his infant veins are interfused
The gravitation and the filial bond
Of nature that connect him with the world.⁹²

In Wordsworth, a continuing ability to draw on these perceptual powers laid down in infancy becomes the basis of the adult's ability to order a universe which would otherwise appear hostile or meaningless. Although they expressed themselves within a very different cultural framework, several of the poets we will be discussing also saw a return to childhood modes of perception as a way of finding unity and peace of mind in an otherwise divided and disordered time.

To attempt any extensive inquiry into these fascinating though highly speculative interconnections must remain beyond the limits of the present study. Nevertheless we will note a frequent pairing of childhood perception and the ideal of national wholeness in the work of the seventeenth-century poets. They may, indeed, have been demonstrating an earlier stage of reaction against some of the aspects of the new science which Wordsworth and Blake deplored. There is a sense in which the educated classes of England can be said to have "grown up" in the course of the seventeenth century. Literary and cultural historians have offered wide evidence that if any one century can be singled out as the time of

greatest revolution in intellectuals' view of the universe, it was the seventeenth: the Ptolemaic system was abandoned for Copernicus' sun-centered world; the animated organism of Greek cosmology was discarded for an inanimate machine. And Jean Piaget's work on the world view of young children has demonstrated its striking formal similarities to the old image of the universe abandoned by scientists and philosophers during the seventeenth century.⁹³

The child's conception of the world is extremely rudimentary while the Ptolemaic system is a complex monument to human ingenuity, but both start with the assumption that humanity is at the center of the universe. Very young children implicitly see themselves as the center of the world and project their own sensations and desires onto the outside environment. They believe the world is alive as they are: Godfrey Goodman shared the same assumption when he argued in *The Fall of Man* that the world was dying. Children establish magical dynamic participations between things, just as George Herbert believed in the theory of correspondences:

Man is all symmetric,
 Full of proportions, one limbe to another,
 And all to all the world besides:
 Each part may call the furthest, brother:
 For head with foot hath private amitie,
 And both with moons and tides.⁹⁴

For children, names belong to objects and emanate from them; Erasmus held that, "if there be not a traceable likeness between the word and the object or action which it symbolises, then there is some *invisible* reason."⁹⁵ Children do not believe in chance. They are convinced of the all-pervasiveness of final causes—there is no "why?" without an answer. Francis Bacon testifies to the preoccupation of his contemporaries with final causes, and even his ardent disciple Sir Thomas Browne found them everywhere in *The Garden of Cyrus*. It is, perhaps, small wonder that many intellectu-

als viewed the new science with alarm: to follow it they were obliged to undergo the painful process of cutting off their own mental roots, of wrenching apart a continuum from childhood belief to its adult elaboration.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, sophisticated Englishmen saw the universe with some of the same basic outlines as children do: the world was an indivisible organic unity and England its microcosm, the mystical body of Christ. By the end of the century, intellectuals had generally adopted a less organic, more mechanistic view of state and universe in keeping with changing political realities and the discoveries of contemporary scientists. But for conservatives caught in between, childhood was a refuge from change. However impractical as a program for living one's life, returning to childhood provided a foundation upon which to create one's art—a salvaging through poetry at least, and on a strictly personal level, of a coherent, orderly world view which adult society seemed no longer able to accommodate. That is not to suggest that childhood was the only literary theme which served that function, or that it was equally central to all the poetry which we are about to discuss. But it was far more central than we have been inclined to recognize. Each poet drew from the common fund of attitudes described in this chapter to form his own creative solution to the problem of recovering the past. And yet however individual and distinctive their use of the child motifs, all looked to childhood for aesthetic release from profound feelings of doubt and social dislocation—from the paralysis of cultural despair.



The Poet as Child: Herbert, Herrick, and Crashaw

Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.

Jer. 1:6

The poetic *persona* of child is, of course, a paradox, since most children do not write poems and those who do generally write bad ones. If a mature artist is to employ the *persona* effectively he must master the rhetoric of simplicity—the art of being plain without being prosaic, childlike without lapsing into childishness. And even then, convincingly childlike verse is compelling only in small doses. We cannot long appreciate lucid simplicity and reductiveness unless they are incorporated into a larger pattern which takes into account the complexities of adult experience.

George Herbert's *The Temple*, a work that influenced most of the other poets to be treated in the present study, uses the *persona* of child in precisely this sophisticated fashion. His poetry adheres to the conservative Anglican ideal of the devout Christian as a meek and submissive child of the church. But Herbert gives intellectual validation to this anti-intellectual ideal by portraying its attainment in process—by writing poems which move from the wandering mazes of pride and intellectual searching to an acceptance of the “narrow path” of mute, childlike humility. Nor is this self-limitation a static dead end, for Herbert ties childhood and play. In lowering himself to childhood, he is relieved of the

heavy burdens of sin and self-examination and freed to live life as a sacred game played before the altar in liturgical worship and mirrored in his poetry through the play of language: puns, stanzaic tricks, and elaborate visual patterning.

In *The Temple*, stylistic play, if inspired by the grace of God, becomes a link with higher order. By retreating to the role of child and servant in his Master's house, Herbert was able to recover the lost ideal of a church whose language and forms of worship were part of a single hierarchy extending from the pettiest human concerns up to the dance of the heavens. He was able, within strict limitations, to reconstitute for himself the traditional late-medieval image of the universe. The *persona* of child is only one of the many roles or potential selves Herbert "tries on" experimentally in *The Temple*: some of them, like the role of courtier or wit or logician, he consistently repudiates despite their continuing attractions; others, like the role of homiletic moralist, seem to fit him better. But the lowly role of child and servant, though he cannot always sustain it, is the role which most consistently gives him respite from his spiritual struggles. It is also, paradoxically, the most fruitful role he can adopt because it allows him to win back what is worth salvaging from all the others. It allows him to escape sterility, disorder, and mental torment for the perfect order and abundance of God's house, an order only partially realized in the English church but to be gloriously fulfilled in the afterlife, when wit and courtliness and play will be exalted for eternity as a form of divine praise.

For Robert Herrick and Richard Crashaw, the *persona* of child was considerably more restricting. By comparison with *The Temple*, their use of the *persona* appears disappointingly uncomplicated, more a form of self-imprisonment than a means of aesthetic release. Herrick's *Noble Numbers* espouses the childlike anti-intellectualism advocated by the Anglican hierarchy; Herrick also writes poems consciously designed to defend the Laudian position on ritual observance and country pastimes. But in his verse, there is very little of Herbert's constant spiritual tearing down and re-

building; Herrick retreats to the *persona* of child but does not use the *persona* as a means of attaining higher order through the "child's play" of ritual observance. *Noble Numbers* remains curiously earthbound, tied to outward forms and ceremonies as an end in themselves rather than as a way of "leaping up to heaven."

For Crashaw, the *persona* was even more restricting, but in an opposite sense: if Herrick is somewhat earthbound, Crashaw never seems to touch ground. His poetry carries stylistic play to its furthest possible limit, exploding liturgical symbols of holy childishness into a vertiginous whirl of language. But he, like Herrick, fails to incorporate his version of the *persona* into a wider, many-leveled design. Instead of allowing him to re-create or reflect the traditional Anglican vision of order, Crashaw's retreat to childhood immerses him in a welter of imagery which serves as a substitute for that vision and obliterates all else, even his own selfhood.

Measured against the demanding aesthetic standard of *The Temple*, the devotional poetry of Herrick and Crashaw must be regarded as at least a partial failure. Our purpose here, however, will not be to pass aesthetic judgment, but to suggest factors which may mitigate that judgment—factors related to the worsening conditions in English church and state during the years when the poets were writing. In moving from Herbert to Herrick to Crashaw we will trace a progressively narrower definition of the *persona* of child, a progressively more radical retreat from the possibility of acting and achieving. At the same time we will be tracing a pattern of increasing departure from the *via media* of Anglicanism as represented in the poetry of George Herbert. The author of *The Temple* was unquestionably an Anglican, but by no means an Anglican of the most conservative stamp: the Laudian party adopted him as one of their own after his death in 1633, yet his work also appealed to numerous Puritans, particularly after the Restoration, when the political passions aroused by issues of church government and ceremonies had to some degree cooled. We can safely assume, however, that no Puritan would have been particularly attracted to the poetry of Robert Herrick. As our

discussion should make clear, *Noble Numbers* is much more tied to the Laudian high-church position than *The Temple*, much more concerned with opposing Puritanism as an active threat to the English church and nation. Crashaw was by far the most cloistered Anglican of the three, perhaps the most virulently anti-Puritan, and certainly the one most drawn to the devotional styles and subjects of the Continental Counter Reformation; after he was ejected from Peterhouse in 1644 by the victorious Parliamentary forces, he committed the ultimate Anglican heresy of converting to Catholicism rather than give up a sacramental church.

This progressive retreat from a middle Anglican position must be viewed in part as a matter of personal temperament—I would certainly not wish to deny that factor, particularly in the case of Crashaw. But it should also be understood as a response to the deterioration of traditional forms of order. To trace the gradual narrowing of the *persona* of child in the poetry of the pre-Civil War and Civil War period is in some measure to trace the history of Anglicanism itself during those years. As the nation became more and more embroiled in struggle, the idea of escaping the turmoil became increasingly attractive to conservatives. Their natural refuge might have been the church, but the church itself was deeply involved—areas of peaceful sanctuary within Anglicanism became ever smaller and more difficult to find. For Herbert, Herrick, and Crashaw, poetry itself became a kind of ultimate refuge. As we discuss the work of each poet, we will note that the extent of his poetic retreat is to a large measure determined by the intensity of his response to the growing polarization and fragmentation of England. The greater his disorientation and pessimism in the face of encroaching political and religious chaos, the more extreme, the more limiting his retreat.

1

Among seventeenth-century poets, George Herbert probably came closest to canonization by contemporary Anglicans. As

revivified after the Restoration in Izaak Walton's *Life*, he was a pattern of cloistered Anglican simplicity and sanctity, who lived and died "like a Saint, unspotted of the World, full of Almsdeeds, full of Humility, and all the examples of a vertuous life."¹ Walton recognized, at least to a degree, that Herbert's simplicity and sanctity were achieved rather than innate, and achieved rather late in his short life. But we would do well to remind ourselves that the cloistered innocent of Anglican legend was a man who had originally hoped to serve the nation in a considerably more active and exalted way than as an exemplar of "primitive piety."

Herbert was born into a fine old gentry family and was conscious of his social position. As a young man he wrote to his brother Henry, "Be proud, not with a foolish vinting of yourself where there is no caus, but by setting a just price of your qualities: and it is the part of a poor spirit to undervalue himself and blush."² If we are to credit Walton, during Herbert's time at Cambridge he dressed like a dandy, surrounded himself with aristocrats, and kept himself at too great a distance from those lacking his birth and breeding. As Public Orator, one of the University's most coveted positions, he distinguished himself as a scholar and master rhetorician through his gracefully ornate and extravagantly complimentary Latin letters and orations. He helped Francis Bacon with translations of his scientific works and lauded him as "the instigator of research, archpriest of truth."³ Herbert was elected twice to Parliament and appeared destined to fulfill his hopes for a high position at the court of James I. His elder brother Edward was knighted by the king, his younger brother Henry became Master of the Revels. For Herbert to aspire to some sort of preferment was to follow the expected family pattern.

Herbert began his university years planning to work toward a career in divinity, and his early sonnets to his mother announce his continuing sense of dedication to God. But his letters from Cambridge show no sense of incongruity between his worldly ambition in the court of James I and his duty to the Court of Heaven. When he was seeking election as Public Orator and a

friend objected that the position seemed unsuitable for one who had dedicated his powers to the Lord, Herbert assured him, "This dignity, hath no such earthiness in it, but it may very well be joined with Heaven" (370). In an address praising King James at the end of *Musae Responsoriae*, he promised to devote all his future poetry to glorifying the king and added that his verse belonged to God. He clearly shared the assumption of sixteenth-century humanists that the English state mirrored the divine order, that faithful service to the king was at the same time service to the Lord who had annointed him.

Though Herbert had every reason to expect that his court ambitions would be rewarded, they were not. He seems to have gone through several years of crisis and ill health during which he gradually abandoned his certainty that service to the state and service to God were not incompatible.⁴ In "Submission" the poet demands of God, "Were it not better to bestow / Some place and power on me?" but answers his own question in the negative:

How know I, if thou shouldst me raise,
That I should then raise thee?
Perhaps great places and thy praise
Do not so well agree. (95)

By the time he wrote "Submission" Herbert had clearly given up his earlier implicit belief that English church and state were part of single unity: the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of James I and Charles I were not one organic whole, but two distinct realms serving contradictory ends.

In announcing his decision to take Holy Orders in 1625, Herbert committed himself to one realm and gave up the other. For a man of such an aristocratic background, distinguished talents, and important connections to become a country parson was most unusual, and no small humiliation. In his preface to *Herbert's Remains*, Barnabas Oley recalled that he had "heard sober men censure him as a man that did not manage his brave parts to his best

advantage and preferment, but lost himself *in an humble way*; That was the phrase, I well remember it" (quoted, xxxii). Herbert himself wrote, "The Countrey Parson knows well, that both for the generall ignominy which is cast upon the profession, and much more for those rules, which out of his choysest judgment hee hath resolved to observe, and which are described in this Book, he must be despised" (268). *The Temple* records Herbert's drastic reordering of the values and assumptions which had inspired his early manhood.

As its title suggests, *The Temple* is a deliberately restricted realm—the house of God—in which the wide-ranging worldly interests of Herbert's Cambridge years have no place. "*The Pearl*" sets humanist ideals and the service of God in clear opposition. The poet is well acquainted with the "wayes of Learning" and the "wayes of Honour," but abandons them, with full knowledge of their powers to attract him, in the simple refrain, "Yet I love thee" (88–89). "*Vanitie* (I)" repudiates Baconian experimental science as represented by the "fleet Astronomer," "nimble Diver," and "subtil Chymick," stripping down nature to her first principles, but unable to find the one thing worth finding: "What hath not man sought out and found, / But his deare God?" (85). In his younger days Herbert had written a discourse on predestination so valued by its recipient Lancelot Andrewes that he is reported to have kept it always at his breast.⁵ But in *The Temple* even doctrinal disputation has no place. "*Divinitie*" satirizes those who "cut and carve" the "transcendent skie" of divinity to the detriment of true belief: "Reason triumphs, and faith lies by" (134). Though the church Herbert knew was besieged by doctrinal strife and liturgical factionalism, in *The Temple* she is presented in her idealized image as the seamless cloak of Christ, her theology as "cleare as heav'n" (135) and her public worship the image of order and stability. *The Temple*, in conscious simplification of a world grown too large and complex, asserts the validity of the traditional theory of correspondences by which the microcosm of man and the macrocosm of the universe are joined with invisible ties

("Man," 91), and follows the Ptolemaic system, so beautifully precise, small, and protective by comparison with the unbounded universe posited by contemporary astronomers. But though Herbert seems to have had little difficulty in whittling down the complex seventeenth-century universe to simpler traditional patterns of church and cosmos, he was able to do so only because he had accomplished the more difficult task of whittling down his own spirit.

In *The Country Parson*, Herbert identifies one of the chief temptations of the priest as "Spirituall pride." Pride appears in many insidious forms in *The Temple*: Herbert's weaving himself into the sense of his poems by valuing rhetorical skill more than the divine objects of his verse as in "Jordan (II)," presuming he can equal Christ's sacrifice in "The Thanksgiving," attempting to place his own powers of reasoning above God's wisdom in "Submission" and "Dialogue," trying to break the bond of God's service in "The Collar," or even striving too eagerly for heaven as if it were "mine own" in "The Flower."

In the Gospels, Christ rebuked the pride of his disciples by commending the humility of a little child. One of the ways Herbert humbles his own pride is by asking to be made a child in spirit. In "H. Baptisme (I)" and "(II)," placed consecutively early in *The Temple*, Herbert examines the sacrament which "taught the Book of Life my name" in what is for him a very characteristic fashion. He looks at baptism first from the outside in "H. Baptisme (I)," in terms of its place in the Christian *schema* and its function in his own life, then from the inside in "H. Baptisme (II)," where he demonstrates its transmuting effects by writing from within the *persona* of the "child of God" he has been made through that sacrament.

Baptism, since it washes away original sin, was traditionally understood as a spiritual rebirth: Christ told Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). The early Christian church celebrated this cleansing rebirth through a wealth of symbols: the new

believer was totally immersed, to signify the death and burial of the "old man" and the birth of the newly innocent child of God from the womb; the new Christian, no matter what his age, was called an infant and given baby food—milk and honey—in token of his spiritual rebirth. As the sacrament of baptism was gradually limited to actual infants, its symbols of spiritual childhood were discarded and real children were regarded as innocents because they had so recently been washed free of original sin. Donne wrote, "Our best state in this life, is but a returning, to the purity, which we had in our baptism."⁶

But as Herbert is forced to learn again and again in *The Temple*, one baptism is not enough. He seems to have been describing his own boyhood, fed with milk and honey, in "Affliction (I)":

At first thou gav'st me milk and sweetnesses;
 I had my wish and way:
 My dayes were straw'd with flow'rs and happinesse;
 There was no moneth but May.
 But with my yeares sorrow did twist and grow,
 And made a partie unawares for wo. (47)

Growing up inevitably means growing out of the purity and grace conferred by baptism and growing into sin and discontent. In "H. Baptisme (I)" Herbert separates himself enough from the sinful nature which clouds his vision to discover that the grace of baptism and its regenerating powers are still available to him: the cleansing blood of the eucharist and the water of baptism are essentially the same, since they issue from the same fountain of grace:

As he that sees a dark and shadie grove,
 Stayes not, but looks beyond it on the skie;
 So when I view my sinnes, mine eyes remove
 More backward still, and to that water flie,
 Which is above the heav'ns, whose spring and vent
 Is in my deare Redeemers pierced side. (43-44)

But often divine grace pours down regenerating showers without any tangible sacramental sign: even the tears he weeps to "drown" his sins "as they grow" issue from the same "blessed streams" of grace. Baptism is the "first acquaintance" which allows all other forms of divine grace to work the same miracle of transformation and renewal.

In "*H. Baptisme (I)*" Herbert suggests a connection between the grace of baptism and the order he is able to experience in his life and build into his verse: "In you Redemption measures all my time." The sinful times he suffers through are brought back to "measure" through the streams of grace first sent through baptism and regularly renewed in other forms; the same grace allows him to "measure time" in his poetry. "*H. Baptisme (I)*" is, in terms of poetic form, a set piece, a sonnet in which rhymes and rhythms are properly ordered in demonstration of the measuring power of grace. As the poem's subject matter is to some degree public (baptism stops "our sinnes" and gives *us* tears) and is about as directly theological as Herbert allows himself to become in *The Temple*, so too the poem's form demonstrates Herbert's mastery of received poetic tradition.

"*H. Baptisme (II)*" offers a radically different and deliberately contrasted view of how the grace of baptism can "measure all my time." The poem is based on Matt. 7:14: "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Each of the three brief stanzas traces in its own form the pattern worked by grace—from the smallness of the child to the growth of the flesh and the swelling of sin and pride, then back to the renewed grace and humility of childhood in spirit. In its skillful use of monosyllables and short limpid phrases, the poem is a stylistic mirror of its message, "Childhood is health."

Since, Lord, to thee
A narrow way and little gate
Is all the passage, on my infancie
Thou didst lay hold, and antedate
My faith in me.

O let me still
 Write thee great God, and me a childe:
 Let me be soft and supple to thy will,
 Small to my self, to others milde,
 Behither ill.

Although by stealth
 My flesh get on, yet let her sister
 My soul bid nothing, but preserve her wealth:
 The growth of flesh is but a blister;
 Childhood is health.

(44)

A newly baptised child is physically small enough to pass through a "narrow way." Herbert has in a sense "outgrown" his baptism—his body has become large—but he prays that in spirit he might remain small enough to negotiate the strait way to eternal life, that he might always recognize his own foolish insignificance before the majesty of God. "*H. Baptisme* (II)" is a key poem in *The Temple* because it establishes Herbert's *persona* of child. It is itself a reflecting glass of the writer's state of grace, a paradigm of how to "write thee great God, and me a childe."

Becoming the child of God means more than achieving humility: in the upper-class England of Herbert's day, children were still regarded as the lowest level of a social hierarchy based on authority and obedience; at least in theory they had no autonomy, no will of their own, but were completely in the power of parents and other superiors. For Herbert, becoming the child of God meant replacing his adult intellect and inclinations with total dependence upon the wisdom and will of his heavenly Father. One of the recurrent patterns of *The Temple* is the poet's lapsing back into spiritual pride or doubt, then his re-creation through grace as the obedient child of God.

"*The Collar*" records a rebellion of the will. As it begins, Herbert has determined to escape his limited, artificially ordered existence for liberty in the larger world outside:

I Struck the board, and cry'd, No more.
I will abroad.
What? shall I ever sigh and pine?
My lines and life are free; free as the rode,
Loose as the winde, as large as store.
Shall I be still in suit? (153)

Filled with repugnance for his "cage" and "rope of sands," the rebel perceives his road to freedom as a simple casting off of self-imposed restrictions. But the very words which declare his revolt ironically forecast its failure: just as the poetry of rebellion is "free" and formless, so would a life without limit quickly disintegrate into chaos. Art would become an impossibility. Lost in the feverish tangles of will, Herbert is incapable of perceiving that his proposed escape from the prison of self-limitation would only trap him in a more terrifying prison of disorder and artistic incapacity. God must intervene to show him his foolishness:

But as I rav'd and grew more fierce and wilde
At every word,
Me thoughts I heard one calling, *Child!*
And I reply'd, *My Lord.* (153-54)

The word *child* is like a chime calling Herbert back to the narrow path of God by reminding him that he is not his own master, not free to obey willful impulses, but at the same time declaring God's grace in "adopting" him despite his willfulness. Herbert's response, the greatest possible contrast to his disordered ravings, is to fall back into the dependence of a child and in doing so to return his life to the harmony of self-limitation, a harmony restored to his art through the completion of the final rhyme.

"*Dialogue*" is a rebellion of the intellect. The poet argues that since his "cares and pains" in God's service can in no way make him worthy of His love, there is no point continuing them. God retorts:

Childhood and Cultural Despair

*What, Child, is the ballance thine,
 Thine the poise and measure?
 If I say, Thou shalt be mine;
 Finger not my treasure.* (114)

But Herbert ignores this appeal for childlike trust and goes on reasoning:

But as I can see no merit,
 Leading to this favour:
 So the way to fit me for it
 Is beyond my savour.
 As the reason then is thine;
 So the way is none of mine:
 I disclaim the whole design:
 Sinne disclaims and I resigne. (115)

Since there appears to be no way he can deserve God's love, he will give up the attempt—resign. But God transforms Herbert's "resign" into "resigning"—giving in—by reminding him of the joys He resigned and the pains He was resigned to, for the sake of humankind:

*That is all, if that I could
 Get without repining;
 And my clay, my creature, would
 Follow my resigning:
 That as I did freely part
 With my glorie and desert,
 Left all joyes to feel all smart— —
 Ah! no more: thou break'st my heart.* (115)

In the final verse, overwhelmed by God's grace to him, Herbert offers a revised resignation. He abandons the tangles of intellect for simple emotion and resigns himself to being the child of God.

Perhaps the most threatening form of rebellion against Her-

bert's attempts to "Write thee great God, and me a childe" is the rebellion of language itself. "H. Baptisme (II)" establishes a connection between the descent of divine grace and the achievement of a simple spareness of style which the classicist and former Public Orator of Cambridge University did not always find himself willing to accept. In *The Temple*, the curl of metaphor and the glitter of burnished language are often a symptom of spiritual pride, a weaving of the self into the sense which challenges God instead of submitting to the demanding poetic of self-limitation. As the poet sheds off and discards the potential identities of his earlier years, so too must he frequently pare down his language from gaudy excess to humble plainness: "The Quip," "The Quid-ditie," the Jordan poems, "The Posie," and numerous other poems from *The Temple* record Herbert's continuing battle to attain the simplicity of utterance of the regenerate child of God.

Herbert's emphasis on achieved simplicity of language is undoubtedly one of the strains in his verse which made it acceptable to some seventeenth-century Puritans, and modern critics have also tended to interpret Herbert's suspicion of decorated verse as a form of Puritanism.⁷ The Puritans did indeed tend to reject linguistic play, along with the play of the liturgy, as a frivolous mockery of proper Christian earnestness. Richard Baxter's conversion taught him to love downright, direct language:

I shall never forget the relish of my soul, when God first warmed my heart with these matters, and when I was newly entered into a seriousness in religion: when I read such a book as Bishop Andrews' Sermons, or heard such kind of preaching, I felt no life in it: methought they did but play with holy things. I feel in myself in reading or hearing, a despising of that wittiness as proud foolery, which savoureth of levity, and tendeth to evaporate weighty truths, and turn them all into very fancies, and keep them from the heart. As a stage-player, or morris-dancer, differs from a soldier or a king, so do these preachers from the true and faithful ministers of Christ: and as they deal liker to players than preachers in the pulpit, so usually their hearers do rather come to play with a sermon, than to attend a message from the God of heaven about the life or death of their Souls.⁸

When John Bunyan wrote his autobiography, he too repudiated the "proud foolery" of stylistic artifice:

I could have enlarged much in this my Discourse of my Temptations and Troubles for Sin; as also, of the merciful Kindness, and Working of God with my Soul: I could also have stepped into a Stile much higher than this, in which I have here discoursed, and could have adorned all things more than here I have seemed to do; but I dare not: God did not play in tempting of me; neither did I play, when I sunk as into a bottomless Pit, when the Pangs of Hell caught hold upon me; wherefore I may not play in relating of them, but be plain and simple, and lay down the thing as it was.⁹

For its Anglican practitioners, on the other hand, stylistic play was justified by Jehovah's example: "I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes" (Hos. 12:10). Divine Writ does not shun elaborate metaphor and symbols to shadow forth the most central truths of Christianity. Donne's famous apology for word play in his *Meditations* draws important connections among the pattern of biblical verbal eloquence, the pattern of divine action on earth, and the patterns of liturgical worship. God is a "direct God, may I not say a *literall God*, a God that wouldest bee understood *literally*, and according to the *plaine sense* of all that thou saiest"; but also a "*metaphoricall God*," in whose language "there is such a height of *figures*, such *voyages*, such *peregrinations* to fetch remote and precious *metaphors*, such *extensions*, such *spreadings*, such *Curtaines* of *Allegories*, such *third Heavens* of *Hyperboles*, so *harmonious eloquutions* as all *prophane Authors*, seeme of the seed of the *Serpent*, that *creepes*, thou art the *Dove*, that *flies*." Donne continues, "Neither art thou thus a *figurative*, a *metaphoricall God* in thy *word* only, but in thy *workes* too. The *stile* of thy *works*, the *phrase* of thine *actions*, is *metaphoricall*. The *institution* of thy whole *worship* in the *old Law*, was a continuall *Allegory*; Neither didst thou *speake* and *worke* in this *language*, onely in the time of thy *Prophets*; but since thou *spokest* in thy *Son*, it is so too." The decorated language of the Anglican liturgy represents a continuation of ancient Christian practice: "This hath occasioned thine ancient ser-

vants, whose delight it was to write after thy *Copie*, to proceede the same way in their *expositions* of the *Scriptures*, and in their composing both of *publike liturgies*, and of *private prayers* to thee, to make their accesses to thee in such a kind of language, as thou wast pleased to speake to them, in a *figurative*, in a *Metaphoricall* language."¹⁰ For Donne the play of language serves the same harmonizing function as the play of the liturgy. Sacred word games are a mimetic recapitulation and validation of the divine plan which overarches the apparent formlessness of everyday human life.

In *The Temple* Herbert repudiates the riddling and winding of secular poetry; he abandons stylistic artifice even in sacred verse to the extent that it is motivated by pride. But that by no means makes Herbert a Puritan in his attitude toward language. In *The Temple*, linguistic playfulness, when sanctified by grace, becomes a form of praise. Over and over in *The Temple* Herbert finds that self-abasement to the narrowness of childhood allows him to rise above that narrowness. Humility makes possible not only spiritual regeneration, but also the transcendence of art. As Herbert expresses it in one of his Latin epigrams, human beings must decide whether to be sterile mountains or fertile valleys: "mons sterilis, vallis an vber eris?"¹¹ God in *The Temple* is a cultivator of fertile valleys; He follows the pattern of "*Easter-wings*," stripping the adult down to the lowly simplicity of a child, then building him back up through grace into a creator whose works reflect the order of liturgical worship and the higher harmonies which govern the universe. Herbert placed "*Easter-wings*" just before "*H. Baptisme* (I)" and "(II)"; he designed its wing-shaped stanzas to be reverse mirrors of the stanzaic pattern in "*H. Baptisme* (II)." The two poems together are a statement of Christian paradox. The poet's recognition of human insignificance "Most poore" and "Most thinne" becomes a means for transcendence: "For, if I imp my wing on thine, / Affliction shall advance the flight in me" (43).

In the seventeenth century, *recreation* could mean either re-creation or play. Herbert fuses the two meanings. The child is a fresh

creation, and every time grace falls on the adult, he is created anew a child of God and freed to play before Him in his verse. Herbert is reported to have remarked once, "*Religion does not banish mirth, but only moderates, and sets rules to it.*"¹² Many of Herbert's poems are as fancifully intricate as others are spare and plain. The "pruning" of rhyme words in "*Paradise*," stanzaic mirrorings in "*Aaron*," the hidden message of "*Coloss. 3. 3 Our life is hid with Christ in God*," the visual punning of "*The Altar*" and "*Easter-wings*"—all of these display the poet at play, building words into sacred game for the glory of his heavenly Father.

The play of language links Herbert's lyrics with that ordered atemporal stasis which seventeenth-century Englishmen were coming more and more to doubt, but which earlier churchmen had posited as governing the apparent randomness of the universe. Sacred game, expressed through *poesis* or Sunday and festival celebration, lifts the poet out of the historical process and gives him a place in the great chain of creation, a harmonious consort singing forth divine glory ("*Employment [I]*," 57). Like Dante, whose *Paradiso* is a glorious eternal *fiesta* of light and motion and song, or like the seventeenth-century anti-Calvinists discussed above for whom child's play was a foreshadowing of angelic comportment in heaven, Herbert envisions the afterlife as an endless whirling dance in beams of Christ's halo:

That so among the rest I may
 Glitter, and curle, and winde as they:
 That winding is their fashion
 Of adoration. ("The Starre," 74)

Since God has assumed the burden of sin, "paid the full price, / That was requir'd to make us gay, / And fit for Paradise" ("*Sunday*," 76), the poet can experience foretastes of the heavenly *fiesta* even on earth. Sundays are tastes of eternity: Herbert calls them the "couch of time" and the pillars "On which heav'ns palace arched lies." If he could live only Sundays, through a childlike

game of jumping over the other six mundane days, he would escape time and change altogether:

Thou art a day of mirth:
And where the week-dayes trail on ground,
Thy flight is higher, as thy birth.
O let me take thee at the bound,
Leaping with thee from sev'n to sev'ii,
Till that we both, being toss'd from earth,
Flie hand in hand to heav'n! (76-77)

Church holidays, too, are insulated from history. On Easter, as the poet and his lute celebrate with music, the "defects" of his art mended by the harmony of the Holy Spirit, he is drawn out of the profane succession of days to apprehend the One Day of eternity:

Can there be any day but this,
Though many sunnes to shine endeavour?
We count three hundred, but we misse:
There is but one, and that one ever. (42)

"*Christmas*," in keeping with the Apocryphal tradition that all time and motion ceased at the moment of the nativity, is another link with divine stasis. The poet sings like the shepherds of old in honor of the birth of the Son (Luke 2:20), but moves quickly from the historical event to the ahistorical reality behind it. His "dark soul" furnished and decked so that he can become a vehicle of praise, Herbert begins a song which recalls Anglican liturgical singing by the usual candlelight; but he will not be satisfied until his liturgy can be everlasting, sung by the light of God:

We sing one common Lord; wherefore he should
Himself the candle hold.
I will go searching, till I finde a sunne
Shall stay, till we have done;
A willing shiner, that shall shine as gladly,
As frost-nipt sunnes look sadly.

Then we will sing, and shine all our own day,
 And one another pay:
 His beams shall cheer my breast, and both so twine,
 Till ev'n his beams sing, and my musick shine. (81)

Light will sing and music shine: an interchange of attributes which looks toward a final irreversible harmony between Creator and created, between the poet's art and its divine source. This circle of reciprocity is the ultimate goal of the sacred game on earth. "Mere child's play" in effect abolishes mundane time and space and the separations among things by pointing out their irrelevance under the eye of eternity. Through the glitter and curl of poetic play, Herbert is able to re-create the traditional Anglican vision of order, of history as mystically transcended by the unity of the seamless cloak of Christ.

Not that such vision is sustained through every line of *The Temple*: Herbert rebels and wanders astray, having frequently to be called back from the sterility of "Sinnes round" to the fruitful lowliness of childhood. But however far he strays, however discordant his errant verse, his repudiations of divine order are always contained within a larger pattern reaffirming that order. As Helen Vendler's study has recently reminded us, moments of complete transcendence and unity come relatively rarely in *The Temple*; most of the poems linking Sundays and church festivals with playful escape out of time into eternity appear in the Williams manuscript and were therefore written fairly early.¹³ A more ordinary, everyday means of containing disorder in *The Temple*, and one of considerable interest to anyone exploring links between the biography and the poetry, is Herbert's sustained self-portrayal as child and servant in the house of a mighty Lord.

Herbert's house of God is a late-feudal household, a place where the ideal of humility is practiced through the distancing of ceremonial order. The poet envisions God as a benign father figure offering both joy and sorrow and sometimes seeming to disappear altogether as upper-class fathers so often did:

Thou tarriest, while I die,
 And fall to nothing: thou dost reigne,
 And rule on high,
 While I remain
 In bitter grief: yet am I stil'd
 Thy childe. (“Longing,” 150)

The God of *The Temple* is a master as well as a father—the Lord of a rich manor (“Redemption,” 40), a great territorial magnate whose household, the church, keeps for all comers the standing feast of the eucharist. Whenever Herbert mentioned the name of Christ, he would add, “My Master” (4). In *The Temple* he often compares himself to the lowly servant of a magnanimous Lord, and sometimes both Father and Lord together. The poet threatens his wayward thoughts in “Assurance”: “But I will to my Father, / Who heard thee say it,” then addresses Him “O most gracious Lord,” and speaks to Him in the language of feudal vassalage (155).

We will remember that among the English gentry into which Herbert was born and bred, the household roles of children and servants were practically indistinguishable. In *The Temple*, Herbert’s *persona* of child blends naturally into the role of God’s lowly servant. Just as the chief duty of a child in a late-feudal household was serving at table, so Herbert’s chief duty is serving at God’s table, the altar. According to Izaak Walton, on the evening of Herbert’s induction into the parsonage of Bemerton, he told a friend:

I beseech that God, who hath honour'd me so much as to call me to serve him at his Altar: that as by his special grace he hath put into my heart these good desires, and resolutions: so, he will by his assisting grace give me ghostly strength to bring the same to good effect: and I beseech him that my humble and charitable life may so win upon others, as to bring glory to my JESUS, whom I have this day taken to be my Master and Governour; and I am so proud of his service, that I will alwaies observe, and obey, and do his Will; and alwaies call him Jesus my Master, and I will always contemn my birth, or any title or dignity that can be

*conferr'd upon me, when I shall compare them with my title of being a Priest, and serving at the Altar of Jesus my Master.*¹⁴

As a country parson Herbert served his master in many ways—helping the poor, or arbitrating quarrels. But it would appear that he most valued his role before the table of God, performing the liturgy of the Anglican church, and preparing and offering the sacramental banquet of the eucharist.

By retreating from society into the house of God, Herbert was able to re-create for himself a near-extinct social institution. The late-feudal household, with its scores of retainers, magnificent shows of hospitality, and great hall where everyone from the lord and lady down to the lowliest guest dined communally, had practically disappeared by the 1620s and 1630s when Herbert wrote. Godfrey Goodman complained in 1616 that while previously the gentry had “continued in their owne countries, kept great houses, much hospitalitie, attended on with troupes and numbers of seruants, their tenants liuing happily under their shadow,” now they had “much improued their estates, ra’ckt their poore tenants, giuen ouer house-keeping, and liue retiredlie.”¹⁵ This decline of traditional communal hospitality, mourned as well in Ben Jonson’s “To Penshurst,” Nashe’s *Summer’s Last Will and Testament*, and numerous other works, was reflected in changing building practices. In country houses of the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, the great central hall was replaced by private rooms where the master and mistress could live and dine cut off from the community and traditional community responsibilities.¹⁶

One of the last of the old-style households was the house in which Herbert himself was actually brought up. His brother Edward noted Magdalen Herbert’s adherence to the traditional late-feudal pattern: she “kept hospitality with that plenty and order as exceeded all either of her country or time . . . she used ever after dinner to distribute with her own hands to the poor, who resorted to her in great numbers.”¹⁷ In his *Parentalia*, George Herbert himself paid tribute to his mother’s orderly housekeeping: her house

was a court of witty conversation, an almshouse, and a hospital for relief of the sick (423).

By taking divine orders, Herbert abandoned all political ambitions in the homes of England's great. But what he lost in the larger world through humble submission to the church, he regained within its protective bosom. In *The Temple* Herbert's adopted mother, his "Mother, the Church of England,"¹⁸ carries on the time-honored customs of his natural mother—keeping open house in ordered comeliness and rewarding the poor and down-trodden. The Herbert family seat was Montgomery Castle, a venerable fortress which still had its moats and drawbridge in Herbert's day and in which he probably lived during at least part of his childhood.¹⁹ He describes his "deare Mother" "*The British Church*" as a similar structure:

Blessed be God, whose love it was
To double-moat thee with his grace,
And none but thee. (110)

It is characteristic of Herbert that the possession of divine grace is communicated through feudal metaphor. Like a great territorial magnate, God is surrounded with awesome tangible signs of his power. And yet within his house, even the most menial acts become a form of praise, a contribution to the harmony of the whole:

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgerie divine:
Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine. ("The Elixir," 185)

In God's house, Herbert's beloved courtesy and courtliness of language, inadmissible for their own sake or as a means of advancing the poet's self-worth, finally find employment. As Helen

Vendler has noted, in "The Odour" the phrases "My Master" and "My Servant" are "constantly circulating on errands of courtesy and love."²⁰ In *The Temple* language itself becomes a banquet offered up by a humble servant for the glory of God. As child and servant in the house of God, the poet recaptures the gracious, courtly milieu of his own early years by replaying in a sacred vein the secular role he is likely to have held in his mother's house as a child.

