Robert Herrick’s visual metaphors are the most powerful and yet the weakest. He attempts to capture the perspective of the subject but forever misses that position, as it is impossible to occupy the position of the subject and yet represent the subject through a gaze. In *Hesperides*, the lover’s visual perception of the female form and his gaze of the beloved contradict each other creating not only an emotional tension but a psychological lure that escapes linguistic assimilation. The poet creates a persona who instead of expressing his satisfaction in his union with the beloved reveals his yearning for an unattainable ideal. In *Hesperides* the poet’s gaze acts as an objet a, showing what the persona will always lack not what he can acquire in the foreseeable future. The beloved is always moving along the emotional and visual meridian symbolizing a lack of all those attributes in the persona that she possesses. The persona’s gaze functions as an unconscious invocation to the beloved to satisfy his desire with the full knowledge that between his gaze and what we actually sees is an illusion — a lure that only dazzles the senses. This lure cannot be contained within the institution of marriage. And obviously both the perception and the gaze in *Hesperides* are intrinsically connected to Herrick’s own understanding of the Anglican values, the representation of women, the reinterpretation of the mannerist tradition in poetry and his allegiance to the political ideology of the times.
Implicity *Hesperides* argues that the persona “hopes to have it after all;” hopes to procure the golden apples of marriage, perhaps, by marrying any one of the four African sister nymphs — Aegle, Arethusa, Erythia and Hesperia. But according to the Greek legend a dreadful hundred-headed dragon, Ladon, guards the beautiful garden where the nymphs frolic. No one has ever succeeded at getting the apples except Heracles who tricked Atlas to get some for him. The legend suggests a lure and a trick. It also implies a hope that tantalizes in its proximity but like the dragon presents the dread and confusion of a hundred perspectives. Perhaps this could be one reason why the argument of the book ends with the following lines:

I write of *Hell*; I sing (and ever shall)

*Of Heaven,* and hope to have it after all.¹

The perspective gets more complicated as the persona sings of a time, which is “trans-shifting” or moving beyond comprehension both intellectually and emotionally. And trans-shifting gets linked to the problem of perception, othering, gaze and linguistic anxiety. To find both the muse and mistress amongst the “Mad maiden(s)” who “roeme” but do not “stay at home” would be rather difficult.² *Hesperides* attempts to unravel if not resolve this difficulty.

Herrick’s reputation as a royalist and a randy bachelor who frequented London taverns fantasizing about women in his poems remained unchanged till the late 1970s. During the last three decades literary scholarship has gradually begun to reassess his works. This reassessment has to do in large measure with the changed literary climate that debunked the methodology of New Criticism and introduced Foucauldian dialectics, deconstructionist, feminist and new historicist practices in the understanding of literature. Today more and more critics see Herrick’s works, like the *Hesperides*, as ideologically motivated and representative of the political
turmoil of the 1640s. Claude J. Summers argues that Herrick’s epigrams, verses and poems all express his “extreme royalist attitude.” Critics such as Leah H. Marcus see Herrick’s poems about rural festivity as expressive of a Laudian Anglican “cultural revival.” Marcus contends that the communal holidays within Herrick’s poems function more as “extensions of sacramental worship” reinforcing the authority of the church and the King and less as innocent moments of communal relaxation. Many critics such as Ann Baynes Coiro see Herrick moving beyond the royalist ideology to question the “Stuart ideals” of patrimony, social hierarchy and matrimony. Herrick’s poems are no longer seen as just cloyingly erotic or politically conservative but as artifacts negotiating issues of ideology, hegemony and marginal subjects. However the restoration of Herrick’s poetic reputation has not provided a balanced understanding of his treatment or representation of women.