Edward Herbert reverted in his *Autobiography* to the role of a twelfth-century knight errant: if we are to credit his testimony, he lived his life as a series of challenges, mortal personal combats, and quests for the love of fair ladies²¹—a feudalization of early seventeenth-century reality which must be seen as part of the almost obsessive aristocratic reaction against eroding class respect delineated by Lawrence Stone. George Herbert's self-portrayal as child and servant in the old-style household of God is a subtler and more creative solution to the same problem of accelerated change and the disappearance of ancient English patterns of order. Herbert's chosen role was humbler and more self-limiting than his flamboyant brother's, a deliberate renunciation of his court hopes, and yet the only means to final preferment in the splendid court of heaven. The lowliness of Herbert's place in God's household does not prevent him from sharing in its munificence. His heavenly Lord, in keeping with traditional laws of hospitality, bars none from His table, as the poet learns at the end of *The Temple* in "Love (III)." The poem is based on Luke 12:37: "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." In "Love (III)" God becomes gracious host and bars Herbert from the customary role of servant which he, with equal *gentillesse*, offers to assume. Though he protests his unworthiness, indeed, *because* he recognizes his unworthiness, he is exalted from humble child and servant into honored and much beloved guest at the sacrament of the altar and at its everlasting successor, the feast of eternal life:

Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back,
 Guiltie of dust and sinne.

But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack
 From my first entrance in,

Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
 If I lack'd any thing.

A guest, I answer'd, worthy to be here:
 Love said, You shall be he.

I the unkinde, ungratefull? Ah my deare,
 I cannot look on thee.

Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
 Who made the eyes but I?

Truth Lord, but I have marr'd them: let my shame
 Go where it doth deserve.

And know you not, sayes Love, who bore the blame?
 My deare, then I will serve.

You must sit down, sayes Love, and taste my meat:
 So I did sit and eat.

(188-89)

The poet's many times of trial and unprofitableness in the service of God on earth are rewarded through a playful contest of wit and courtesy which culminates in the banquet of eternity. The poems of Sunday and festival transcendence placed early in *The Temple* tend to look forward to an eventual escape from time and change, but "Love (III)" is written in the past tense, as though to suggest that in essence the escape has already been made: the poet has already taken the "standing" and "place" in heaven which he prayed for in "The Starre"; his playful contest with love has already demonstrated that the court of God will welcome the glitter and curl and winding of wit and feudal *gentillesse* as a "fashion of adoration" for all eternity.

The *persona* of child operates on several levels in *The Temple*. Within individual poems and from one poem to another, Herbert fights against his chosen role, then reaccepts it and merges it almost imperceptibly with other roles, then forgets and struggles again. But overarching this daily battle is the serene confidence

that the battle is already won. He works and suffers, he pirouettes and plays, but always under the sheltering roof of his Father's house. The poet's revolts against the narrow path of childhood must be seen as ironic: although from the limited viewpoint of the speaker in any given poem, they are departures from his *persona*, from the wider perspective of the creator of *The Temple*, they are yet another manifestation of his humble childishness. When Herbert strikes out against his lowly role in "*The Collar*," God's one-word rebuke "*Child!*" is double-edged. It points out that the rebel is a chosen recipient of divine grace, but at the same time shows him that his planned escape, though daring and grandiose in his own mind, is in fact no more than an infantile temper tantrum. To the extent that he succumbs to the world's blandishments, he demonstrates his childishness in a negative sense: "Then silly soul take heed; for earthly joy / Is but a bubble, and makes thee a boy" ("*Vanitie* (II)," 111). But this recognition of his humble inconsequence is itself the first step toward attaining the grace of the regenerate child of God. It is this ironic multiplicity of Herbert's *persona* that gives *The Temple* its complex tone of security despite looming perils, of certainty even in the midst of doubt, and its complex artistry, by which jarring rhythms and defective rhymes at once signal their own inadequacy and contribute to the euphonic symmetry of the whole.

The Temple rings a thousand changes upon the *persona* of child. Sometimes the poet seems to "lisp in numbers," as in "*Discipline*";²² sometimes he makes a naive allegory or apparently trivial game of the most solemn Christian truths, as in "*Peace*" and "*The Bag*." Sometimes he strives for a homely, folksy effect which recalls the concreteness of medieval popular devotional manuals ("*The 23rd Psalme*"; "*Charms and Knots*"). By comparing a poem's early form in the Williams manuscript with its final version in *The Temple*, we can often see the poet deliberately striving for a clumsy, childlike quality in his rhymes.²³ Some of Herbert's most spare and reductive poems were in fact considered appropriate for seventeenth-century children. Thomas White included several of

them in *A Little Book for Little Children* (12th ed., 1702). But that they have also appealed, in Herbert's day and our own, to readers of anything but childish intellect is sufficient testimony to their creator's mastery of the demanding rhetoric of simplicity.

The Temple would have been a remarkable achievement in any period. But it is particularly intriguing that Herbert's poetic mimesis of traditional Anglican theory about the ultimate unity of individual spiritual experience, church ceremonial, and universal order was composed at a point in English history when that theory was becoming quite untenable. We could argue that at least during his Bemerton years, despite the contact Wilton House and Sarum offered with the wider world outside, Herbert was to an extent cut off from the violent dissent which beset the church, able to live in peaceful conformity with her traditions because he had exiled himself from the troubling realities of Puritan and Anglican controversy. Yet we may be sure that the sense of pastoral serenity and cloistered isolation conveyed by *The Country Parson* and *The Temple* was much more a product of the poet's art than a reflection of his contemporary situation. While "*The British Church*" celebrates the "perfect lineaments and hue" of Anglicanism, "*Church-vents and schismes*" mourns the degree to which that idealized image has been sullied by divisions. Though the poet's larger subject is the universal history of the church, he is also talking about the present condition of Anglicanism, the one "Brave rose" who has survived the vicissitudes of Christian history:

Why doth my Mother blush? is she the rose,
And shows it so? Indeed Christs precious bloud
Gave you a colour once; which when your foes
Thought to let out, the bleeding did you good,
And made you look much fresher then before.
But when debates and fretting jealousies
Did worm and work within you more and more,
Your colour vaded, and calamities
Turned your ruddie into pale and bleak:
Your health and beautie both began to break. (140)

The Temple suggests that Herbert's ultimate refuge was not the institution of Anglicanism but the household and temple of his own spirit. Though the main section of *The Temple* is entitled "The Church," in the series of architectural poems placed early in this section the church's tangible fixtures are transmuted into aspects of the poet himself: its altar, his heart; its monuments, his flesh; its lock, his sinfulness; its marbled floor, the most basic virtues; its windows, divine grace as it shines forth in his life. The forms and festivals of the church cannot be accepted merely at face value, but must be tested and internalized, transmuted into motions of his own spirit. Although Herbert's sanctity became a hagiographical weapon for Laudian controversialists, and although the poet in his youth had tried his hand at controversy in *Musae Responsoriae*, the mature Herbert himself was no warfaring Christian. Instead of attempting to resolve the grave divisions marring the theoretical oneness of Anglicanism, he turned inward and worked at resolving the self-divisions besetting the "familie" and household of his own soul. *The Temple* itself is the seamless cloak Herbert sought, a poetic retreat where his conflicting passions and goals are woven into exalted unity through the poet's recognition of his childish insignificance before the majesty of God.

2

In his own way, Robert Herrick valued simplicity as much as his contemporary George Herbert did. F. W. Moorman wrote of Herrick's *Noble Numbers*, "The truth is that his conception of religion, in spite of his reading of the Fathers, was scarcely more mature than that of a child of eight."²⁴ Had Herrick been alive in 1910 to read Moorman's severe verdict or its echoes in more recent criticism, he would doubtless have been more than a little amused. For although his *Noble Numbers* never commends childhood so directly as *The Temple* does, the collection makes much more sustained use of the poetic *persona* of child.²⁵

Herrick's secular verse is often devoted to the celebration of

little things—the world of fairies, the shimmer of a gown, the pretty sweetness of rosebuds and infants, the antics of the boy cupid. In a line from “*A Ternarie of littles, upon a pipkin of Jellie sent to a Lady*,” the poet suggests a connection between his style and his subjects: “As my small Pipe best fits my little note.”²⁶ Herrick implies that if he had a larger subject he would poetize with more grandeur, and, indeed, occasional poems like “TO THE KING, Upon his taking of *Leicester*” are written in a more heroic vein than most of *Hesperides*. But Herrick’s religious verse, despite the loftiness of the subject and the nobility promised in the collection’s title, is strongly marked by a love for littleness. Over half of his “pious pieces” are a mere two to four lines long. They tend to place much greater emphasis on Christianity’s shimmering externals—the glow of candlesticks and the heady odor of incense—than on intellectual or psychological profundity. The most ambitious of *His Noble Numbers* are those singled out on the 1647 title page, in which he “sings the Birth of his CHRIST: and sighes for his *Saviours* suffering on the *Crosse*” (337). But even these poems curiously reduce the emotion-charged events they purport to commemorate: the nativity becomes a glorified birthday party, and the crucifixion, a stage play performed to the astonishment of its spectators.

One of the epigrams in *Hesperides* hints that a delight in small things might be more than mere fancy: “Who with a little cannot be content, / Endures an everlasting punishment” (213). Christ often commends “little ones” in the Gospels; in *Noble Numbers*, the love of littleness is proof of that great virtue, humility. In “*A Thanksgiving to God, for his House*,” Herrick thanks God for the small blessings he has received:

Lord, Thou hast given me a cell
Wherein to dwell;
And little house, whose humble Roof
Is weather-proof;

Low is my porch, as is my Fate,
Both void of state;

Like as my Parlour, so my Hall
And Kitchin's small:
A little Butterie, and therein
A little Byn,
Which keeps my little loafe of Bread
Unchipt, unflead:
Some brittle sticks of Thorne or Briar,
Make me a fire,
Close by whose living coale I sit,
And glow like it.

(349-50)

Herrick, like Herbert, had flitted about court in his earlier years and known the yen for preferment. Because of his undistinguished family background, Herrick could not have expected to attain high station; his settling for the life of a country parson was a considerably less radical compromise of earlier career possibilities than Herbert's had been. But like Herbert he viewed his country existence as a retreat into lowliness. His needs were simple; his gratitude for small blessings, a sign of holy humility. According to one of Herrick's epigrams:

Humble we must be, if to Heaven we go:
High is the roof there; but the gate is low:
When e're thou speak'st, look with a lowly eye:
Grace is increased by humility.

(362)

In *Noble Numbers*, Herrick follows his own advice: he looks "with a lowly eye" by speaking in a child's voice and reducing his vision of God and emotional responses to him to those of a little child. *Noble Numbers* is empty of the terror of sin and damnation which is so common a feature of seventeenth-century Christianity. His version of hell is hardly menacing: "Hell is no other, but a soundlesse pit, / Where no one beame of comfort peeps in it" (372). Hell's torments are merely "whipping cheer"

and even earthly punishment for sin is like the correction administered by a tutor to a recalcitrant schoolboy who hasn't learned his lessons:

If I have plaed the *Truant*, or have here
Fail'd in my part; O! Thou that art my *deare*,
My *mild*, my *loving Tutor*, *Lord and God!*
Correct my errors gently with thy Rod. (398)

Herrick's sorrow for his sins is portrayed as the crying of a lost child: "Open thy gates / To him, who weeping waits, / And might come in, / But that held back by sin" (370). Everyone on earth, good or bad, feels some of God's whippings, but his good children will be rewarded in heaven for their earthly trials: "God from our eyes all teares hereafter wipes, / And gives His Children kisses then, not stripes" (379). Even "*His Letanie, to the Holy Spirit*," Herrick's most powerful evocation of doubt and dread, frames its visions of deathbed suffering and demonic temptation with the refrain, "Sweet Sprit comfort me!" (347), a reassuring reminder of God's promised relief.

Herrick no more allowed himself to be plagued by theological problems than did Herbert. But unlike Herbert he occasionally inserts an epigram dealing with a complex doctrinal issue into his collection of verse. As the notes to L. C. Martin's edition amply indicate, many of these epigrams are merely rhymed versions of John Gregory's *Notes and Observations upon Some Passages of Scripture* which appeared in 1646. Unless Herrick saw this work in manuscript, he must have produced his rhymed versions of Gregory very shortly before the publication of *Noble Numbers*. Yet however quickly and belatedly they were composed, Herrick's theological epigrams by no means violate the collection's anti-intellectual spirit. Their doctrinal subtleties are never put to use, but simply stated, much as a child might recite a difficult part of the catechism, relieved to get it right. The repetitive literalism of "*Gods presence*" is characteristic of these poems:

God's present ev'ry where; but most of all
 Present by Union *Hypostaticall*:
 God, He is there, where's nothing else (Schooles say)
 And nothing else is there, *where He's away.* (388)

The basic doctrine of *Noble Numbers* is a plain and direct statement of Anglican *credo*.

I do believe, that die I must,
 And be return'd from out my dust:
 I do believe, that when I rise,
 Christ I shall see, with these same eyes:
 I do believe, that I must come,
 With others, to the dreadfull Doome:
 I do believe, the bad must goe
 From thence, to everlasting woe:
 I do believe, the good, and I,
 Shall live with Him eternally:
 I do believe, I shall inherit
 Heaven, by Christs mercies, not my merit:
 I do believe, the One in Three,
 And Three in perfect Unitie:
 Lastly, that JESUS is a Deed
 Of Gift from God: *And heres my Creed.*
 ("His Creed," 358-59)

Simple, almost sing-song verses express the poet's naive faith.

As Miriam Starkman's study of *Noble Numbers* has shown, the effortless, childlike tone of Herrick's verses is the result of considerable artistry.²⁷ Like Herbert in some of *The Temple's* homiletic poems, Herrick deliberately exploits flat rhymes and circuitous redundancy in order to achieve an effect of homely simplicity and sincerity. Lest his readers doubt that his naive tone is an achieved naiveté rather than a reflection of real verbal incapacity, the poet makes his technique clear by writing verses for children with the same ingenuous, singsong quality as the majority of his "pious pieces":

What God gives, and what we take,
'Tis a gift for Christ His sake:
Be the meale of Beanes and Pease,
God be thank'd for those, and these:
Have we flesh, or have we fish,
All are Fragments from His dish.
He His Church save, and the King,
And our Peace here, like a Spring,
Make it ever flourishing. ("Graces for children," 363)

"Another Grace for a Child" includes a particularly whimsical touch of realism. The child compares its cold hands to the clammy frogs which so delight country boys:

Here a little child I stand,
Heaving up my either hand;
Cold as Paddocks though they be,
Here I lift them up to Thee,
For a Benizon to fall
On our meat, and on us all. *Amen* (364)

Noble Numbers is a Christianity in miniature. What fitter figure to preside over it than God in miniature, the Christ Child? Herrick's Deity is curiously split. "God" is generally seen in dilute Old Testament terms as a stern father figure who whips his children for their sins, to make them fit for paradise. He is far away and vaguely frightening. But Jesus, the benign New Testament comforter, interposes:

Good and great God! How sho'd I feare
To come to Thee, if *Christ* not there!
Cou'd I but think, He would not be
Present, to plead my cause for me;
To Hell I'd rather run, then I
Wou'd see Thy Face, and He not by. (395)

Jesus is sweet and mild and, more often than not in *Noble Numbers*, envisioned as a loving human child. Herrick's most elaborate

“pious pieces” celebrate the birth and circumcision of the Christ Child.

In “*To his Saviour. The New Years gift*” the poet offers a small gift to the Child:

That little prettie bleeding part
 Of Foreskin send to me:
 And Ile returne a bleeding Heart,
 For New-yeers gift to thee.

Rich is the Jemme that thou did'st send,
 Mine's faulty too, and small:
 But yet this Gift Thou wilt commend,
 Because I send Thee all. (376)

His heart is, predictably enough, just a little thing, a trifle, yet all that he or anyone can give. The real subject of this ditty, of course, is Christ's sacrifice on the cross, prefigured in the blood of the circumcision, and the Christian's sacrifice of himself in return. Herrick begins with Christian doctrine but whittles down even its most soberly awesome tenet to a pleasant little game with the Christ Child.

“*To his Saviour. The New Yeers gift*” uses a technique Helen Vendler has discussed in her reading of *The Temple*: Herbert sometimes reduces Christian teaching to a “Sunday-school” level of interpretation in which even the passion of Christ “‘is but a play,’ to adapt Yeats’s words.”²⁸ But Herbert’s occasional experiment is Herrick’s constant practice. Herbert’s poems of festival celebration are based on a process of internalization and transformation: the poet first makes the festival “his own” through self-examination and recognition of divine grace; then he can transcend the limits of time and self through a traditional form of public celebration. In Herrick’s verse, on the other hand, there is no process of internalization or testing: collective ceremonies are valued much more for their own sake. His poems of holiday celebration abandon the *persona* of child for the role of a pageant

manager who supervises the re-creation of festivities which bear a distinctly late-medieval stamp. In "An Ode of the Birth of Our Saviour" (345), the birthday of the Christ Child becomes a village festival reenacted year by year with mingled pomp and tenderness. "To his Saviour, a Child: a Present, by a child" revives the spirit of the medieval cycle plays. Herrick so matches the combined winsomeness and practicality of the Chester shepherd boys that his poem could have served as preperformance coaching for one of them:

Go prettie child, and beare this Flower
Unto thy little Saviour;
And tell Him, by that Bud now blown,
He is the *Rose of Sharon* known:
When thou hast said so, stick it there
Upon his Bibb, or Stomacher:
And tell Him, (for good handsell too)
That thou hast brought a Whistle new,
Made of a clean strait oaten reed,
To charme his cries, (at time of need:)
Tell Him, for Corall, thou hast none;
But if thou hadst, He sho'd have one;
But poore thou art, and knowne to be
Even as a monillesse, as He.

(354)

Coral would be a particularly welcome gift for the Infant Jesus because it was thought to help children in teething: a bit of sentimental realism remarkably close to the homely piety of the fifteenth-century shepherds' plays. As in the medieval plays, past and present coalesce. Herrick instructs the child as though the Christ to be honored through his little performance had just then been born in England.

In Herrick's Christmas carols, as in medieval Franciscan carols, holiday gaiety is transformed into an expression of Christian joy and praise. "A Christmas Caroll, sung to the King in the Presence at White-Hall" and "The Star-Song: A Caroll to the King: sung at

White-Hall" make revelry a Christmas gift to the Christ Child. But Herrick's most startling medievalization, for all its classical elements, is his "Good Friday: *Rex Tragicus*, or Christ going to his Crosse" in which the crucifixion itself becomes a public pageant like a medieval passion play, and Christ, an actor coached by the poet:

Put off Thy Robe of *Purple*, then go on
 To the sad place of execution:
 Thine hour is come; and the Tormentor stands
 Ready, to pierce Thy tender Feet, and Hands.

The *Crosse* shall be thy *Stage*; and Thou shalt there
 The spacious field have for Thy *Theater*. (398)

As the performance progresses, drama will be transmuted to public ceremonial: the viewers will themselves enter the pageant, mourning the death of their Player-King and performing his funeral rites.

"*Rex Tragicus*" is written in a considerably more heroic vein than most of Herrick's *Noble Numbers*; but the grand language of a few of Herrick's "pious pieces," instead of elevating the stylistic level of the whole collection, serves rather to emphasize its homely simplicity by contrast. And even the most elaborate poems of *Noble Numbers* consistently reduce religious experience to a kind of playfulness. It may be, of course, that Herrick was temperamentally unsuited for any more rigorous form of religious experience; he was probably not capable of the extraordinary psychological subtlety of a George Herbert. But he was capable of considerably more poetic range than we find in *Noble Numbers*, as any reader of *Hesperides* can testify. We must ask why *Noble Numbers* is so relatively impoverished by comparison.

By happy historical accident we have evidence suggesting that Herrick wrote in the homely, concrete manner of the *sermo humilis* for the same reason medieval popularizers had: to enrich the religious life of people whose ignorance left them impervious to

more sophisticated appeals. A visitor to the village of Dean Prior in 1809 found that Herrick was still very much alive in local legend, and that his verse had been preserved by oral tradition. Dorothy King, an illiterate local woman in her nineties, had been taught five of Herrick's *Noble Numbers*, including "His Letanie, to the Holy Spirit," by her mother. She "called them her prayers" and said them to herself in bed when she could not sleep. Even at her advanced age, she was able to recite them "with great exactness."²⁹ If Herrick's *Noble Numbers* was intended as a catechism and religious handbook for ignorant villagers like Dorothy King, then the brevity of Herrick's poems, their emphasis on easily grasped externals, their generalized emotion, and their appeal to a love of games and trivia all were skillfully geared to their audience. The most clearly homiletic poems of *The Temple* have usually been considered among Herbert's least successful. If Herrick's aim in *Noble Numbers* was more strongly and consistently didactic than Herbert's in *The Temple*, then it is perhaps not surprising that his verse strikes us as narrower and more limited.

But Herrick did not intend his *Noble Numbers* only as a compendium for village devotion. In publishing the collection in 1648, he made it available to a more sophisticated audience for whom his reductionism would have carried profound political implications. Just as *Hesperides* chronicles the military progress of the Civil War in such avidly royalist paeans as "To Prince Charles upon his coming to Exeter" and "TO THE KING, Upon his welcome to Hampton-Court," so *Noble Numbers* plays royalism in a religious key, affirming its author's commitment to the conservative Anglican ideal of the English as submissive children of their mother the church. The collection is liberally sprinkled with the personal pronoun *his*. The poet, lowering himself to the same level as the childish ignorant parishioners who found solace in reciting his poems, played the child to dramatize the humble obedience he and more rebellious countrymen owed to Laudian ecclesiastical authority.

Even though Herbert and Herrick were practically the same

age, Herbert had written and died fifteen years before Herrick's work was published, and before much of it was written. Those fifteen years saw a rapid acceleration in the process of social disintegration which influenced Herbert's decision to give up his humanist goals, a disintegration culminating in the overthrow of the traditional Anglicanism whose values he had celebrated so lovingly in *A Priest to the Temple*. Herbert's death roughly coincided with the beginning of Archbishop Laud's ascendancy over the English church. Under Laud, what constituted Anglican orthodoxy was more narrowly defined than it had been earlier; at the same time Laud was much more energetic about enforcing ecclesiastical uniformity than his predecessors had been. The result of Laud's policies was not the return to church unity he hoped for, but an ever-increasing polarization in religious and political affairs and the alienation of many who under less stringent circumstances would have considered themselves staunch Anglicans. One example of the disastrous effects of Laudian policy was the uproar which followed Charles I's republication of the *Book of Sports* at Laud's urging in 1633. By advocating Sunday and holiday game-playing and by moving to expel ministers who would not go along, the Laudian party created a furor and shocked not only the "Puritanes and Precisians" against whom the *Books of Sports* was chiefly aimed, but many otherwise dutiful Anglicans who considered the traditional pastimes immoral.³⁰

Beneath the surface naiveté appropriate to a work of popular devotionalism, Herrick's *Noble Numbers* is resolutely and combatively Laudian. In *The Temple* Herbert would seem to have held to the theory of predestination, a perfectly respectable Anglican doctrine in his time.³¹ But under Laud, Arminianism became Anglican orthodoxy and predestinarian ideas came to be associated with the opposition. *Noble Numbers* refutes Puritanism on the bedrock level of doctrine by denying Calvinist teaching about original sin and predestination. If a human being errs, it is not through innate corruption, as Calvin and his followers argued, but through a lapse of will ("*The Will the cause of Woe,*" 370), and

even the will is upright enough to turn away from wickedness. Herrick's "pious pieces" mock predestination with the argument that no sinner is incapable of self-regeneration:

Predestination is the Cause alone
Of many standing, but of fall to none.
(*"Predestination,"* 389)

Art thou not destin'd? then, with hast, go on
To make thy faire *Predestination*:
If thou canst change thy life, God then will please
To change, or call back, His past *Sentences*. (*"Another,"* 389)

Even if committed, an evil act need not be repeated, for

God, who me gives a will for to repent,
Will add a power, to keep me innocent;
That I shall ne're that trespasse recommit,
When I have done true Penance here for it.
(*"To God,"* 397)

In *Noble Numbers* Herrick lays the doctrinal bases for a redefinition of religious experience away from the idea of inner, individual struggle and toward shared communal observance.

According to one of Herrick's epigrams, "A prayer, that is said alone / Starves, having no companion" (381). He not only echoes the *Book of Common Prayer* throughout his verse, but carries the Laudian emphasis on set forms and doctrinal uniformity to its furthest possible limit. In their singsong patness, their seemingly endless repetition of moral and theological platitudes, his verses border on parody of the intonations of the established liturgy, but without being at all parodic in their intent. If, as we have seen, Puritan pamphleteers attacked the set forms as babbling childishness, Herrick refuted them with childishness, expressing through the naive, unquestioning tone of his poems the absolute, unquestioning loyalty Englishmen owed their beleaguered church.

But *Noble Numbers* is a broader defense of vanishing supremacies than the single issue of liturgical conformity would suggest. The poet does not just regret lost unanimity, he attempts to restore a lost world—an idealized “Merry England” frolicking in the traditional communal pastimes the Laudian party was attempting to restore through enforcement of the *Book of Sports*. Herrick has too often been considered a mere transcriber of ethnographic data, a jolly little man who sat under a tree taking notes while the Devonshire peasants cavorted about him. This image, however seductive, skirts a few awkward realities: the age-old mummings and festivals celebrated in his verse were disappearing under the pressure of economic change even as he was writing; when they did survive, such customs were under strong Puritan attack; Devonshire itself had a very powerful anti-Laudian party; by the time Herrick was ejected from Dean Prior for royalism in 1647, the old customs had been so effectively suppressed that a man could be put in the stocks for allowing even his child to play on Sundays.³² Like the beautifully ordered household of *The Temple*, the “Merry England” of Herrick’s verse is no literal portrait but a sophisticated artistic construct.

In *The Temple* Herbert retreated from the unsettling ferment of contemporary England into a private realm removed from time through the patterning of liturgical motion and language. But Herrick attempted a much broader solution to the problem of historical process. Rather than looking inward, he projected ceremonialism outward and re-created England in the image of her own past. The most elaborate of his “pious pieces” are wreathed in the same spirit we have previously encountered in the late-medieval *Dives et Pauper*. Erik Erikson has called it the “gaiety of *Agape*,” an expansive religious joy which seeks to embrace all of life and sanctify profane art and ceremony.³³ This devotional spirit was by no means completely alien to *The Temple*: in “*Easter*,” for example, Herbert offers a lute, boughs, and garlands as the instruments of sacred game; although God does not need the poet’s gifts, He does not reject them. Herbert’s Country Par-

son was directed to be "a Lover of old Customes, if they be good and harmlesse."³⁴ But Herrick went much further than Herbert in advocating religious all-inclusiveness. By placing such emphasis on pre-Reformation parish customs, he created a highly skilled piece of political propaganda. *Noble Numbers* was designed to exorcize the future-oriented, individualistic, commercial values which characterized Puritanism, to charm England back to the Laudian royalist ideal of a golden agrarian *tempus ille* made timeless and united through the power of festival observance.

After the republication of the *Book of Sports* in 1633, the Laudian hierarchy produced a number of treatises which, with greater or lesser explicitness, defended the traditional pastimes as a vehicle for divine praise. Gilbert Ironside, for example, argued in a 1637 treatise dedicated to Laud that holiday dancing and festivities, however base in themselves, "should be used by a Christian man in obedience unto God, who hath imposed them upon us: and with faith in his promises to sanctifie them unto us, accompanied with an unfained desire to glorifie God in them, and for them, they begin to change their natures, and are no more base and vile, but honourable and glorious."³⁵ But the most eloquent apologist for traditional festivity was the poet Robert Herrick. The most elaborate poems of *Noble Numbers* assert the sanctity of playfulness by making a game of Christianity: reducing ceremonialism to its play essence and expanding this essence into a medievalized version of Anglicanism, a deliberate glorification of those base sports and holiday customs condemned as corrupt and childish remnants of paganism by contemporary Puritans.

"To his Saviour. The New Yeers gift" provides a good example of Herrick's rhetorical technique. He vindicates a traditional holiday custom by making it the only appropriate response to divine grace. His exchange of New Year's gifts with the Christ Child is one of the very customs denounced by contemporary Puritans, but in Herrick's poem it becomes an *imitatio dei*. God in his grace was the first New Year's gift giver, sending his Son as a free

offering to restore fallen humanity. Holiday gift-giving among Christians is no trivial or sacrilegious act, but a symbolic commemoration of this first and greatest gift.

As I have argued elsewhere in considerably greater detail, Herrick's Christmas carols and "*Rex Tragicus*" follow a similar pattern, refuting Puritan opinion against the play forms of dancing, public ceremonials, and the drama by assimilating these "profane" customs into the pattern of divine action on earth and locating their source in God himself.³⁶ The "publike mirth" of the carols is made possible by a grace infused into the world by the "quicken-ing birth" of the Christ Child (364). Given their divine origin, the Yuletide customs reenacted in Herrick's verse are not only acceptable, they are necessary; for God-given joy must be returned to its source through the praise of public merriment. In "*Rex Tragicus*" Christ himself is not only master player, but also playwright:

this *Scene* from Thee takes life and sense,
And soule and spirit, plot, and excellence. (399)

As in the Christmas carols, communal worship is inspired by an outflowing of divine grace. Even those spectators who "scorn" Christ are drawn by the excellence of his performance and his adherence to the "Lawes of Action," into "praise and pitie" alongside the devout. Herrick vindicates his ritual transformation of New Testament history—and religious ceremonial in general—by positing Christ as its moral center, creator of the laws of action which govern its performance.

A number of critics have argued persuasively in recent years that ritual was for Herrick a way of escaping the process of history.³⁷ By reviving medieval ceremonialism in some of its most playfully outrageous forms, he offered one of the most seductive royalist arguments in favor of the *Book of Sports* and the values it stood for, and against Puritan antiarchaism. For Herrick, as for the Laudian party in general, the ceremonialism of the past was no heathenish abomination, but an ideal prototype receding alarm-

ingly under Puritan attack with each passing year, a timeless model which, if followed, would restore England to political unity, stasis, and magical insulation against the all too evident ravages of "Times trans-shifting."

In discussing the relatively few elaborate poems of *Noble Numbers*, however, we must not lose sight of the collection's general character. The playful religious gaiety which animates his most successful poems is surprisingly lacking in most of *Noble Numbers*. Unlike Herbert, Herrick seems never to envision earthly ceremonial as a way of transcending time altogether; for all his devotion to the play spirit, he has little to say about the notion of play in paradise. His verse remains wedded to the ideal of "Merry England" itself as a kind of ultimate value, a value which is celebrated more effectively and consistently in *Hesperides* than in *Noble Numbers*. *Hesperides* is devoted to many of the same aims as *Noble Numbers*: "The bad season makes the Poet sad" lauds the "golden Age" of Charles I more explicitly than any of *Noble Numbers*; numerous poems from *Hesperides* defend the *Book of Sports* by re-creating communal ceremonies of the English countryside;³⁸ some of *Hesperides*, like some of *Noble Numbers*, were passed from generation to generation by villagers of Dean Prior. By keeping the "gaiety of Agape" and the "Merry England" ideal relatively muted in his religious verse, however, Herrick created a final line of defense against encroaching political and social chaos. If Laudian ritual were to fail as a means of insulating England from change, and if ritualism itself were to be banished from the land, the simple, stable piety advocated in *Noble Numbers* could endure unchanged so long as there were faithful Anglicans to preserve it in their own private devotions.

When Herrick was ejected from Dean Prior in 1647, most of his poetry had already been written. Nevertheless, *Hesperides* reflects his awareness of the troubles all about him. It is a pastoral world, but the reality of Civil War keeps breaking in. In "Upon the Troublesome times" Herrick relates the war's devastation to his own sense of the transience of all things:

- O! TIMES most bad,
 Without the scope
 Of hope
 Of better to be had!
2. Where shall I goe,
 Or whither run
 To shun
 This publique overthrow?
3. No places are
 (This I am sure)
 Secure
 In this our wasting Warre.
4. Some storms w've past;
 Yet we must all
 Down fall,
 And perish at the last. (211)

Hesperides is a world in flux—its beauties shimmer before the eye for an hour, then pass away, victims of “*Times trans-shifting*.” The poet ceremonializes everything from a love affair to the death of a rose, as though searching for a way to capture and crystallize the fleeting joys of the moment. But the only thing in *Hesperides* to survive the power of time is the poetry which records the passage of all else to death and oblivion:

- Trust to good Verses then;
 They onely will aspire,
 When Pyramids, as men,
 Are lost, i'th' funerall fire.
- And when all Bodies meet
 In *Lethe* to be drown'd;
 Then onely Numbers sweet,
 With endless life are crown'd. (81)

In “*To his Friend, on the untuneable Times*” (84) and “*The bad season makes the Poet sad*” (214), however, Herrick suggests that his cre-

ative powers themselves are fleeting—tied to the golden age of Charles's reign and waning along with the monarch's eclipse. *Hesperides* celebrates transience—blooming youth, sudden ephemeral sights and feelings, springtime—with subtle nuance and, at times, real emotional force.

In *Noble Numbers*, too, ceremonialism finally fails as a means for transcending mutability. The Good Friday poems which end the collection trace Christ's descent from the cross into the grave, and from there to the harrowing of Hell. But it is a descent not followed by ascent—a crucifixion and burial without an Easter resurrection. And this despite the fact that Easter was second only to Christmas as a time for traditional holiday merriment: Jack of Lent was turned out of doors, feasts were prepared amid general rejoicing, and even the sun was popularly believed to dance for joy. In *The Temple*, Easter is a day of celebration on which Herbert, imitating his resurrected Lord, rises above time and mutability to contemplate eternity. But none of Herbert's joy and hope enters *Noble Numbers*. Instead, Herrick's attention is fixed on Christ's tomb, where he vows to remain and die:

Let me live ever here, and stir
No one step from this *Sepulcher*.
Ravisht I am! and down I lie,
Confus'd, in this brave Extasie,
Here let me rest; and let me have
This for my *Heaven*, that was Thy *Grave*:
And, coveting no higher sphere,
I'll my Eternitie spend here. (402)

In the final poem of the series, he beholds the stone rolled away but fails, like the three Marys before him, to recognize that Christ is risen:

Hence they have born my Lord: Behold! the Stone
Is rowl'd away; and my sweet Saviour's gone!

Tell me, white Angell; what is now become
 Of Him, we lately seal'd up in this Tombe?
 Is He, from hence, gone to the shades beneath,
 To vanquish Hell, as here He conquer'd Death?
 If so; I'll thither follow, without feare;
 And live in Hell, if that my *Christ* staves there. (403)

But unlike the three Marys, he never encounters the risen Christ. Instead of the bright Paschal celebration we might expect from such a proponent of playfulness, Herrick's *Noble Numbers* ends in the melancholy shades of the underworld. Recapitulating in a more clearly Christian context the "drowning in Lethe" theme so prominent in *Hesperides*, the last of Herrick's "pious pieces" move from the stasis of ritual observance to a more permanent form of timelessness—the stasis of death.

Herrick was too self-conscious an artist to have omitted the festival embodiment of Christianity's central miracle through mere inadvertence. Rather, we can speculate, he was dramatizing through his own projected descent into oblivion what he saw as the fate of England herself were she to allow her traditional public festivals to disappear. *Noble Numbers* ends in solemn warning. At the same time, Herrick's pessimistic closing demonstrates the poet's recognition that his warning may well go unheeded. As a recent article by Claude J. Summers has pointed out, the royalist panegyrics in *Hesperides* subtly convey an awareness of the vulnerability of the king's cause beneath their surfaces of triumphant celebration.³⁹ The poet's awareness of the frailty of his "Merry England" ideal casts a similar shadow across *His Noble Numbers*.

By contrast, the short simple poems of the collection—vastly outnumbering those more ambitious "pious pieces" announced on the 1647 title page—convey utter stability. No matter what the devastations of war, Herrick's trusting, childlike faith will endure:

Rapine has yet tooke nought from me;
 But if it please my God, I be

Brought at the last to th'utmost bit,
God make me thankfull still for it.
I have been gratefull for my store:
Let me say grace when there's no more.
("To God, in time of plundering," 376)

George Herbert could afford to question religious ideas, to explore them. His relationship to God was always changing and developing. By deliberately excluding the kingdom of Charles I from *The Temple*, he was able to insulate himself from the deteriorating order of England and attune himself with the higher order of the heavens. But for Herrick there was less possibility of complexity or transcendence. Not only did he live longer than Herbert, into and beyond the war years, but since he posited the actual performance of traditional ceremonies as the earthly conduit of the "gaiety of *Agape*" and portrayed all England as its playground, he was much more vulnerable than Herbert to Puritan suppression of the old sports and the political disintegration of England. The ritual bases of Herrick's universe were crumbling, and the only way he could retain a sense of religious orientation was by retreating to bald statement, without nuance, intricacy, or a flicker of doubt. The *persona* of child gives *Noble Numbers* an air of absolute sincerity and unquestioning acceptance. By retreating to a child's version of Anglicanism, Herrick created for his "pious pieces" a stability his *Hesperides* does not have, a humble certainty beyond the power of time to alter or destroy.

3

Richard Crashaw retreated further still—into the phantasmagoric world of baroque Catholic spirituality and the poetic role of infant. His father was a noted Puritan pamphleteer, but long before the younger Crashaw's conversion to Roman Catholicism, he appears to have felt a need for absolute withdrawal

from the tempestuous controversies of the time. He found his ideal milieu in the Laudian sanctuary of Peterhouse, a "little contentfull kingdom"⁴⁰ where he could live in peace and worship with uninterrupted fervor and devotion. According to the preface of *Steps to the Temple*, a body of verse whose title reflects Herbert's influence, "*in the Temple of God, under his wing, [Crashaw] led his life in St. Maries Church neere St. Peters Colledge: There he lodged under Tertullian's roofo of Angels: There he made his nest more gladly then David's Swallow neere the house of God: where like a primitive Saint, he offered more prayers in the night, then others usually offer in the day*" (76). This example of high Anglican hagiography appears not to have exaggerated Crashaw's tendency toward self-seclusion. Had he been left to a life of retirement, Crashaw probably would have died a high Anglican. But when the Civil War spread to Cambridge he was forced to abandon his "little kingdom" and cast adrift. His one extant letter, written shortly before his formal expulsion from Peterhouse in 1644, testifies to his complete disorientation: "such a concussion of mee such a dislocation of my whole condition, as puts mee into ye greatest exigence both spirituall and temporall I was euer cast into" (xxx). By embracing Catholicism, Crashaw sought to recapture the peace and protectiveness the shattered Anglican church could no longer offer him.⁴¹

Crashaw's life was clearly an attempt to escape from the world; in his religious verse he succeeded. Although a few of his poems demonstrate that he was quite capable of exploring the complexities of human psychology and the vicissitudes of human history, most of his lyrics are completely cut from history, from all passage of time, from human society, from learning—dead to the world, in short. But unlike most religious lyrics of seventeenth-century England, Crashaw's are also dead to himself. He interpreted Christ's paradox "whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 16:25) to mean that the Christian must annihilate his own will and intellect, die to all life of his own and become nothing before God:

Come man;
 Hyperbolized NOTHING! know thy span;
 Take thine own measure here: down, down, & bow
 Before thy self in thine idæa; thou
 Huge emptynes! contract thy self; & shrinke
 All thy Wild circle to a Point. O sink
 Lower & lower yet; till thy leane size
 Call heaun to look on thee with narrow eyes.
 Lesser & lesser yet; till thou begin
 To show a face, fitt to confesse thy Kin,
 Thy neighbourhood to NOTHING.

("DEATH'S LECTVRE," 340-41)

Reminders of human lowliness were, of course, common in seventeenth-century English funerary verse. But to most Anglicans, Crashaw's death of the self must have appeared extreme. John Donne had only scorn for "monkish" attempts to escape the world altogether and become nothing:

He that hath good parts, and smothers them, in a retired and useless life, is inexcusable. When therefore men retire themselves into *Cloysters* and *Monasteries*, when they will not be content with *St. Pauls* diminution, to be changed from *Saul*, to *Paulus*, (which is *little*) but will go lower then that little, by being called *minorites*, *less* then *little*, and lower then that, *minims*, *least of all*; and yet finde an order less then that, as they have done, *nullani*, *nothing at all*, *Ex ore suo*, out of their own mouthes they shall be judged; and that which they have made themselves here, God shal make them in the world to come, *nullanos*, *nothing at all*.⁴²

Donne, with his strong and inescapable self-consciousness, could not be expected to sympathize with any attempt at total and perpetual self-abnegation. Nor did Herbert and Herrick. Herbert called himself "Less than the least of all God's mercies," and asked to be made "small to my self" but never nothing at all. Herrick sought the humility of a "little one" of God, but not total annihilation. Herbert and Herrick envisioned their poetic *personas* as children old enough to walk and talk, yet young enough to serve

as living symbols of humility. But becoming a child was not radical enough for Crashaw.

As we have seen, Pierre de Bérulle, founder of the French Oratorians, and his followers preached the doctrine of self-annihilation, and found a symbol for the "death of the self" in the state of human infancy. Bérulle wrote that infancy is "the lowest and most abject condition of human nature, after that of death."⁴³ Young babies are truly "dead to the world"—they appear to show no awareness that anything outside exists, no awareness even of themselves. "Infantia torpet" as one of Quarles's *Hieroglyphicks of the Life of Man* pointed out.⁴⁴ Infants in the seventeenth century were immobilized from head to foot by tight swaddling bands. A swaddled infant looked much like a dead person in a shroud. Pictures of the "ages of man" sometimes brought out the similarity between infancy and death by portraying a baby in a cradle along with a dead man whose coffin bears a striking and sinister resemblance to the cradle.⁴⁵ Crashaw may have come into direct contact with the Oratorians since they were influential in the court circle of his chief patrons, Queen Henrietta Maria and the Countess of Denbigh. But if so, he took little interest in Berullian teachings beyond the initial stage. For Bérulle, infancy was the first step of an Augustinian growth to "manhood in Christ"; but the poet was content to remain in self-annihilation. The static posture and fixed vision of Crashaw in his religious poems are those of an infant, dead to world and self, and immobile before the majesty of God.

Herbert and Herrick conveyed their *persona* largely through the use of simple childlike language. Crashaw, too, was quite capable of reproducing childlike speech. In his "HYMN TO THE NAME AND HONOR OF THE ADMIRABLE SAINTE TERESA" the verse of the first section describing her early attempt at martyrdom is deliberately contrasted with the florid, highly ornate language evoking her mature religious experience later in the poem. Crashaw imitates the ingenuousness of the seven year old that St. Teresa was when she set out to fight the Moors:

FAREWEL then, all the world! Adieu.
 TERESA is no more for you.
 Farewell, all pleasures, sports, & ioyes,
 (Neuer till now esteemed toyes)
 Farewell what ever deare may bee,
 MOTHER's armes or FATHER's knee
 Farewell house, & farewell home!
 SHE's for the Moores, & MARTYRDOM. (318)

Children can talk, but infants, the *in-fantes*, cannot. The Epistle Dedicatory to a manuscript collection of Crashaw's *Sacred Epigrams* refers to the tender infancy of their author's muse and begs a fatherly indulgence on the part of the dedicatee for its whispering attempts at speech.⁴⁶ In his version of *Sospetto d'Herode*, Crashaw translates Marino's prayer "And may you support my infirm talent" as "O be a Dore / Of language to my infant Lips" (109).⁴⁷ Unlike Herbert and Herrick, Crashaw could not convey his *persona* through the use of childlike language. His role of infant is developed chiefly through patterns of imagery—patterns projected everywhere in his verse.

An infant's first and most important need is for nourishment. In the words of St. François de Sales, "The breasts and dugges of the mother are the closet of the little infants treasures, he hath no other riches then those."⁴⁸ Crashaw's poetry is full of nourishing milk in abundant floods: the "Two sister-seas of Virgin-Milk" which bathe the Christ Child (250), the "milky riuers" of Magdalen's tears which are sipped by little cherubs in heaven (309), the "milky way" traveled by the Holy Innocents:

Goe smiling soules, your new built Cages breake,
 In Heav'n you'l learne to sing ere here to speake,
 Nor let the milky fonts that bath your thirst,
 Bee your delay;
 The place that calls you hence, is at the worst
 Milke all the way. (88)

The poet envisions heaven as a sea of milk where even the hungriest baby can suck its fill.

The image of the infant at the breast was pervasive during the Renaissance—we need only recall Spenser's description of Charity in the House of Holiness (*Faerie Queene*, bk. I, canto X, st. 30–31) or glance at Octavio van Veen's emblem of hope (figure 2). As noted earlier, the image was common in Continental devotional writings like the manuals of St. François de Sales, where it emblemized a meditative ideal. But to understand precisely why baroque writers found it compelling, we must recognize its sacramental meaning. Blood and milk were typologically equivalent. Early Christian decorations in the Catacombs had often depicted Jesus as a shepherd carrying a pail of milk, symbol of the eucharist.⁴⁹ In the baroque period, the equivalence was more than symbolic, since milk was widely believed to be refined blood. St. François wrote, "As grapes ripening by the sunnes heate, chang their colour, become a gratefull and nourishing wine: so blood tempered by the heate of the heart, turns faire white, and becomes a fit foode for children."⁵⁰ Because it was believed to require a loss of blood, the act of nursing was considered extremely debilitating by medical authorities; Mary's suckling of the infant Jesus was therefore a form of sacrifice.⁵¹ One of the Jesuit epigrams translated in horrified fascination by Crashaw's Puritan father in his *Iesuites Gospell* equates the milk of Mary with the blood streaming from the side of her crucified Son: "But ah, I thirst: ah drought my breath doth smother / Quench me with blood, sweet Son, with milke, good Mother. Ah when shall I with these be satisfide? / When shall I swim in ioyes of brest and side?"⁵² In nourishing the Infant Jesus, the Virgin sacrificed her own blood in order that he might sacrifice his for all humanity. By extension, in the poetry of Crashaw the younger, Mary's breast provides sacramental nourishment for the whole world: "O boundles Hospitality! / The FEAST of all things feeds on the" (302).

Crashaw's poetry, though to all appearances insulated from the contemporary controversies which troubled Herbert and Herrick, is specifically and massively anti-Puritan in a very interesting sense: it is a repudiation of his father's arguments and beliefs.

William Crashaw devoted himself to attacks on the Jesuit epigrammatists, complaining, "They make [Jesus] an vnderling to a woman, and not his Person only but his bloud and merits, & compare together his bloud and her milke, and vpon comparison finde them so equall, that they mixe them together, and in the mixture finde the milke so excellent, that they preferre it afore the bloud, as a thing more precious."⁵³ He might just as well have complained of his own son. What Crashaw the elder vehemently rejected, Crashaw the younger just as vehemently espoused and expanded. If William Crashaw attempted to bring up a son in righteousness according to the standard Puritan educational model, he failed miserably. We cannot know what personal pressures moved Richard Crashaw to retreat so completely from his father's ideology and to become so conspicuous an example of Puritan pedagogical failure. Even by the standards of the Continental Counter Reformation, Crashaw's imagery is somewhat extreme. The sucking imagery and floods of milk which course through his verse are based on Continental models, but he uses them with such pervasiveness and intensity that his poetry becomes a vast and idiosyncratic vision of ecstatic infantilism.

Readers have often noted the prominence of women figures in Crashaw's poetry: his patrons were women; he was interested chiefly in female saints; even God, for Crashaw, is not a father, but a mother. Just as Mary nursed the Christ Child at her breast, the adult Christ nurses humankind at his. The transformation of Christ into a mother figure, though offensive to modern sensibilities, was standard in baroque devotional literature. St. Teresa made the transformation in her description of the "Prayer of Quietude" in which the soul in God's presence is "like an infant still at its mother's breast."⁵⁴ St. John of the Cross wrote that God is occupied in "favoring and caressing the soul like a mother who ministers to her child and nurses it at her own breasts. The soul thereby comes to know the truth of Isaiah's words: *You shall be carried at the breast of God and upon His knees you will be caressed.*"⁵⁵ Even the mild and moderate Herbert, in one of his

early Latin epigrams, interpreted John 13:23 “Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved” as John’s sucking the blood of salvation from Christ’s breast:

Ah now, glutton, let me suck too!
 You won’t really hoard the whole
 Breast for yourself! Do you thieve
 Away from everyone that common well?
 He also shed his blood for me,
 And thus, having rightful
 Access to the breast, I claim the milk
 Mingled with the blood.⁵⁶

In seventeenth-century devotional literature, the flowing wound in Christ’s side commonly becomes his breast. Crashaw’s lines, “Hee’l have his Teat e’re long (a bloody one) / The Mother then must suck the Son” (94), so shocking to modern readers, merely elaborate a commonplace of baroque religious language. Mary will suck the breast of Christ’s wound, a source of sacramental nourishment for all humanity.

Writers as widely different in spirit as John Donne and Jeremy Taylor describe the Christian’s need to suck the life-giving fountain of Christ’s side.⁵⁷ But Crashaw expands the fountain into a “deluge of Deliuerance” (289). “Blood,” “flood,” “food,” and “good” are rhymed over and over in his verse.⁵⁸ His poetic universe bubbles and overflows with nourishing liquids. Infants were commonly regarded as cruel and greedy in the seventeenth century because of their seemingly insatiable hunger for their mother’s blood—we will recall Donne’s description of the unborn infant already displaying its corrupt nature by its need for that form of nourishment.⁵⁹ But Crashaw’s poetry creates a paradise of infantile wish-fulfillment where life-giving liquids are ever abundant and greed is a sign, not of cruelty, but of thirst for divine grace and spiritual health.

For Crashaw, the breast connotes not just nourishment, but absolute peace and protection. He loves to rhyme “breast” with

“nest.” Christ’s “too liberal brest” is a “nest of loues” (277). Mary’s breast is “the noblest nest / Both of loue’s fires & flouds” (285). When Crashaw writes of the Infant Jesus secure at the breast of the Virgin, he offers not so much objective description of him as identification with him. Southwell’s “New Prince, New Pompe” is a fairly direct application of the Jesuit “composition of place”:

BEHOLD a silly tender Babe,
In freesing Winter night;
In homely manger trembling lies,
Alas a pitteous sight:
The Innes are full, no man will yeeld
This little Pilgrime bed;
But forc’d he is with silly beasts,
In Crib to shrowd his head.⁶⁰

But Crashaw’s poems on the Infant Jesus dissolve into sensation. He is not so much looking at the Child, as putting himself in his place, nestled in Mary’s warm breast:

Tit [yrus] I saw the curl’d drops, soft & slow,
Come houering o’re the place’s head;
Offering their whitest sheets of snow
To furnish the fair INFANT’s bed
Forbear, said I; be not too bold.
Your fleece is white But t’is too cold.

Cho. Forbear, sayd I

Thyr. I saw the obsequious SERAPHIMS
Their rosy fleece of fire bestow.
For well they now can spare their wings
Since HEAVN itself lyes here below.
Well done, said I: but are you sure
Your down so warm, will passe for pure?

Cho. Well done sayd I

Tit. No no. your KING's not yet to seeke
 Where to repose his Royall HEAD
 See see, how soon his new-bloom'd CHEEK
 Twixt's mother's breasts is gone to bed.
 Sweet choise, said we! no way but so
 Not to ly cold, yet sleep in snow.

(“IN THE HOLY NATIVITY OF
 OUR LORD GOD,” 249–50)

Herbert sometimes felt the impulse to retreat altogether, as in “*The Temper (I)*”: “O let me, when thy roof my soul hath hid / O let me roost and nestle there”; but he usually resisted it: “Yet take thy way; for sure thy way is best: / Stretch or contract me, thy poore debter.”⁶¹ Crashaw joyfully surrendered to a similar impulse. His poetry is full of images of enclosure—wardrobes, cabinets, chests, hives of sweetness, rooms, beds. The prototype of all containers is Mary herself, who bore Christ within her “healthfull womb” (303). But Christ, the “Womb of Day” (243), is, like his mother, a container: “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved” (John 10:9). To enter into Christ is to return to the womb, to the warmth and safety of complete encirclement. Interpreting Acts 17:28, “In him we live, and move, and have our being,” Jeremy Taylor wrote that Christians are “enclosed in His circle, wrapped up in the lap of His infinite Nature; or as infants in the wombs of their pregnant mothers.”⁶² Just as Christ was wrapped in the womb of Mary, so Christians are enclosed in Christ; Crashaw expressed this idea in one of his hymns: “In thy embrace / The world lyes warm, & likes his place” (255). The poet’s love for soft, warm containers carries infantilism to its furthest extreme—the desire to return to the womb.

The return to the womb is a death, spiritual annihilation, but also a means for rebirth. *Womb* and *tomb* are frequent rhyme words in Crashaw. He loves to play with their similarity:

How life & death in Thee
 Agree!

Thou hadst a virgin womb,
And tomb.

A IOSEPH did betroth
Them both.

("TO OVR B. LORD VPON THE
CHOISE OF HIS Sepulcher," 279)

Womb and tomb are often so conflated that one cannot be separated from the other—they converge on a single point:

Rise, Heire of fresh Eternity

From thy Virgin Tombe:

Rise mighty man of wonders, and thy world with thee

Thy Tombe, the universall East,

Natures new wombe,

Thy Tombe, faire Immortalities perfumed Nest.

("Easter day," 100)

The poetry of Herbert and Herrick, especially the latter, was marked by a strong consciousness of the perishability of all things, a consciousness which was undoubtedly heightened by their perception of the rapidity of change in contemporary England. But in the insulated poetic world of Crashaw, time does not exist; death does not exist. Every tomb is a womb, each death begets new breath: "That as I dedicate my deuoutest BREATH / To make a kind of LIFE for my lord's DEATH, / So from his liuing, & life-giuing DEATH, / My dying LIFE may draw a new, & neuer fleeting BREATH" ("THE RECOMMENDATION," 276).

Crashaw's poetry is full of the nascent pattern of contraction to a small space, then joyous bursting free:

Thou

Womb of Day!

Vnfold thy fair Conceptions; And display

The Birth of our Bright loyes.

O thou compacted

Body of Blessings: spirit of Soules extracted!

O dissipate thy spicy Powres
 (Clowd of condensed sweets) & break vpon vs
 In balmy shows;
 ("TO THE NAME OF IESVS," 243-44)

As the phoenix perished only to rise again on his own pyre, Christ contracted himself into Mary's womb, then expanded to fill eternity. His tomb was but another womb from which he emerged in glory. The human soul imitates Christ and dies to itself to be reborn in God—not once, through baptism, but in an endless cycle of contraction and expansion, confinement and bursting forth.

Crashaw's Christianity is a giant projection of the forms and processes of motherhood—the overflowing breast, the warmth of a mother's arms, the protection of the womb, and the joyous liberation of birth. His poems are a bewildering welter of images, shifting and flowing, shrinking and swelling—much as an actual infant may experience the world around him. But beneath the tumult lies stasis—the absolute trust and certainty of one who has abandoned motion and self for passive adoration, who has assumed the role of infant before his great God.

If Herrick's *persona* condemned him to a certain narrowness of stylistic range, Crashaw's condemned him to an opposite variety of narrowness. By clinging to the poetic role of infant, Crashaw managed to bypass completely the self-searching of Herbert and the political preoccupations of Herrick. Having severed himself from doubt and struggle, from the emotional complexities which give such richness to *The Temple*, Crashaw dwells continually in that realm of divine play before God which Herbert entered only in moments of supreme exultation. Crashaw's poetry, with its long cascades of language and seemingly endless turns of wit upon mysteries of the faith, exemplifies the play spirit run riot. While Herbert's reworking of his poems generally seems to have pared them to greater plainness, Crashaw revised his poems toward greater ornateness and elaboration. Rather than reflecting the hier-

archical ecclesiastical order which Crashaw so loved and needed, the play of his language by its very motion and brilliance obliterates our consciousness of ordered hierarchical levels, and of his poetry's doctrinal and liturgical bases. This, we may argue, was precisely Crashaw's aim and a general aim of Continental baroque religious poetry—to suspend the reader's intellectual faculties and plunge him into rapture before the Christian mysteries. But the perpetual high rapture of Crashaw is as severe a limitation of his potential poetic range as the lowly plainsong of Herrick.

A. Alvarez has complained, "With Crashaw the recurrent question is why, given that power and fertility, he was not a greater poet. It is as though he had in him the essential stuff of great poetry, but frittered it away."⁶³ It may be, on the contrary, that contemporary conditions failed Crashaw. His was by no means the sort of creativity which flourishes in an environment of combat and adversity. Writing as he did during the years when the Anglican church went from retrenchment to extinction, Crashaw was forced into an ever-increasing detachment from the received social milieu which had originally fostered his art and was obliged, finally, to abandon England itself.

The poets whose work we have examined gave very different and highly original answers to the Gospel question, what does it mean to become as a little child? Herbert died early enough to escape the worst of England's disorders; the *persona* of child was for him both a retreat and a means of liberation. Herrick lived on to see the destructiveness of the Civil War, a process which heightened his already strong sense of the mutability of all things; for him the *persona* was much more constricting. Herrick was, so to speak, caught in the narrow center section of Herbert's "Easter-wings": he reduced himself to childhood "Most poore" and "Most thinne" but could find stability only in that rather severe self-limitation. Although Crashaw was writing at the same time as Herrick, his need for peace and protection would seem to have been considerably more acute; then too, he was deprived of his niche within the Anglican church several years before Herrick was

ejected from Dean Prior. Crashaw was most strongly affected by the disorders and retreated furthest of all into the immobility of infancy. The greater the poet's sense of dislocation and isolation as England approached Civil War, the more radical his poetic retreat; but for each, the retreat to childhood was a way of keeping past ideals alive by shutting himself off from a present which threatened their extinction.

Herbert, Herrick, and Crashaw had written virtually all their poetry and published most of it before the Rubicon year of 1649, when King Charles was executed, the House of Lords and monarchy abolished, and the Commonwealth proclaimed. For Anglican conservatives, and indeed for a great many Englishmen who could not at all be labeled conservative, the execution of the anointed head of English church and state and the uprooting of royal authority represented a shockingly definitive and irrevocable break with the past. We will turn now to two poets who produced, or at least formulated, most of their work during the Interregnum. Both considered themselves dutiful children of an Anglican church which had in fact vanished from the land. Theirs was not the prewar problem of conserving the old order—it was much too late for that—but a new problem of recapturing the ideal of English unity when its time-honored institutional bases had been completely destroyed.



Children of Light: Vaughan and Traherne

When the Holy Ghost cometh into the soul, then he regenerateth it anew in God, and then it becometh a paradisical child, and getteth the key of paradise, and that soul seeth into the midst thereof.

Jacob Boehme, *Three Principles*

Vaughan and Traherne—the two names have been closely linked ever since the discovery of Traherne’s manuscripts in the 1890s and their initial attribution to Vaughan by Alexander Grosart. His mistake is understandable, for the two writers do have much in common—most notably their profound interest in the visionary capacity of children. In turning from the earlier poets to these we may sense that we have entered a strange rarefied atmosphere, a new realm of ideas remote from the ritual forms and doctrines of conservative Anglicanism. Yet both Vaughan and Traherne, as the latter’s recently discovered “Select Meditations” demonstrate, considered themselves devoted to the Anglican church; both were appalled by the Civil War’s destruction of its head, the English monarch. The two poets faced the same dilemma: how to regain the traditional Anglican vision of order when the traditional governmental and ecclesiastical hierarchies had disappeared. Both poets sought to resolve the dilemma through vision—in cultivating the capacity to discern beyond apparent chaos the luminous animate unity which once, according to conservative theorists, had shone so brightly in England.

And yet we must not allow our recognition of the striking similarities between the two poets to blind us to the profound differences between them. Critics are wont to elucidate Traherne by quoting Vaughan, and vice versa, thus obscuring the fact that the two approach the same problem in radically different spirits. In the precise powers they attribute to childhood, in the ways they merge it into the larger whole of human experience, Vaughan and Traherne are far apart. The dominant mood in Vaughan's poetry is pessimism, and a sense of deep loss which occasional moments of vision can only partly alleviate. Vaughan conveys a feeling of such age and world-weariness that we must remind ourselves he was writing as a fairly young man: when the first part of *Silex Scintillans* was published in 1650, its author was still in his late twenties. Traherne, on the other hand, writes in a tone of eternal and occasionally maddening optimism. He felt a profound sense of loss at the destruction of church and state but built a highly original system which restored the loss and insulated him in a most ingenious fashion against any new experience of national upheaval. While for Vaughan, nothing short of death could make up for the loss of the past, for Traherne, the absence of continuing tradition was a challenge to new synthesis.

In dealing with the marked difference between the two poets, as always we must acknowledge the factor of personal temperament; but we must also continue to explore links between the poet's personal situation vis-à-vis the national disorders and his treatment of the theme of childhood. If Vaughan's poetry seems much more rooted in the past than Traherne's, much more tied to pre-war ideals of order, it may in part be because Vaughan's life was considerably more immersed in that order: he was fifteen years older than Traherne during a period of English history when change was so rapid that fifteen years was a long time. The national peace and harmony Vaughan yearned for and connected with the period of his own childhood were things which Traherne, who was not born until 1637, scarcely knew. For Vaughan, individual and national history are intrinsically bound together; his search for childhood perception is a search for an order some-

how imbedded in England and inseparable from England's past. In the writings of Traherne, on the other hand, order is not found within things but imposed upon them. The child's perception and actual conditions in England are separate; though a return to childhood perception allows Traherne to re-create a vision of English order, that order is overlaid, not intrinsic, and departs in a number of ways from the ritualized, late-medieval order the earlier poets had sought. For them, and for Vaughan, the retreat to childhood was an attempt to salvage a unity inherent in English institutions or at least upon English soil. For Traherne, who was many years their junior and who grew up during the war years, the idea of inherent unity no longer existed.

1

Henry Vaughan gives fullest expression to his ideas about childhood in two poems: "The Retreat" and "Childe-hood." Some of these ideas we have met before. The anti-intellectualism of "Childe-hood" would have been congenial to Vaughan's spiritual mentor, that "blessed man, Mr. *George Herbert*."¹

Since all that age doth teach, is ill,
Why should I not love childe-hood still?

Those observations are but foul
Which make me wise to lose my soul.

And yet the *Practice* worldlings call
Business and weighty action all,
Checking the poor childe for his play,
But gravely cast themselves away. (521)

Like Herbert, Vaughan sees in the guileless simplicity of childhood the straight and narrow path to eternal life:

Were now that Chronicle alive,
Those white designs which children drive,
And the thoughts of each harmless hour,

With their content too in my pow'r,
 Quickly would I make my path even,
 And by meer playing go to Heaven. (520)

Vaughan's lines are an effective gloss for the antihumanist emblem in figure 6. Children skip playfully up to paradise while their wise and sober-minded elders remain morosely rooted to the earth and its vanities.

For Herbert and Herrick, retreat to childhood was a way of limiting and domesticating their responses to God by basing them on the common everyday relationship of a submissive child and its loving parent. But for Vaughan, childhood is anything but everyday—as far away and strange as a “Chronicle” of past history: “I cannot reach it, and my striving eye, / Dazles at it, as at eternity” (520). Childhood does not limit the powers of adulthood, but expands them, for the child is a seer who gazes steadily on the full face of God and sports with his angels:

An age of mysteries! which he
 Must live twice, that would Gods face see;
 Which *Angels* guard, and with it play,
 Angels! which foul men drive away. (521)

“Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 18:10). Christ's beautifully ambiguous warning was often cited in the seventeenth century as biblical proof that children enjoy the protection of guardian angels who dwell in the presence of God. Thomas Fuller suggested that an infant's apparently uncaused smiles are prompted by its secret communings with its angels.² But Vaughan's children behold the face of God just as their angelic guardians do: the very young are forgetful, easily distracted, and inattentive to the world of adults—not out of folly but through wisdom, since their attention is fixed on things divine.

This mysterious detachment from matters worldly makes children, not man, the proper study of mankind:

How do I study now, and scan
Thee, more then ere I studyed man,
And onely see through a long night
Thy edges, and thy bordering light!
O for thy Center and mid-day!
For sure that is the *narrow way*. (521)

Vaughan's alchemically minded brother Thomas echoes his interest in the "Center and mid-day" of childhood. In the midst of a discussion of the interaction of fire and water in *Euphrates* he recalls his extraordinary insights into "Platonick Philosophie" as a child and digresses:

This Consideration of my self, when I was a Child, has made me since examine Children, namely, what thoughts they had of these elements, we see about us. . . A Child, I suppose, in puris Naturalibus, Before education alters him, and ferments him, is a Subject hath not been much consider'd, for men respect him not, till he is company for them, and then indeed they spoil him. Notwithstanding, I should think, by what I have read, that the natural disposition of Children, before it is corrupted with Customs and Manners, is one of these things, about which the Antient Philosophers have busyied themselves even to some curiosity.³

Just at this point Thomas abruptly recalls himself to the alchemical business at hand, but we can be sure one thing he had in mind was the interest of "Antient Philosophers" in the idea of preexistence.

This time-honored doctrine, expounded by Pythagoras and Plato and christianized by Origen and Cyril of Alexandria, was widely held in one form or another during classical and early Christian times. In its Christian form, its basic tenet was that all human souls were created by God in the beginning, along with heaven and earth, and placed in human embryos one by one as they were needed. St. Augustine gave the doctrine the dignity of

his own consideration, asking God, "Did my infancy succeed another age of mine that died before it? was it that which I spent within my mother's womb? . . . and what before that life again, O God my joy, was I anywhere or any body? For this have I none to tell me, neither father nor mother."⁴ St. Augustine concluded that the best answer to his questions was not to answer them at all, but St. Jerome was somewhat less charitable, considering it a *stulta persuasio* that "souls were created of old by God and kept in a treasury."⁵ By A.D. 543, when it was formally condemned, the doctrine of preexistence was virtually dead.

But like so many other doctrinal speculations of the early Christian period, in the seventeenth century it returned to life. It was popular among the Cambridge Platonists, above all Henry More who first suggested it in the poetic appendix to his "Song of the Soul" and later defended it with great zeal. By the 1660s More had made important converts—George Rust in *A Letter of Resolution concerning Origen* and Joseph Glanville in his *Lux Orientalis*.⁶ Advocates of the doctrine could marshal in its defense not only early eastern fathers but also biblical testimony. Job 38:7 ("The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy"), if it refers to the time of creation, certainly implies that human souls existed then. The *Wisdom of Solomon* 8:19–20 ("For I was a witty child, and had a good spirit. Yea rather, being good, I came into a body undefiled") could be interpreted as a description of the child's preexistent state. Thomas Vaughan taught the doctrine of preexistence and engaged in a voluminous and acrimonious debate with the more genial More over its precise nature. But the idea received its most compelling literary treatment in the poetry of his brother Henry.

In "The Retreat" Vaughan looks back with longing on his infancy:

Happy those early dayes! when I
Shin'd in my Angell-infancy.
Before I understood this place
Appointed for my second race.

(419)

The phrase "second race" hints that his soul existed before his life on earth, that it dwelt in the eternal light of God's presence evoked later in the poem as "that plaine, / Where first I left my glorious traine, / From whence th'Inlightned spirit sees / That shady City of Palme trees" (419). Here Vaughan conflates Moses' vision from the heights of Pisgah of the Promised Land, the Plain of Jerico and city of palm trees (Deut. 34:1-3), with the "Plain of Truth" in Plato's *Phaedrus* where preexistent souls

with the rest of the happy band saw beauty shining in brightness—
we philosophers following in the train of Zeus, others in company with
other gods; and then we beheld the beatific vision and were initiated into
a mystery which may be truly called blessed, celebrated by us in our state
of innocence, before we had any experience of evils to come, when we
were admitted to the sight of apparitions innocent and simple and calm
and happy, which we beheld shining in pure light, pure ourselves.⁷

Vaughan's children, before they are sent down to earth, walk like Plato's philosophers on a shining plain in trains of glorious spirits, beholding and enlightened by the presence of God.

But to come to a more precise understanding of how Vaughan uses the doctrine of preexistence, we must descend for a page or two into a murky area of Christian dogma. This doctrine was one of the three main theories of the origin of the soul and the problem of evil which were current in the seventeenth century. The first, preached by early Protestant reformers like Calvin and his seventeenth-century followers, was traducianism—the belief that since Adam both body and soul have been transmitted from one generation to the next through the act of copulation. Such a theory was attractive to Calvinists because it provided an admirable explanation for their belief that original sin is the innate corruption of both body and soul: since every man's seed is infected with the sinfulness of the fallen Adam, original sin has been passed down to all humanity through simple propagation. But traducianism was widely attacked in the seventeenth century for failing to distinguish ade-

quately between matter and spirit. Henry More refuted it on the witty grounds that it implied "grosse Pie-crust will grow wise, / And pickled Cucumbers sans dout Philosophize."⁸

Not a few men of his day were, like More, unwilling to accept the notion of philosophical cucumbers: in opposition to traducianism, and also to Calvin and his followers, many of More's contemporaries espoused the medieval doctrine of creationism—that bodies are propagated through copulation but souls, created *ex nihilo* by God as needed and infused into embryos as he breathed the "breath of life" into Adam. This operation had frequently been portrayed in medieval art by a naked soul-child floating down from heaven to enter its new body.⁹

Creationism was opposed by strict Calvinists because it tended to undermine their view of original sin. How can a soul be tainted with corruption if it has just been created by God, who can do no evil? The usual answer offered was that the soul was infected with original sin through its contact with the body. Jeremy Taylor argued, "The soul was created simple and pure, but fell into vice by the evil combination with the flesh."¹⁰ The doctrine of creationism harmonized beautifully with Plato's vision of the soul "imprisoned in the body, like an oyster in his shell"¹¹ and St. Paul's strong sense of the dualism of body and spirit. One of the most popular depictions of this dualism was Hugo's emblem illustrating Rom. 7:24: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death" with a soul-child staring plaintively out of its bony prison (figure 7).

The doctrine of preexistence, for most of its seventeenth-century adherents, differed from creationism in two major respects: first, that souls are not created as needed but have existed since the beginning of the world; and secondly, that souls are corrupt before their infusion into earthly bodies, having sinned already in their preexistent state. This view explains original sin quite neatly but can be refuted just as neatly, since St. Paul states in Rom. 9:11 that children not yet born have done neither good nor evil. Henry Vaughan avoided this doctrinal pitfall by combining the idea of



O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Rom. 7. 24.
P. 192.

Figure 7. The body of death. Hermann Hugo, *Pia Desideria*.

preexistence with the creationist doctrine that souls enter their bodies pure and innocent, only to be corrupted by the impurity of the flesh.

Being born is no small catastrophe. According to Vaughan's *Flores Solitudinis*, a newborn child weeps, despite the joy and laughter of adults around it, to protest as best it can against its earthly imprisonment: "Thou onely art the infallible diviner of thy own frail condition, who refuseth it with teares, which are the most proper expressions of unwilling, & constrained nature" (287).¹² What soul could welcome such confinement of its native powers?

Our Eyes from henceforth shall not behold the Divine spirits, for wee shall onely peepe through two small Spheres made of grosse and corrupt humours. When we look towards Heaven, we shall have onely the liberty to grone for the presence of our Creatour, but see him we may not; for we shall see then by a Secondary light, which is the light of the lower World, and not be permitted to use our own discerning light, &c. We shall hear our Kinred rejoicing in the air, and mourn that we are not partakers of their liberty, &c. But thou great Father and maker of Spirits, who doest dispose of all thy works as it pleaseth thee, appoint we beseech thee some terme to our sad bondage, and let this punishment passe quickly over us, that we may be restored again to our celestially liberty, to behold (without obstruction) the perfect beauty of all thy works. (284)

We need not assume that Vaughan always agreed with Nierembergius, from whose works he was translating. And indeed, on the face of it, this mournful evocation of the plight of flesh-imprisoned souls seems to contradict Vaughan's celebration of the child's vision of God and converse with angels in "Childe-hood." But the contradiction is resolved if we realize that, for Vaughan, the shades of its prison house close over the soul not all at once, but subtly and slowly.

"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9). Newborn infants, though separated from God, are still bathed in his light. "The Retreat" describes them as having left their preexistent state so recently that they are still oriented toward it:

When yet I had not walked above
 A mile, or two, from my first love,
 And looking back (at that short space,)
 Could see a glimpse of his bright-face;
 When on some *gilded Cloud*, or *flowre*
 My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
 And in those weaker glories spy
 Some shadows of eternity. (419)

Everywhere the poet looked as a child he could see reflections of the divine light. Even his own body seemed irradiated with it: he “felt through all this fleshly dresse / Bright *shootes* of everlasting-nesse” (419). But his spirit could not long resist the burgeoning corruption of the body: “The Retreat” oscillates between the lost unity and the forces which have shut it off, forcing us to contemplate the childhood state from a perspective of ever increasing darkness and absorption in evil.¹³ “Repentance” expresses the same pattern of negative development. As the poet grew, his spiritual vision was gradually eclipsed by the foulness of his body like a flower choked off by weeds:

Lord, since thou didst in this vile Clay
 That sacred Ray
 Thy spirit plant, quickning the whole
 With that one grains Infused wealth,
 My forward flesh crept on, and subtly stole
 Both growth, and power; Checking the health
 And heat of thine. (448)

Vaughan’s lines echo Herbert’s “Although by stealth / My flesh get on” in “*H. Baptisme* (II)” except that Vaughan’s working of the idea does not require the sacrament of baptism. The child is pure not because he has so recently been cleansed by baptism, but because the corruption of his flesh has not yet clouded and extinguished the vision of his soul.

Though Vaughan’s formulation would perhaps have raised

Herbert's eyebrows, there was nothing terribly recondite about it. John Earle's popular character of "A Child" sketches much the same pattern in witty capsule form: "The elder he growes, hee is a stayre lower from God; and like his first father, much worse in his breeches. Could hee put off his body with his little Coate, he had got eternitie without a burthen, and exchang'd but one Heauen for another."¹⁴ The solemn intonations of thrice-great Hermes are even closer to Vaughan:

Look at the soul of a child, my son, a soul that has not yet come to accept its separation from its source; for its body is still small, and has not yet grown to its full bulk. How beautiful throughout is such a soul as that! It is not yet fouled by the bodily passions; it is still hardly detached from the soul of the Kosmos. But when the body has increased in bulk, and has drawn the soul down into its material mass, it generates oblivion; and so the soul separates itself from the Beautiful and Good, and no longer partakes of that; and through this oblivion the soul becomes evil.¹⁵

In Vaughan's poetry as in the *Hermetica*, it is the smallness and weakness of the infant's body which make possible the vision of his soul.

But once the "material mass" of the body has gained the upper hand, all the world seems to conspire to bury the soul deeper and deeper in mire. Life is shrouded in noxious mists and hurled pell-mell, a "dark contest of waves and winde" ("Quickness," 538). In "The World" Vaughan contrasts the cloudy and erratic daily pursuits of earthly beings with the great ring of eternity—"pure and endless light, / All calm, as it was bright" (466). Lovers pine for "sour delights" and "silly snares of pleasure"; statesmen thirst for power but are "hung with weights and woe / Like a thick mid-night-fog"; the miser and epicure struggle frantically for "slight, trivial wares." Imprisoned in the flesh, human beings are caught in a vicious circle: their passions move them to seek their pleasures in material things which alienate them ever further from that vision of eternity which is the only solace of the spirit.

Vaughan's study of childhood creates in him a restlessness in

the world, a profound homesickness for the glorious past he cannot relive. But if he must look back on his childhood with a sense of irrevocable loss, perhaps he can look forward with hope to death and renewed freedom from the flesh. Vaughan draws an imaginative parallel between the child's state before birth and the afterlife. His vision of the departed souls in "They are all gone into the world of light!" is strikingly close to his portrayal of preexistence in "The Retreat." The spirits of the dead are like angelic children "walking in an Air of glory" (484) and bright with the radiance of their celestial home. Life marks out a circle, beginning in the light of God's presence, moving into darkness, but returning at last to eternal light.

Senex bis puer as the old saying goes: old men are as forgetful and inattentive as children. For Vaughan the old man's detachment from the world is, like the child's, a positive good. As the aging poet's body weakens and its passions subside, perhaps it will lose its stranglehold over his soul so that at death he will be as pure and clear-sighted as when he was born:

Some men a forward motion love,
 But I by backward steps would move,
 And when this dust falls to the urn
 In that state I came return. ("The Retreat," 420)

Waller's lines on old age in "Of the Last Verses in the Book" provide an interesting gloss for Vaughan's and a reverse image of Vaughan's childhood decline from the light of preexistence into the darkness of the flesh:

The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
 Lets in new light through chinks that time has made;
 Stronger by weakness, wiser men become,
 As they draw near to their eternal home.
 Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
 That stand upon the threshold of the new.¹⁶

Vaughan can take some comfort from the fact that every step he takes away from the vision of childhood is a step back toward it. But as often as his knowledge of heaven to come inspires hope and exultation, it breeds despair:

I see them walking in an Air of glory,
 Whose light doth trample on my days:
 My days, which are at best but dull and hoary,
 Meer glimmerings and decays. ("They are all gone," 484)

His perception of the happiness of the dead merely heightens his own sense of miserable imprisonment in time and decay. He wanders through life an Ishmael, an alien in a strange land.