Recent evaluation of Herrick’s works either employ a post-Freudian paradigm or use a feminist critique, forgetting to locate him in the historical context of seventeenth century Stuart England of which he was very much a part. Gordon Baker on the one hand, believes that the presence of an “obstructed desire” and “prepubescent sexuality” are the twin psychological factors responsible for a profligate eroticism in Herrick’s presentation of women. On the other hand most feminist analyses of Herrick’s poetry seem rather critical of his patriarchal values. Feminist critics like Moira P. Baker and Bronwen Price have explored “the cultural repression of women” in the erotic presentation of the female body. Price employs a Foucauldian argument to suggest that Herrick’s fetishistic and voyeuristic treatment of women was closely tied up with “a sexual politics bound up within an emerging bourgeois economy and discourse of subjectivity.” Evidently most feminist critics ignore the religious, political, personal and totemic dimensions of Stuart England within which these poems were composed.
Heather Dubrow's brilliant study of the tumultuous seventeenth century England highlights the significant role marriage played in strengthening social cohesion. During this period, the institution of marriage was seen as a "source and a symbol of an orderly and harmonious society" as English poets increasingly depended on the epithalamium genre celebrating marriage as a proper mode to allay fears of social instability.  

Interestingly, Herrick in his epithalamia introduces reluctant brides who balk at the suggestion of sexual consummation thus destabilizing the ideology of the marriage poems. By destabilizing the institution of marriage, which reinforced male dominance, Herrick questions the gender politics within Stuart culture. In "Upon some women" he despises those women who cannot love:

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Thou who wilt not love, doe this;
Learne of me what Woman is.
Something made of thred and thrumme;
A mere Botch of all and some.
Pieces, patches, ropes of haire;
In-laid Garbage ev'ry where.12
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Elsewhere he finds women the best of God's creature and worthy of praise:

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O Jupiter, sho'd I speake ill
Of woman-kind, first die I will;
Since that I know, 'mong all the rest
Of creatures, woman is the best.13
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It was widely believed in the Stuart period that the institution of marriage contributed in large measure to social order. Divinely ordained, marriage reinforced patriarchy. Since women were represented as sexually insatiable and
gullible they had to be restrained and guided by fathers and husbands. The social value of women was determined by pre-marital virginity and post-marital fidelity. It was argued that without female chastity it would be rather difficult to establish the legitimacy of heirs.\textsuperscript{14}

Matrimony for women was seen as role fulfilling and natural. Both promiscuous and unmarried women were perceived as threats to society as they attempted to destabilize the social system.\textsuperscript{15} On the contrary men were allowed their bachelorhood without threatening the system.\textsuperscript{14} Herrick himself remained a bachelor by choice throughout his life. In “No Spouse but a Sister,” Herrick confesses that he has remained a bachelor to enjoy freedom and escape marital problems:

\begin{quote}
A bachelour I will
Live as I have liv'd still,
And never take a wife
To crucife my life (Is.1-4):\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

Strangely he chooses a sister, instead of a wife, with whom he would not have incestuous relations:

\begin{quote}
Which I will keep embrac'd,
And kisse, but yet be chaste (Is.9-10).
\end{quote}

The tantalizing thought of incest indulged in a denial stretches the limits of permissible behavior without transgressing the forbidden. This sentiment was quite revolutionary in those times. Though Herrick’s male personae can escape marriage, his female personae are not granted this freedom. In \textit{Hesperides} Herrick exhorts
women to look forward to getting married and not to think of delaying marriage or leading a promiscuous life.\textsuperscript{18}

Herrick's own life has an important bearing on his writing. Though his mistresses are exotic, they are almost always imagined. In "Upon the losse of his Mistresses" Herrick complains how he has lost most of his "dainty" mistresses — Julia, Sapho, Anthea, Electra, Myrha, Corinna and Perilla. He leads a lonely life after "All are gone;" and he concludes:

For to number sorrow by
Their departures hence, and die."\textsuperscript{19}

Interestingly his housekeeper was named Prudence whom he prudently avoids in his poems. Herrick approves of the working class culture but reaffirms social hierarchy.\textsuperscript{20} He socialized a lot and occasionally drank to excess but did not lead a dissolute life. In his poems he reflects a belief in the abiding quality of love. In "Love what it is." he states:

Love is a circle that doth restlesse move
In the same sweet eternity of love.\textsuperscript{21}

A hedonist by temper but a parson by profession, he could quite easily combine a classical paganism with Christian folk tradition in his writing. In his Julia poems he is able to synthesize elements of classical yearning and formality with Anglican rituals of gratification and control.