This mortal world is a barren and dreary place by comparison with the glory of eternity. "Fire is the *Suburb of Heaven*: The *Earth* which is cold and dull, like an *Iland* lies most remote, and cut off (as it were) from the *neighborhood of light*" (*Flores Solitudinis*, 266). But though the light of God seems hopelessly far away and lost, Vaughan tirelessly explores for faint glimmers, finding them first within himself:

I summon'd nature: peerc'd through all her store,
 Broke up some seales, which none had touch'd before,
 Her wombe, her bosome, and her head
 Where all her secrets lay a bed
 I rifled quite, and having past
 Through all the Creatures, came at last
 To search my selfe, where I did find
 Traces, and sounds of a strange kind.
 ("Vanity of Spirit," 418)

The searcher's soul is not totally eclipsed by the darkness of his flesh: he recognizes in its "weake beames, and fires" vestiges of the "sacred Ray" planted there by God. Nor are the natural creatures around him dull and dead. In "Cock-crowing" he discovers that all have souls as he does—kernels of light planted within

them. For plants and animals, these sparks act as magnets lifting up their heads toward heaven in still and patient anticipation of their liberation from the flesh:

And do they so? have they a Sense
Of ought but Influence?
Can they their heads lift, and expect,
And grone too? why th'Elect
Can do no more: my volumes sed
They were all dull, and dead,
They judg'd them senselesse, and their state
Wholly Inanimate.
Go, go; Seal up thy looks,
And burn thy books. ("And do they so?" 432)

The creatures of the natural world are as absorbed in the world beyond as children are and seemingly unconscious of this world or even of themselves. The commonplace that children are like animals was usually cited in Vaughan's period as proof of the brutish obtuseness of both. But when seen in the light of the spirit, both are patterns of otherworldliness.

As so often in Vaughan, his perception creates a double response. He rejoices in the upward vision of natural things toward their Creator, but at the same time he is tortured by the awareness of his own inability for steady contemplation. Moments of spiritual intensity like the climax of "Regeneration" and "The Morning-watch" come seldom and are quickly past:

But I am sadly loose, and stray
A giddy blast each way;
O let me not thus range!
Thou canst not change.
Sometimes I sit with thee, and tarry
An hour, or so, then vary
Thy other Creatures in this Scene
Thee only aym, and mean. (432)

The same longing which attracts him to childhood impels him even further down the great chain of being, to birds, plants, and even stones:

I would I were a stone, or tree,
 Or flowre by pedigree,
 Or some poor high-way herb, or Spring
 To flow, or bird to sing!
 Then should I (tyed to one sure state,)
 All day expect my date. (432)

Plants and animals never forget the world beyond and never cease longing for it, while children grow into adults too restless and aimless to remain focused on God. Yet, since human beings are not animals, the closest they come to the "sure state" of natural things is during the clear and steady theocentricity of childhood.

Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny: Vaughan pairs the golden age of childhood, "the short, swift span / Where weeping virtue parts with man" (521), and the golden age of the Old Testament patriarchs. During the childhood of the race, grown men still had precisely those visionary powers which were later limited to young children:

Sure, It was so. Man in those early days
 Was not all stone, and Earth,
 He shin'd a little, and by those weak Rays
 Had some glimpse of his birth.
 He saw Heaven o'r his head, and knew from whence
 He came (condemned,) hither,
 And, as first Love draws strongest, so from hence
 His mind sure progress'd thither.
 Things here were strange unto him. ("Corruption," 440)

Like children newly placed on earth, human beings newly fallen from Eden were still oriented toward it. They retained their communion with the angels:

Angels lay *Leiger* here; Each Bush, and Cel,
 Each Oke, and high-way knew them,
 Walk but the fields, or sit down at some *wel*,
 And he was sure to view them. (440)

Like children, the early patriarchs could see the joys of their lost estate reflected on the earth. "Still *Paradise* lay / In some green shade, or fountain" (440). Just as Vaughan himself lost sight of the light as he grew, the whole human race has gradually fallen under a cloud. As for the individual, so for all humanity: Vaughan was a lover of beginnings.

Another blessed beginning was the childhood of Christianity, a "Golden Age," an "age that loved light" before war and superstition blasted the peace of the early church (*Primitive Holiness*, 340). Like all loyal high-churchmen of his time, Vaughan identified Laudian Anglicanism as the only true follower of primitive Christianity. Writing during the Interregnum in his "Ad Posteris," he used the same pattern of light into darkness to describe the deterioration of church and state during his own lifetime:

In order that you may be well informed about the times in which I lived, let me tell you that they were cruel. I lived when religious controversy had split the English people into factions. I lived among the furious conflicts of Church and State. At the outset, while the wretched inhabitants raged through their pleasant fields, the base weed laid low the holy rose. They disturbed the fountains, and peace perished beneath the flood, and a gloomy shadow overspread the light of heaven.¹⁷

After the Restoration, as before the Interregnum, conservatives preached openly what Vaughan in "Ad Posteris" could only hint—that the prerevolutionary times of Charles I had been England's golden age. The idea swept John Beaumont to great heights in one of his Restoration sermons:

And was not the Land most blessed? In civil respects; was it not the Paradise where Peace, Plenty, and Honer, securely flourished, whilst they

were nipped and blasted in other Nations? Was not this the Object of the World's Envy, and yet so secured, as that all Envy could not endanger it? In ecclesiastical respects, was it not the onely Sanctuary of the truly Catholik and Apostolic Faith and Discipline? Was not God's Service amongst us happily protected from Superstition on one hand, and from profanes on the other? . Join both respects together, and were not the forged prerogatives of the Golden Age, I say, not copied, but really transcended, by our felicity?¹⁸

Even *after* the reestablishment of order in church and state, the idealization of prerevolutionary England exerted a tremendous emotional pull upon conservatives. What must Vaughan have felt, writing under the dark shadow of the Interregnum, when so many past values seemed irrevocably gone?

The poet's ideals were embodied in the life and works of his spiritual mentor George Herbert, first among "many blessed Patterns of a holy life in the *Brittish Church*, though now trodden under foot, and branded with the title of Antichristian" (*Mount of Olives*, 186). Herbert would have found this yearning for his own times profoundly ironic. Already in his day a sharp cleavage had developed between church and state, and the "rose" of Anglicanism, though not yet laid low by "base weeds" as in Vaughan's "Ad Posterus," was clearly under attack, as Herbert lamented in "*Church-Rents and Schisms*."

But despite growing dissent, an established church "triple moated" with divine grace was still available to Herbert. Through grace, he could become a child and servant in his Father's house; its rituals and sacraments were a haven "Which I can go to, when I please."¹⁹ For Herrick and Crashaw, too, becoming the child of God by submitting without question to ecclesiastical doctrine and discipline seemed a viable means for attaining peace and stability, though Crashaw was obliged to cross the Channel and drown himself in the symbols of Continental Catholicism to find his spiritual home. But for Vaughan, retreat into a temporal institution was not possible: as a young man he saw Herbert's sanctuary broken open and sacked. It is likely that he actually fought against

the parliamentary forces in the Civil War and watched his brother William die at home as a result of war wounds;²⁰ it is quite evident from the anti-Puritan rhetoric which is so salient a feature of all his writings after the war that he watched with horror the gradual extinction of the earthly manifestations of Laudian Anglicanism. Her holy offices were usurped by "barbarous persons without *light* or *perfection*" (*Mount of Olives*, 171); her festivals, "those *bright columnes of light*" (*Primitive Holiness*, 379), abolished by parliamentary decree. The Puritan regime was established in South Wales as early as 1646; many of Vaughan's clerical friends were sequestered then. When his brother Thomas was evicted from his living in the local parish in 1650, Vaughan's earthly church did literally disappear, since the post remained vacant for nearly eight years.²¹

Vaughan and his fellow royalist gentry in South Wales suffered real hardship during the Interregnum. In view of his own life experience, it is hardly surprising that he associates childhood with all he calls good. When Herbert died in 1633, Vaughan was about twelve years old. His childhood years were actually passed during what he later portrayed as the golden age of Anglicanism, when divine grace, the "light of heaven," seemed to shine on Britain and her church. As he grew up he saw the end of this golden age of grace, peace, stability, and light as the country was darkened by the clouds of approaching war. Vaughan's early verse seems relatively unaffected by England's troubles; it is mostly secular, written in the Cavalier mode about the usual amatory subjects. But sometime around 1648, or perhaps a bit more gradually, the impact of the war and the overwhelming changes it wrought upon England began to hit home. In the 1654 preface to the second part of *Silex Scintillans*, Vaughan himself claimed that he had been transformed by "the blessed man, Mr. *George Herbert*, whose holy *life* and *verse* gained many pious *Converts*, (of whom I am the least)" (391). At any event, after the Civil War, Vaughan's poetry became almost exclusively religious, a highly individualized search for glimmers of divine order in a world that had been

deprived of the "light" of church and monarchy. Much of the force and poignancy of Vaughan's vision of childhood must derive from his adult conviction that the very years when he had been a child were the years when his religious ideals had been best embodied on British soil.

Vaughan could not conceive of order except in the traditional terms of the *Book of Homilies*: none could exist without proper hierarchy and subordination. He wrote vehemently anti-Puritan tracts in defense of traditional order; his verse is only slightly more covert in its condemnation of the warring upstarts who had destroyed that order. In "The Constellation," for example, he contrasts the hierarchies of the stars, always moving by divine command and always at peace with one another despite varying brightness, with the anarchic willfulness of the Puritan populace:

But here Commission'd by a black self-wil
 The sons the father kil,
 The Children Chase the mother, and would heal
 The wounds they give, by crying, zeale.

Thus by our lusts disorder'd into wars
 Our guides prove wandring stars,
 Which for these mists, and black days were reserv'd,
 What time we from our first love swerv'd. (470)

The poet closes by praying for a return to the Anglican ideal of the seamless cloak of Christ. If the British returned to their "first love," submitted once again to the humility of divine grace, then church and state would be repatterned to accord with the harmony of the celestial hierarchy:

Settle, and fix our hearts, that we may move
 In order, peace, and love,
 And taught obedience by thy whole Creation,
 Become an humble, holy nation.

Give to thy spouse her perfect, and pure dress,
 Beauty and holiness,
And so repair these Rents, that men may see
 And say, *Where God is, all agree.* (470)

The poet of *Silex Scintillans*, for all his interest in the hermetic and the arcane—indeed, *through* his interest in ideas so remote from the mainstream of earlier Anglicanism—was searching for the same stasis and unity the earlier poets had sought; for Vaughan, though, these values seemed much further away.

Herbert, Herrick, and Crashaw were able to return to childhood in spirit, aided always by the grace of God. But for Vaughan, childhood and adulthood are separated by a tremendous gulf, just as the two states were divided in his own life by the dark chaos of war. Childhood seems too distant and mysterious even to be comprehended, let alone regained. When Vaughan uses the *persona* of child, it generally functions not to bring him back to his early spiritual communion with God, but to dramatize his awareness that past blessings are lost. In “The Seed growing secretly” he compares his life on earth to the progress of a plant prospering at first, but then cut off from life-giving nourishment:

My dew, my dew! my early love,
My souls bright food, thy absence kills!
Hover not long, eternal Dove!
Life without thee is loose and spills.

Something I had, which long ago
Did learn to suck, and sip, and taste,
But now grown sickly, sad and slow,
Doth fret and wrangle, pine and waste.

O spred thy sacred wings and shake
One living drop! one drop life keeps!
If pious griefs Heavens joys awake,
O fill his bottle! thy childe weeps!

(510–11)

The voice is not that of a chosen "little one" of God, but of an outcast Ishmael dying of thirst in the desert, his early spiritual food gone.

Earlier Anglicans could quench their thirst with the holy sacraments; Vaughan, deprived of the church, was obliged to look elsewhere for spiritual sustenance. What the ritual and symbolism of Anglicanism were for his master Herbert, the flora and fauna of the countryside were for Vaughan. His poetry is dominated by imagery drawn from the natural world—the elemental power of wind and rain, the secret activities of plants and animals, the great cycles of the seasons. Herbert's God was relatively approachable much of the time—the familiar Father and Master of His house, the church. But Vaughan's is modeled on the sun, that remote body which sheds down light and warmth on all of nature, yet is often shrouded in clouds. Herbert's church and her ritual were "bright and clear," beautifully ordered, and reflecting heavenly harmonies. As Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth have recently demonstrated, the emblematic landscape of Vaughan's "Regeneration" is a natural temple whose elements recapitulate the architectural features of an Anglican house of worship.²² But Vaughan's temple of nature is all too often a seeming chaos of flux—wandering breezes, sudden inexplicable shiftings of light and shadow. Only occasionally and intermittently does it mirror the pattern of those "Fair, order'd lights," the stars (469). It comforts him with hints that there is a "tye of Bodyes," a unity behind the apparent chaos. But just as often, it taunts him with his own failure of vision.

Much of the power of Vaughan's lyrics derives from his ceaseless exploration of his own paradoxical situation. He longs for innocence and purity, yet he is bound by the sinfulness of his flesh. He prays for flashes of vision into the bright light of eternity, but when they come, he is unable to sustain them. He apprehends the possibility of a "heaven on earth," of a clear and constant vision of God here in this life, but his glimmers of insight into the static realm he seeks usually reveal it as far away in space

and time from his earthly prison. "My Soul there is a Countrie, / Far beyond the stars" ("Peace," 430). Vaughan acknowledges his inability to transcend the paralyzing duality of his nature and achieve under his own power the heaven on earth he longs for. He can only wait in mingled hope and despair, praying that God will break through the sinful veil which covers him and grant him full sight.

Critics have generally characterized Vaughan's verse as an uneven alteration between flashes of brilliance and morose turgidity: his poems kindle into brief incandescence when he moves toward perception of a fragment of the lost unity; they lapse into relative formlessness and incoherence when he loses the thread of vision. With ritualism banished from the land, he was cut off from the play spirit and its potential for generating links with higher order. The poet was an exile in the fallen wilderness of Puritanism, but without the Puritans' faith in struggle toward the New Jerusalem. With no confidence in the future, he was locked into nostalgia for the past, into a need to recapture somehow—through death if not in life—the steady white light which shines upon childhood.

2

"Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness," St. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians (I Thess. 5:5). Vaughan began life as a child of light but slipped into darkness with the passing years. On turning to the writing of Thomas Traherne, however, we immediately sense ourselves to be in the presence of one who has regained the light. Nearly all of his works express radiant joy and perfect fulfillment. He announces to the world, in a voice of prophetic conviction:

Our Saviors Meaning, when He said, He must be Born again and become a little Child that will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: is Deeper far than is generally believed. It is not only in a Careless Reliance upon Divine Providence, that we are to become Little Children, or in the feeble-

ness and shortness of our Anger and Simplicity of our Passions: but in the Peace and Purity of all our Soul. Which Purity also is a Deeper Thing then is commonly apprehended. for we must disrobe our selvs of all fals Colors, and unclothe our Souls of evil Habits; all our Thoughts must be Infant-like and Clear: the Powers of our Soul free from the Leven of this World, and disentangled from mens conceits and customs.²³

Vaughan would have found little to object to in this formulation. If we were to stop here, as some readers have, Traherne would seem almost identical to Vaughan in his conviction that childhood is a time of innocence and spiritual vision. But if we press on we will discover subtle yet basic points of disagreement between the two poets on the subject of childhood—disagreements which help account for Vaughan's failure to regain the steady light of childhood and Traherne's relative ease in doing so.

While Vaughan could retain only indistinct impressions of what childhood must have been, Traherne re-creates its "Center and mid-day" by projecting us back into his own. His imaginative reentry into childhood in *The Third Century* is based not on Vaughan's analogy between children and early man, but on the even more surprising belief that as an infant newly born on earth he was a faithful replica of Adam just placed in the Garden of Eden. The notion that the first man in the Garden was actually a child enjoyed a measure of popularity among early Greek and medieval authorities;²⁴ it was echoed by John Earle's "A Child is a Man in a small Letter, yet the best Copie of *Adam* before hee tasted of *Eue*, or the *Apple*."²⁵ Godfrey Goodman asked, "How credulous and easie of believe are the young children, as if they were fit subjects to be again seduced by the serpent?"²⁶ but took no interest in exploring those positive aspects of the parallel which fascinated Traherne.

Adam left posterity no record of his response on first seeing the joys of the Garden, but we may assume he was as dazzled as Traherne's infant by the beauty of his surroundings. Traherne never tires of evoking the child's sense of wonder at even the most

commonplace earthly objects: "All appeared New, and Strange at the first, inexpressibly rare, and Delightfull, and Beautifull. I was a little Stranger which at my Entrance into the World was Saluted and Surrounded with innumerable Joys" (I, 110). Not the least charming aspect of his glorious surroundings is the fact that all have been created expressly for him. "All Things were Spotles and Pure and Glorious; yea, and infinitely mine, and Joyfull and Precious" (I, 110). Just as Adam was given dominion over all the earth and her creatures, the infant is monarch of all he surveys: "The Skies were mine, and so were the Sun and Moon and Stars, and all the World was mine, and I the only Spectator and Enjoyer of it" (I, 111). Traherne recaptures with remarkable accuracy the grandiosity of early childhood perception, when the infant assumes he is the center of the world, and everything in it an extension of himself made to serve his good pleasure.

Before Adam fell, he had no knowledge of death or any other evil. Jeremy Taylor thought that since knowledge removed Adam from paradise, the child's ignorance would put him back in.²⁷ For Traherne, too, the child's "very Ignorance was Advantageous" (I, 110). He is convinced that all he sees has been forever as he sees it, and can never change: "The Corn was Orient and Immortal Wheat, which never should be reaped, nor was ever sown. I thought it had stood from everlasting to everlasting" (I, 111). He is divided by "A learned and a Happy Ignorance" from the sins and follies of mankind ("*Eden*," II, 12). One of the happiest results of this ignorance is that, not knowing sin, the infant feels as perfect and pure as Adam was:

But that which most I Wonder at, which most
I did esteem my Bliss, which most I Boast,
And ever shall Enjoy, is that within
I felt no Stain, nor Spot of Sin. ("Innocence," II, 14)

Andrew Willet recorded in his commentary on Genesis, "Some thinke, that there remaineth yet in children that are not ashamed of

their nakednes, some shadow of our first estate.”²⁸ Adam was not ashamed of his body until he had fallen from righteousness; nor is Traherne’s child. His limbs and features, fresh from the shaping power of God, seem as precious to him as the jewels in the rivers of paradise: “These little Limmes, / These Eys and Hands which here I find, / . . . Welcom ye Treasures which I now receiv. / . . . New Burnisht Joys! / Which yellow Gold and Pearl excell!” (“*The Salutation*,” II, 4). One of Traherne’s favorite biblical texts is Ps. 139:14: “I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made,” expanded in his *Thanksgivings* into fifteen pages extolling the beauty and power of the human body. For Vaughan, it is the body’s vileness which spoils the angelic spirit of humanity. But Traherne, inverting the great chain of being, asserts in his *Christian Ethicks* that having a body is precisely what places humanity above the angels: “IF you look into the *Nature of Angels and Men* you will find this mighty Difference between them, Angels are more Simple Spirits, Men are Images of GOD carefully put into a Beautiful Case. Their Souls would seem Equal to the Angels were they not to live in Humane Bodies, and those Bodies are Superadded, certainly for unspeakable and most Glorious Ends.”²⁹

But if the case is beautiful, how much more so the “Image of GOD” within it? Traherne occasionally disparages the body, but only by comparison with the soul. God is infinite, so a soul made in his image must be infinite as he is: “a Sphere like Thee of Infinite Extent: an Ey without walls; All unlimited & Endless Sight” (“*Select Med.*,” I, 91). Traherne was emphatically not, as Herrick was, a lover of littleness. Christ’s exhortations to humility do not at all mean human beings should be contented with small blessings and lowliness of spirit:

Humility . . . is the way to full and perfect Sublimity. A man would little think, that by sinking into the Earth he should come to Heaven. He doth not, but is buried, that fixeth and abideth there. But if he pierceth through all the Rocks and Minerals of the inferiour World, and passeth on to the

end of his Journey in a strait line downward, in the middle of his way he will find the Centre of Nature, and by going downward still begin to ascend, when he is past the Centre; through many Obstacles full of gross and subterraneous Darkness, which seem to affright and stifle the Soul, he will arrive at last to a new Light and Glory, room and liberty, breathing-place and fresh-air among the *Antipodes*, and by passing on still through those inferiour Regions that are under his feet, but over the head of those that are beneath him, finally come to another Skie, penetrate that, and leaving it behind him sink down into the depth of all Immensity.³⁰

Even the lowly virtue of humility leads the soul into the sublime vastness of infinity.

Like Adam before his fall, the infant bears God's image clear and unspoiled. Traherne celebrates the infinity of his infant soul with seemingly indefatigable bursts of hyperbole and bristling forests of exclamation points: "O Joy! O Wonder, and Delight! / O Sacred Myserie! / My Soul a Spirit infinit! / An Image of the Deitie!" ("My Spirit," II, 54). He delights in the old definition of God as a sphere whose center is everywhere and circumference nowhere and applies it, quite logically, to the soul of the infant itself:³¹

A Strange Extended Orb of Joy,
 Proceeding from within,
 Which did on evry side convey
 It self, and being nigh of Kin
 To God did evry Way
 Dilate it self even in an Instant, and
 Like an Indivisible Centre Stand
 At once Surrounding all Eternitie. ("My Spirit," II, 54)

How can a center surround? If Traherne's exposition of the power of the infant soul is something less than lucid, it may be because he is struggling to express the inexpressible, the combined though contradictory attributes of immanence and transcendence.

It is a commonplace of religious thought that God is somehow both above and beyond his creatures and within them. Meister Eckhart mused, "God is in all things. The more He is in things, the more He is outside things; the more He is within, the more He is without . . . and when I say 'the innermost,' I mean the highest, and when I say 'the highest,' I mean the innermost."³² St. Teresa recorded, "I used unexpectedly to experience a consciousness of the presence of God, of such a kind that I could not possibly doubt that he was within me or that I was wholly engulfed in Him."³³ But the simultaneous immanence and transcendence of God is a paradox only from the point of view of the human body, which insists on drawing dichotomies between what is outside it and what is within it. As St. John of the Cross pointed out, "Being a spirit, the soul does not possess in its being the high or the low, the more profound or the less profound as do quantitative bodies. Since it has no parts, there is no difference as to the inward and the outward."³⁴

As the mystic sees God, little children see all things—simultaneously within them and without. Jean Piaget's research has clearly shown the inability of young children to distinguish themselves from their surroundings. The world around them seems simultaneously to flow through their minds. They cheerfully hold paradoxical beliefs—a thought or a dream is a voice in the head and at the same time outside it. What appears paradoxical to the adult is simple to the child because he has not yet learned to see boundaries between things.³⁵

It is precisely this refusal to dichotomize which Traherne discovers and celebrates in the infant soul in "*My Spirit*." Like the God in whose image it was created, the soul is *one*—a unity "Simple like the Deitie" (II, 50). Like God, it is both immanent and transcendent: "In its own Centre is a Sphere / Not shut up here, but evry Where." Since it knows no "Brims or Borders," what it sees outside it is at the same time within it (II, 52); the infant is therefore unable to distinguish between a thing and a thought, between objective reality and his own mental creations:

With all she wrought,
My Soul was fraught,
And evry Object in my Soul a Thought
Begot, or was; I could not tell,
Whether the Things did there
Themselves appear,
Which in my Spirit *truly* seemed to dwell;
Or whether my conforming Mind
Were not alone even all that shind. (II, 52)

Through tortured abstractions, Traherne struggles to communicate his remarkable insight into the undifferentiated wholeness of the infant's perception—an insight which had to wait until the twentieth century to be validated by the research of Piaget.

The mysterious "Center and mid-day" of childhood so longingly sought by Vaughan is its wholeness, its denial of all dualisms. But for Vaughan such unity could have existed with any permanence only in the "world of light" of the child's preexistent state. England once had reflected this heavenly unity, but no longer could. On earth, dichotomies are inevitable, beginning with the powerful antagonism between body and soul. As soon as a child's pure soul is placed in a body of gross and sinful flesh, the first border is drawn, the first dualism firmly established. As the child grows, dichotomies multiply rapidly. Light and dark, heaven and earth, God and humanity—all come to seem total opposites divided by unbridgeable chasms. Even to the child newly born, though God is still visible, He has lost His immanence. The child and the natural world around him are bathed in white light, but God himself, the source of the light, lies apart—in a heaven far distant from the earth.

For Traherne, the light of childhood vision is not passively received from above, but actively generated from within. Traherne's God, like Vaughan's, is modeled on the sun—an inexhaustible orb radiating light and energy throughout the universe; the infant soul, made in His image, is a sun as He is: "For Since the Sun which is a poor little Dead Thing, can at once shine upon

many Kingdoms, and be wholly present, not only in many Cities and Realms upon Earth, but in all the Stars in the firmament of Heaven: surely the Soul which is a far more perfect Sun, nearer unto GOD in Excellency and Nature, can do far more" (I, 92). Little children commonly think of vision as emanating from their eyes and giving light;³⁶ Traherne celebrates the *Infant-Ey*, "the light of the soul, as "A simple Light from all Contagion free" that "shineth in an heavenly Sence, / And round about (unmov'd) its Light dispencc" (II, 86). For Traherne, Matt. 5:14, "Ye are the light of the world," is literal truth, when applied to the infant eye.

Since the child's vision is generated from within himself, Traherne has no need for Vaughan's concept of preexistence. The spiritual powers of infancy date from conception: "Will you see the Infancy of this sublime and celestial Greatness? Those Pure and Virgin Apprehensions I had from the Womb, and that Divine Light wherewith I was born" (I, 110). The child's powers are planted within him by God: "By the Gift of GOD they attended me into the World" (I, 110). But once he has received his spiritual vision, he carries it with him everywhere.

The beams of the infant eye can shoot out through the universe and penetrate mysteries, so that the infant knows all as God does. Traherne asserts, with all due modesty, "My Knowledg was Divine" and asks, "Is it not Strange, that an Infant should be Heir of the World, and see those Mysteries which the Books of the Learned never unfold?" (I, 111). Strange indeed, and paradoxical when we remember that Traherne's infant knows no evil. "'Tis strange that I should Wisest be, / When least I could an Error see" (*The Return*, II, 87). But this paradox, like all others, is resolved through the wholeness of childhood perception. Since infants cannot distinguish between thoughts and things—between what they create and what exists independently of their own minds—evil does not exist for them as long as they fail to perceive it.

Traherne was no Berkeleian—he never denies the existence of things in themselves, independent of the human mind. But his writings give strong and consistent emphasis not to things in

themselves, but to things as they are perceived. By seeing the world about him as Eden and his own body as beautiful and pure, the child makes them so; and by failing to perceive evil, in effect he uncreates it. His conviction that all the world's loveliness belongs to him is not megalomania, but simple truth. Beauty *is* in the eye of the beholder: "Tis not the Object, but the Light / That maketh Heaven" ("*The Preparative*," II, 22). The wondrous kingdoms of the child are his because he has created them through the godlike and God-given power of the "Infant-Ey." Heaven, eternity, paradise—these are not places. They are a state of mind. Vaughan's child gazes toward a heaven far removed from the earth in space and time, but Traherne's sees paradise all about him: "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21).

As Traherne grew up, however, he lost his celestial state of mind:

The first Light which shined in my Infancy in its Primitive and Innocent Clarity was totally ecclipsed: insomuch that I was fain to learn all again. If you ask me how it was ecclipsed? Truly by the Customs and maners of Men, which like Contrary Winds blew it out: by an innumerable company of other Objects, rude vulgar and Worthless Things that like so many loads of Earth and Dung did overwhelm and Bury it. (I, 114)

Like Vaughan, Traherne sees the child's soul as gradually clouded and choked off. But for Traherne, the first agent of corruption is not the sinful body, but the evil customs of men. His fall dated not from his birth, but from his first communication with other human beings.

Traherne was well aware of the effects of language and its hidden assumptions on patterns of thought. In "*Dumnesse*" he describes his infancy as a time of silent exultation over the glories within and around him. Nature created him speechless "that he / Might in himself profoundly Busied be" and deaf "that he might / Not be disturbd, while he doth take Delight / In inward Things,

nor be depravd with Tongues, / Nor Injured by the Errors and the Wrongs / That *Mortal Words* convey" (II, 40). Mortal words, as much of Traherne's verse testifies, are powerless to communicate the vision of infancy—they warp what is clear and simple into gnarled tangles of paradox. When first placed on earth, the infant has no use for words. He sees himself as unique, like Adam before the creation of Eve, and enjoys his Eden in solitary splendor. Other people are not beings like himself, but decorative parts of his own unified creation: "The Men! O what Venerable and Reverend Creatures did the Aged seem! Immortal Cherubims! And yong Men Glittering and Sparkling Angels and Maids strange Seraphick Pieces of Life and Beauty! Boys and Girles Tumbling in the Street, and Playing, were moving Jewels. I knew not that they were Born or should Die" (I, 111). But as he grows, the infant gradually becomes conscious that he is not alone in his Eden. Other people like himself talk to him. Their words teach him that he is not the center of the universe, that his vision of the world is relative, not absolute—just one of myriad possible viewpoints. Words teach him new and foreign concepts like death, decay, and sin. He is forced to accept "Churlish Proprieties," bounds and divisions, and his unified vision crumbles and passes away, to be replaced by the chaotic multiplicities and discontinuities of the fallen world of adults:

All Mens thoughts and Words were about other Matters; They all prized New Things which I did not dream of. I was a stranger and unacquainted with them; I was little and revered their Authority; I was weak, and easily guided by their Example: Ambitious also, and Desirous to approve my self unto them. And finding no one Syllable in any mans Mouth of those Things, by Degrees they vanishd, My thoughts, (as indeed what is more fleeting then a Thought) were blotted out. And at last all the Celestial Great and Stable Treasures to which I was born, as wholly forgotten, as if they had never been. (I, 115)

By learning to speak their language, Traherne signaled his acceptance of the world view of adults: "*I then my Bliss did, when my*

Silence, break" ("Dumnesse," II, 40). By the time he was three or four, Traherne's unified vision had been destroyed by the divisive power of human beings and their language.

But the lost bliss of infancy can be regained. Traherne's *Third Century* is his spiritual autobiography, written on the Puritan model, but preaching a radically different message. Traherne's is a tale not of conversion from the sins of childhood, but of reversion to its godlike powers.

During the period of "Apostasie" which followed the eclipse of his infant vision, Traherne experienced a vague sense of uneasiness and longing strikingly similar to the tone of much of Vaughan's poetry: "Yet sometimes in the midst of these Dreams, I should com a litle to my self, so far as to feel I wanted som thing . . . to long after an unknown Happiness, to griev that the World was so empty, and to be dissatisfied with my present State becaus it was vain and forlorn" (I, 119). As Vaughan was an Ishmael, Traherne was a prodigal son: "Being Swallowed up therfore in the Miserable Gulph of idle talk and worthless vanities, thenceforth I lived among Shadows, like a Prodigal Son feeding upon Husks with Swine. A Comfortless Wilderness full of Thorns and Troubles the World was, or wors" (I, 118). Like Vaughan, he could feel occasional glimmers of something greater than the atomized wasteland about him: "I was som times tho seldom visited and inspired with New and more vigorous Desires after that Bliss which Nature Whispered and Suggested to me. Evry New Thing Quickened my Curiosity and raised my Expectation" (I, 123). And like the brothers Vaughan, he busied himself over the nature of childhood with no little curiosity, for he recognized in the fantasies of children fragmentary survivals of the forgotten visions of infancy ("*On Leaping over the Moon*," II, 130; "*Shadows in the water*," II, 127). His vague sense of what he had lost gradually became a burning ambition to return to the spiritual fulfillment of that early time of life: "I must becom a Child again" ("*Innocence*," II, 18).

In *The Third Century* Traherne describes at some length his recovery of the paradise of infancy. Convinced there was more to

happiness than the "vain and forlorn" pleasures of fallen men, he prayed for a book from heaven which could teach him the meaning of true felicity. Once he discovered the Bible, he realized his prayers had been answered long before they were even uttered. Genesis and the Psalms taught him that man had been created in the image of God and that all the world's glories and treasures were made for him. Through sin he had lost the image of God and his divine inheritance—the world no longer belonged to him, but to innumerable petty proprietors who insisted on drawing boundaries and distinguishing mine from thine. But the New Testament promised that through the death of Christ on the cross, he could be reinstated as the "heir of God." Traherne vowed to regain his lost happiness no matter what the cost; yet despite his detailed recounting in *The Third Century* of the spiritual stages he passed through on his way back to felicity, the process remains always mysterious.

In his as yet unpublished "Select Meditations" Traherne was much more explicit about the precise experience which allowed his reconversion—the revelation that beneath its dross, his soul was still the infinite image of God:

This Endless Comprehension of my Immortal Soul when I first saw it, So wholly Ravished and Transported my spirit, that for a fortnight after I could scarcely Think or speak or write of any other Thing. But Like a man Doteing with Delight and Extasie, Talk of it Night and Day as if all the Joy of Heaven and Earth were Shut up in it. For in very Deed there I saw the Divine Image Relucent and Shining, There I saw the foundation of mans Excellency, and that which made Him a Son of God. Nor ever shall I be able to forget its Glory.³⁷

Once he recognized the infinity of his own soul, everything fell into place. His soul could encompass the universe, all belonged to him, his inheritance was restored, and with it his lost happiness. Death, such a terror for most people and such a constant theme in Vaughan's poetry, scarcely existed for Traherne once he had regained "Felicity"—an earthly fulfillment in joy and love to remain

unimpaired through eternity: "Your Enjoyment of the World is never right, till evry Morning you awake in Heaven: see your self in your fathers Palace: and look upon the Skies and the Earth and the Air, as Celestial Joys . . . You never Enjoy the World aright, till the Sea it self floweth in your Veins, till you are Clothed with the Heavens, and Crowned with the Stars . . . Till your Spirit filleth the whole World" (I, 14-15). This utter loss of distinction between self and other is what it means to regain the "Center and mid-day" of childhood.

Vaughan, too, prayed fervently for a return to his childhood state, but the sinful inconstancy of his flesh inevitably weighed down the upward motions of his spirit. For Traherne, with his belief in the innate purity of both body and soul, sin is something external to human nature and easily cast off, as one throws aside an uncomfortable garment. Human beings naturally desire good more than evil: "I can not remember, but that I was ten thousand times more prone to Good and Excellent Things, then evil" (I, 115). Once the right road is perceived, it seems so delightful that it must be followed:

Hence did Eternity contrive to make
 The Truth so fair for all our Sake
 That being Truth, and Fair and Easy too,
 While it on all doth Shine,
 We might by it becom Divine
 Being led to Woo
 The Thing we view,
 And as chaste Virgins Early with it joyn,
 That with it we might likewise Shine.

(*"The Designe,"* II, 72)

For Traherne it is all so simple!

Traherne's adult visionary power scarcely differs from that he remembers from his infancy, except in its greater range, elaboration, and impregnability. The child's power is instinctive, but easily destroyed because it operates unconsciously. As an adult

Traherne has "Collected again, by the Highest Reason" what was intuitive before his "Apostasie" (I, 110). He has experienced and rejected the vision of fallen adulthood and consciously regained his infant ability to gather the world's multiplicities into a unity. Traherne's unawareness of sin as an infant made him its easy victim. But for the adult, the evils of the world not only pose no threat—they can become an aspect of felicity. Made in the image of God, Traherne has inherited his power to "draw Order out of Confusion," to make a heaven of the fallen world (I, 129). His perception of the sufferings of sinful humanity increases his own happiness (II, 188–89), and the very pains of the damned are assimilated into his joyous unified vision, for "Hell it self is a part of GODs Kingdom, to wit His Prison. It is fitly mentioned in the Enjoyment of the World: And is it self by the Happy Enjoyed, as a Part of the world" (I, 24). Traherne, it would seem, had little sympathy for the Vaughans of his day—those who languished in sin and darkness, convinced they were powerless to escape.

Many readers have found Traherne's cheerful acceptance of the woes of others somewhat deficient in the Christian charity he preached, to say the very least. But the idea that the blessed rejoice in the sufferings of the damned is old and venerable.³⁸ If we are to deal fairly with Traherne we must recognize that here, as in so many other areas, he rethought Christian commonplace: his professed enjoyment of the sufferings of fallen men by no means prevented him from trying to turn them from their mistakes. Traherne was nothing if not a missionary—for every passage about enjoying the tortures of sinners, he wrote many exhorting them to abandon their errors and seek true happiness. Much of his work, in marked contrast to Vaughan's, is open and public in tone. Now that he has regained felicity he must lead others to follow in his footsteps.

Traherne delights in pointing out that, although the world was made for him alone, it was made for every other single human

being just as it was for him: "all we see is ours, and evry One / Possessor of the Whole" ("Ease," II, 66). By this paradox, God satisfies man's need to get just as well as his need to give (I, 96). In bringing others to felicity, Traherne not only gives happiness but also receives it since the happiness of others increases his own; in showing others that the world belongs to them, he does not divide his own inheritance, but multiplies it, since the worlds possessed by others belong to him as sole heir of all things. And everyone else who has regained the vision of infancy is in exactly the same position he is. Traherne's system is based on his infant conviction that all the world's treasures were made expressly for him. But he ingeniously combines infantile grandiosity with altruism so that each augments the other in an endlessly expanding spiral of joy. This infinite but ever-increasing felicity is the one grand theme which reverberates through all Traherne's writings. At its worst his work is uninspiring didacticism, incessant hammering at the same worn-out ideas. But at its best it conveys infectiously the glowing spirit behind it.

What little we know of his life tends to confirm the suspicion that Traherne the man, like Traherne the writer, preached his views with no small fanaticism, but fanaticism of the gentlest kind. One who claimed to have known him personally recorded for posterity:

He was a Divine of the *Church of England*, of a very comprehensive Soul, And very acute Parts, so fully bent upon that Honourable Function in which he was engaged; and so wonderfully transported with the Love of God to Mankind, with the excellency of those Divine Laws which are prescribed to us, and with those inexpressible Felicities to which we are entitled by being created in, and redeemed to, the Divine Image, that he dwelt continually amongst these thoughts, with great delight and satisfaction, spending most of his time when at home, in digesting his notions of these things into writing, and was so full of them when abroad, that those that would converse with him were forced to endure some discourse upon these subjects, whether they had any sense of Religion or

not. And therefore to such he might be sometimes thought troublesome, but his company was very acceptable to all such as had any inclination to Vertue, and Religion.³⁹

Traherne himself was well aware that his enthusiasm often carried him a bit beyond acceptable conversational limits. In his "Select Meditations" III, 65, he ruefully remarked, "Profound Inspection, Reservation & Silence; are my Desires. O yt I could attain ym: Too much openness & proneness to speak are my Diseases . . . Speaking too much and too Long in ye Best Things . . . Here I am Censured for speaking in ye singular number, & saying I . . . Felicity is a Bird of paradise so strange, yt it is Impossible to flie among men without Loseing some feathers were she not Immortal."⁴⁰ But though felicity's feathers may have been ruffled from time to time, Traherne seems to have been one of those whose beliefs are held with such exasperating invulnerability that he must be listened to or left in undisturbed enjoyment of his creed.

Yet we cannot help wondering what his contemporaries must have thought of this Anglican divine's understanding of the doctrine of original sin. Traherne occasionally describes the results of Adam's fall in terms which sound quite conventional:

Mankind is sick, the World distemper'd lies,
Opprest with Sins and Miseries.
Their Sins are Woes; a long corrupted Train
Of Poyson, drawn from *Adam's* vein,
Stains all his Seed, and all his Kin
Are one Disease of Life within. (II, 187)

But it becomes clear from his context that what he has in mind is not an evil inherent in human nature since the fall, but the "Corrupt Customs and maners of Men" he castigates so often as the cause of the infant eye's eclipse. Traherne does not explain evil through any of the three major doctrines of his day—traducianism, creationism, or preexistence.

Vaughan's view of original sin would have seemed heterodox enough to any firm follower of St. Augustine, since he thinks of the soul of a newborn child as not yet infected by the sinfulness of its body; but Traherne denies that either soul or body is corrupt at birth.⁴¹ For him, as virtue is a good "habit of Soul,"⁴² so sin is bad habit which quickly becomes so engrained in its practitioners that they forget it is not part of their nature: "our Misery proceedeth ten thousand times more from the outward Bondage of Opinion and Custom, then from any inward corruption or Depravation of Nature: And that it is not our Parents Loyns, so much as our Parents lives, that Enthrals and Blinds us. Yet is all our Corruption Derived from Adam: inasmuch as all the Evil Examples and inclinations of the World arise from His Sin" (I, 115).

For Traherne, original sin means no more than the child's innate willingness to follow the bad examples all round him. Once he has lost his infant vision, he is a *tabula rasa*, weak, inexperienced, and easily led: "An Empty Book is like an Infants Soul, in which any Thing may be Written. It is Capable of all Things, but containeth Nothing" (I, 3).⁴³ Adam ate the apple because he was weak and gullible, no match for the subtle serpent. Children fall because they are equally deceived by the customs and manners of humanity. But no self-respecting theologian would consider this weakness original sin, since it is not the *result* of Adam's fall, as original sin must be, but its *cause*.

And Traherne goes so far as to suggest that children need not fall at all. The very malleability which makes them so easily succumb to false values can be used to instill true ones. They must be taught the validity of their infant perception of the world:

Had any man spoken of it, it had been the most easy Thing in the World, to hav taught me, and to hav made me believ, that Heaven and Earth was GODs Hous, and that He gav it me. That the Sun was mine and that Men were mine, and that Cities and Kingdoms were mine also: that Earth was better then Gold, and that Water was, every Drop of it, a

Precious Jewel. And that these were Great and Living Treasures: And that all Riches whatsoever els was Dross in Comparison. From whence I clearly find how Docible our Nature is in natural Things, were it rightly entreated. (I, 115)

Children are eager to have their instinctive knowledge confirmed by others, if only there were others in the world who would teach them.

Traherne's interest in the religious education of children allies him with the Puritans. But while John Bunyan and James Janeway call upon parents and teachers to wean children from evil, Traherne urges that children's instinctive values be rationally reinstilled before they are shattered by the beginning of speech: "By this let Nurses, and those Parents that desire Holy Children learn to make them Possessors of Heaven and Earth betimes. to remove silly Objects from before them, to Magnify nothing but what is Great indeed, and to talk of God to them and of His Works and Ways before they can either Speak or go. For Nothing is so Easy as to teach the Truth because the Nature of the Thing confirms the Doctrine" (I, 117). We can safely assume that no child was ever kept from falling by the wayside through Traherne's proposed method. But the very fact that he could suggest such an educational program testifies to his lack of sympathy with the doctrine of the child's innate depravity. The poet was very well aware of the existence of sin, but his writings implicitly deny any recognizable form of original sin.

We need not think of Traherne as a wild-eyed heretic hatching forth strange doctrines in some solitary corner of the English countryside, for during the relative religious freedom of the Interregnum, he was in very good company. As early as 1646, the furiously antisectionarian Presbyterian Thomas Edwards published his *Gangraena or a Catalogue and Discovery of many of the Errours, Heresies, Blasphemies, and pernicious Practices of the Sectaries of this time, vented and acted in England in these four last years*, listing sixteen sects and 176 heresies, later augmented to 300. In the same year

Ephraim Pagitt in his *Heresiographie* lamented the "numerous company of heretics suddenly descending upon London like locusts."⁴⁴ Many of these were Familists or Anabaptists outside the pale of respectability. But the Latitudinarians of Great Tew had to be taken more seriously. John Hales anticipated Traherne's emphasis on sin as bad habit. In a sermon provocatively entitled "Christian Omnipotency" he argued, "When evil education, wicked examples, long custom, and continuance in sin hath bred in us an habit and necessity of sinning, presently original sin, and the weakness of man's nature, bear the blame."⁴⁵ But a more thorough and outspoken attack on the doctrine of original sin came from that prominent divine Jeremy Taylor.

In his *Unum Necessarium* Taylor argued that original sin means nothing more than physical mortality: whether or not it proves to be an evil depends on the moral state of the Christian at death. Taylor took every occasion to praise the innocence of children, defending them stoutly against St. Augustine, the Puritans, and by implication, the Ninth Article of the Church of England. When his treatise appeared in 1655, he was amazed to find his formulations widely condemned—not by radical Puritans, but by his fellow Anglicans. In *A Further Explication of the Doctrine of Original Sin and Deus Justificatus* (1656) he expressed his pained astonishment at the tumult aroused by his views and defended them by amassing quotations from the early Greek fathers.

Taylor was also fond of quoting Quintillian to the effect that parents bring their children up to be sinful. In his sermon "The Gate to Heaven a Strait Gate" he states:

The purpose of this discourse is this, that we may consider how sin creeps upon us in our education, so tacitly and undiscernibly, that we mistake the cause of it; and yet so effectually and prevalently, that we guess it to be our very nature, and charge it upon Adam, when everyone of us is the Adam, the man of sin, and the parent of our own iniquities.—We are taught to be revengeful even in our cradles, and taught to strike our neighbours as a means to still our frowardness, and satisfy our wranglings.⁴⁶

Taylor consistently denies that children must inevitably and in all cases succumb to sin. If Christians are incapable of avoiding sin, why did Christ enjoin the paralytic to "go and sin no more"?⁴⁷ It is hardly surprising that Taylor was widely accused of being the disciple of that fifth-century British heretic Pelagius.

Speculations like Taylor's were so widespread during and after the Interregnum that Theophilus Gale, a staunch Anglican and one in whose writings Traherne took great interest, felt forced to condemn his age "wherein so many Professors of the Reformed Religion have turned their backs on the Doctrine of Free-Grace, and imbibed so many *Pelagian* Infusions."⁴⁸ If Pelagianism is used strictly to refer to those doctrines known to have been preached by Pelagius and his followers, then Traherne was not a Pelagian. He would have denied their teaching that Christ's role was merely that of a moral guide and example, to mention only one important point of disagreement.⁴⁹ But if Pelagianism is used loosely, as it usually was in seventeenth-century England, for any doctrine which does not merely dilute but denies the Ninth Article, then Traherne was Pelagian indeed.

If Traherne cannot be entirely defended against charges of heresy, however, he can certainly be excused. His theological system is so original and full of vitality that we may at first fail to realize one of its most striking traits. He was a divine of the Church of England who, according to the contemporary who prefaced his "Serious and Pathetical Contemplation," was "much in love with the beautiful order and *Primitive* Devotions of this our excellent Church. Insomuch that I beleive, he never failed any one day either publickly or in his private Closet, to make use of her publick Offices, as one part of his devotion, unless some very unavoidable business interrupted him" (I, xxxii). But the church and her rituals scarcely appear in most of his writings. Much as he may have loved Anglicanism, he built a large and coherent body of religious thought quite independent of it and, in fact, contradicting many of the chief tenets of Anglicanism.

It would be tempting to resolve this apparent paradox by dis-

counting contemporary testimony concerning Traherne's allegiance to Anglicanism. But in the "Select Meditations" Traherne himself describes at length his devotion to the prerevolutionary pattern of English church and government and his dismay over its destruction in the Civil War:

Besids ye Heaven and ye Earth wch ye Heathen enjoy, Thou hast brought in ye Gospel of thy Son into our land Converted our Kings Senators & Nobles, Exalted thy Name, Established thy word and worship by Laws, Buildd thy Selfe Temples, and Appoynt[ed] Revenues for thy Church and Ministers, Greatly are . . . our Saviour Dignified, & our Cittys Beautified with those thy Most Glorious and Beautifull Houses. wear all this to be Done againe Thou knowest ye Sweat & Bloud wherewith it was Atcheived, But O ye wickedness of Ignorant zealots! who contemn thy Mercies and Despise ye union ye Beautifull union of thy Nationall church! every way thou art provoked to Anger, by Open profaness & Spirituall wickedness. And by ye Ignorance of both, Despising thy Mercies O Lord when our citties & Teritories are united by Laws in ye fear of thy Name: & are at one accord in Calling upon Thee; When they Move by Consent like an united Army. How Ravishing is their Beauty, How Sweet their Order! It is O my God as if ye Nation had but one Soul. In all wch while thy Glory Reigneth, She is made thy Throne; one Throne and Temple unto Thee. Be not wroth very Sore O Lord, neither remember Iniquity forever. The Holy Citties are a Wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a Desolat[ion] our Holy and our Beautifull house where our fathers praised Thee is burnt up with fire and all our pleasant Things are layd wast. ("Select Med.," I, 85)

The Traherne of the "Select Meditations" is staunchly if belatedly Laudian in his praise for "ye Shining Light wch a Golden candlestick giveth in a National Church" ("Select Med.," III, 23), his rejoicing in "The Saboths and festivals & ordinances of thy church" ("Select Med.," IV, 24), and his insistence on the virtue of religious uniformity: "might every man do what is right in his own Eys we should all run into confusion" ("Select Med.," III, 25).

Traherne by no means saw his own highly original and heretical

system as part of the "confusion" he deplored. Rather the system was meant to counteract it. His conception of infant vision allowed him to escape old boundaries, to shatter old limits and expand into infinity. Yet this escape was made in the service of reintegrating old forms, of reviving the same seamless cloak of national religious and political unity whose decline was mourned by Herbert and Herrick and Vaughan. As in the earlier poets, we can see an important correlation between Traherne's use of the theme of childhood and his personal experience of political and social fragmentation. Traherne was only fifteen years Vaughan's junior, but those were a critical fifteen years: born in 1637, he spent his early life during the Civil War and Protectorate. The "beauty in holiness" of institutional Anglicanism which Vaughan remembered with such nostalgia had passed away before his time. Like Jeremy Taylor and many others who came to intellectual maturity during England's troubles, Traherne responded to the absence of a uniform, received theology by building his own, based on "Beauties of Inward Holiness" ("Select Med.," I, 87), which would allow each individual human being to restore through his own all-encompassing creative vision the "one Soul" of light and unity that postwar England had lost.

Vaughan still followed traditional habits of thought to the extent that he searched for an ordered unity inherent in the fallen world and found in moments of heightened perception that natural things were alive and linked by a "tye of Bodyes." But for Traherne, the ties must be imposed from without. Material objects are chaotic and diffuse without the God-given power of the infant eye to "draw Order out of Confusion" and weld them into unity.⁵⁰ They are "dead and quiet" particles (I, 123). Even the human body is a "Poor Carcase" (I, 83). But the creative vision of the infant eye brings them to life and motion much as a sudden appearance of the sun on a cloudy day kindles and transforms the landscape.

Since order is not discovered in things seen but created by those who see, Traherne was much more optimistic than any of the earlier poets we have discussed about the possibility of restoring

England's golden age. The infant sees even the works of civilization as part of the glory of his paradise: "The Citie seemed to stand in Eden, or to be Built in Heaven. The Streets were mine, the Temple was mine, the People were mine, their Clothes and Gold and Silver was mine, as much as their Sparkling Eys Fair Skins and ruddy faces" (I, 111). In *The Third Century* Traherne condemns the creations of human beings as evil because they divide and distract the child from his true happiness in the creation of God. But once the visionary powers of infancy are regained, all the works of humanity can be perceived as beautiful and divine. Traherne's *Thanksgivings* celebrate the joys of civilized England as well as the pleasures of Eden:

Festivals and Sabbaths,
Sacraments and solemn Assemblies,
Bishops, Priests, and Deacons,
Emperors, Kings, and Princes,
Counsellors, Physicians; Senators,
And Captains,
In all the Beauty of their Office and Ministry,
Shine like Stars
In the firmament of thy Kingdom:
In the midst of whom
Thy Servant liveth. (II, 252)

Whatever the actual changes in English church and state, and there were many during Traherne's short lifetime, his infant eye can effortlessly and instantaneously restore the "one Soul" of national unity.

Just as he imaginatively rebuilds English society according to the model of Richard Hooker and the *Book of Homilies*, Traherne affirms the worth of the mental powers so valued by sixteenth-century humanists. He by no means shared the anti-intellectual strain we have noted in the earlier poets. Knowledge, reason, understanding—all of these are treasures which contribute to the greatness of the human soul:

Only Souls, immortal Souls, are denied nothing.

All things are penetrable to the Soul of Man.

All things open and naked to it.

The Understanding seeth

Their {

- Natures,
- Uses,
- Extents,
- Relations,
- Ends,
- Properties,
- Services,

Even all their Excellencies.

(II, 235)

At the university, he discovered vast new realms for the operation of his understanding: "I saw that there were Things in this World of which I never Dreamed, Glorious Secrets, and Glorious Persons past Imagination. There I saw that Logick, Ethicks, Physicks, Metaphysicks, Geometry, Astronomy, Poesie, Medicine, Grammar, Musick, Rhetorick, all kinds of Arts Trades and Mechanicisms that Adorned the World pertained to felicity" (I, 132). Once he regained his infant vision, Traherne could see the works of God and the works of man in harmony: church and state, faith and reason, things spiritual and things physical, all these were not discordant contraries but part of one all-encompassing unity.

In many ways Traherne seems much more modern than the other poets we have studied. For him, play and ritualism are not at the basis of all order; the unity of all things is not inherent and organic, but has to be imposed by the perceiver. Many of the late-feudal institutions which were important to some of the earlier poets simply do not exist in Traherne's verse, as indeed they scarcely existed in Interregnum England—they were probably not an important part of his early life experience. Then too, Traherne's thirst for infinity and his shattering of older boundaries of order mark him as heir of the new science more than a conservator of a dying cosmography and social theory. But he consistently

used the new as a way of reaffirming the old: the uncontained and uncontainable power of the infant eye, his Pelagian doctrine, all of the heterodox and sometimes wildly original features of his system were designed to re-create for everyone his own vision of what prewar England had been.

With Traherne we have come full circle. For Herbert, the demands of faith and the pursuits of secular society seemed hopelessly at odds. Retreating to childhood was a way out—a way of abandoning intellectual pride and social ambition for a narrower world which excluded them. In Herrick and Crashaw, the retreat became progressively narrower and more constricting. For Vaughan, retreat into any earthly institution seemed impossible: searching for childhood meant looking beyond the world altogether into another realm far above it and already lost. But for Traherne, childhood was not a way out, but a way back in. By regaining his infant powers, Traherne put Humpty Dumpty together again—reunited what seemed to Herbert irreconcilable. The infant eye does not establish boundaries and create limits, as Herbert tried to, but obliterates them. It does not whittle down and narrow adult experience but builds up and expands it. Through the creative vision of infancy, Traherne was able to reenter the world the other poets abandoned, to affirm the value of many activities they had been obliged to give up. In tracing the meaning of childhood through the five poets, we have actually traced a much larger pattern of disintegration and reintegration: the collapse of the humanist faith that the individual, the church, and English society are an orderly continuum; the gradual realization that order is not inherent within things but imposed from without; and the conscious rebuilding of the continuum, or at least those aspects of it which could be rebuilt, after the Restoration.

We have marked out a neat set of parallels between the use of childhood themes in a number of Anglican poets and the history of the church itself. But particularly during the war years, the idea

of childhood retreat appealed also to some Englishmen who might have been less than pleased to be classified as conservative Anglicans. Lest the pattern of our discussion seem too symmetrical, we must turn to a great exception—a man more loyalist than royalist, Andrew Marvell⁵¹—and to yet another aspect of childhood which may at first appear remote from the issue of cultural fragmentation: its freedom from adult sexuality.



Beyond Child's Play: Andrew Marvell

Supposing we played a little before entering upon our serious concern and maintained that all things are striving after Contemplation. . . Well—in the play of this very moment am I engaged in the act of Contemplation? Yes; I and all that enter this play are in Contemplation: our play aims at vision.

Plotinus, *The Enneads*

Andrew Marvell was far less willing than the other poets we have discussed to give childhood his unqualified approval. Like the rest, however, he envisioned it as a state cut off from the everyday concerns of adults and harboring values lost to them. His poetry holds in witty equipoise the two basic clusters of attitudes we have labeled “Anglican” and “Puritan.” The playful harmony and Edenic retirement of childhood are counterpoised against the fallen world of maturity, where progress comes through energetic work amid the dust and heat. Marvell’s political preferences were by no means so conservative as those of a Herbert or a Vaughan: unlike them, he came to terms with the Commonwealth government and gave it valuable service. But like the other poets, he felt keenly the loss of England’s past; his idealization of childhood carries political overtones which by now we can recognize as seventeenth-century commonplace: retreating to childhood serves as a way of preserving within himself virtues which seemed to

have vanished in England at large—unity and stability, simplicity and communion with God. Marvell's poetic retreat, however, is also connected to a different seventeenth-century commonplace not so readily extensible to the political sphere—the commonplace of childhood sexual innocence.

Marvell's poetry is never simple, never reducible to a single framework of critical discussion. He is the most teasing of poets, throwing out hints and flashes of deep significance with witty *sprezzatura*, as though defying his plodding readers to keep up with him. His verse is so delicately allusive, such a mixture of the serious and the comic, that to "hew and square" it into rigid thematic patterns is almost inevitably to diminish it and destroy its balance. Yet the patterns are there, irresistibly tempting us to follow their track; we need feel no compunction about singling out one set of patterns for discussion so long as we recognize the limitations of our own endeavor. Marvell's poems are about a great many things, art and artifice, literary theory, the uses of the classics. One of the things they are quite frequently about is the passage from innocence to experience, a subject Marvell explores on the level of individual and national history. The Eden of childhood innocence is, as the Eden of prewar England was, a time of harmony and stasis. To attempt to preserve that harmony and stasis when outward conditions no longer foster it, however, is to transform it into a form of bondage. For Marvell, the garden of childhood has many charms, but on both the individual and the national level, it will, and must inevitably, be outgrown.

1

When Sigmund Freud's *Essay on Infantile Sexuality* was published in 1905, it was greeted with distress by a public accustomed to thinking of children as asexual. His findings would have come as no shock, however, to earlier thinkers like St. Jerome and St. Gregory, who sadly recounted cases of nine- and ten-year-old boys impregnating their nurses; or to Jean Charlier de Gerson,

who observed masturbation and erection in young fifteenth-century schoolboys, attributed such behavior to original sin, and urged its eradication through education; or to Michel de Montaigne, who professed himself ignorant compared with young girls when it came to love knowledge: "Hear them describe our wooings and our conversations and you will realize full well that we bring them nothing that they have not known without us. . . . It is born in their veins."¹ In pointing out that sexual interest and activity are not limited to adults, Freud was not preaching a radically new idea but reviving a very old one.

It is not, however, an idea which was given great prominence in seventeenth-century poetry, which tended to favor an equally venerable tradition that children are sexual innocents. Perhaps as part of the ideological backlash against Calvinist emphasis on original sin, seventeenth-century poets often praised the original sexual purity of children. Robert Farlie, in "May or Mans Childhood," describes the child's "spotlesse beauty" as exceeding any "Snow-white Lilly"; his "Virgins red-enamelled modesty" makes roses blush for shame.² Traherne often referred to the virginal innocence of children, and Vaughan regretted it in "Childe-hood":

Dear, harmless age! the short, swift span,
Where weeping virtue parts with man;
Where love without lust dwells, and bends
What way we please, without self-ends.³

But the subject receives considerably more emphasis in the poetry of Andrew Marvell.

"*The Picture of little T.C. in a Prospect of Flowers*" and "*Young Love*" are Marvell's answer to the minor seventeenth-century genre of love poems addressed to little girls, most gracefully typified in Edmund Waller's "*To a Very Young Lady*":

Why came I so untimely forth
Into a world which, wanting thee,
Could entertaine us with no worth

Or shadow of felicity,
 That time should me so far remove
 From that which I was born to love?
 Yet, fairest blossom! do not slight
 That age which you may know so soon;
 The rosy morn resigns her light,
 And milder glory, to the noon,
 And then what wonders shall you do,
 Whose dawning beauty warms us so?
 Hope waits upon the flowery prime;
 And summer, though it be less gay,
 Yet is not looked on as a time
 Of declination or decay;
 For with a full hand that does bring
 All that was promised by the spring.⁴

Looking at a lovely child, Waller casts all his hopes on that future time when she will attain the full ripeness of her powers. If her light is so fair in the mildness of morning, what will it be at noon? And if the new blossom of her beauty is irresistible, what will it be when full blown? Though he looks at a child, Waller sees in her the woman she will become.

In "*Young Love*" Marvell, too, addresses a child—presumably a very young child since he calls her "little Infant" and infancy in its widest seventeenth-century interpretation meant the first few years of life. But while Waller waits patiently for the time when his young lady will be ready for adult passion, Marvell is in a greater hurry:

Now then love me: time may take
 Thee before thy time away:
 Of this Need wee'l Virtue make,
 And learn Love before we may.
 So we win of doubtful Fate;
 And, if good she to us meant,
 We that Good shall antedate,
 Or, if ill, that Ill prevent.⁵

He argues not *carpe diem*, but *carpe ante diem*. Marvell's use of traditional love persuasions on a little child has raised the eyebrows of more than one reader, for whom Carew's famous—or infamous—lines in "The second Rapture" would have seemed shocking enough: "Give me a wench about thirteene, / Already voted to the Queene / Of lust and lovers."⁶ But Marvell distinguishes, as Carew emphatically does not, between lust and love. He uses the language of sexual passion, with a jocular recognition that it does not quite fit his situation, to describe a relationship free of sexual entanglement:

Common Beauties stay fifteen,
 Such as yours should swifter move;
 Whose fair Blossoms are too green
 Yet for Lust, but not for Love. (I, 26)

The poet is attracted to the child not for what she will become at maturity, but for what she is now—as youthfully innocent as a "snowy Lamb" or "wanton Kid." The child can love with playfulness and gaiety because she is free of the darker and more complicated passions of adulthood.

In "*The Picture of little T.C. in a Prospect of Flowers*," if T.C. is not the same child, she is another small girl too young "Yet for Lust, but not for Love." She is still one of nature's buds, playing innocently in a landscape of greenery and flowers. As he watches her sport Marvell imagines her adult transformation and foresees a picture of violence in marked contrast to the mild wonders Waller anticipates for his young lady:

Who can foretel for what high cause
 This Darling of the Gods was born!
 Yet this is She whose chaster Laws
 The wanton Love shall one day fear,
 And, under her command severe,
 See his Bow broke and Ensigns torn.
 Happy, who can
 Appease this virtuous Enemy of Man! (I, 41)

The coming of maturity will transform T.C. from a playful child into a pitiless warrior against mankind who will "drive" over them "In Triumph" and delight in causing devastation. When that time comes, the poet will retreat from the battlefield for a place of quiet and protection: "Let me be laid, / Where I may see thy Glories from some shade" (I, 41). As in "Young Love," Marvell chooses innocent love over lust. He shuns the very sexual ripeness Waller awaits so hopefully in *his* young lady.

The child T.C. is as creative as her adult counterpart will be destructive: she lives in fruitful harmony with nature. The green world courts her "with fruits and flow'rs," and she in return orders and beautifies it simply by her presence:

See with what simplicity
 This Nymph begins her golden daies!
 In the green Grass she loves to lie,
 And there with her fair Aspect tames
 The Wilder flow'rs, and gives them names:
 But only with the Roses plays;
 And them does tell
 What Colour best becomes them, and what Smell. (I, 40)

Marvell attributes miraculous powers to her, asking her to reform nature's mistakes, to give natural things longer life. This playful little child seems able to manage with ease what few adults would dare to attempt—the restoration of Eden. She can "disarm" the thorns which, according to St. Ambrose, first disfigured roses at the time of Adam's fall.⁷ She has the unfallen Adam's power to charm all things into obedience and Adam's prerogative to give them names. But through the words "Mean time, whilst" in stanza four, Marvell suggests that her power over nature will be lost with the end of her childhood, when she gives up her indolent life amid grass and flowers to do battle against the world of men. T.C.'s movement from harmony in nature to disharmony and alienation from it marks out a pattern which appears with varia-

tions often in Marvell's poems—a pattern based, however subtly and playfully, on the idea that Eden was lost with the beginning of sexuality.

The Genesis story itself is full of sexual elements for anyone who cares to search for them: the symbol of the snake, the pun on the Hebrew word *'arum*, meaning both cunning and nakedness, and the ambivalence of the Hebrew word for knowledge, which also refers to coition.⁸ St. Ambrose implied that sexual intercourse between Adam and Eve caused their fall, and Abraham Cowley echoed him: "As soon as two (alas!) together join'd, / The Serpent made up Three."⁹ Robert Farlie quoted Adam himself:

I First of mankind, made by power divine,
Immortall once, brought death on me and mine.
Alone, I stood, but married, I became
Cursed, as likewise cursed was my dame.¹⁰

The Ambrosian view, while widely popular among nonspecialists in such matters, seems to have enjoyed little respect among theologians, who generally preferred to condemn sexuality as one of the more disastrous *results* of the fall. Some church fathers held that if Adam had not fallen, the human race would have multiplied, not through sexual generation, but as the angels were created. Others thought that Adam and Eve would have procreated by generation, but somehow without violating their virginity. Yet others speculated that human members of generation were not even created until after the fall. Such antisexual speculation was no doubt fueled by the classical idea that men and women in the golden age did not practice sexual reproduction.¹¹

If adult sexuality as we know it is a sign of human corruption since the fall, then the coming of puberty testifies that a person is fallen indeed. Rabbinical literature often asserts that the good *yezer*, or inclination, dates from birth, but the evil *yezer* is activated at the age of puberty.¹² Shakespeare provides a witty Christianized version of the idea in *The Winter's Tale*, when Polixenes

all amused by Polixenes' joke because it would have struck too close to home. When we first meet him in "Damon the Mower," he has been stricken with hopeless desire for Juliana, another figure like the adult T.C. who delights in destroying men. He recalls his life before the onset of sexual passion as an Edenic time of carefree self-possession in the natural world:

I am the Mower *Damon*, known
Through all the Meadows I have mown.
On me the Morn her dew distills
Before her darling Daffadils.
And, if at Noon my toil me heat,
The Sun himself licks off my Sweat.
While, going home, the Ev'ning sweet
In cowslip-water bathes my feet.

(I, 46)

Nature soothed and cooled him in his labors and he, in return for her ministrations, did his part to help her bring in the harvest. The two existed in harmony as each participated in the activity of the other. Far from being an uncouth rustic, he was something of an artist, sporting and singing with the fairies. His mind was a flawless mirror of nature's joyful innocence:

My Mind was once the true survey
Of all these Medows fresh and gay;
And in the greenness of the Grass
Did see its Hopes as in a Glass.

("The Mower's Song," I, 48)

He was so much a part of the green world that he and it could scarcely be distinguished. Owen Feltham's praise of the lives of plants and animals serves as an analogue of the original condition of Marvell's Mower: "How happy and how healthfull doe those things live, that follow harmlesse *Nature*? They weigh not what is *past*, are intent on the *present*, and neuer solicitous of what is to come. . . They live like *Children*, innocently sporting with their

Mother, Nature. . . . And this *blessedness* they have heere about Man, that, neuer seeking to be more than *Nature* meant them, they are much nearer to the happinesse of their *first estate*."¹⁴

With the coming of Juliana, however, the Mower's Eden is quickly lost: his happy self-possession gives way to grief. Damon's mournful recital of the changes Juliana has wrought is laden with theological overtones. The green world has become a scorching desert: Tertullian and later church fathers thought post-lapsarian Eden was surrounded by "the *torrida zona*, the parching countrie under the aequinoctiall."¹⁵ Damon's torrid zone is dead to all natural creatures but one—the glittering snake that slithers from its hiding place as a sinister emblem of the Mower's condition and perhaps also of his awakened sexuality:

Oh what unusual Heats are here,
Which thus our Sun-burn'd Meadows sear!
The Grass-hopper its pipe gives ore;
And hamstring'd Frogs can dance no more.
But in the brook the green Frog wades;
And Grass-hoppers seek out the shades.
Only the Snake, that kept within,
Now glitters in its second skin. (I, 45)

The snake seeks no respite from the heat; Damon can find none. Though he searches for some "cool cave" or "gelid fountain," nature's springs and grottos come to symbolize Juliana herself: like the "cave" and "fountain" of her body, they promise relief but offer none. The Mower's words are strongly reminiscent of lines from Hermann Hugo's very popular *Pia Desideria*, put in the mouth of a fallen soul:

Oh! who will shade me from this *scorching* heat!
See on my head how the fierce Sun-beams beat!
While by their fervor parch'd, the burning Sand
Scalds my gall'd feet, and forces me to stand.
Then, then I praise the Groves, and shady Bow'rs,
Blest with cool Springs, and sweet refreshing Flow'rs.¹⁶

Marvell himself, we will recall, planned to retire to the shade when T.C. began her devastating rampage. He was quite willing to abandon lust as, apparently, the Mower cannot.

Failing to realize that the desert around him is of his own making, parched with the heat of his own "hot desires," the Mower imagines that a pathetic fallacy is in operation—that nature obligingly harmonizes with his despair as she had with his earlier happiness: "ev'ry thing did seem to paint / The Scene more fit for his complaint" (I, 44). In "*The Mower's Song*," however, he comes to recognize the projective nature of his perception. The natural world no longer mirrors his own feelings; its greenery blooms on despite his distress:

But these, while I with Sorrow pine,
Grew more luxuriant still and fine;

. . . .

Unthankful Meadows, could you so
A fellowship so true forego,
And in your gawdy May-games meet,
While I lay trodden under feet?

(I, 48)

But he reproaches nature unjustly, for she stands ready to help him as always. It is he who has abandoned her by losing his capacity to accept what she offers. In "*The Mower to the Glo-Worms*" he recognizes that nature's "living Lamps" are still lighted to guide him, but he can no longer follow them:

Ye Glo-worms, whose officious Flame
To wandring Mowers shows the way,
That in the Night have lost their aim,
And after foolish Fires do stray;

Your courteous Lights in vain you wast,
Since *Juliana* here is come
For She my Mind hath so displac'd
That I shall never find my home.

(I, 47-48)

His "home" in the natural world gone, his mental self-possession shattered, Damon is himself transformed into a destroyer. His mowing, once helpful participation in the natural cycle, has become an enraged act of vengeance, a savage "depopulation" of the meadows he once loved. But he himself is the chief victim of his attack:

While thus he threw his Elbow round,
 Depopulating all the Ground,
 And, with his whistling Sythe, does cut
 Each stroke between the Earth and Root,
 The edged Stele by careless chance
 Did into his own Ankle glance;
 And there among the Grass fell down
 By his own Sythe, the Mower mown. (I, 47)

In this ominous mishap, the Mower symbolically reenacts his fall from the Eden he dwelt in before the fateful coming of Juliana. And, as in Genesis, with the fall death enters. Damon moves quickly toward the ultimate sundering of the harmonious bonds he once enjoyed:

Only for him no Cure is found,
 Whom *Julianas* Eyes do wound.
 'Tis death alone that this must do:
 For Death thou art a Mower too. (I, 47)

In the final tableau of "*The Mower's Song*" the barren landscape of Damon's grave, marked only by withered grass, forms an emblem of bleak mental desolation in greatest contrast to the green abundance he enjoyed before his downfall. Paradoxically, his passion for a woman has led to barrenness while his innocent love for nature was fruitful and creative. With the onset of lust, his Eden became a hell on earth.

"*The unfortunate Lover*" provides yet another variation on the theme of the destructiveness of lust. Its first stanza extolls the love

of the young and innocent, sporting in a garden of delight much as Marvell hoped to frolic with the little girl addressed in "Young Love":

Alas, how pleasant are their dayes
With whom the Infant Love yet playes!
Sorted by pairs, they still are seen
By Fountains cool, and Shadows green. (I, 29)

They dwell in a verdant and refreshing Eden, like the Mower before his fall, in which the natural world offers shade and fountains are properly refreshing. But their Eden, like his, is only temporary. The "Infant Love" will eventually grow up and the heat of lust will overpower the light of childish affection:

But soon these Flames do lose their light,
Like Meteors of a Summers night:
Nor can they to that Region climb,
To make impression upon Time. (I, 29)

After only a brief glimpse of innocent harmony, the scene abruptly shifts to a tempest-tossed rock where the unfortunate Lover stands chained, a Promethean martyr to adult sexuality. He is subjected to the exquisitely hideous tortures of "Corm'rants black" (I, 29-30) and forced, like the fallen Mower flailing with his scythe, to do battle against nature. He cuffs the thunder, wrestles with the rock, beats back the waves, himself ragged and torn. Damon at least had the sense to recognize and bemoan his fallen state but this hapless youth actually seems to be enjoying himself:

And all he saies, a Lover drest
In his own Blood does relish best. (I, 30)

He welters in masochistic mock-heroics which can only lead to his own destruction. He dies, of course, and Marvell implies that his

melancholy history is that of all who dare to brave the storms of passion:

This is the only *Banneret*
 That ever Love created yet:
 Who though, by the Malignant Starrs,
 Forced to live in Storms and Warrs;
 Yet dying leaves a Perfume here,
 And Musick within every Ear:
 And he in Story only rules,
 In a Field *Sable* a Lover *Gules*. (I, 30-31)

The ludicrous extravagance of "*The unfortunate Lover*" was deliberately cultivated by its creator: this poem is Marvell's mocking answer to the flocks of dilute Petrarchanists of his day who strained hard to express the torments of their passion. Cowley's "*The Thraldome*" provides a good example of such seventeenth-century *Sturm und Drang*:

I came, I saw, and was undone;
Lightning did through my bones and marrow run;
 A *pointed pain* pierc'd deep my heart:
 A swift, cold trembling seiz'd on every part,
 My head turn'd round, nor could it bear
 The *Poison* that was enter'd there.¹⁷

If this be passion, Marvell would appear to be saying, let me have none of it.

But the poet's mock-heroic portrait of the unfortunate Lover is tinged with sympathy, for even he has on occasion been passion's unwilling victim. In "*The Fair Singer*" Marvell himself turns Petrarchan: he has encountered another Amazon warrior like the adult T.C., but this time he has not managed to escape and dies vanquished on the battlefield. In "*The Gallery*" yet another female destroyer is at work. Seen alone and from afar, she is a charming "*Aurora in the Dawn*" or a "*Venus in her pearly Boat*." But with

her lovers, she becomes a witch and "Inhumane Murtheress" who tortures and disembowels them, then casts their carcasses aside as prey for vultures. Here again, Marvell chooses innocence over experience. He prefers to the portrait of a pitiless destroyer the picture of the winsome young girl she once was, playing like the little T.C. in idyllic harmony with the world of grass and flowers:

But, of these Pictures and the rest,
That at the Entrance likes me best:
Where the same Posture, and the Look
Remains, with which I first was took.
A tender Shepherdess, whose Hair
Hangs loosely playing in the Air,
Transplanting Flow'rs from the green Hill,
To crown her Head, and Bosome fill. (I, 32)

Presumably for the Petrarchanists love is destructive because unrequited. The same poets who paint such vivid pictures of the horrors of a woman's scorn describe her acquiescence in precisely the opposite terms—as an Edenic existence in which nature does her all to heighten the transports of the lovers. The Thomas Carew who wrote "SONG: Murdring beautie" also wrote "A Rapture" evoking the "Halcyon calmenesse" and "steadfast peace" of "Loves Elizium":

There, a bed
Of Roses, and fresh Myrtles, shall be spread
Vnder the cooler shade of Cypresse groves:
Our pillowes, of the downe of *Venus* Doves,
Whereon our panting lims wee'le gently lay
In the faint respites of our active play;

.. . . .

Meane while the bubbling streame shall court the shore,
Th'enamoured chirping Wood-quire shall adore
In varied tunes the Deitie of Love;
The gentle blasts of Westerne winds, shall move
The trembling leaves, & through their close bows breath

Still Musick, whilst we rest our selves beneath
 Their dancing shade; till a soft murmure, sent
 From soules entranc'd in amorous languishment
 Rowze us, and shoot into our veines fresh fire,
 Till we, in their sweet extasie expire.¹⁸

Carew's "Elizium" of desire endlessly aroused and fulfilled has all the standard elements of the seventeenth-century cavalier love paradise—soft banks, caressing breezes, birds and flowers—each shot through with an eroticism which contributes to the harmonious cycle of human love. But Marvell's one invitation to sexual fulfillment departs radically from the conventions.