Herrick saw the evanescence of life but did not become elegiac like Mathew Arnold. He always sought ways to defeat the transience of life through his carpe
diem poems. The idea of carpe diem or seize the day in such poems as “Corinna’s going a Maying,” “To the Virgins” and “To Make Much of Time,” temperamentally suited a man who frequented taverns where he forget his worries in drink and the company of men. When Herrick articulates his yearning or desire for a woman or her loss he is dealing with an imaginary-psychological construct where yearning, desiring or losing the “Other” becomes a pleasure in its own right. He wishes to die before his beloved to escape the pain of bereavement. In “To Julia” he conveys this feeling succinctly:

> Julia, when thy Herrick dies,
> Close thou up thy Poets eyes:
> And his last breath, let it be
> Taken in by none but Thee.

And again in “His Last request to Julia” Herrick writes:

> My Fates are ended; when thy Herrick dyes,
> Claspe thou his Book, then close thou up his Eyes.

From a Lacanian perspective Herrick’s poems enjoy the opposition between “articulated content” and “position of articulation.” Though he rejects promiscuity and social deviance in his articulated content, he might just endorse them as a position of articulation. This line of thought may be somewhat plausible if we see the interconnection between the representation of the female body in poetry and painting.

The representations of the female body in English poetry and painting in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century derived their cue from a common aesthetic
that Herrick understood quite well. Many critics have seen a correlation between Herrick's method of presenting the manner of bodies in motion and the limning style of Elizabethan miniature painters. It is now believed that Herrick's ability to beautify and objectify the female form followed the aesthetic practice of the English limners and the mannerist aesthetic of Nicholas Hillard, Edward Norgate, Henry Peacham, and the former goldsmith William Herrick.26 Herrick's penchant for detail, the presence of fine filigree work in his poems, could be derived from his experience as an apprentice to his goldsmith uncle Sir William Herrick, while his understanding of larger social movements like the Civil War would perhaps be a consequence of his study of law at St. John's College, Cambridge.

It is possible to see the goldsmith's craft and the sculptor's vision in Herrick's finely crafted poems. Critics believe that his poetic style involves grace (grazia), invention (invenzione), technical precision (praecisio), resolution of artistic difficulty-simplicity formula (difficuita/facilita formula) and high manner (high maniera) which were seemingly techniques employed in sculpting the human form27 Benvenuto Cellini's advice about sculpting is a good example of the mannerist tradition. Cellini observes that the human form can best be represented in sculpture if the artist follows life closely in parts and whole.28 It is possible to distill from Cellini's words the following mannerist tenet: demonstrate your artistic judgment by following the best of life closely and perfect nature in the whole and in parts by artificio. When nature is imitated precisely art triumphs.

Though Herrick's applies Cellini's advice to his poetic construction there are inherent problems in the medium Herrick uses. He tries to freeze the moment through the medium of language, which refuses to be frozen. In his poem, "To Perenna" Herrick observes the harmony and perfection of his mistress's body and finds variety in her "faire, and unfamiliar excellence" (ls.3-4). He attempts to
capture this harmony and perfection in words. The miniature world is tarnished by
darkness and shadows, which also symbolize falsehood and wickedness. Herrick
however does not fail altogether.

The clarity and freshness of portraits in Herrick's poems dazzle the eye. He
attempts to catch the delicate and rarified aspect of life, trying to arrest life in its
eternal movements, imagining himself as a painter creating a miniature painting.
The presence of grazia, the stylistic principle of miniaturist aesthetic, places
Herrick within the tradition of English limners. Their art invariably gave the
illusion of motion in the human body and the way such motion reveals internal
passion or evokes passion in the observer. This is hard enough to capture in stone
and well nigh impossible in words; but Herrick intriguingly tries to represent the
effect of clothes over the human form through words.

The relevance of elegant drapery over the human form, the conception of an artist's
gaze on this form and the problem of representing this gaze, fascinated both
Raphael and Herrick. In poems such as "To his Mistresse," "Julia's Petticoat,""Delight in Disorder," "Art Above Nature," "To Julia," and "Upon Julia's Clothes" he suggests his mistress to dress in silk and become a "jewel set on fire."29 "Julia's Petticoat" gives such ecstatic delight to the poet that he nearly swoons to death with pleasure—"Down'd in Delights; but co'd not die."30 In "Art above Nature, to Julia" Herrick is once more allured by Julia's "airie silks" (lines 15-16) and confesses that "mine eye and heart/Dotes less on Nature, than on Art."31 However he fears that if Julia banishes him from her sight he would destroy all art:

"... I will live alone

There, where no language ever yet was known."32
Alan Rudrum in “Royalist lyric” suggests that by imagining women who are free to dress as they please, Herrick is not indulging in male fantasy but empowering women. Gail S. Weinberg points out that Julia’s loose-fitting garments were the new style at the English court imported from the Continent. And the poet’s response to their effect on him is partly “a response to a specific new phenomenon.” Herrick is not just topical or up-to-date but seriously goes about overcoming the problem of an artist’s gaze and the representation of drapery over human form.

The preoccupation with the female form and problem of representing its sensuousness in words stimulated Herrick’s poetic talents. The softness of the female form and drapery hiding and yet revealing this form seemed to have preoccupied his thoughts. Dalliance can be fraught with danger but if the intention is matrimony it may not cause any harm. “The silken Snake” is one such example. Herrick, startled by Julia’s sudden flinging of her silken lace upon his face, calms himself by reasoning that the silken lace was not a snake as it did not bite him. By fusing the swift and threatening movement of the snake with the soft and harmless motion of silk the poet takes away the danger of the bite (“But though it scar’d, it did not bite.”) diluting the potency of the metaphor. The sudden action of the snake enveloped in the softness of silk gives both immediacy and grace to the poem. Julia’s bodily movements are silk-like and harmless and therefore graceful. The physical motion of the clothes animated by physical movement and a gentle breeze give a distinctive quality to the personal manner of Herrick’s style. In the midst of this dalliance holy matrimony is envisaged:

    Holy waters hither bring
    For the sacred sparkling:
    Baptize me and thee, and so
Let us to the Alter go.
And (ere we our rites commence)
Wash our hands in innocence.
Then I'le be the Rex Sacrorum,
Thou the Queen of Peace and Quorum.36

In the context of marriage even erotic delights may be permitted. J. G. O. Whitehead suggests that in some Julia poems such as “Upon the Nipples of Julia’s Breast” the reference to her breasts as “strawberries” and “creame” allude to the Tudor rose, which combined the red rose of the house of York and the white rose of the house of Lancaster and ushered in a time of peace.37 The political undertones may seem far-fetched but suggestions to matrimony and social stability are plausible. The coming together of the red rose and white rose ended the long period of social turmoil in England and established the Tudor dynasty.

Obviously the poems about Julia are about different parts of her body that hides the woman behind it. But Herrick wants us to believe that their love will last forever:

An endless prove;
And pure as Gold for ever.38

And after his death she will be reflected in his eyes forever.

Herrick employs language to eroticize different parts of Julia’s body and make them into a fetish. In the poem “Julia’s Churching, or Purification” the poet makes Julia go through a ritual of purification after giving birth; her hymen becomes a fetish.39 This strange fictional purification is called “churching,” a play upon the Anglican
ritual of thanksgiving for “safe deliverance” of a woman during “childebirth.”

*The Book of Common Prayer* reaffirms that the Lord will protect a woman from evil if she “both faithfully live, and walke in her vocation.” If a woman fulfills her wifely duties she will be protected from adultery and will continue to bear more children in future. This promise firmly enforces patriarchal authority of the state, church and husband. Herrick’s churching ceremony reinforces the patriarchal paradigm by allowing the man to dominate the woman in marriage. After undergoing the churching ceremony of purification Julia can return home as a virgin bride to her husband — “to the breaking of a Bride-Cake) home / Where ceremonious Hymen shall for thee / Provide a second Epithalamie” (lines 10-12). Urging Julia to be faithful to her husband the poet plays God by restoring her broken hymen through the power of language so that she can return to her husband as a virgin bride once again:

She who keeps chastly to her husbands side  
Is not for one, but every night his Bride:  
And stealing still with love, and feare to Bed,  
Brings him not one, but many a Maiden-head. (lines 13-16)

So it seems that Julia will need must suffer the pain of ritual defloration as now she has been bestowed with “many a Maiden-head.” This is undoubtedly a function of an eternal domination and control of female sexuality and pleasure. Language not only tries to control the other but also turn back time, restoring the loss of virginity.