In "To his Coy Mistress" Marvell seems clearly to advocate the adult sexual passion which elsewhere he mistrusts. There is no question that this time the poet has chosen not a child or near-child, but a mature woman as the object of his love. He describes her in strongly sensual terms:

Now therefore, while the youthful hew
 Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
 And while thy willing Soul transpires
 At every pore with instant Fires,
 Now let us sport us while we may. (I, 28)

Here Marvell urges that lust be indulged rather than abandoned, but passion requited has much the same effects as passion frustrated. Nature remains hostile and uncooperative: the landscape of the poem is the barren wasteland so often associated in Marvell with lust. The fecundity of "vegetable Love" and the rich beauty of an "Indian Ganges" could embellish the lovers' passion if they had forever and everywhere in which to play it out. But the world which they must eventually face is unmistakably a fallen world, a depersonalized desert marked only by tomb and ashes:

And yonder all before us lye
 Desarts of vast Eternity.
 Thy Beauty shall no more be found;

Nor, in thy marble Vault, shall sound
My echoing Song; then Worms shall try
That long preserv'd Virginitie:
And your quaint Honour turn to dust;
And into ashes all my Lust.

(I, 28)

In order to transcend this grim and uncompromising future the two prepare for a union which will be heroic in its strength, but not particularly calm or harmonious: "And tear our Pleasures with rough strife, / Thorough the Iron gates of Life" (I, 28). Like the unfortunate Lover and Damon the Mower, they will act in savage defiance of nature. Their predatory tearing and devouring "like am'rous birds of prey" bear an ominous resemblance to the tortures performed by the cormorants in "*The unfortunate Lover.*" The "Iron gates" which loom on their horizon are also disquieting. The ultimate fate of the lovers is left deliberately ambiguous: if they can be seen as conquerors who will defeat the harsh limits of the human condition, they can also be seen as victims who will doom themselves to destruction, hurtle through the gates of life into death. Their lust may bring transcendence; it may also bring annihilation. But it will not bring harmony with the natural world. "*To his Coy Mistress*" is a powerful repudiation of the standard love paradise, where desire is indulged amid peace and natural fecundity. In Marvell's poetry, such Edenic reciprocity with nature exists only in the absence of sexual passion.

A common border design on title pages of Renaissance books is a tiny depiction of Time leading a man in his prime, while a child goes before him and an old man follows behind.¹⁹ Time does not exist for little children. They live in an eternal present. Traherne, as an infant, thought "All Time was Eternity, and a Perpetual Sabbath."²⁰ Polixenes in *The Winter's Tale* remembered well his own obliviousness to time as a child who believed "there was no more behind / But such a day to-morrow as to-day, / And to be boy eternal." Marvell's young innocents all seem equally unaware of time's passage. Little T.C.'s "golden daies" are spent lying in

ease among the garden flowers. The "little Infant" in "Young Love" is crowned monarch over "old Time beguil'd." Before his fall, as Damon reaps in the meadows, his scythe swings in harmony with time, signaling the proper turning of the seasons. Time for these figures is something to be enjoyed in sweet repose of mind. It slips away so gradually and evenly that it is imperceptible. The playfulness of Marvell's innocents demonstrates their obliviousness to the passing of the hours. Their sport is a stepping out of time, a refusal to accept its inexorable demands, a way of forcing it—from their subjective viewpoints at least—to stand still.²¹

Marvell's children are as unaware of time as Adam was in the Garden of Eden. But for his fallen characters, time is an inescapable and implacable enemy who brings bitter fruits of change, decay, and death. It seems always to move too slowly or too fast. In "Damon the Mower" Damon drags lethargically through each hopeless day in a fruitless search for ease; in "The Mower's Song" he struggles against time in an equally hopeless frenzy of activity. The unfortunate Lover battles the elements in his ill-fated attempt to "make impression upon Time." For these characters life is emptied of play. Like Adam after the fall, they are forced to work hard and relentlessly.

The poet in "To his Coy Mistress" can imagine a life freed of the power of time:

Had we but World enough, and Time,
This coyness Lady were no crime.
We would sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long Loves Day. (I, 27)

But in the fallen world of the poem, time's tyranny seems inescapable: its winged chariot is forever hurrying at their backs. Rather than endure its slow ravages, "languish in his slow-chapt pow'r," they determine to burst out of its bonds: "though we cannot make our Sun / Stand still, yet we will make him run" (I,

28). With an irony almost tragic in its intensity, they realize that their effort to transcend the temporal through their love may result in death, their final submission to time's power. Just as Marvell associates sexual passion with a natural landscape of desolation, he gives his passionate lovers a strong awareness of their entrapment in time.

Marvell's innocents, too, are subject to the power of time, but lucky enough not to realize it. They dwell in a timeless Eden so long as they perceive themselves to do so. In "Young Love" and "The Picture of little T.C. in a Prospect of Flowers," the poet tries to stop his own subjective clock—to regain the timelessness of Eden in loving children for whom time has no meaning. But much of the poignancy of these poems derives from his knowledge that this attempt, at best, can be only temporary. In the seventeenth century with its primitive methods of child care, children were much more fragile and ephemeral than they are today. The little girl in "Young Love" may die very soon: "Time may take / Thee before thy time away." T.C. is equally vulnerable—one of nature's infant buds which may be plucked by Fate in an instant. As H. M. Margoliouth has pointed out, if T.C. was Theophila Cornwall, "she had been preceded by an elder sister of the same Christian name, who had died in infancy" (I, 261)—a circumstance which would give added poignancy to Marvell's admonition in the last stanza of "The Picture of little T.C.":

But O young beauty of the Woods,
Whom Nature courts with fruits and flow'rs,
Gather the Flow'rs, but spare the Buds;
Lest *Flora* angry at thy crime,
To kill her Infants in their prime,
Do quickly make th'Example Yours;
And, ere we see,
Nip in the blossome all our hopes and Thee. (I, 41)

Flora's imagined retribution would be quite unfair, for she has innumerable buds, while there is only one T.C. The child may die,

but the creatures of nature participate in an endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth in which they are constantly renewed. And even if T.C. lives, she will quickly pass from childhood to adulthood. As a little girl she is just a bud, but already she is in "blossome" so far as the poet is concerned. By playing on the paradox of a blossoming bud, Marvell offers a dark hint that the only way her innocent charm can escape the ravages of maturity is through death—by being cut off in her infant "prime" like one of the buds she picks so nonchalantly. If the poet is to find a surer object for his love, he must abandon humankind for the green world itself.

In the natural surroundings of "*The Garden*" Marvell turns back the clock of his own maturity and escapes from adulthood back into the playful naiveté of one of his innocent characters. For him in his garden as for little T.C. in hers, time flows imperceptibly. Here the image of its passing is the imaginative reverse of the ominous winged chariot:

How well the skilful Gardner drew
Of flow'rs and herbes this Dial new;
Where from above the milder Sun
Does through a fragrant Zodiack run;
And, as it works, th'industrious Bee
Computes its time as well as we.
How could such sweet and wholesome Hours
Be reckon'd but with herbs and flow'rs! (I, 53)

The flowers have been arranged to form a sundial which measures the path of the sun by slowly opening and closing its petals. Here the sun "runs" as it did in "*To his Coy Mistress*," but the running of this "milder Sun" is in harmony with the drowsy landscape beneath it, where the only real activity is the work of the bee. As the bee gathers thyme, Marvell stores up the happy hours he spends in the garden, where he can perceive time as something to be savored, not something to be escaped.

From his playful ease amid luxuriant greenery, the poet looks out on the fallen world—the "busie Companies of Men" who

"amaze" themselves with "unceasing Labours" in another torrid zone like Damon's, barren of all but the "short and narrow verged Shade" of a few paltry leaves (I, 51). In the fallen world passion must be "run" like a race, a "heat," and (through Marvell's witty pun) a hot race at that. But from the innocent garden perspective, the only love worth running for is the asexual love of plants and trees:

Apollo hunted *Daphne* so,
 Only that She might Laurel grow.
 And *Pan* did after *Syrinx* speed,
 Not as a Nymph, but for a Reed. (I, 52)

And in the garden one need not run at all. Fruits and flowers are only too happy to offer themselves for Marvell's pleasure, for he lives in that harmony with nature enjoyed by little T.C. in her garden and Adam in Eden. His carving on the trees is another act of naming, like theirs: "Fair Trees! where s'eer your barks I wound, / No Name shall but your own be found" (I, 51). The plants respond to his loving solicitude by forcing themselves upon him in what can only be called a pleasant and innocent parody of rape, consummating the love of man and nature in the garden. Adam lost the Garden of Eden through sexuality, and Damon fell from his Eden with the beginning of his lust for Juliana. But Marvell's "fall on Grass" is a playful mockery of these disasters which substitutes for dark passion the innocent love of plants: melons are as round as the rounded female anatomy, but much less dangerous; entanglement with flowers is far preferable to the more traditional entanglements with women. Marvell's "fall on Grass" does not remove him from his Eden, but carries him further in, from pleasures of the body to the even greater delights of the mind and the achievement of psychic wholeness.

Marvell's poetry very frequently introduces the theme of doubleness: the "double Heart" which tortures the soul in "A Dialogue between the Soul and Body," the Mower's accusation in

"*The Mower against Gardens*" that man has seduced the pink to grow 'as double as his Mind," Damon's complaint in "*The Mower to the Glo-Worms*" that Juliana has "displac'd" his mind, and in the refrain to "*The Mower's Song*" her separation of his thoughts from himself: "and She / What I do to the Grass, does to my Thoughts and Me" (I, 48). In "*The Definition of Love*" the poet characterizes his own love in terms of the same mental dislocation as Damon's: his "extended soul" is divided from himself by the cruel "Iron wedges" of fate. Marvell's association of passion with psychic division is perhaps linked to that most basic dichotomy between the sexes—male and female, each needing the other, neither complete in itself. The lover who desires his sexual opposite is torn in two, part of him going out in longing to her and part remaining behind.

The usual way of solving the dilemma of doubleness is, of course, through sexual union, the creation of a single being which transcends the divided opposites of man and woman. In *The Symposium* Aristophanes was so struck by man's need for sexual union that he invented the myth of the Androgynes to explain it. "The primeval man was round, his back and sides forming a circle. He could walk upright as men now do, backwards or forwards as he pleased, and he could also roll over and over at a great pace, turning on his four hands and four feet, eight in all, like tumblers going over and over with their legs in the air; this was when he wanted to run fast." The Androgynes were much more powerful than modern human beings: "Terrible was their might and strength, and the thoughts of their hearts were great, and they made an attack upon the gods." Zeus took such alarm at the threat they posed that he split them all in two to destroy their power. Thus arose the human need for sexual union. "Each of us when separated, having one side only, like a flat fish, is but the tally-half of a man, and he is always looking for his other half," for "human nature was originally one and we were a whole, and the desire and pursuit of the whole is called love."²²

But Marvell, as we might expect, has little faith in Aristo-

phanes' proposed method for achieving wholeness. In "*The Definition of Love*" Fate plays the role of Plato's Zeus, recognizing that if the lovers were allowed to unite, their great might would overthrow her own:

For Fate with jealous Eye does see
Two perfect Loves; nor lets them close:
Their union would her ruine be,
And her Tyrannick pow'r depose.

And therefore her Decrees of Steel
Us as the distant Poles have plac'd,
(Though Loves whole World on us doth wheel)
Not by themselves to be embrac'd.

(I, 39-40)

Envious Fate has forced the opposites to remain as sundered as the north pole from the south. Love is at a stalemate: "the Conjunction of the Mind, / And Opposition of the Stars" (I, 40).

The amorous pair in "*To his Coy Mistress*," however, refuse to remain so docile. They resolve to reconstitute one of the Androgynes, to weld male strength and female sweetness into a unity more powerful than the fate which opposes them and roll this ball of strength in defiance against the limits fate draws. But the union will not be created without tearing and struggle. And the iron gates lowering on the horizon are disturbingly reminiscent of Fate's implacable wedges in "*The Definition of Love*." Their heroic attempt is threatened with doom from its inception.

Lovers try to transcend doubleness by breaking through the boundaries of sexual differentiation in the act of coition. But in Marvell's poetry such a project is portrayed as self-defeating, like trying to stop a fire by throwing on fresh logs. If psychic division and dislocation are caused by sexual passion, the mind is best healed by abandoning adult sexuality altogether. In "*The Garden*," the poet attains with playful and singlehanded ease the wholeness his lovers must struggle so hard to achieve. By retreating from adult sexuality he recaptures for himself the creative control over

the natural environment which Damon and little T.C. possessed during their time of innocence. In the central stanzas of "*The Garden*" Marvell joyously enacts a return to the same unity of childhood vision which we have found to be such a constant subject in the writings of Traherne:

Mean while the Mind, from pleasure less,
 Withdraws into its happiness:
 The Mind, that Ocean where each kind
 Does streight its own resemblance find;
 Yet it creates, transcending these,
 Far other Worlds, and other Seas;
 Annihilating all that's made
 To a green Thought in a green Shade.
 Here at the Fountains sliding foot,
 Or at some Fruit-trees mossy root,
 Casting the Bodies Vest aside,
 My Soul into the boughs does glide:
 There like a Bird it sits, and sings,
 Then whets, and combs its silver Wings;
 And, till prepar'd for longer flight,
 Waves in its Plumes the various Light.

(I, 52)

Traherne claims, "GOD hath made you able to Creat Worlds in your own mind, which are more Precious unto Him then those which He Created."²³ As Marvell lies in fallow indolence among the flowers his mind leaps into activity, creating an Eden within him even lovelier than the one outside. But as the barrier of the body dissolves, its "Vest" cast aside, inside and outside flow together into unity. The "green Thought" is a paradise within the soul, but the soul, singing in the branches, is at the same time surrounded by the paradisiacal light and greenery of the garden. From a Trahernian standpoint, of course, Marvell's vision remains confined. Traherne insists that the visionary powers of infancy are infinite, while Marvell's do not venture beyond the treetops where his soul sits poised for "longer flight." But within the limits of the garden, Marvell has regained a brief taste of the

unified vision of infancy—its combined immanence and transcendence, its ability to create as it perceives.

In "A DIALOGUE, BETWEEN *The Resolved Soul, and Created Pleasure*" the joys of the senses and the duties of the spirit are sharply opposed. Pleasure invites the Soul to enjoy the gifts of nature, but the Soul spurns her invitation into "Nature's banquet" of "fruits and flow'rs," arguing that such indolence will hinder his progress toward heaven (I, 9–11). But for the poet in "*The Garden*," no such conflict exists. Nature and grace are part of one continuum leading from playful immersion in the sensory delights of fruits and flowers on to contemplation and spiritual ecstasy. Though the pleasures of the body are transcended, they are not negated. Matter and spirit, body and soul are brought into harmony through the wholeness of childhood vision.

The unfallen Adam lived in just such a harmony of physical and mental powers, so perfectly mirrored by the natural world that he had no need of Eve:

Such was that happy Garden-state,
While Man there walk'd without a Mate:
After a Place so pure, and sweet,
What other Help could yet be meet!
But 'twas beyond a Mortal's share
To wander solitary there:
Two Paradises 'twere in one
To live in Paradise alone.

(I, 53)

Lurking somewhere behind this witty passage are the Androgynes again, this time in their Christianized form.

Aristophanes' myth of archetypal man's fall from unity to doubleness is amazingly compatible with that other great myth of the fall in Genesis. The much maligned doctrine of the androgynal Adam was not the joke of fanciful Platonizers, but a perfectly legitimate means for solving a textual crux. Genesis gives two separate and seemingly contradictory accounts of the creation of Adam and Eve. In Genesis, chapter 1, "God said, Let us make

man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply" (Gen. I:26-28). But Genesis, chapter 2 states clearly that Adam was created "of the dust of the ground" and Eve, quite some time later, out of one of his ribs. Given the notion that Adam was created androgynous, the two stories can easily be squared. Genesis, chapter 1 describes the creation of the archetypal Adam, delicately playing on the pronouns *he* and *them* to indicate his possession of the male and females opposites in union. This Adam was given great power—dominion over all the earth and a godlike capacity for creating, signified in the command "Be fruitful and multiply." Genesis, chapter 2 offers a more detailed account of the androgynous Adam's beginnings, but goes on to relate how, for reasons which are unclear in the text, it was decided that Adam needed a helpmeet. He was disastrously divided and weakened by the creation of Eve from his rib. The splitting of the androgynous Adam into halves resulted almost immediately in their temptation and expulsion from the Garden. Adam was meant to create as God does, by himself; but once fallen from his primal unity, he was forced to procreate in the less exalted manner since followed by his corrupt progeny. Just how the details of Adam's fall were worked out depended on the ingenuity of the individual commentator. But the doctrine of the androgynous Adam was held or considered quite pervasively in one form or another: from Gregory of Nyssa to the Hermetic writings, to rabbinical literature, to Jacob Boehme, to Marvell's patron Lord Fairfax.²⁴

The myth of the androgynous Adam was intended as a history of the early days of the human race, but Marvell applies it to the history of the individual. The powerful unity of the first man is a

natural symbol for the small child's perception of his environment as part of himself and under his complete control. But by the time the child has grown to puberty, his happy self-contained unity has been lost, and its loss made all too evident with the development of his capacity for adult passion and his need for a sexual object outside himself. According to Jacob Boehme, the androgynous Adam sported in Eden while his "child-like mind" dwelt in paradise.²⁵ This is just the state achieved by Marvell in the Garden, when inner and outer reality coalesce: "Two Paradises 'twere in one / To live in Paradise alone" (I, 53). Such happy unity was possessed also by the unfallen Damon, who could boast that his mind was "The true survey / Of all these Medows fresh and gay; / And in the greenness of the Grass / Did see its Hopes as in a Glass" (I, 48). Marvell's lyrics often pair the wholeness of the childlike mind with the capacities of the archetypal man. Unity means power—power to rule and to create: as T.C. presides over her flowers, ordering and beautifying them; as the unfallen Damon tunes nature with his carefree song and dance; as Marvell's soul sings in the garden and brings whole new worlds into being.

In a little Latin epigram, "*Upon an Eunuch; a Poet,*" Marvell plays as we have seen him play in the Mower poems, on the paradox of fruitfulness through asexuality:

Don't believe yourself sterile, although, an exile from women,
You cannot thrust a sickle at the virgin harvest,
And sin in our fashion. Fame will be continually pregnant by you,
And you will snatch the Nine Sisters from the mountain;
Echo too, often struck, will bring forth musical offspring.²⁶

An eunuch is one unfortunate—or fortunate—enough to have grown to manhood with the sexual incapacity of a child. He lacks the power of begetting children, but the imaginative children of his mind are far more enduring than any mortal offspring. In Marvell's poetry freedom from passion brings the harmony and

self-possession necessary for artistic transcendence. But with the doubleness of sexuality, all comes tumbling down: mental wholeness crumbles into fragmentation; power and creativity are dissolved into incapacity and disorder—paradise is lost as it was for the androgynous Adam upon the creation of Eve.

Such a pronounced antisexual bias runs through Marvell's lyrics that we may be strongly tempted to seek its psychological origins. His poetry reveals patterns which Sigmund Freud associated with impotence. Marvell portrays adult sexuality much as little children are likely to see it—as brutal violence, a form of self-injury or even death.²⁷ Even in "*To his Coy Mistress*," Marvell's impassioned persuasion to love, he envisions the sex act as a tearing blend of pleasure and pain which may become a masochistic hurtling toward death. Freud characterizes normal adult love as the convergence of two streams: first, that affection and esteem common among children as well as adults and secondly, sensuality, the desire for physical union between adult male and female; if these streams never meet, the result is likely to be impotence.²⁸ Marvell's poetry generally separates them sharply. In "*Young Love*" he calls the first "Love" and the second "lust." The one is innocent and playful, the other, dark and destructive. Toward the second, he shows the anxiety usually associated with incapacity to deal with an approaching task. He shies away from feeling physical desire along with his esteem for the love object and seeks out the love of little girls with whom adult sexuality is out of the question, or even the innocent embraces of nature herself.

If we wished to find biographical support for conclusions based on this characteristic pattern in Marvell's poetry, we would have no difficulty doing so. It is well known by now that he never married, left no recorded children, and was more than once accused by contemporary pamphleteers of impotence and homosexual relations with John Milton.²⁹ But political pamphleteering was not noted for its gentility in Marvell's day, and he threw as many insults as were cast at him. Given the fact that all such accusations against him came from the same group of en-

emies, and given the possibility that his well-known freedom from more mundane vices like drunkenness and frequenting bordellos may have driven his attackers to some ingenuity in finding a credible way of impugning his moral character, we may be permitted to deny the insinuations of contemporary pamphleteers as acceptable evidence. The question of what Andrew Marvell's sexual preferences were will doubtless never be settled, and is perhaps not worth settling.

But though we cannot be certain of the biographical implications of Marvell's marked poetic preference for innocent love over lust, we can be sure of its historical respectability. His attitudes parallel a whole wing of the Christian tradition: the broad current of opinion connecting sexuality with the fall of Adam, the even broader current of antifeminism from St. Paul to Marvell's own day,³⁰ and an interesting passage from the Gospel of Matthew where Christ praises those who become eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven and goes on, surely not by accident, to praise little children in almost the same terms:

For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for such is the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 19:12-14)

It seems that Christ himself believed in the sexual innocence of little children, or so he can easily be understood. In favoring little children and linking them to those adults who abandon their sexuality in service of a higher religious cause, Christ could perhaps be seen as advocating an undertaking like Marvell's in "*The Garden*," where recreation leads to re-creation, where a return to the playful innocence of childhood brings spiritual rejuvenation, restored wholeness of mind, and the capacity to transcend the fallen world.

Much as he prized playfulness, retirement, and sexual innocence, however, Marvell also insisted that one cannot live in a garden forever. The verdant Edens of Marvell's poetry are not simply an escape from adult sexuality; they are retreats from great and often violent processes of history which must ultimately be confronted. As Christopher Hill has pointed out, the theme of psychic doubleness in Marvell's poetry is linked to the problem of political allegiance and the contrary pulls of nostalgia for the old and respect for the awesome power of the new.³¹ In "To his Noble Friend Mr. Richard Lovelace, upon his Poems" he regrets, in typical conservative royalist fashion, the "candid Age" of an England untainted by the corrupting swarms of "reforming" Puritan pamphleteers—"Word-peckers, Paper-rats, Book-scorpions," and "barbed Censurers"—an age when ambition itself was properly grounded in humility:

That candid Age no other way could tell
 To be ingenious, but by speaking well.
 Who best could prayse, had then the greatest prayse,
 Twas more esteemed to give, then weare the Bayes:
 Modest ambition studi'd only then,
 To honour not her selfe, but worthy men.
 These vertues now are banisht out of Towne,
 Our Civill Wars have lost the Civicke crowne. (I, 3)

In "Upon Appleton House," too, Marvell regrets the virtues and lowliness of traditional England's "strait and narrow path" to heaven, lost virtues which are still embodied on General Fairfax's country estate:

But all things are composed here
 Like Nature, orderly and near:
 In which we the Dimensions find
 Of that more sober Age and Mind,

When larger sized Men did stoop
To enter at a narrow loop;
As practising, in doors so strait,
To strain themselves through *Heavens Gate*. (I, 63)

Following a tradition used frequently in Shakespeare's history plays and in Elizabethan and Jacobean civic pageantry,³² Marvell describes prewar England as a pure and harmonious Eden—the grand prototype of the smaller and more limited Edens his young innocents are able to restore:

O Thou, that dear and happy Isle
The Garden of the World ere while,
Thou *Paradise* of four Seas,
Which *Heaven* planted us to please,
But, to exclude the World, did guard
With watry if not flaming Sword;
What luckless Apple did we tast,
To make us Mortal, and The Wast? (I, 72)

Fairfax's garden at Nun Appleton was laid out in playful imitation of a fort; in the garden of England, too, flowers and foliage had once been the only forms of bellicosity. But what had once been playful metaphor was transmuted into grim reality when the national garden was choked with the weeds of Civil War: "But War all this doth overgrow: / We Ord'nance Plant and Powder sow" (I, 72–73). Just as Marvell's innocents fall from their childhood harmony with nature through the violence of sexual passion, so England itself has fallen from her traditional order and felicity through the violence of war. Marvell's description of the weed-choked garden recalls Vaughan's description of the English rose strangled by the weeds of war in "Ad Posteror." As D. C. Allen has demonstrated, "*Upon Appleton House*," whatever other meanings it may also have, depicts allegorically the Civil War's destruction of the garden of England through the series of upheavals which beset its microcosm the Fairfax estate.³³

In "Upon Appleton House" the poet plays again with his familiar theme of retreat and renewal, but incorporates it into a much larger pattern of return to the world. As he tours Fairfax's estate, Marvell explores various possibilities for retreat which recapitulate, sometimes only fleetingly, forms of retirement which we have noted in the poets discussed earlier. The house itself at Nun Appleton is in some respects a remnant of the old feudal pattern of hospitality: its perennially "open Door" wears a "Stately Frontispiece of Poor"; it has the traditional hall for communal dining; its rooms are decked with "Furniture of Friends" rather than the opulent marble superfluities characteristic of the new, more private Italianate fashion in seventeenth-century estates. Fairfax himself is too great a man to fit the traditional pattern: when he enters, the house is forced by his "magnitude" to swell to its absolute limits. The house was in fact designed by Fairfax, a mirror of his own "Humility"; his gracious acquiescence to its narrowness is, like George Herbert's retreat to the late-feudal household of *The Temple*, a willed relinquishment of grander possibilities for his own life. In Marvell, however, there is much more sense of strain between the straitness of old forms and the breadth of human potential.

The poet's tour takes him next to the ruins of the nunnery and a much less wholesome form of retreat, the cloister. Fairfax's energy, through a witty telescoping of family history, has demolished the suffocating, cloying sanctuary of Roman Catholic monasticism. The persuasion to cloistered life offered by one of the "Suttle Nunns" recalls the hothouse luxuriance of Crashaw: "All night embracing arm in arm, / Like Chrystal pure with Cotton warm" (I, 68). In the false retreat of Catholicism, a retreat which had apparently seduced Marvell himself briefly during his university years,³⁴ the wholesomeness of nature is stifled by artifice. Fairfax's microcosmic enactment of the Protestant Reformation, by freeing his own estate from the unhealthy perversions of the cloister, has aided the cultivation of the happy Edenic garden of post-Reformation prewar England.

When Marvell begins exploring the meadows, the poem's tone darkens somewhat. The meadows become the field of recent English history, where the bloody revolutionary pageant of the Mowers is enacted. Against their massacres, the natural humility of the nesting rail provides no defense. When the floods come, the meadows become a chaos which even the poet is forced to flee. In imitation of General Fairfax's retreat from what he saw as the chaotic excesses of the left-wing revolutionaries, Marvell himself abandons the flooded meadows for the quiet seclusion of the woods. In this "yet green, yet growing Ark" he can escape, as in "*The Garden*," the incessant toils of ambition and the desperate race of sexual passion (I, 81). Freed from the darts of lust and safe from the pageant of revolutionary upheavals taking place in the meadows outside, he can sport like a child in innocent harmony with nature. He wanders in aimless indolence, immersing himself even deeper into the animism and interconnectedness of the green world until he feels at one with it:

Thus I, *easie Philosopher*,
Among the *Birds* and *Trees* confer:
And little now to make me, wants
Or of the *Fowles*, or of the *Plants*.
Give me but *Wings* as they, and I
Streight floting on the *Air* shall fly:
Or turn me but, and you shall see
I was but an inverted *Tree*.

(I, 80)

He finds in himself a mysterious capacity to communicate with natural things in their "learned original" and to read the cryptic language of "*Natures mystic Book*" (I, 80). The woods are a sacred grove, yet another variation upon the theme of retreat; there Marvell is able to perceive the existence of a timeless, intrinsic order lost to English church and state, a vision of continuing unity in the temple of nature which is very much like Henry Vaughan's in "*Regeneration*" and like the "tye of Bodyes" inter-

mittently perceived by Vaughan. Marvell's depiction of the natural temple playfully links it to the vanished institutions of Anglicanism. The birds sing in well-tuned "winged Quires" under its Corinthian columns; the poet himself becomes the bishop of this natural cathedral when oakleaves and ivy "embroyder" him an ornate ecclesiastical garment: "Under this *antick Cope* I move / Like some great *Prelate of the Grove*" (I, 81). The pun on *antick* suggests both the venerable age of the institution of episcopacy and the poet's playfulness in adopting it for himself. In Edward Benlowes' "The Sweetness of Retirement, or the Happiness of a Private Life," which Marvell undoubtedly had in mind when he wrote "*Upon Appleton House*," the grove is much more overtly a shelter for vestiges of Anglican ritualism.³⁵

In "*Upon Appleton House*," as in "*The Garden*," Marvell's entanglement in green retreat leads to a fall. He falls—but harmlessly—onto a plump bank of moss:

Then, languishing with ease, I toss
 On Pallets swoln of Velvet Moss;
 While the Wind, cooling through the Boughs,
 Flatters with Air my panting Brows.
 Thanks for my Rest ye *Mossy Banks*,
 And unto you *cool Zephyr's* Thanks,
 Who, as my Hair, my Thoughts too shed,
 And winnow from the Chaff my Head. (I, 81)

Breezes, banks, and shady boughs solicitously join forces to comfort his body and restore his divided mind. But then the Garden pattern changes. As soon as he realizes his safety and security in the temple of the green world, cut off from destructive involvement with women and from the relentless despoiling being enacted on the "fields of History" below, he begins to think of escaping his miniature Eden. If he is to remain, it will be by force—the "*antick Cope*" which makes him "*Prelate*" of this grove must become a painful prison:

Bind me ye *Woodbines* in your 'twines,
 Curle me about ye gadding *Vines*,
 And Oh so close your *Circles* lace,
 That I may never leave this Place:
 But, lest your *Fetters* prove too weak,
 Ere I your *Silken Bondage* break,
 Do you, O *Brambles*, chain me too,
 And courteous *Briars* nail me through. (I, 81)

What began as a healing retreat into a sanctuary for traditional order has ended in martyrdom and incapacity. But the prison proves not to be strong enough: Marvell abandons the woods for the riverbank where, the floods of revolution having subsided, he encounters Fairfax's daughter Mary, another of Marvell's nymphs in a landscape, and begins to entertain the possibility of national renewal.

Mary has spent her morning in the garden, like little T.C. The flowers discharge their fragrance in honor of her parents, but mistake her for one of themselves, "with the Flow'rs a Flow'r." But in the evening we discover she is far more than a flower among other flowers. She is the ordering principle behind all the harmonies of the estate—an Eden-maker even more powerful than T.C.:

'Tis *She* that to these Gardens gave
 That wondrous Beauty which they have;
She streightness on the Woods bestows;
 To *Her* the Meadow sweetness owes;
 Nothing could make the River be
 So Chrystal-pure but only *She*;
She yet more Pure, Sweet, Streight, and Fair,
 Then Gardens, Woods, Meads, Rivers are. (I, 84)

As always for Marvell's children, the relationship is reciprocal. Nature gladly repays Mary's gifts, and mirrors her loveliness:

Therefore what first *She* on them spent,
 They gratefully again present.

The Meadow Carpets where to tread;
 The Garden Flow'rs to Crown *Her* Head;
 And for a Glass the limpid Brook,
 Where *She* may all *her* Beautyes look;
 But, since *She* would not have them seen,
 The Wood about *her* draws a Skreen. (I, 84)

But just as Marvell himself gave up his happy self-abandoning immersion in the green grove, Mary must inevitably leave the childhood garden for the fallen world of maturity. She was born for a higher cause than to bask in the natural loveliness of Nun Appleton. When Marvell was writing, she was no "little infant" but a child of thirteen or fourteen poised on the brink of adulthood; she was already something of a scholar and had subdued the gaiety of childhood for a sobriety more becoming to adulthood. Marvell is forced to "grow up" and abandon his childish, indolent lolling by the river for fear of incurring her displeasure (I, 83). For the future of T.C., Marvell foresaw only destruction; Mary, having been raised in a "*Domestick Heaven*," will devote herself not to the annihilation of potential lovers, but to a sober marriage foreshadowed in the line "And find a *Fairfax* for our *Thwaites*." (The poet could not, of course, have known that Mary's union with George Villiers would prove anything but auspicious.) Her passage out of the childhood garden will be no cause for mourning but a means toward "universal good"; Marvell hints that her miraculous powers for drawing harmony out of chaos may reform the England outside as they have the lesser England of Nun Appleton (I, 85).

Unlike John Donne, who made the death of a child Mary's age symbolic in his *Anniversaries* of the irreversible decline and death of the traditional pattern of world order, and unlike the other poets studied here, who (Traherne excepted) could envision no future synthesis worthy of replacing the fragmented image of English unity, Marvell was willing to entertain the optimistic possibility of eventual national renewal—not, perhaps, along the time-

honored hierarchical lines of the Tudor and Stuart state-garden, but renewal nevertheless. In "Upon Appleton House" the poet suggests that Mary Fairfax may reverse the career of her father—he having sequestered himself from a nation in disorder and she setting out to order it again. In "An Horatian Ode upon Cromwel's Return from Ireland" and "THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY Of the Government under O.C." Oliver Cromwell becomes the agent of possible renewal. His thunderous power promises to reforge English unity, to retune the "ruling Instrument" of state to the music of the spheres (I, 110), and to reanimate the nation with his own soul (I, 118, lines 379–80). "Upon Appleton House," more than any of Marvell's other poems, is a working through of the attractions and limitations of retreat: we can speculate with John Wallace that the poem may have been Marvell's farewell to Fairfax, his estate, and the life of total self-seclusion from national affairs which Fairfax had chosen.³⁶ After two years' service at Nun Appleton, Marvell gave up the security and detachment of the country life to offer himself as a servant of Cromwell's government.

"The Nymph complaining for the death of her Faun" is a graceful lament for the lost garden of childhood which may also be, as some critics have suggested, an elegy for the lost garden of England.³⁷ But if so, it is an elegy which distance its readers from that which it mourns by hinting that the nymph's golden world, for all its static beauty, contained the seeds of its own destruction. The nymph is perhaps the most charming of Marvell's innocent young girls, and the only one who talks for herself, telling us her sad story of a child, or near-child, who cannot grow up. She gives us only a shadowy glimpse of Sylvio, but enough for us to speculate that he may have tired of her naive innocence:

Unconstant *Sylvio*, when yet
I had not found him counterfeit,
One morning (I remember well)
Ty'd in this silver Chain and Bell,
Gave it to me: nay and I know

What he said then; I'm sure I do.
 Said He, look how your Huntsman here
 Hath taught a Faun to hunt his *Dear*.
 But *Sylvio* soon had me beguil'd.
 This waxed tame, while he grew wild,
 And quite regardless of my Smart,
 Left me his Faun, but took his Heart. (I, 23–24)

Sylvio left her the fawn, a baby deer, but took away his heart—a punning reference to hart, the adult of the species—as though to enact symbolically his conviction that, whereas he was ready for adult passion, she remained a child incapable of it. And indeed the fawn seems to have met perfectly the nymph's need for childish affection and companionship:

Thenceforth I set my self to play
 My solitary time away,
 With this: and very will content,
 Could so mine idle Life have spent.
 For it was full of sport; and light
 Of foot, and heart; and did invite,
 Me to its game: it seem'd to bless
 Its self in me. How could I less
 Than love it? (I, 24)

They lived in sport, like all Marvell's innocents, their playful chases a harmless parody of the desperate race of the adult lovers in "*To his Coy Mistress*":

It is a wond'rous thing, how fleet
 'Twas on those little silver feet.
 With what a pretty skipping grace,
 It oft would challenge me the Race:
 And when 'thad left me far away,
 'Twould stay, and run again, and stay. (I, 24)

Like all the others, this nymph played in a garden, where her fawn harmonized so well with the roses and lilies of its surround-

ings that she could mistake it for yet another plot of flowers: "For, in the flaxen Lillies shade, / It like a bank of Lillies laid" (I, 25). Here, as so often in Marvell's poems, innocence has religious connotations, this time of that other Edenic garden in the Song of Songs 6:2-3: "My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies. I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: He feedeth among the lilies."

But the fallen world bursts suddenly and violently into the nymph's Eden when the troopers shoot her fawn. The fawn may or may not represent the traditional church as seen through devout and submissive Anglican eyes—certainly the poem's many references to the Song of Songs call to mind the usual interpretation of that work in seventeenth-century literature as an evocation of the love between the Christian soul and Christ or the church. The troopers are equally hard to pin down. They may or may not represent the parliamentary forces who destroyed the Anglican church. To either exclude or insist upon political interpretation of the poem would be to damage its delicate balance between the simple emotion of the nymph and the multifaceted allusiveness of her language for more sophisticated readers.

The nymph has a child's inability to comprehend seemingly pointless evil. No one has ever explained to her that justice does not always triumph, that God allows the good to suffer and die as well as the bad:

But, O my fears!
It cannot dye so. Heavens King
Keeps register of every thing:
And nothing may we use in vain
Ev'n Beasts must be with justice slain;
Else Men are made their *Deodands*. (I, 23)

Unable to live in such an unkind world, she invents, as the young often do, an animal heaven where her fawn will dwell happily and prepares to join him through her own death:

Now my Sweet Faun is vanish'd to
 Whether the Swans and Turtles go:
 In fair *Elizium* to endure,
 With milk-white Lambs, and Ermins pure:
 O do not run too fast: for I
 Will but bespeak thy Grave, and dye. (I, 25)

The final image of the nymph and her fawn carved in timeless but immobile stone is a fitting symbol for her inability to leave the garden of childhood, to abandon innocence for experience. It would be a fitting symbol, too, for the plight of conservative Anglicans unable to come to terms with the historical processes transforming England during the Civil War period. The nymph has found the only retreat which is enduring—into the cold stasis of marble, quiet and peaceful indeed, yet empty of all life but the tears of her grief.

For Marvell, as for the other poets we have studied, retreat to childhood provides a remedy for psychic fragmentation and the terrors of social upheaval. Looking out from the protected garden of childhood, the poet perceives the harried bustling of adult society as vain and even immoral. Yet he recognizes that trying to stop time and remain in the garden would mean self-imprisonment or reduction to complete immobility. And from the midst of adult society, where dynamic forces are at work, the garden of retirement seems irrelevant and not a little ridiculous. Set off against the mighty struggles of Cromwell and King in Marvell's "Horatian *Ode*," the youth singing in the shadows "His Numbers languishing" and even Cromwell himself in his earlier garden seclusion "As if his highest plot / To plant the Bergamot" (I, 92) are laughable in their innocuousness. Much as Marvell valued the creativity and simplicity of childhood retreat he could not see life from that perspective alone. No more than Milton could he give unqualified praise to a "fugitive and cloistered virtue." Yet far more than Milton he could appreciate its attractions. The traditional Anglican unity, in all its cloistered, static loveliness, exerts

an emotional pull; so does the Pauline and Puritan vision of life as heroic struggle toward social reform and self-regeneration. Neither world view suffices in itself and neither can be taken quite seriously from the standpoint of the other, but the two contraries must be patched together into a whole somehow if life is to be lived to its fullest. And in the thick of the fight, it is pleasant to know that the green world and its renewing energies are always there for the asking. Marvell's ability to step out of history and back into the temporary stasis of a garden or grove is something which he possesses within himself, independent of outward circumstances. By abandoning adult passion and ambition, he can re-create the Eden of childhood, if only fleetingly. We can speculate that long after Marvell had given up life in the country at Nun Appleton for an active career in public and parliamentary affairs, long after he had given up the "Numbers languishing" of lyric poetry for political satire, he still felt the pull of the garden. In the middle of a sober business letter in 1673 he happened to remark, "I intend by the end of next week to betake my selfe some fiue miles of to injoy the spring & my privacy" (II, 328).



Toward Further Speculation

It has often been asserted that childhood was “discovered” by writers of the romantic era. But it would be a mistake to assume that childhood has ever been discovered once and for all, like some new continent on the English literary map which once found could be charted for the enlightenment of later explorers. If we have tended not to find child subjects in earlier literature, it must be in large part because we have been taught not to look for them. Since our own views about childhood have developed out of romantic ideas, we have quite naturally been inclined to accept the notion that the romantics were the first to take any sort of real interest in that stage of life. It may be, too, that we have not until recently known *how* to look for child subjects in earlier literature. Now that historians of childhood and the family have begun to delineate earlier patterns of child-rearing and to investigate how those patterns are related to other more familiar aspects of a given culture, we have a fascinating new set of interrelationships to explore. By measuring the portrayal of child subjects in literature against a wider range of attitudes and actual behavior toward children, we can learn a great deal about what is going on in that literature, and in other areas of a given culture as well.

The sudden appearance (or disappearance) of childhood as an important literary subject seems always to be a barometer for important cultural change. We have singled out three periods when child subjects rose to unusual prominence—the fourteenth century, the seventeenth, and the early nineteenth—and suggested a connection between the experience of cultural breakdown and an idealization of the undifferentiated wholeness of the child’s per-

ception. But this attempt at explanation is quite speculative. A great deal of fascinating work remains to be done on why child subjects have surfaced in literature at some times and not at others. What sort of explanation we accept as sufficiently explaining such phenomena will of course depend on our own assumptions and frame of reference.

During the seventeenth century, the theme of returning to childhood in English poetry was closely tied to an extreme political polarization in England. We have traced two opposing clusters of attitudes: the Puritan emphasis on original sin and the transformation of individual children into agents of moral and social reform, and the conservative Anglican emphasis on original innocence and idealization of childhood as a symbolic link with a past untroubled by Puritan agitation. During the decades of upheaval before and after the Civil War, the two currents were clearly polarized: the moral valuation of childishness was a focal point for much wider political and religious antagonisms. But pro- or anti-childishness cannot always be so closely correlated with political allegiance. After 1660, with the reestablishment of relative peace and order in England and the relaxing of many of the tensions generated during the Civil War period, the two currents tended to merge.

Calvinism remained a potent ideological force in England, but Nonconformist writers gradually diluted and deemphasized the doctrine of original sin. By the time of Daniel Defoe's *Family Instructor* (1715), the Puritan child had become a "teacher sent from Heaven" whose natural impulses toward good made him an agent for the conversion of his lax and hypocritical elders.¹ Isaac Watts' *Divine and Moral Songs for Children* placed seventh in a list of nine items for the instruction of children that "they may be taught that their very natures are sinful" and qualified it with a hesitant "may." The idea of infant damnation does appear in Dr. Watts' *Songs*, but only once, and then in the midst of a lullaby designed not to alarm children but to put them to sleep.² James Janeway's *A Token for Children* appeared in several eighteenth-century editions and seems to have been widely read. William

Godwin remembered his own youthful enthusiasm for Janeway's model children, whose "premature eminence suited to my own age and situation strongly excited my emulation. I felt as if I were willing to die with them, if I could with equal success enjoy the admiration of my friends and mankind."³ But if the young Godwin's reaction was at all typical, Janeway's book was read more as a manual for gaining childhood renown than as an impassioned attempt to save children from hell.

During the same period, as we have seen, the child-centered family structure and the concern for children's actual needs and capacities which had been particularly emphasized by seventeenth-century Puritans spread to the upper levels of society and became the preferred model. Nearly everywhere in eighteenth-century culture we can find evidence for a shift toward new tolerance for childish behavior and a new concentration on children's welfare—from methods of education, secular and religious, to toys, children's books, and practices of child care.⁴ By the romantic period, expressions of concern for children and sentimentality toward childhood had become commonplace in the world of English letters and could no longer be tied to any particular ideology.

Vaughan's "The Retreat" and Wordsworth's "Intimations Ode" have been tirelessly compared ever since Archbishop Trench first noted their similarity in 1868 and explained it by demonstrating, to his own satisfaction at least, that Wordsworth had owned a copy of *Silex Scintillans*. Though Trench's certainty of direct influence cannot be shared by modern critics,⁵ his perception of the striking parallels between the two poems is certainly valid. Both use the idea of preexistence; both see the human progress through life as gradually extinguishing the glorious vision of infancy; and both revere childhood for its possession of powers lost to adults, although Wordsworth was much more sanguine than Vaughan about the compensations of later life—the "years that bring the philosophic mind" and the "primal sympathy" which allows a return in thought to the vision no longer perceived through the eyes. But why limit comparisons to Vau-

ghan and Wordsworth? "The Retreat" and the "Intimations Ode" are only the two most obvious of many points of contact between seventeenth-century and romantic images of childhood. William Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and Book Second of the *Prelude* are as concerned with the unity of infant vision as the writings of Thomas Traherne. Sexual innocence and experience and their relationship to artistic creativity are as constant a theme in Blake's poetry as they are in Andrew Marvell's. Coleridge's notebooks indicate that he planned a whole series of poems on the subject of infancy.⁶ The traditional association of childhood with the ideals of humility and simplicity was as central to the *Lyrical Ballads* as it was to the verse of Herbert and Herrick: by elevating children and child subjects to an important place in his poetry, Wordsworth deliberately set his work against the norms of eighteenth-century neoclassicism just as the earlier poets had repudiated the assumptions of sixteenth-century humanism. Both the seventeenth-century poets and the first generation romantics were writing during times of revolution and social unrest, when important intellectual syntheses had recently been abandoned. Both groups of poets experienced considerable social and psychic dislocation at least to some degree related to the turbulence of the age in which they lived, and both groups explored childhood for possible solutions to the problem of disorientation and cultural fragmentation.

By the romantic period, however, the idealization of childhood was no longer a touchstone for political and religious conservatism. The romantics took considerable interest in recapturing the ideal of the animate unity of all things, an ideal which England had "outgrown" in the seventeenth century. They were interested in the possibility of merging with the natural world and reinvesting it with spiritual significance, in exploring traditional agrarian patterns of life in opposition to industrialization and the new science. But for the romantic poets, at least in their younger years, childhood was usually a symbol of revolt against traditional institutions of church and state and the traditional social hierarchy: the child in its simple, wholesome purity was the basis upon which a

new, more egalitarian society was to be built. Later on in the century, the idealization of childhood was taken up by writers and thinkers all across the political spectrum. Wordsworth's "Intimations Ode" and other similar poems were immensely influential upon members of the Oxford movement: the Tractarians and their more Calvinistically inclined opponents fought a nineteenth-century battle over church forms and doctrine which in many ways recapitulated the far more momentous controversies of two centuries before and had some of the same political implications. But the romantic idealization of childhood was adopted just as enthusiastically by reformers committed to recasting English society so that the child's "heavenly patrimony" would not be closed off and destroyed by "excessive labor, inadequate education, poor housing" or other earthly ills.⁷

Now that we are coming to recognize the historical relativity of the pervasive literary worship of childhood, it is necessary to explore its cultural meanings further. Freud has certainly offered a number of important insights into the nineteenth-century idealization of childhood, but these are only a beginning; much remains to be discovered. If in earlier periods the idealization of childhood can be correlated with cultural breakdown, the extreme and pervasive idealization of childhood in the nineteenth century may indicate that in that century the condition of cultural breakdown had itself become a norm. The exaltation of childhood has been a strong tendency in our own unquiet century as well, but we may simply be too close to our own times to be able to look at how child subjects function in our own literature with any real perspective. We have discovered that by exploring attitudes toward childhood in earlier literature and culture we can learn a great deal about how people of various times and places have viewed life as a whole. It may indeed turn out that our own rather sudden burst of interest in the history of childhood and the family in the 1960s and 1970s will, for future investigators, prove a similarly fruitful way of approaching our own assumptions and preoccupations. By our attempts to find out how other people have thought and written about childhood, we are in fact defining ourselves.

Notes
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Notes

Chapter 1. Childhood and Social Class

1. Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost* (New York: Scribner, 1965), pp. 103–04. For Gregory King's estimates, see his *Natural and Political Observations and Conclusions upon the State and Condition of England, 1696* (London, 1810); and the modern evaluation in D. V. Glass, "Gregory King's Estimate of the Population in England and Wales, 1695," *Pop. Stud.*, 3 (1949–50), 338–74.

2. See, e.g., Peter Coveney, *The Image of Childhood: The Individual and Society: A Study of the Theme in English Literature*, rev. ed. (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin, 1967), p. 29; and D. W. Harding, "The Character of Literature from Blake to Byron," in *The Pelican Guide to English Literature*, ed. Boris Ford, rev. ed. (Baltimore: Penguin, 1962), V, 33–64, esp. pp. 38–40.

3. See Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, tr. Robert Baldick (New York: Random House, 1962). In "Developmental Perspectives in the History of Childhood," *JIH*, 2 (1971), rpt. in *The Family in History: Interdisciplinary Essays*, ed. Theodore K. Rabb and Robert I. Rothberg (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1973), pp. 127–39, John Demos has pointed out that Ariès studied childhood as a "mirror which focuses and reflects back cultural themes of central importance." Demos called for more work correlating patterns of child rearing and adult personality structures. Here we will be interested chiefly in views of childhood as a mirror of cultural attitudes, but we cannot entirely ignore the separate issue of what child rearing in earlier cultures was like. In *Parents and Children in History: The Psychology of Family Life in Early Modern France* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), David Hunt has attempted to fill a large gap in Ariès' exposition by examining very early developmental stages, but Hunt generalizes widely on the basis of an atypical example, the early training of Louis XIII. Ariès' failure to consider the class limitations of his formulations has been noted and discussed by Lutz K. Berkner in "Recent Research on the History of the Family in Western Europe," in a special issue of *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *New Social History of the Family*, ed. Michael Gordon and Tamara Hareven, 35 (1973), 395–405; and by Lawrence Stone in "The Massacre of the Innocents," *NYRB* (Nov. 14, 1974), pp. 25–31. In *The History of Childhood* (1974; rpt. New York: Harper

Torchbooks, 1975), Lloyd deMause takes Ariès to task for fuzziness and distortion of evidence, but deMause's collection, although full of useful data, is methodologically chaotic and sometimes inclined to overemphasize the most negative evidence and treat it as normative. A number of other studies will be cited in the course of our discussion. For more bibliography, see Berkner and C. John Sommerville's "Bibliographic Note" in Rabb and Rothberg, pp. 227-35.

4. See, e.g., Gordon J. Schochet, "Patriarchalism, Politics and Mass Attitudes in Stuart England," *HJ*, 12 (1969), 413-41.

5. Montesquieu, *Pensées in Oeuvres complètes*, ed. André Masson (Paris: Nagel, 1950-55), II, 46. Other examples will be cited in the course of the discussion that follows.

6. See, e.g., Francis Janney, *Childhood in English Non-Dramatic Literature 1557-1798*, Diss. Johns Hopkins 1925 (Griefswald: Abel, 1925), pp. 13-15.

7. John Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius: or, The Grammar Schoole* (London, 1627), p. 308. For accounts of other Renaissance prodigies, see George Boas, *The Cult of Childhood*, Studies of the Warburg Institute, Vol. 29 (London, 1966), p. 17; Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt, *Children in English Society Vol. I: From Tudor Times to the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1969), pp. 10 ff.; and J. H. Van den Berg, *The Changing Nature of Man: Introduction to a Historical Psychology*, tr. H. F. Croes (New York: Delta Dell, 1961), pp. 26-28.

8. See, e.g., F. E. Hutchinson, *Henry Vaughan: A Life and Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1947), pp. 24-25.

9. T. S. Eliot, "The Silurist," *Dial*, 83 (1927), 260-61.

10. The phrase is borrowed from Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1963). In using his phrase, I do not mean to suggest that the seventeenth-century poets were espousing the same ideology as critics of the modern German state, although there are some points of similarity.

11. Thomas Vaughan, *Euphrates, or the Waters of the East (1655)*, ed. W. Wynn Westcott, *Collectanea Hermetica*, Vol. 7 (London, 1896), pp. 28-29.

12. Quoted from Ernst Robert Curtius' discussion of the *topos* in *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, tr. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963), pp. 98-101. For a general survey of classical opinion see Boas, pp. 12-15. I have made no attempt to explore the subject independently since our interest here is in the major currents later writers inherited from the classics.

13. See Louis Chéronnet's pamphlet, *L'Enfant dans l'Antiquité*, Series L'Enfant dans l'art (Villefranche-Rhone, 1950).

14. Plato, *Laws*, VII, 808 in *Dialogues*, tr. B. Jowett, 4th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1953), IV, 376.

15. *Natural History* VII, Proem, Sect. 1; quoted in Arthur O. Lovejoy and George Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1935), p. 402.

16. Arthur F. Leach, *Educational Charters and Documents, 598 to 1909* (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1911), p. 45; William Nelson, ed., *A Fifteenth Century Schoolbook* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956), p. 33.

17. Robert Steele, *Medieval Lore from Bartholomaeus Anglicus* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1907), pp. 51–52.

18. John Lydgate, *The Minor Poems*, ed. Henry Noble MacCracken, *EETS*, es 107 (London, 1911), pp. 343–56.

19. See Roger Sherman Loomis, *Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1927), p. 56; and Lotte Graeffe's survey of medieval ballads and romances, "The Child in Medieval English Literature from 1200 to 1400," Unpub. diss. University of Florida 1965.

20. Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, tr. Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperger (New York: Longmans, Green, 1941), I, 17, 284, 316; II, 676.

21. See Ariès, pp. 33–35; and Pierre Du Colombier's pamphlet *L'Enfant au Moyen âge*, Series L'Enfant dans l'art (Villefranche-Rhone, 1951). DeMause claims, however, that Ariès has ignored "voluminous evidence that medieval artists could, indeed paint realistic children" (p. 5).

22. Ariès, Chap. 2, esp. p. 34; Frank Manuel has complained that historians have tended to treat Ariès as "Holy Writ"; see "The Use and Abuse of Psychology in History," *Daedalus*, 100 (1971), 203; and deMause's list, pp. 5 and 57, n. 22.

23. See, e.g., the extended and detailed description of St. Hugh's affection for children in *Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis*, ed. Decima L. Douie and Dom Hugh Farmer (London: Nelson, 1961), I, 129–30; Bartholomaeus's account of the tasks of the nurse in Steele, pp. 53–54; and Mary Martin McLaughlin's "Survivors and Surrogates: Children and Parents from the Ninth to the Thirteenth Centuries" in deMause, pp. 101–81. McLaughlin, however, is sometimes too inclined to accept literary evidence as proof of actual practice; if saints' mothers are portrayed as invariably solicitous and loving toward their children (in imitation of the Virgin), that pattern probably tells us more about hagiographic convention than about actual child-rearing practices; the same criticism applies to Michael Goodich's "Childhood and Adolescence among the Thirteenth-Century Saints," *History of Childhood Quarterly: The Journal of Psychohistory*, 1 (1973), 285–309.

24. For standard opinions see William Langland, *Piers the Plowman*, ed. Walter W. Skeat, rev. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), I, 124; *Handlyng Synne*, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, Roxburghe Club Pub., No. 81 (London, 1862), p. 154; Nicholas Bozon, *Metaphors* tr. J[ohn] R[ose] (London: Constable, 1913), pp. 26–28, and 62; and G. R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1933), pp. 461–68. G. G. Coulton quotes one of the earliest books of household conduct in *Chaucer and His England*, 4th ed. (New York: Methuen, 1927), p. 216; and Agnes Paston's advice to her son's tutor at Cambridge assumed beatings were an essential part of the learning process. See H. S. Bennett, *The Pastons and Their England* (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1922), p. 82.

25. See G. G. Coulton's account in *Five Centuries of Religion* (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1923–50), I, 222–30; and McLaughlin's more positive discussion in deMause, pp. 129–32, 174 n., 195–97.

26. For general studies of the place of children in medieval society, see Ariès, Pts. 2–3, esp. pp. 365–69; early portions of Pinchbeck; Bennett, pp. 73–81; Margaret Wade Labarge, *A Baronial Household of the Thirteenth Century* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 45–47; John William Adamson, *A Short History of Education* (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1919), Chap. 3; and Frederick J. Furnivall, ed., *Manners and Meals in Olden Time: The Babees Book, etc., EETS*, os 32 (London, 1868), a collection of treatises on the duties of pages with a very useful introduction.

27. *Pueriles Confabulatiunculæ: or Childrens Dialogues*, tr. John Brinsley (London, 1617), p. 19.

28. Quoted from Adamson, *Short History*, p. 84. The “common form” openings are discussed in Bennett, p. 73.

29. See Enid Welsford, *The Fool: His Social and Literary History* (1935; rpt. London: Faber, 1968), pp. 200–03; and Barbara Swain, *Fools and Folly during the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1932), pp. 4–5, 55–61.

30. Quoted from the legend of Peter of Malines in Coulton, *Five Centuries*, I, 109.

31. See E. K. Chambers, *The Medieval Stage* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1903), I, 143 n., 260. For flogging as a mnemonic device, see Coulton, *The Medieval Village* (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1925), p. 73.

32. Paul Sabatier, *Life of St. Francis of Assisi*, tr. Louise Seymour Houghton (New York, 1895), pp. 281–82.

33. *The Mirror of Perfection*, tr. Robert Steele in *The Little Flowers of St. Francis and Other Writings*, ed. Hugh McKay (New York: Dutton, 1963), p. 275.

34. St. Augustine, *Confessions*, tr. Edward Pusey (New York: Washington Square Press, 1960), p. 9.

35. St. Bonaventura, *The Life of St. Francis in Little Flowers*, p. 368; and Thomas of Celano, *The Lives of S. Francis of Assisi*, tr. A. G. Ferrers Howell (New York: Dutton, 1908), pp. 178 and 328.

36. Karl Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1933), II, 24–28.

37. *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, tr. and ed. Isa Ragusa and Rosalie B. Green (Princeton: Univ. Press, 1961), pp. 71–72.

38. Nicholas Love, *The Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ*, ed. Lawrence F. Powell (Oxford: Clarendon, 1908), p. 47.

39. See Leah Sinanoglou [Marcus], “The Christ Child as Sacrifice: A Medieval Tradition and the Corpus Christi Plays,” *Speculum*, 48 (1973), 491–509.

40. Clement A. Miles, *Christmas in Ritual and Tradition* (London: Unwin, 1912), p. 39.
41. Geoffrey Chaucer, *Works*, ed. F. W. Robinson, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside, 1961), p. 23.
42. Richard Leighton Greene, ed., *The Early English Carols* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935), pp. 37-38.
43. Carleton Brown, ed., *Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1924), p. 91.
44. See Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1953), I, 22-23; Emile Mâle, *L'Art religieux de la fin du moyen âge en France*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Colin, 1922), Chap. 4; and Mary Desirée Anderson, *Drama and Imagery in English Medieval Churches* (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1963), p. 54.
45. Greene, pp. 69-70.
46. Lydgate, p. 138.
47. Chaucer, p. 161.
48. John Mirk, *Festial*, ed. Theodore Erbe, *EETS*, es 96 (London, 1905), p. 25.
49. Although we know that extremely large households were general among the upper classes, the notion that people of all other classes in preindustrial Europe lived in extended families has been disproved. See Peter Laslett and Richard Wall, eds., *Household and Family in Past Time* (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1972), pp. 139-56; Rabb and Rothberg, pp. 4, 174 n., and 220. Emily R. Coleman's "Medieval Marriage Characteristics: A Neglected Factor in the History of Medieval Serfdom," Rabb and Rothberg, pp. 1-15, has found the nuclear family predominant even among the peasantry of ninth-century Ile-de-France.
50. Owst, pp. 27-35.
51. Millard Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death* (Princeton: Univ. Press, 1951), p. 61; Mâle, p. 197 and, more generally, pp. 167-218 on the laicization of French art.
52. *The Non-Cycle Mystery Plays*, ed. Osborn Waterhouse, *EETS*, es 104 (Oxford, 1909), p. 43.
53. *York Plays*, ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith (Oxford, 1885), pp. 235-36. Unfortunately, most of this episode is lost. For the subject in art, see Louis Réau, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1955-59), II, ii, 329.
54. Quoted from Samuel B. Hemingway's ed., *English Nativity Plays* (New York: Holt, 1909), pp. 64-65.
55. The Towneley "Second Shepherds' Play," *Ibid.*, p. 213.
56. See Michael Drayton's sonnet "To Folly," *The Works*, ed. J. William Hebel, corr. ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1961), II, 321; and Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1939), pp. 104-27.

57. *The Colloquies*, tr. Craig R. Thompson (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 3.
58. *Tottel's Miscellany*, ed. Edward Arber (London, 1870), p. 30.
59. *Arcadia or Menaphon*, ed. E. Brydges, *Archaica* (London, 1815), I, 39–41.
60. Shakespeare, *The Complete Works*, ed. Peter Alexander, Tudor ed. (London: Collins, 1954), *R. III*, III, i, p. 721 and *Cym.* I, i, p. 1198. For childhood in sixteenth-century portraiture see Bettina Hürlimann, *Children's Portraits: The World of the Child in European Painting* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1950).
61. See Walter Kaiser, *Praises of Folly* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1964), pp. 9–11.
62. *Paraphrases upon the New Testament*, ed. Nicholas Udall (London, 1551–52), I, Fols. lxxii and lxxvi.
63. Richard Hooker, *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie*, 3rd ed. (London: 1611), Bk. 3, p. 98.
64. Henry Cornelius Agrippa, *Of the Vanitie and vncertaintie of Artes and Sciences*, tr. Ia. San[ford] (London, 1575).
65. Edmund Spenser, *Poetical Works*, ed. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt, Oxford Standard Authors Ed. (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1912), Bk. II, Canto I, 40, p. 74, and Bk. II, Canto II, 1, p. 76.
66. See Erasmus, *Colloquies*, pp. 32–34; Elyot, *The Book named The Governor*, ed. S. E. Lehmburg (London: Dent, 1962), Bk. I, viii, p. 26; and Kempe, *The Education of Children in Learning in Four Tudor Books on Education*, ed. Robert D. Pepper (Gainesville, Fla.: Scholars' Facsimiles & Rpts., 1966), pp. 213–14.
67. *The Catechism of Thomas Becon, with Other Pieces*, ed. John Ayre, Parker Soc., Vol. 13 (Cambridge, 1844), p. 8.
68. *The Petie Schole* (London, 1587), p. 50.
69. For general studies of medieval and Renaissance education, see John William Adamson, *'The Illiterate Anglo-Saxon' and Other Essays on Education, Medieval and Modern* (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1946); Adamson, *Short History*, pp. 45–124; Kenneth Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1965); Clara P. McMahon, *Education in Fifteenth Century England*, Johns Hopkins Studies in Educ., No. 35 (Baltimore: 1947); and William Harrison Woodward, *Studies in Education during the Age of the Renaissance, 1400–1600*, Columbia Univ. Teachers College Classics in Educ., No. 32 (New York, 1967), particularly Lawrence Stone's forward to this last book.
70. T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakespeare's Petty School* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1943); Foster Watson, *The English Grammar Schools to 1660* (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1908); and Pinchbeck, p. 280.
71. John Evelyn, *Diary*, ed. E. S. de Beer, Oxford Standard Authors Ed. (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1959), p. 385.
72. In "The Rise of the Nuclear Family in Early Modern England: The Patriarchal Stage," in *The Family in History*, ed. Charles E. Rosenberg (Philadelphia:

Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), pp. 13-57. Lawrence Stone has argued that between 1500 and about 1660 there was actually a temporary strengthening of the preexisting "patriarchal authoritarianism" in the family. See also Schochet, p. 420.

73. John Donne, *Sermons*, ed. George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1953-62), IX, 59.

74. Quoted in A. M. Earle, *Child Life in Colonial Days* (New York, 1899), p. 193.

75. See John Brinsley, *Corderius Dialogues Translated* (London, 1636), Bk. II, Dialogue 50, p. 124; Roger Ascham, *The Scholemaster* (London, 1570), Preface; Elyot, Bk. I, v, p. 18; and Henry Peacham, *The Complete Gentleman*, ed. Virgil B. Heltzel (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1962), p. 47.

76. Thomas Dekker, *The Dramatic Works*, ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1953-61), Act IV sc. i, I, 254.

77. See, e.g., Nelson, pp. 13-14; W. H. Woodward, *Desiderius Erasmus concerning the Aim and Method of Education*, Columbia Univ. Teachers College Classics in Education, No. 19 (New York, 1964), p. 189; Woodward, *Studies in Educ.*, pp. 163-70; Peacham, p. 208; and John Stephens, *Essayes and Characters, Ironically, and Instructive* (London, 1615), p. 412.

78. See John Stephens, Character VIII, "A Farmer," p. 317; and Francis Bacon, Essay VII, "Of Parents and Children," in *Essays, Advancement of Learning, New Atlantis, and Other Pieces*, ed. Richard Foster Jones (New York: Odyssey, 1937), p. 19.

79. *Aubrey's Brief Lives*, ed. Oliver Lawson Dick (1949; rpt. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1962), pp. xxxi-xxxiii. For more negative descriptions of the transformation see Aubrey's quotation from Thomas Tyndale, pp. 302-03; and Isaac Watts, *Works* (London, 1753), V, 396.

80. See Lawrence Stone's *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965); and his "Marriage among the Elizabethan Nobility in the 16th and 17th Centuries," *Comp. Stud. Soc. Hist.*, 3 (1961), pp. 182-206.

81. Stone, *Crisis*, pp. 745-49; on the decline of authoritarianism in the family, see also Schochet, pp. 436-37.

82. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 2 (Jan., 1732), p. 556. See also Pinchbeck, pp. 304-07.

83. Alexander Pope, *Dunciad*, IV, 501-04 in *Poetical Works*, ed. Herbert Davis (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966), p. 576.

84. Quoted in Adolph Charles Babenroth, *English Childhood: Wordsworth's Treatment of Childhood in the Light of English Poetry from Prior to Crabbe* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1922), p. 19.

85. *The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), No. 246, II, 454; and No. 192, II, 255.

86. *The Lucubrations of Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq.* (London, 1728), No. 189, III, 350.

87. *The Guardian* (London, 1756), No. 105, II, 93; No. 62, I, 276; and No. 150, II, 260–61.

88. Henry Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones: A Foundling*, ed. Martin C. Battestin and Fredson Bowers, Wesleyan Ed. (Oxford: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1975), I, 39.

89. Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, ed. Maynard Mack (New York: Holt, Rinehart, 1961), pp. 218–19.

90. *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, ed. R. W. Chapman, rev. Oxford Standard Authors Ed. (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1953), p. 1216.

91. *Pamela*, intro. M. Kinkead-Weekes (New York: Dutton, 1962), II, 401.

92. See Babenroth, *passim*.

93. Quoted in Babenroth, p. 252. For childhood in eighteenth-century art, see Pierre Du Colombier's pamphlet, *L'Enfant au XVIII^e siècle*, Series L'Enfant dans l'art (Villefranche-Rhone, 1956); and for more general cultural surveys, J. H. Plumb, "The New World of Children in Eighteenth-Century England," *Past and Present*, No. 67 (1975), 64–95; Rosamond Bayne-Powell, *The English Child in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Dutton, 1939); and F. J. Harvey Darton, *Children's Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1958).

94. Quoted in Bayne-Powell, *English Child*, p. 14.

95. Locke, *Works*, (1823; rpt. Darmstadt, Germany: Scientia Verlag, 1963), IX, 153–68; see also Plumb, pp. 67–80.

96. On funerary commemorations of children, see Ariès, pp. 40–42; and Stone, *Crisis*, p. 593. Ariès' evidence must be received with caution: I have seen separate funerary effigies of children in English churches dated earlier than he claims they are to be found. For examples of the literary vogue see Ben Jonson, *Works*, ed. C. H. Herford Percy and Evelyn Simpson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1947), VIII, 41; Robert Herrick, *The Poetical Works*, ed. L. C. Martin (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956), p. 123; George Wither, *Poetry*, ed. Frank Sidgwick (London: Bullen, 1902), II, 184; and William Browne, *Poems*, ed. Gordon Goodwin (London, 1894), II, 270. Most of these examples show clear indebtedness to Martial, *Epigrams*, Bk. 6, LII; Bk. 7, XCVI; Bk. 10, LXI; and Bk. 11, XCI; but it is significant that this particular classical form was not revived until the seventeenth century. For child portraiture in the seventeenth century, see Ariès, p. 45; and Hürlimann.

97. Epistle Dedicatory, Bk. I.

98. Herrick, p. 86.

99. John Brinsley, *Ludus*, p. 277. See also Charles Hoole, *A New Discovery of the old Art of Teaching Schoole*, ed. E. T. Campagnac (London: Constable, 1913), pp. 10–40; John Clarke, *Bishop Gilbert Burnet as Educationist*, Aberdeen Univ. Stud., No. 67 (Aberdeen, 1914), pp. 15–25; the preface to Commenius, *Orbis Sensualium*

Pictus, tr. Charles Hoole (London, 1664); J. W. Adamson, *Pioneers of Modern Education 1600–1700*, (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1921); and Watson, pp. 268–72. In his “Rise of the Nuclear Family,” Lawrence Stone has argued that school flogging may have become *more* common from medieval times to the seventeenth century, if only because more children went to school; his evidence for the Middle Ages, however, is extremely scanty. See notes 24, 25, and 31 above. Whether or not children were actually given less physical punishment, seventeenth-century educational theorists certainly placed more stress than their forebears on milder alternate methods of imparting knowledge.

Chapter 2. Childhood and Seventeenth-Century Ideology

1. See Carl Gustav Jung, “The Special Phenomenology of the Child Archetype,” in *Psyche and Symbol: A Selection from the Writings of C. G. Jung*, ed. Violet S. de Laszlo (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1958), p. 144. Although I find this formulation useful, I would by no means describe my own approach to the subject as Jungian.

2. William Laud, *Liturgy, Episcopacy and Church Ritual* (Oxford, 1840), p. 308.

3. See Cornelius à Lapide, *Commentarii in IV Evangelia* (Antwerp, 1732), I, 345 and 367; and in particular, Origen’s commentary on Matthew in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. IX, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (New York, 1925).

4. St. Augustine, *Confessions*, pp. 6–7 and 18.

5. Lapide, I, 344. My translation.

6. John Calvin, *A Harmonie vpon the three Evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke, with the Commentarie of M. Iohn Caluine*, tr. E[usebius] P[agit] (London, 1610), pp. 485–86.

7. John Calvin, *The Institution of Christian Religion*, tr. Thomas Norton (London, 1611), Bk. II, Chap. I, p. 108. Norton’s translation is accurate. For medieval opinion, see G. G. Coulton’s pamphlet *Infant Perdition in the Middle Ages*, *Medieval Studies*, No. 16 (London: Simkin, Marshall, 1922).

8. The Ninth Article reads: “Original Sin standeth not in the following of Adam, as the Pelagians do vainly talk, but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and therefore in every person born into the world it deserveth God’s wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated, whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek *φρόνημα σαρκός*, which some do expound the wisdom, some the sensuality, some the affection, some the desire, of the flesh, is not subject to the law of God. And although there is no condemnation to them that believe and are bap-

tized, yet the apostle does confess that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin."

9. Godfrey Goodman, *The Fall of Man* (London, 1616), pp. 327–30; John Donne, "Death's Duel" in *Sermons*, X, 232.

10. On burial customs, see Christina Hole, *English Home-Life 1500 to 1800* (London: Batsford, 1947), pp. 76, 171.

11. *Sermons*, V, 162 ff.

12. Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (New York: Schocken, 1964), p. 13. I am strongly indebted to Hill's work. For a concise study of Puritan doctrinal differences from Anglicanism, see John F. H. New, *Anglican and Puritan: The Basis of Their Opposition 1558–1640* (London: A. & C. Black, 1964).

13. John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding and The Pilgrim's Progress*, ed. John Brown (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1907), p. 8.

14. Oliver Heywood, *His Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books*, ed. J. Horsfall Turner (Bingley, 1882–85), I, 153–54. See also Paul Delany, *British Autobiography in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1969).

15. James Janeway, *A Token for Children* (London, n.d.), "To Parents and Teachers of Children." See also Thomas White, *A Little Book for Little Children*, 12th ed. (London, 1702), Chap. I.

16. Bunyan, p. 8.

17. Janeway, pp. 14, 8.

18. [John] B[unyan], *A Book for Boys and Girls or Country Rhimes for Children* (London, 1686), pp. 55–56.

19. John Milton, *Complete Prose Works*, ed. Douglas Bush et al., II (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1959), 515–16.

20. Oliver Heywood, *The Best Entail, Or Dying Parents Living Hopes for their Surviving Children* (London, 1693), Preface. For general studies of Puritan family life see Levin L. Schücking, *The Puritan Family: A Social Study from the Literary Sources*, tr. Brian Battershaw (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1969); Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Family*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966); Hill's Chap., "The Spiritualization of the Household"; and John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970).

21. Heywood, *Autobiography*, I, 205.

22. Charles Webster, *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine and Reform 1626–1660* (London: Duckworth, 1975), esp. Chap. 6. See also Webster, ed., *The Intellectual Revolution of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1974), which collects the articles from *Past and Present* debating the social origins of the scientific revolution.

23. Though Puritan educators distrusted play in general, they recognized that a

certain amount of play was necessary for children's health. For representative opinions see William Gouge, *The Works* (London, 1627), "Domesticall Duties," p. 297; William Perkins, *Christian Oeconomie*, tr. Thomas Pickering (London: 1609), p. 142; and Richard Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Pt. II, Chap. X in *The Practical Works* (London, 1838), I, 452. On discipline, see Morgan, pp. 103-37; Edward Hake, *A Touchstone for this time present* (London, 1574), sig. F7; and in particular, Hezekiah Woodward, *A Childs Patrimony and a Childs Portion* (London, 1643).

24. See Alan MacFarlane, *The Family Life of Ralph Josselin, a Seventeenth Century Clergyman* (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1970), p. 83; and Demos, p. 133. For Puritan opinion on breastfeeding, see Gouge, pp. 288-91; and William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (1938; rpt. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957), p. 30. For other methods of birth control see MacFarlane, p. 203; Schücking, p. 67; Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971), p. 189; Louis Henry's study of Calvinist Geneva, *Anciennes familles genevoises: Etude démographique XVI^e-XX^e siècles*, Institut Nationale d'Etudes Démographiques: Travaux et documents cahier No. 26 (Paris, 1956), pp. 71-142; and E. A. Wrigley, "Family Limitation in Pre-Industrial England," *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2nd ser. 19 (1966), 82-109.

25. Woodward, *Patrimony*, "Epistle to the Ministers."

26. Baxter, *The Catechising of Families*, Chap. 38 in *Works*, IV, 135; and *Compassionate Counsel to All Young Men*, Chap. 3, in *Works*, IV, 4.

27. Quoted in Morgan, p. 168. My discussion of American Puritanism is heavily indebted to Morgan. On naming customs see Charles Bardsley, *Curiosities of Puritan Nomenclature* (New York, 1880), pp. 117-212; Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1946), p. 112; and M. M. Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism: A Chapter in the History of Idealism* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 463.

28. Quoted in Morgan, p. 184. See also Heywood, *Entail*, p. 21 ff.; and Joseph E. Illick, "Child-Rearing in Seventeenth-Century England and America" in *The History of Childhood*, ed. deMause, esp. pp. 327-31.

29. Ephraim Pagitt, *Heresiography* (London, 1645), p. 35.

30. Quoted from the extensive excerpts in Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, rev. ed. (London: Temple Smith, 1970), pp. 328-29.

31. St. Teresa, *Works*, tr. and ed. E. Allison Peers (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1957), II, 130-31. See also her *Interior Castle*, in *Works*, II, 245.

32. St. François de Sales, *An Introduction to a Devout Life*, tr. I. Y., 3rd ed. (Rouen, 1614), pp. 98, 153, 492, and 503; *A Treatise of the Love of God*, tr. Miles Car, 18th ed. (Douay, 1630), pp. 354-55, 389-91, and 403.

33. Francis Quarles, *Complete Works in Prose and Poetry*, ed. Alexander Grosart (Edinburgh, 1880-81), I, lxxiv.

34. Quarles, *Emblemes and Hieroglyphicks of the Life of Man* (London, 1658), p. 198.

35. See Ariès, pp. 121–22.

36. Hermann Hugo, *Pia Desideria*, tr. Edmund Arwaker (London, 1686), pp. 133–34.

37. The phrase is Jules Michelet's, *Histoire de France* (Paris, 1857), XI, 167. Father de Bérulle, later Cardinal, was active in negotiating the marriage of Henrietta Maria to Charles I, and accompanied her to the English Court with twelve other Oratorians in 1625, remaining until forced by Protestant intolerance to return to France. For his theology, see "De l'Abaissement du Fils de Dieu," in the *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. M. Migne (Paris, 1856), pp. 1006–07. Berullian ideas in the writings of other Oratorians are discussed in Henri Bremond, *A Literary History of Religious Thought in France*, tr. K. L. Montgomerie (London: S.P.C.K., 1928–36), III.

38. Bremond, III, 457–60.

39. Albert Lepitre, *St. Anthony of Padua*, tr. Edith Guest (London: Duckworth, 1902), pp. 88–89. See, e.g., J. van Oost's painting of St. Anthony in the Groeninge Museum, Bruges, Belgium. For general treatments of Counter-Reformation devotion to the childhood of Christ, see Bremond, III, 163–65 and *passim*; and Emile Mâle's monumental study, *L'Art religieux du XVI^e du XVII^e et du XVIII^e siècle*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Colin, 1951), pp. 321–22 and 179–83.