In a poem such as “Delight in Disorder” Herrick imagines a wanton sensuousness even in the absence of a the female body:

A Sweet disorder in the dresse
Kindles in cloathes a wantonnesse:
A Lawne about the shoulders thrown
Into a fine distraction:
An erring Lace, which here and there
Enthralls the Crimson Stomacher:
A Cuffe neglectfull, and thereby
Ribbands to flow confusedly:
A winning wave (deserving Note)
In the tempestuous petticote:
A carelesse shooe-string, in whose tye
I see a wilde civility:
Doe more bewitch me, then when Art
Is too precise in every part.43

The poet has overcome the difficulty of finding an appropriate method to express
his gaze of the draped female form even in the absence of that form. It is a theoretical celebration of an aesthetic philosophy. An apparent carelessness in
dress gives the female form its erotic quality but the poet records the details quite precisely — an “erring Lace,” a “Cuffe neglectfull,” the “tempestuous petticote” and a “carelesse shooe-string.” The “tempestuous petticote” becomes the graceful and seductive movement of the girl, the drapery itself and a mirror of the amorous gaze of the observer. This kind of poetic representation gives the clothes a wanton, erring, winning, careless and bewitching quality. The apparent carelessness creates a calculated seduction, which is prolonged eternally as it is frozen in time. The clothes both restrain and seduce the gaze of the male poet eternally. The grace enhances the beauty of the clothes and bewitches the observer. The poem leaves much to the imagination to construe. Herrick’s language provokes the mind to run free along many erotic possibilities.44

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In *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-analysis* Jacques Lacan pointed out that *Wiederholen* (repeating) though related to *Erinnerung* (remembering) is not *Reproduzieren* (reproduction).\(^4\) Remembering obliges events to ‘yield’ themselves creating a sort of center. It is at such moments that the subject resists the remembered center and in resisting repeats the action.\(^4\) Norman Bryson makes a subtle distinction between the gaze and the glance in Western art. The gaze masterfully repeats an act and perseveres to “confine what is always on the point of escaping or slipping out of bounds”; and in so doing does “a certain violence (penetrating, piercing fixing).”\(^4\) Freud argues that the gaze is a phallic activity linked to the desire to control the object.\(^4\) The object of desire is invariably cast as passive, feminine victim.\(^4\) It is possible to see Herrick’s representation of the female body as an attempt to manipulate female sexuality through language and text, a self-fashioning strategy of Renaissance poets to delight the male reader by fetishizing and repressing the female form.\(^4\)

**II**

Herrick’s poem “Upon Julia’s Clothes” provides an excellent example of the figurative use of language to create a mood, feeling and an emotion. At the same time it stretches itself beyond its linguistic confines and organizes itself as part of the unconscious.

**Upon Julia’s Clothes**

Whenas in silks my Julia goes,
Then, then, methinks, how sweetly flows
That liquefaction of her clothes.
Next, when I cast mine eyes, and see
That brave vibration, each way free,
O, how that glittering taketh me! 51

In the first stanza, the visual image of Julia in silks quickly gets transformed into a metaphor through the use of the words “flows” and “liquefaction.” Her silks melting into liquid taking the form of her body has the appeal of a metaphor. The process of liquefaction takes place at high temperatures when solid substance become liquid and are then fused with other metals to form an alloy. The suggestive eroticism of her silks melting into liquid taking the form of her body, clinging to her and revealing what they cover has the combined sensuality of dress/undress.

The erotic metaphor of the first stanza expands to include a kinetic image of vibration. The mesmeric almost sexually conscious quality of her movement is suggested by the word “brave.” She defies the speaker’s gaze, almost taking pleasure in arousing his desire. 52 The vibration of her body or her clothes is left deliberately ambiguous so both the speaker and reader can revel in the luscious and delectable moment. The gaze locked at the movement is both uninhibited and mutual. The blurring of focus between gaze and movement apart from its ambiguity is also an attempt to reach a nonverbal experience through the verbal. Both the sexual intention of gaze and physical space of movement collapses in the kinetic image of vibration. She is “free” of restrictive underclothing and the translucence of this suggestive revelation vibrating through the gaze gather momentum, as is the tendency of all vibrations, into the “glittering” moment of ecstasy. The vibrating blur of Julia in her silks glitters in the proximity of the gaze, touched and touchable. The overload of sensation spills into the tactile image of the phrase “taketh me” or takes possession of me by force or skill. The trap of the
gaze, the ensnarement of the suggestive vibration of the body for a moment, releases the poem from the confines of the seventeenth century modesty into the complex metaphors of magical sexual fantasy. But we should not forget that the seventeenth century is structured within the unconscious deeper layers of the language that organizes the poem.

Even before human relations develop, nature organizes them with its own structures, what Claude Levi-Strauss calls the totemic function of language. Lacan believes that "the unconscious is structured like a language" prior to "experience," "individual deduction," "collective experience," or "social needs." When viewed from a totemic perspective issues of virginity, marriage, child-bearing, churching become inscribed within their own lines of force that help in continuing life and sustaining social cohesion. The allure that Julia exercises over the persona activates themes of matrimony, sexual bonding and procreation. It is also true that seventeenth century Europe harnessed these issues to create hegemony and disempower women.

It is possible to argue like the new historicists that the personae doubles up as an Anglican priest who witnesses the movement of a divine being in Julia. In observing the social ritual of a woman walking in a silk dress revealing her sensuous form stretches the limits of social conformity and yet does not transgress. The persona's gaze captured in the poem reasserts the traditional role of women as desirable outside marriage and the imperative but transgressive gesture. In "Corinna's going a Maying" the persona, who functions both as a lover and a priest, encourages women to pray and participate in the May Day celebrations. The lover here too doubles up as a priest to encourage Corianna to choose her own man after some dalliance. This social ritual will after all provide a husband and a happy marriage to her. The gaze of beauty that Herrick presents is "profoundly
unsatisfying” in a Lacanian sense. It never fulfils but excites desire, which can be realized only in marriage.

Introducing the dialectic of the eye and the gaze Lacan points out that both do not compliment but contradict each other. The gaze, instead of creating love generates a lure, which does not satisfy. Lacan suggests that a lover is forever dissatisfied because he is missing the same position and perspective enjoyed by his beloved—“You never look at me from the place from which I see you.” Julia’s image is forever “glittering” or dazzling the senses; she is “a mere dialectic of appearance,” an objet a, from whom the persona had separated physically to reconstitute himself. Apart from other things Julia presents herself as a symbol of a lack. Here we see no demand but a desire of the other, an invocation of the unconscious. Between the gaze and what we finally see is a lure. The poet presents the persona as someone other than who he is. The poet shows the persona an aspect of Julia, which is not what he wants to see. The persona perhaps wants to get married to her not show his desire or yearn for her. But the eye of the poet functions as an objet a, showing what the persona lacks not what he can get. In “The Transformation” after the poet’s death Julia sits on a “refulgent thronelet.” The “immortal” poet now looks at her radiant beauty that shines more brightly in “thy counterfeit?” In Herrick the visual image is most powerful, as the poet believes that amongst the sense the eyes are vanquished first. The visual image is most powerful in love and war:

‘Tis a known principle in War.
The eies be first, that conquer’d are.