40. Thomas Fuller, *Good Thoughts in Bad Times and Other Papers* (London, 1880), p. 135.

41. John Milton, *Paradise Regained, the Minor Poems, and Sampson Agonistes*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Odyssey, 1937), Bk. I, lines 200–06, p. 454.

42. William Crashaw, *The Iesuites Gospell: Written by themselves* (London, 1621), The Epistle.

43. Quarles, *Works*, ed. Grosart, II, 201–02; see also Quarles, *Emblemes*, p. 221.

44. See Ariès, p. 124; and the fine collection of engravings in Tome VI of the Cabinet des Estampes ser. "Histoire du Sauveur" at the Bibliothèque nationale, from which the frontispiece was chosen. The subject, however, was not used exclusively by Counter-Reformation artists but is prominent as well in art associated with the Lutheran Reformation, where it was apparently used to emphasize the necessity for educating children.

45. Baxter, *A Treatise of Conversion*, Chap. I, in *Works*, II, 424.

46. Owen Feltham, *Resolves. Divine, Morall, Politicall* (London, 1628), p. 192.

47. Thomas Fuller, *The Infants Advocate* (London, 1653), p. 109.

48. Jeremy Taylor, *Unum Necessarium*, Chap. VI in *The Whole Works*, ed. Charles Page Eden (London, 1847–54), VII, 267–68.

49. Thomas Fuller, *A Pisgah-Sight of Palestine* (London, 1650), Dedicatory Epistle to Bk. I.

50. John Earle, "A Childe" in *Micro-cosmographie, or A Peece of the World Discovered* (London, 1628).

51. Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, tr. from the 1944 ed. (Boston: Beacon, 1955), p. 13.
52. Baxter, *A Treatise of Conversion*, Chap. IV in *Works*, II, 454.
53. Phillip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses* (London, 1583), sig. N.
54. J[ohn] H[all], *Emblems with elegant Figures* (London, 1648), p. 5.
55. Plato, *Laws*, VII, 803. Quoted in Huizinga, pp. 18-19. This translation best brings out the play ideal in Plato.
56. St. Bernard, *Life and Works*, tr. and ed. John Mabillon and Samuel J. Eales (London, 1896), I, 314.
57. See Greene, ed., *Early English Carols*, pp. cxiv-cxxvii.
58. *Dives and Papver* (London, 1534 for 1536), fol. 120-32. For medieval opinion against holiday festivities, see Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, I, Appendix 23, 526-41; and II, Appendix 7, 441-45. See also his *Medieval Village*, pp. 255-60.
59. *Ludus Coventriae*, ed. K. S. Block, *EETS*, es 120 (London, 1922), p. 16. For medieval liturgy and drama as play see Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church*, I, 81-85; O. B. Hardinson, Jr., *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1965), Essay II; and V. A. Kolve, *The Play Called Corpus Christi* (Stanford: Univ. Press, 1966), Chap. 8.
60. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, tr. from the 1962 edition (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 233-67.
61. See Emile Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIII^e siècle en France*, 5th ed. (Paris: Colin, 1923), Introduction.
62. Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, tr. Rosemary Sheed (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1958), p. 391. See also his *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return*, tr. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959), pp. 85-86. For an edition of "Vertewis of the Mass" see *Ratis Raving*, ed. J. Rawson Lumby, *EETS*, os 43 (London, 1870), p. 113. St. Augustine's supposed teachings about the virtues of the mass were frequently cited in the work of late-medieval popularizers.
63. See Charles Trinkaus and Heiko A. Oberman, eds., *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion: Papers from the University of Michigan Conference* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), esp. A. N. Galpern, "The Legacy of Late Medieval Religion in Sixteenth Century Champaign," pp. 141-76. See also Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, tr. F. Hopman from the 1924 edition (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor, 1954); and Arthur B. Ferguson, *The Indian Summer of English Chivalry* (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1960), esp. Chap. 4.
64. Martin Luther, *The Works*, ed. Henry Eyster Jacobs et al. (Philadelphia: Holman, 1915-32), IV, 380-81.
65. See Calvin's *Petit traité de la Sainte Cène* in *Trois traités*, ed. Albert-Marie Schmidt, *Oeuvres de Jean Calvin*, Vol. 2 (Paris: Edition "Je sers," 1934), p. 133.

66. *Certaine Sermons or Homilies Appoynted to be read in Churches* (London, 1633), II, 71.
67. Thomas, p. 75.
68. See W. B. Rye, ed., *England as Seen by Foreigners in the Days of Elizabeth and James the First* (1865; rpt. New York: Bloom, 1967), pp. 10 and 16; and Thomas Platter, *Travels in England (1599)*, tr. Clare Williams (London: Jonathan Cape, 1937), pp. 149, 176, and 209.
69. Richard Hooker, *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie*, 3rd ed. (London, 1611), Bk. 5, pp. 195–96.
70. *Homilies*, I, 69–70.
71. Hooker, Bk. 5, pp. 375–76. See also R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (London: Murray, 1927), Chap. III.
72. Hooker, Bk. 5, p. 381.
73. Henry Barrow, *A Brief Discoverie of the False Church in The Writings 1587–1590*, ed. Leland H. Carlson, *Elizabethan Nonconformist Texts*, Vol. 3 (London: Allen & Unwin, 1962), pp. 364–67.
74. Quoted in W. H. Hutton, *The English Church from the Accession of Charles I to the Death of Anne (1625–1714)* (London: Macmillan, 1903), p. 101.
75. William Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix* (London, 1633), pp. 112–15, 505.
76. Baxter, *Christian Directory in Works*, I, 153. Baxter's direct target is Catholicism, but it is clear that his oblique aim is criticizing Laudianism.
77. Baxter, *The Saints' Everlasting Rest in Works*, III, 342; and *A Treatise of Self-Denial in Works*, III, 426.
78. Hooker, Bk. 4, p. 129.
79. Quoted in W. B. Whitaker, *Sunday in Tudor and Stuart Times* (London: Houghton, 1933), p. 62.
80. Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism*, pp. 131–36 and passim.
81. Prynne, p. 253. See also Stubbes's *Anatomie*, "Dancing, a corrosiue."
82. *The Kings Maiesties Declaration to His Subjects, Concerning lawfull Sports to be vsed* (London, 1633), pp. 10–11.
83. *Homilies*, I, 90 and 98.
84. Hooker, Bk. 5, pp. 289, 250, 275, and 198.
85. See, e.g., Donne's exposition of Matt. 18:3 in *Sermons*, IV, 205. We will encounter many other examples later in our discussion.
86. Thomas Sprat, *Sermons Preached on Several Occasions* (London, 1697), pp. 3 and 34–35.
87. See, among many other discussions of the shift, Eliade, *Cosmos*, p. 144; Thomas, pp. 425–30; and S. F. Mason, "Science and Religion in Seventeenth-Century England" in *Intellectual Revolution*, ed. Webster, pp. 197–217.
88. For antiquarianism see Thomas, p. 428; and Oliver Lawson Dick's Introduction to *Aubrey's Brief Lives*. The aristocratic reaction is treated at length in

Lawrence Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, pp. 26, 581, 751, and passim. The golden age motif will be discussed later, but see also Harry Levin, *The Myth of the Golden Age in the Renaissance* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana Univ. Press, 1969), pp. 99-115; and Frances A. Yates, "Queen Elizabeth as Astraea," *JWCI*, 10 (1947), 27-82.

89. For other examples see Hill's chapter, "Individuals and Communities."

90. See Heiko Oberman, "The Shape of Late Medieval Thought: The Birthpangs of the Modern Era" in *The Pursuit of Holiness*, pp. 3-25.

91. This is, of course, a very brief statement of the complex theory of narcissism, or, as it is coming to be called, the theory of the self. See Heinz Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self*, The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child Monograph Ser., No. 4 (New York: International Universities Press, 1971) and the just published *The Restoration of the Self* (New York: International Universities Press, 1977). I am indebted to my friends and colleagues at the Workshop on Psychosocial Studies of the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis for my growing acquaintance with Kohut's theories and their application to other disciplines. Kohut's theories are, in general, quite compatible with the work of Jean Piaget, cited below.

92. Wordsworth, *Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, rev. ed. Ernest de Selincourt (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1969), Bk. Second, lines 232-40, p. 505.

93. See in particular Jean Piaget's *The Moral Judgment of the Child*, tr. Marjorie Gabain (1932; rpt. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960); *The Language and Thought of the Child*, tr. Marjorie Gabain (New York: Meridian, 1955); and *The Child's Conception of the World*, tr. Joan and Andrew Tomlinson (1929; rpt. London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1960). For studies of the changing cosmography see, e.g., G. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1945), Part II: "The Renaissance View of Nature"; and Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *The Breaking of the Circle*, rev. ed. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1960).

94. George Herbert, *Works*, ed. F. E. Hutchinson, rev. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), p. 91.

95. W. E. Woodward, *Desiderius Erasmus*, p. 141.

Chapter 3. *The Poet as Child: Herbert, Herrick, and Crashaw*

1. Izaak Walton, *Walton's Lives*, ed. S. B. Carter (London: Falcon, 1951), p. 256.

2. George Herbert, *Works*, ed. F. E. Hutchinson, rev. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), p. 366. Future quotations from this edition will be indicated by page number in the text. My discussion of Herbert's biography is strongly indebted to Joseph H. Summer's valuable study *George Herbert: His Religion and Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1954), pp. 13-48; Marchette Chute, *Two*

Gentle Men: The Lives of George Herbert and Robert Herrick (New York: Dutton, 1959), pp. 22–56 and passim; and Helen C. White, *The Metaphysical Poets: A Study in Religious Experience* (New York: Macmillan, 1936), pp. 106–85. I regret that Amy M. Charles, *A Life of George Herbert* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1977), appeared too late to influence my work.

3. George Herbert, *The Latin Poetry*, tr. Mark McCloskey and Paul R. Murphey (Athens, Ohio: Ohio Univ. Press, 1965), p. 169.

4. As a younger son Herbert was, of course, by no means alone in his predicament. See Joan Thirsk, "Younger Sons in the Seventeenth Century," *History*, ns 54 (1969), 358–77; and Mark Curtis, "The Alienated Intellectuals of Early Stuart England," *Past and Present*, No. 23 (1962), pp. 25–43.

5. Walton, p. 212.

6. Donne, *Sermons*, I, 281. On baptismal customs in the early church see Pierre Pourrat, *Christian Spirituality*, tr. W. H. Mitchell and S. P. Jacques (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1953), I, 17; and William Wall, *The History of Infant Baptism*, 3rd ed. (London, 1720), I, 260; II, 389.

7. See Summers, pp. 16–19; and Helen Vendler, *The Poetry of George Herbert* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 267–68.

8. Richard Baxter, *A Treatise of Conversion in Practical Works*, II, 399. For another example see Thomas Goodwin, *The Works* (London, 1681–1704), V, x.

9. Bunyan, *Grace Abounding*, p. 6. See also William Haller's discussion of sermon style in *The Rise of Puritanism*, Chap. IV et passim; and Stanley Fish's illuminating discussion in *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972), pp. 70–75.

10. John Donne, "Expostulation 19," *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*, ed. John Sparrow (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1923), pp. 113–14. On *poesis* as a play function, see Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* Chap. VII. Huizinga's insights are applied to seventeenth-century literature in Joan Webber's valuable *The Eloquent "I": Style and Self in Seventeenth-Century Prose* (Madison, Wisc.: Univ of Wisconsin Press, 1968); and Frank J. Warnke, "Sacred Play: Baroque Poetic Style," *JAAC*, 22 (1964), 455–64.

11. Herbert, *Latin Poetry*, pp. 94–95. Stanley Fish has argued that the process of Herbert's poems is a series of self-consuming retreats in which the poet is "reduced to silence and disappears" (p. 203). That is indeed the process of some of Herbert's poems, but not all. I agree with Helen Vendler that although Herbert is often silenced and humiliated, his separateness of self is not completely annihilated, p. 291, n. 4.

12. Walton, p. 241.

13. Vendler, Chap. V. See also Mary Ellen Rickey, *Utmost Art: Complexity in the Verse of George Herbert* (Lexington, Ky.: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1966), upon which Vendler's discussion is partly based.

14. Walton, p. 228. On Herbert's *persona* of child and servant see also Rosalie L. Colie's excellent study "Logos in The Temple," *Paradoxia Epidemica* (Princeton: Univ. Press, 1966), Chap. 6.
15. Goodman, *The Fall of Man*, pp. 163–64.
16. On the decline of the great household, see J. Alfred Gotch, *The Growth of the English House* (London: Batsford, 1909), pp. 150–60; and Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy*.
17. *The Autobiography of Edward Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, ed. C. H. Herford (N.p.: Gregynog Press, 1928), p. 6.
18. Walton, p. 246.
19. Chute, p. 22.
20. Vendler, p. 248.
21. See Herford's introduction to the *Autobiography* and Delany, *British Autobiography*, pp. 20–21.
22. Vendler, pp. 244–45.
23. In *Music for a King: George Herbert's Style and the Metrical Psalms* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1972), Coburn Freer carries his argument for the influence of the psalms much too far, but does succeed in making his case for poems like "Easter" and "The 23rd Psalm," pp. 135–39. See also Michael P. Gallagher's study of the plain style, "Rhetoric, Style, and George Herbert," *ELH*, 37 (1970), 495–516.
24. F. W. Moorman, *Robert Herrick: A Biographical and Critical Study* (London: John Lane, 1910), p. 137. For the same idea in more recent scholarship, see Chute, pp. 199–205; and John Press's pamphlet, *Herrick, Writers and Their Work*, No. 132 (London: Longmans, Green, 1961), pp. 31–35.
25. Miriam K. Starkman's valuable study "Noble Numbers and the Poetry of Devotion" in *Reason and the Imagination*, ed. Joseph A. Mazzeo (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1962), was to my knowledge the first to suggest that the apparent childishness of *Noble Numbers* was a deliberate artistic strategy. See also Robert H. Deming's very useful discussion in *Ceremony and Art: Robert Herrick's Poetry* (The Hague: Mouton, 1974), pp. 66–79, 103–13, and 139–42.
26. Robert Herrick, *The Poetical Works*, ed. L. C. Martin (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956), p. 249. Future quotations from this edition will be indicated by page number in the text. I am also indebted to J. Max Patrick, ed., *The Complete Poetry of Robert Herrick* (New York: Norton, 1968).
27. Starkman, pp. 8–10.
28. Vendler, p. 175.
29. *The Quarterly Review*, 4 (August, 1810), Article XI, p. 172.
30. For reactions to the *Book of Sports*, see Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism*, pp. 193–200.
31. Herbert's line from "The Water-Course,"

Who gives to man, as he sees fit, $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Salvation} \\ \text{Damnation} \end{array} \right.$

has usually been cited as a demonstration of the poet's acceptance of predestination; but it does not follow a hard-line predestinarian position since Herbert leaves open the question of whether what God sees fit to give is based on the spiritual state of the recipient.

32. See Hill, "Individuals and Communities" and passim; and Chute, p. 240.

33. *Young Man Luther* (New York: Norton, 1962), p. 179.

34. Herbert, *Works*, p. 283.

35. *Seven Questions of the Sabbath* (Oxford, 1637), p. 236. For other examples, see John Pocklington, *Sunday No Sabbath* (London, 1636), p. 37; and Peter Heylyn, *The History of the Sabbath* (London, 1636), Bk. II, p. 269.

36. See my "Herrick's Noble Numbers and the Politics of Playfulness," *ELR*, 7 (1977), 108-26.

37. See in particular Deming's book; his "Robert Herrick's Classical Ceremony," *ELH*, 34 (1967), 327-48; his "Herrick's Funeral Poems," *SEL*, 9 (1969), 153-67; A. Leigh DeNeef, "*This Poetick Liturgie*": *Robert Herrick's Ceremonial Mode* (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1974); and Daniel H. Woodward, "Herrick's Oberon Poems," *JEGP*, 64 (1965), 270-84. My reading of Herrick portrays him as more specifically Laudian and anti-Puritan than any of these.

38. See my "Herrick's *Hesperides* and the 'Proclamation Made for May,'" *SP*, in press.

39. Claude J. Summers, "Herrick's Political Poetry: The Strategies of His Art," in "*Trust to Good Verses*": *Herrick Tercentenary Essays*, ed. Roger B. Rollin and J. Max Patrick (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1978).

40. Richard Crashaw, *The Poems English, Latin and Greek*, ed. L. C. Martin, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957), p. xxix. All quotations from this edition will be cited by page number in the text.

41. Crashaw, p. 416, p. xxxiii. My discussion of Crashaw has been particularly influenced by Mario Praz, *The Flaming Heart* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1958); Malcolm Mackenzie Ross, *Poetry and Dogma: The Transfiguration of Eucharistic Symbols in 17th-Century Poetry* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1954); Austin Warren, *Richard Crashaw: A Study in Baroque Sensibility* (University, La.: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1939); and George Walton Williams, *Image and Symbol in the Sacred Poetry of Richard Crashaw* (Columbia, S.C.: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1963). As Richard Strier has reminded us in "Crashaw's Other Voice," *SEL*, 9 (1969), 135-51, Crashaw was certainly capable of writing poetry of considerable psychological complexity. Why he chose not to develop his poetry in this particular direction will be one of the foci of our discussion.

42. Donne, *Sermons*, I, 209.

43. "De l'Abaissement du Fils de Dieu," in *Oeuvres*, p. 1007. My translation.

44. Francis Quarles, *Emblemes and Hieroglyphicks*, pp. 354–56.

45. Samuel C. Chew, *The Pilgrimage of Life* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1962), p. 148. See also Herbert's "Mortification." Helen Vendler has claimed that "the startling resemblance between swaddling-bands and a shroud is one that only a poet would be struck by" and argued that this personalization of the homiletic is the basis for the poem's success (pp. 168–70). The perception of the resemblance, was, however, as much a seventeenth-century commonplace as some of the others Vendler dismisses as tedious.

46. See George Walton Williams's helpful edition, *The Complete Poetry of Richard Crashaw* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor, 1970), pp. 624–28.

47. Praz, p. 232.

48. *A Treatise of the Love of God*, p. 270.

49. Pourrat, I, 12.

50. De Sales, *Treatise*, pp. 272–73. For the sacramental blood and milk motifs in art see Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena*, pp. 151–52; and Réau, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien*, III, i, 209.

51. See David Hunt, *Parents and Children in History*, pp. 119–20.

52. William Crashaw, *The Iesvites Gospell*, p. 11.

53. *Ibid.*, "The Epistle."

54. St. Teresa, *Works*, II, 130–31.

55. St. John of the Cross, *Spiritual Canticle in Collected Works*, tr. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), p. 517. The King James version of Isaiah 66:12 interprets the mother figure to be not God but Jerusalem, and calls her "she." Bérulle's *Discours de l'Etat et des grandeurs de Jesus, Oeuvres*, p. 335, also transforms God into a mother.

56. Herbert, *Latin Poetry*, p. 119. See also Herbert's "Longing."

57. Donne, "Death's Duel," *Sermons*, X, 248; Jeremy Taylor, *Holy Living*, Chap. IV, Sect. X in *The Whole Works*, III, 218.

58. See Mary Ellen Rickey, *Rhyme and Meaning in Richard Crashaw* (Lexington, Ky.: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1961), pp. 6–9.

59. Depictions of the seven deadly sins in the Renaissance often paired the pig of gluttony with a human baby. According to a treatise on birth attributed to Hippocrates, infants are born because they are incontinently driven out of the womb by hunger. See Joseph Needham, *A History of Embryology*, 2nd ed. rev. (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1959), p. 36.

60. Robert Southwell, *The Poems*, ed. James H. McDonald and Nancy Pollard Brown (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), p. 16.

61. Herbert, *Works*, p. 55.

62. Taylor, *Holy Living*, Chap. I, Sect. III in *Works*, III, 23.

63. A. Alvarez, "Marvell and the Poetry of Judgement (1960)," in *Marvell: Modern Judgements*, ed. Michael Wilding (New York: Macmillan, 1969), p. 182.

Chapter 4. *Children of Light: Vaughan and Traherne*

1. Henry Vaughan, *Works*, ed. L. C. Martin, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957), p. 391. Future quotations from this edition will be cited by page number in the text. Among the numerous critical discussions of Vaughan, Helen C. White, *The Metaphysical Poets*; M. M. Mahood, *Poetry and Humanism* (1950; rpt. Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat, 1967), and Louis L. Martz, *The Paradise Within* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1964), are particularly useful in defining the quality of the poet's religious experience and linking Vaughan to earlier poets like Herbert. L. C. Martin, "Henry Vaughan and the Theme of Infancy," in *Seventeenth Century Studies Presented to Sir Herbert Grierson* (1938; rpt. New York: Octagon, 1967), 243-55, is an important study of the sources and emotional impetus behind Vaughan's retreat to childhood; Martin points out that Wordsworth and Vaughan shared some of the same depression in similar political and personal circumstances. Chapter 5 of James D. Simmonds, *Masques of God: Form and Theme in the Poetry of Henry Vaughan* (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1972), is the most comprehensive discussion of Vaughan's anti-Puritanism. Leona Spitz, "Process and Stasis: Aspects of Nature in Vaughan and Marvell," *HLQ*, 32 (1969), 135-47, draws a number of important distinctions between the perceptions of nature in the two poets.

2. *A Pisgah-Sight of Palestine* (London, 1650). Dedicatory Epistle to Bk. I. Vaughan was probably acquainted with some of the writings of Jacob Boehme, who frequently describes the angels in heaven as playing children. See *The Three-fold Life of Man*, tr. John Sparrow, reissued by C. J. B[arker], Intro. by G. W. Allen (London: Watkins, 1909), p. 363; and *The Aurora*, tr. John Sparrow, ed. C. J. B[arker] and D. S. H[ehner] (London: Watkins, 1914), pp. 277, 287.

3. Thomas Vaughan, *Euphrates, or the Waters of the East (1655)*, ed. W. Wynn Westcott, *Collectanea Hermetica*, Vol. 7 (London, 1896), pp. 28-29.

4. St. Augustine, *Confessions*, p. 5.

5. See W. G. T. Shedd's concise discussion of preexistence in *A History of Christian Doctrine* (New York, 1864), II, Bk. 4, Chap. 1.

6. On preexistence in seventeenth-century England, see Merritt Y. Hughes, "The Theme of Pre-Existence and Infancy in *The Retreat*," *PQ*, 20 (1941), 484-500; Marjorie Hope Nicolson, ed., *Conway Letters: The Correspondence of Anne, Viscountess Conway, Henry More, and Their Friends, 1642-1684* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1930), p. 173; and Anne Davidson [Ferry]'s unpublished dissertation, "Innocence Regained: Seventeenth-Century Interpretations of the Fall of Man," Columbia University, 1956.

7. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 250, in *Dialogues*, tr. Jowett, III, 157.

8. Henry More, *Philosophical Poems*, ed. Geoffrey Bullough, Univ. of Manchester English Ser., No. 20 (Manchester, 1931), p. 249.

9. For examples see Ariès, p. 36. Creationism is, of course, much older than the Middle Ages, but it was especially predominant then. Authorities varied on when infusion of the soul took place—at conception, at birth, or in between—and whether the whole soul was infused or only its rational faculty. See Needham, *History of Embryology*, pp. 91–94.

10. Jeremy Taylor, quoting Prudentius in *A Further Explication of the Doctrine of Original Sin*, Chap. 7, Sect. 1, in *The Whole Works*, VII, 307.

11. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 250, in *Dialogues*, III, 157.

12. The idea is of course traditional. See *Notes and Queries*, Ser. 4, Vol. 7 (1871), 211 and 394; and Ser. 4, Vol. 8 (1871), 54.

13. See Simmonds' reading, pp. 46–49.

14. John Earle, "A Childe" in *Micro-cosmographie*.

15. *Hermetica*, ed. and tr. Walter Scott (Oxford: Clarendon, 1924–36), I, 197–99.

16. Edmund Waller, *Poems*, ed. G. Thorn Drury (London, 1893), II, 144. Waller, however, does not combine this vision of gradual enlightenment with the doctrine of preexistence.

17. Henry Vaughan, *The Complete Poetry*, ed. French Fogle (1964; rpt. New York: Norton, 1969), pp. 45–46.

18. Quoted from a manuscript at Peterhouse, Oxford, in Warren, *Richard Crashaw*, pp. 50–51.

19. George Herbert, "The H. Communion" in *Works*, p. 53. I am indebted to Mahood, p. 28.

20. See E. L. Marilla, "Henry Vaughan and the Civil War," *JEGP*, 41 (1942), 214–26.

21. Martz, p. 13.

22. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth, "Vaughan's Temple in Nature and the Context of 'Regeneration,'" *JEGP*, 74 (1975), 351–60.

23. Thomas Traherne, *Centuries, Poems, and Thanksgivings*, ed. H. M. Margoliouth (Oxford: Clarendon, 1958), I, 113. All future quotations from this edition will be cited by volume and page number in the text. The best full-length studies of Traherne are K. W. Salter, *Thomas Traherne, Mystic and Poet* (London: Arnold, 1964); and Gladys I. Wade, *Thomas Traherne* (Princeton: Univ. Press, 1946). See also Allen H. Gilbert "Thomas Traherne as Artist," *MLQ*, 8 (1947), 319–41, for a critique of some of Wade's assumptions. Particularly useful studies of Traherne's religious ideas include Rosalie Colie's "Thomas Traherne and the Infinite: The Ethical Compromise," *HLQ*, 21 (1957), 69–82; Davidson [Ferry], n. 6 above; and Martz, *The Paradise Within*. Carol L. Marks has studied Traherne's sources in "Thomas Traherne and Cambridge Platonism," *PMLA*, 81 (1966), 521–34; and "Thomas Traherne and Hermes Trismegistus," *RN*, 19 (1966), 118–31; See also Joan Webber's discussion of Traherne's prose style in *The Eloquent "I."*

24. Jeremy Taylor quotes Theophilus Antiochenus [Ad Autolyicum lib. ii (cap.

25): "Adam, in that age was yet as an infant, and therefore did not understand that secret, viz., that the fruit which he ate had in it nothing but knowledge" (*Works*, VII, 322). For similar opinions in other early authorities, see George Boas, *Essays on Primitivism and Related Ideas in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1948), pp. 16, 25, 39, 43, and 95–96; and Davidson [Ferry], pp. 42 and 242.

25. Earle, "A Childe."

26. *The Fall of Man*, pp. 328–29.

27. Taylor, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living*, Chap. II, Sect. VI, in *Works*, III, 107.

28. Andrew Willet, *Hexapla in Genesis, a Sixfold Commentary upon Genesis* (London, 1608), p. 39. Willet, however, discounts the idea.

29. Thomas Traherne, *Christian Ethicks*, ed. Carol L. Marks and George Robert Guffey (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1968), p. 104. Traherne's recently discovered "Select Meditations" IV, 37 expands on man's superiority to the angels. I am greatly indebted to the late James M. Osborn for having kindly allowed me to read this as yet unpublished manuscript in the Beinecke Library, Yale University. Quotations from this manuscript will be slightly modernized, and indicated by Century (roman numerals) and Meditation (arabic numerals) in the text.

30. *Christian Ethicks*, pp. 209–10. See also "Select Med.," III, 98.

31. For the ancestry of the definition, see Hiram Haydn, *The Counter-Renaissance* (New York: Scribner, 1950), p. 335; and Abel Lefranc, *Grands écrivains Français de la Renaissance* (Paris: Champion, 1914), pp. 172–81.

32. Meister Eckhart of Strasbourg, *Selected Treatises and Sermons*, tr. and ed. James M. Clark and John V. Skinner (London: Collins, 1963), p. 54.

33. St. Teresa, *Works*, I, 58.

34. St. John of the Cross, *Works*, p. 583.

35. See Piaget, *The Child's Conception of the World*. Salter discusses the absence of self-object boundaries in Traherne's work, p. 32.

36. Piaget, *Child's Conception*, p. 49.

37. "Select Med.," IV, 3. Quoted in Martz, p. 210.

38. G. G. Coulton cites Tertullian, Aquinas and many other sources in his *Five Centuries of Religion*, I, Appendix 2, 441–42.

39. From an unsigned preface to Traherne's "A Serious and Pathetical Contemplation," quoted in Margoliouth, I, xxxi–xxxii. One might be inclined to attribute this description of Traherne to someone who got his notion of the man from his writings, since it was published in 1699, 25 years after Traherne's death. But George Hicks, who saw the work through the press, wrote the bookseller that the preface was written by one who had actually known Traherne and wished to pay tribute to his memory.

40. "Select Med.," III, 65. Quoted by James M. Osborn in "A New Traherne Manuscript," *TLS* (Oct. 8, 1964), p. 928.

41. Chapter V of *Christian Ethicks* contains a prominent exception. Traherne states, "Tho the first Man (who had experience of both Estates) was able to compare them, because in his Corruption, he might possibly retain a Sence of that Nature, and Life which he enjoyed in his integrity: Yet all his posterity, that are born Sinners, never were sensible of the Light and Glory of an Innocent Estate" (pp. 38–39). This flatly contradicts his conception of the child's original innocence in *The Centuries* and his poetry, as well as other passages in *Christian Ethicks*. It may well be that Traherne felt obliged, under pressure from religious authorities, to "recant" or at least hedge his most unorthodox doctrines.

42. *Christian Ethicks*, p. 251.

43. The idea of the *tabula rasa* was by no means invented by Locke, but a seventeenth-century commonplace, often used in discussion of education and ultimately based on Plato's comparison of the soul to a wax tablet in *Theatetus*, 191. Traherne actually uses the phrase *Rasa Tabula* in his "Select Med.," IV, 2.

44. Quoted in Luella Wright, *The Literary Life of the Early Friends* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1932), p. 18.

45. *The Works of the Ever Memorable Mr. John Hales of Eton* (Glasgow, 1765), II, 247.

46. Taylor, I, 118.

47. Taylor, "Sermon: The Christian Conquest over the Body of Sin" in *Works*, VIII, 270.

48. *The Court of the Gentiles* (Oxford, 1669–77), Part III, p. 147. For Traherne's interest in Gale, see Wade, pp. 252 ff.

49. As we have seen, for Traherne, Christ's death on the cross was necessary to redeem man once fallen. Traherne discusses Christ's role in his *Centuries*, I, 40–43. Nearly every critic has felt compelled to comment on Traherne's ideas about original sin. For an interpretation opposite to mine, see William H. Marshall, "Thomas Traherne and the Doctrine of Original Sin," *MLN*, 73 (1958), 161–64.

50. See *Christian Ethicks*, pp. 78–79.

51. See the introduction to John M. Wallace, *Destiny His Choice: The Loyalism of Andrew Marvell* (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1968).

Chapter 5. Beyond Child's Play: Andrew Marvell

1. Michel de Montaigne, *Complete Essays*, tr. Donald Frame (Stanford: Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 651–52. For Gerson's ideas see Ariès, pp. 106–09; and on the observations of St. Jerome and St. Gregory, Frederick J. Furnivall, ed., *Child-Marriages, Divorces, and Ratifications &c in the Diocese of Chester, A.D. 1561–66*, *EETS*, os 108 (London, 1897), pp. xxiii–xxix.

2. Robert Farlie, *Kalender of Mans Life* (London, 1638), sig. C4.

3. Vaughan, *Works*, p. 521.

4. Waller, *Poems*, I, 57. For a study of Marvell's relationship to the genre see J. B. Leishman, *The Art of Marvell's Poetry*, 2nd ed. (London: Hutchinson Univ. Library, 1968), pp. 171 ff.

5. Andrew Marvell, *The Poems and Letters*, ed. H. M. Margoliouth and rev. Pierre Legouis (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), I, 27. Future quotations from this edition will be cited by volume and page number in the text. Important critical studies of Marvell are numerous and seem more often to be new departures than attempts to build upon earlier readings; every reader of Marvell is likely to come away with a different set of interpretations. Sensitive discussions to which I am indebted include Donald M. Friedman, *Marvell's Pastoral Art* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1970); Harold Toliver, *Marvell's Ironic Vision* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1965); and Rosalie Colie, "*My Echoing Song*": *Andrew Marvell's Poetry of Criticism* (Princeton: Univ. Press, 1970). For Marvell's attitude toward sexuality, I am indebted to Lawrence W. Hyman, *Andrew Marvell* (New York: Twayne, 1964); Frank Kermode, "The Argument of Marvell's 'Garden,'" *Seventeenth Century English Poetry: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. William Keast (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962); and Ruth Nevo, "Marvell's 'Songs of Innocence and Experience,'" *SEL*, 5 (1965), 1–21; and for Marvell's politics, to John M. Wallace, *Destiny His Choice*.

6. Thomas Carew, *Poems*, ed. Rhodes Dunlap (Oxford: Clarendon, 1949), p. 103.

7. See Herrick, *Poetry*, ed. Patrick, "The Rose," p. 526.

8. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Sexuality and the Christian Tradition* (Dayton, Ohio: Pflaum, 1969), p. 65.

9. Abraham Cowley, *Essays, Plays and Sundry Verses*, ed. A. R. Waller (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1906), p. 396.

10. Farlie, "February, or Epitaphs," sig. K2.

11. The most thorough contemporary commentary on Genesis is Benedictus Valentinus Pererius, *Commentariorum et disputationum in Genesim tomi quatuor Opus* (1622). See also Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in the Middle Ages*; and for classical opinion, Lovejoy and Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity*, pp. 158 and 354–55.

12. Joshua Abelson, *The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1912), p. 281.

13. Shakespeare, *WT*, I, ii, *Works*, ed. Alexander, p. 378.

14. Feltham, *Resolves*, "Second Century," pp. 91–92.

15. Willet, *Hexapla in Genesis*, p. 56.

16. *Pia Desideria*, tr. Arwaker, pp. 163–64. See also Stanley Stewart's valuable study, *The Enclosed Garden: The Tradition and the Image in 17th Century Poetry* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1966).

17. Abraham Cowley, *Poems*, ed. A. R. Waller (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1905), p. 67.
18. Carew, p. 50.
19. Chew, *Pilgrimage of Life*, p. 154.
20. Traherne, *Centuries, Poems, and Thanksgivings*, I, 111.
21. See Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton, 1950), p. 186.
22. Plato, *Dialogues*, tr. Jowett, I, 524. For the Hermaphrodite as a Renaissance symbol of marriage, see Donald Cheney, "Spenser's Hermaphrodite and the 1590 *Faerie Queene*," *PMLA*, 87 (1972), 192–200.
23. Traherne, *Centuries, Poems, and Thanksgivings*, I, 102. See also William Empson's discussion in *Some Versions of Pastoral* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1935), pp. 119–25.
24. See *Select Writings and Letters of Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa*, tr. William Moore and H. A. Wilson, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd ser., Vol. 5 (New York, 1893), p. 407; *The Pyramider of Hermes*, tr. Dr. Everard (1650), *Collectanea Hermetica*, Vol. 2 (London: 1893), pp. 25–26; and Jacob Boehme, *Mysterium Magnum*, tr. John Sparrow, ed. C. J. B[arker] (London: Watkins, 1924), I, 123. For rabbinical interest in the idea, see Ruth Wallerstein, *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Poetic* (1950; rpt. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1965), pp. 333–34; and Mircea Eliade, *The Two and the One*, tr. J. M. Cohen (London: Harville Press, 1965). For Fairfax's interest see Maren-Sofie Røstvig, "Andrew Marvell's 'The Garden': A Hermetic Poem," *ES*, 40 (1959), 65–76.
25. Boehme, *Mysterium*, I, 123–24.
26. William A. McQueen and Kiffin A. Rockwell, *The Latin Poetry of Andrew Marvell* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1964), p. 43.
27. Sigmund Freud, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, ed. James Strachey et al. (London: Hogarth, 1959), IX, 220–23.
28. Freud, XI, 180–81.
29. The issue of Marvell's marriage is settled in F. S. Tupper, "Mary Palmer, alias Mrs. Andrew Marvell," *PMLA*, 53 (1938), 367–92. For the accusations of pamphleteers, see Pierre Legouis, *André Marvell: Poète, Puritain, Patriote* (1928; rpt. New York: Russell, 1965), pp. 367–68, 459–60.
30. See Wolfgang Lederer, *The Fear of Women* (New York: Greene & Stratton, 1968).
31. Christopher Hill, "Society and Andrew Marvell," *Puritanism and Revolution* (1958; rpt. London: Panther, 1968), pp. 324–50. See also Friedman, pp. 31–32.
32. See David M. Bergeron, *English Civic Pageantry 1558–1642* (London: Arnold, 1971), pp. 83 and 296–97.
33. Don Cameron Allen, *Image and Meaning* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1960), pp. 115–53. See also Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution*, pp. 339–44.

34. For Marvell's short-lived conversion by "Jesuits" in 1639, see Pierre Legouis' convenient English condensation of his monumental study, *Andrew Marvell: Poet, Puritan, Patriot* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), pp. 4 and 7. Legouis speculates that this "conversion" may have been precipitated by the death of Marvell's mother and his father's hasty remarriage in 1638.

35. See Leishman, *Marvell's Poetry*, p. 228; and Wallace, p. 248. See also Summers and Pebworth, "Vaughan's Temple in Nature."

36. Wallace, p. 253.

37. See in particular Earl Miner, "The Death of Innocence in Marvell's 'Nymph Complaining,'" *MP*, 65 (1967), 9–16.

Chapter 6. Toward Further Speculation

1. See Daniel Defoe, *The Novels and Miscellaneous Works* (Oxford, 1841), XV, 4, 13, and 31–41. This development within Puritanism was part of a wider intellectual current; see D. P. Walker, *The Decline of Hell: Seventeenth-Century Discussions of Eternal Torment* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1964).

2. Isaac Watts, *Works*, (London, 1753), V, 362; and IV, 313.

3. Quoted in Bayne-Powell, *English Child*, p. 131.

4. See Chap. I above and the references cited in Chap. I, n. 93.

5. See Helen McMaster, "Vaughan and Wordsworth," *RES*, 11 (1935), 313–25. In "Henry Vaughan and the Theme of Infancy," L. C. Martin suggests that Wordsworth may have drawn indirectly on the same tradition as Vaughan through Coleridge, who knew the Hermetic and Platonic literature very well.

6. *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1957), I, Entry No. 330.

7. See Barbara Garlitz's survey, "The Immortality Ode: Its Cultural Progeny," *SEL*, 6 (1966), 639–49.



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