In most anthologies of cavalier poets of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries Herrick is summarily dismissed as a minor poet. In fact many of his
poems, which were written before the Civil War, did not find honorable mention until after the Restoration. Though he is seen as one of the least political of the Cavalier poets, Herrick suffered immensely from the conflict losing his living as a clergyman. A thorough reading of *Hesperides* and “Noble Numbers: Or, His Pious Pieces” reveal a remarkably talented poet who could dexterously handle diverse themes ranging from religious sacraments and marriage to the Civil War and kingship. His treatment of women might offend some of our modern-day feminist but it must be noted that Herrick, though tainted by the prejudices and values of his age, saw men and women functioning within the hierarchical social structure of Stuarts, fulfilling their roles within marriage as both procreators and preservers of the social order. Perhaps because he never married, Herrick’s attitude towards women was more of a potential marriage partner and therefore courtship and dalliance become the dominant modes in his poems. The constant yearning, never to be realized in blissful matrimony, creates a constant tension in his poems between the subjective eye, which attempts to capture the objective “other” and the object that escapes capture. Read within the Lacanian and historical context Herrick’s poems seem both palpable and multifaceted.

NOTES


12 *The Poetical Works of Robert Herrick*, ibid., p. 76.


15 Bridget Hill, “A Refuge from Men: The Idea of a Protestant Nunnery,” *Past and Present*, 117 (1987), p. 119. The historian Bridget Hill gives a possible reason why spinsterhood was perceived as a threat to society in seventeenth century England; she writes, “Spinsterhood, because it escaped male authority within marriage, was seen as a latent threat against the whole structure of domestic authority” (p.119).

16 *The Cambridge Companion to Writing of the English Revolution*, N. H. Keeble, ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Alan Rudrum in an essay entitled, “Royalist lyric,” points out that the publication of Hesperides in 1648 was a political act not just a literary one. “Herrick present the ‘halcyon days’ of Charles I’s ‘personal rule’ in the 1630’s as a time of innocent mirth and merrymaking, which must have seemed appealing to those already wearied of the Rule of the Saints. The late 1640s in fact saw a number of rebellions against the Puritan prescription of just such festivities as Herrick celebrated" (p.182).

17 *Poetical Works*, ibid., p.13.


19 *Poetical Works*, ibid, pp.15-16.


Perennial, 1995).

23 Slavoj Zizek, The Plague of Fantasies, rpt., 1999, (London: Verso, 1997). In the chapter, “Love Thy Neighbour? No, Thanks!” Zizek states that, “Poetry, the specific poetic jouissance, emerges when the very symbolic articulation of this Loss gives rise to a pleasure of its own” (p.47).

24 Poetical Works, ibid., p.186.

25 Poetical Works, ibid., p.329.


28 The treatises of Benvenuto Cellini on goldsmithing and sculpture, translated from the Italian by C. R. Ashbee, (New York : Dover Publications, 1967). In his Treatise on Sculpture, Cellini offers the following advice on the disegno of the human form which is generally applicable to all his art, whether minuteria or grosseria:

[All] the really great masters have followed life, but the point is that you must have a fine judgment to know how the best of life is to be put into your work, you must always be on the look out for beautiful human beings, and from among them choose the most beautiful, and not only so, you must from among even these choose the most beautiful parts, and so shall your whole composition become an abstraction of what is beautiful. So alone may work be created, that shall be evident at once as the labour of men both exquisite in judgment and humble in study. (Treatises, p.140)

29 Poetical Works, ibid., p.20.

30 Poetical Works, ibid., p.67.


32 Poetical Works, ibid., p.60.

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Rudrum writes, “In imagining women with the freedom to dress as they pleased, Herrick is not merely indulging make fantasy, but, as Shakespeare did, demonstrating the possibility of a world in which women need not be entirely at the mercy of a male-dominated social and religious establishment. The ‘dishevelled woman’ of Cavalier verse is consciously set against Puritan values” (p.184).

J. G. O. Whitehead, “The Tudor Rose, Coat of Arms, London 10 (July) pp.110-15. Whitehead argues that whether Herrick’s mistress was real or imagined the fact remains that her breasts “were the Tudor rose with its ideals personified; and that rose stood for ...a return to the Golden Age” somehow lost by the Stuarts. Also see Poetical Works, ibid., p.164.

Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800, (New York: Harper, 1977). As Lawrence Stone suggests, the seventeenth century saw a reinforcement of patriarchy in England as the monarchy began more forcefully to assert its authoritarian prerogatives (Chapter 5). “Authoritarian monarchy and domestic patriarchy,” he argues, “form a congruent and mutually supportive complex of ideas and social systems” (p. 152). In seventeenth century England, patriarchy was reinforced by the state, Stone contends, “in the ... form of authoritarian dominance by the husband and father over the woman and children within the nuclear family” (p. 153).

Jacques Lacan, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-analysis, (London: Vintage Press, 1998), Trans., Alan Sheridan. Chapter 4, “Of the Network of Signifiers,” pp.49-50. Lacan writes, “Lastly — in these first stages of the experience in which remembering is gradually substituted for itself and approaches ever nearer to a sort of focus, or centre, in which every event seems to under an obligation to yield itself — precisely at this moment, we see manifest itself what I will also call — in inverted commas, for one must also change the meaning of the three words that I am going to say, one must change it completely in order to give it its full scope — the resistance of the subject, which become at that moment repetition in act” (p.51).


Lacan, ibid. Lacan writes, “Lastly — in these first stages of the experience in which remembering is gradually substituted for itself and approaches ever nearer to a sort of focus, or centre, in which every event seems to under an obligation to yield itself — precisely at this moment, we see manifest itself what I will also call — in inverted commas, for one must also change the meaning of the three words that I am going to say, one must change it completely in order to give it its full scope — the resistance of the subject, which become at that moment repetition in act” (p.51).

Fredric Jameson, The Political Unconscious, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981). As Fredric Jameson suggests, the literary text may be seen as a “rewriting or restructuration of a prior historical or ideological subtext” (p.81). Paradoxically, according to Jameson, the literary work is at once constituted and constituting, structured and structuring: “the literary work, ... as though for the first time, brings into being that very situation to which it is also, at one and the same time, a reaction” (p.82). As Louis Montrose states it, a text “restructures [its] ideological subtext” (p. 87). In other words, a text restructures within itself a culture’s ideological assumptions about gender, power, class, and so forth. In the introduction to her superb collection of contemporary essays on the female body in Western culture, Susan Rubin Suleiman suggests that the cultural significance of the body is not primarily its flesh-and-blood solidity, but its function as a “symbolic construct.” All that a culture perceives and knows about the body exists in some form of discourse, which is never unmediated, free of interpretation or politically “innocent” (p .2). It is possible to see Renaissance poetry as a discursive practice situated within the larger sexual discourse of the time in order to see how the symbolic construction of the female body is shaped by, and in turn shapes, specific assumptions about gender and power.

Derrida, Jacques, Positions, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). Derrida argues that the “classical philosophical opposition” is never a “peaceful coexistence,” but a “violent hierarchy” in which “one of the two terms governs the other” (Positions 41). Among these hierarchies, Derrida includes “male/female” or “masculine/feminine.”

Gene Montague, “Herrick’s ‘Upon Julia’s Clothes,” Explicator, 36 (Spring 1978), pp. 21-22. Montague observes that “the central angling image” in the poems links up Julia and the narrator as “fisherman, bait, and prey. The question is, Who is angling for whom nd with what?”


Lacan, ibid., Lacan writes: “From the outset, we see, in the dialectic of the eye and the gaze, that there is no coincidence, but, on the contrary, a lure. When, in love, I solicit a look, what is profoundly unsatisfying and always missing is that — You never look at me from the place from which I see you” (p. 103).

Lacan, ibid., “Generally speaking, “ Lacan concludes, “the relation between the gaze and what one wishes to see involves a lure. The subject is presented as other than he is, and what one shows him is not what he wishes to see. It is in this way that the eye may function as objet a, that is to say, at the level of the lack (— o)” (p.104).

Hess believes that the picture of merry England that Herrick created influenced eighteenth and nineteenth century poets—"almost concomitantly with the growth of imperialist, commercialist England, her pastoral lyrist gave his nation a dream to be possessed by ... That bright arcadian landscape where in her meadows sits eternal May made perfect propaganda material for the empire builders."