

Un-selfing of the Self – the logic of ecstasy in the poetry of Richard Crashaw

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Abstract

The present paper deals with the problem of ecstasy in the English poems of Richard Crashaw. Its main argument is that Crashaw redefines the Platonic/Neoplatonic concept of ecstasy in his work, since his central focus is not of philosophical, but of theological nature, i.e. it deals with the sacramental transformation of the self in an act of 'un-selfing' one's self. It discusses three main problem fields: the concept of ecstatic love, ecstatic self-consummation and, finally, the decentring of the self and the musical nature of the new creation recentred and reclaimed by God.

Keywords: Richard Crashaw, English metaphysical poetry, concepts of ecstasy, sacramental theology, mysticism

1. Introduction

The title of Richard Crashaw's (c. 1613–1649) first and most important collection of poetry, *Steps to the Temple* (1646), makes a clear allusion to another great work of English metaphysical poetry, namely to George Herbert's *The Temple* (1633).¹ However, in contrast to other representatives of the metaphysical school, Crashaw's poetry owes a great deal to the flourishing of Spanish mystical poetry of the *Siglo de Oro* (especially St Teresa of Jesus). The passionate religiosity of post-Tridentine Roman Catholicism, to which he converted in 1640s, makes his poetry a unique phenomenon in English poetry. The ambiguous and problematic reception his work has enjoyed over the centuries reflects this "awkwardness" more than abundantly.² Crashaw's devotion – unlike that of Donne, Vaughan, Traherne or Herbert – is ardent

and exuberant, and his verse constantly refers to the states of mystical transformation achieved in religious ecstasy.

The issue of ecstasy in the early modern period has often been discussed in relation to the Neoplatonic concepts found in various Renaissance treatises or hermetic and demonological handbooks.³ In an illuminating and still relevant essay on the notion of ecstasy in 17th century England, G. L. Finney points out that “in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries ‘ecstasy’ was frequently used to mean literally a separation of the soul from the body” (Finney 153). However, this type of philosophical analysis falls short of the reality dealt with in devotional poetry of the given period⁴ as it does not take into account the symbolic meaning of the ecstatic state as it was received especially in the Catholic tradition. I want to argue that the type of Christian mysticism defined by the seminal works of St John of the Cross (1542–1591) and St Teresa of Jesus (1515–1582), and elaborated upon in the poetic work of the northerner Richard Crashaw, redefines the classical Platonic/Neoplatonic notion of ecstasy, since its central focus is *not of philosophical, but of theological nature*. The central issue for the spiritual transformation of the self is the dichotomy between the closed self and the liberated one.⁵ The ‘separation’ of the soul from the body is not meant *literally*, but *sacramentally*: it becomes a sign of the transformation of a self-centred and self-owned ego in the union of wills. The *unio mystica* – at least as presented in the two mentioned Carmelite authors – does not destroy the existence of the *I* of the devotee; it liberates him/her to an ultimate self-consummation in becoming transformed for the *Thou* of God: “The supernatural union comes about when the two wills – that of the soul and that of God – are conformed in one.”⁶

In this paper I will focus on Crashaw’s poems specifically thematizing the problem of ecstasy. I will discuss the ‘logic of ecstasy’, namely the process of ‘un-selling of the self’: instead of making the soul literally ‘leave the body’ to be united with the One, ecstasy in Crashaw brings about a new sense of integration, the liberation of the self-consumed ego into the union of love defined and redefined by the infinite quality of God’s self-communication. This enquiry will also include cosmological problems, or the redefinition of the tension between the centre and the spheres⁷: the inner *decentring* of the self is related to the *recentring* of the sacramental cosmos of the devotee and the new harmoniousness achieved by the abovementioned process of interior integration.

2. Love as spiritual ecstasy

Love’s ecstasy is one of the most important themes of Crashaw’s verse. The soul of the devotee is taken into the whirl of mystical ecstasy, and in consuming the joys of *unio mystica*, it loses a firm conscience of its former self and its properties.

Arguably the most famous of Crashaw’s poems, “The Flaming Heart Upon the Book and Picture of the Seraphical Saint Teresa” (first published in *Carmen Deo Nostro*, 1652),⁸ is based on the description of the ecstasy of St Teresa that we can find in her *Autobiography*: a seraph is drawing an arrow from the heart of the saint.⁹ The conceit of the poem is a paradoxical critique of this way of ‘expressing’ her (e.g. in

Bernini's famous rendering in the Coronaro chapel of *Santa Maria della Vittoria* in Rome). The poet argues that such an image is a mistake, a "fair-cheek fallacy":

You must transpose the picture quite,
And spell it wrong to read it right;
Read *Him* for her, and her for him;
And call the *Saint* the *Seraphim*. (208)¹⁰

The first of the "transpositions" is the change of her sex: indeed, throughout the poem Teresa is depicted as "manly": "Why man, this speaks pure mortal frame;/ And mocks with female *Frost* love's manly flame./ One would suspect thou meant'st to paint/ Some weak, inferior, woman saint." Another transposition is the transposition of the role: Teresa should no longer be a veiled nun and the seraph should not hold the "Dart". In fact, it should be the other way round:

Give *Him* the veil; that he may cover
The Red cheeks of a rivall'd lover.
Asham'd that our world, now, can show
Nests of new Seraphims here below.
Give her the *Dart* for it is she
(Fair youth) shoots both thy shaft and *Thee*
Say, all ye wise and well-pierc't hearts
That live and die amidst her darts,
What is't your tasteful spirits do prove
In that rare life of Her, and love?
Say and bear witness. Sends she not
A *Seraphim* at every shot? (209)

The change in the role of the two actors marks the crucial change in the order of activity. The wound inflicted upon her by the angel becomes her "weapon", and the supposed passivity ("the wound") becomes "the activ'st part". The confusing paradox is the only way of explaining why the deformation of the body, in fact, entails a reformation of the self:

For in love's field was never found
A nobler weapon than a *Wound*.
Love's passives are his activ'st part.
The wounded is the wounding heart. (209)

The logic of love ecstasy thus seems to be a process of *being beyond* one's self and thus also of *decentring* oneself. The centre of the self has shifted, because the self can no longer possess the original unreformed identity. Everything reacquires a new quality of distance: i.e. love becomes a constant movement to *dispossess*, or *unself* one's self, since the supposedly "given" identity of the fallen closed self has been shattered.

Language ascertains the tension between *the state of being* and *the actual process of attaining it*: indeed, the final paradox of the poem shows the incompatibility of life and death:

By all of *Him* we have in *Thee*;
Leave nothing of my *Self* in me.
Let me so read thy life, that I
Unto all life of mine may die. (211)

If life is marked by the process of being, death is a mere state of non-being. The paradox of the final couplet is its impossibility: life is incommensurably superior to death, for life is and death is not. The final quatrain of the poem thus carries the following message: in the process of becoming 'un-selfed' ("By all of *Him* we have in *Thee*"), the life of the *individual*¹¹ self appears as an unreal entity, a mere transient state. This state denotes life as no more than an enduring death. It must, therefore, be overcome: "Let me so read thy life, that I/Unto all life of mine may die."

This logic is akin to the logic of martyrdom, as we find it in "A Hymn to the Name and Honor of the Admirable Teresa". The central theme of the poem is sacrificial self-destruction. However, Teresa is to undergo a specific type of martyrdom, not the 'traditional' martyrdom at the hands of the heathens. Her martyrdom is a martyrdom of genuine love, i.e. of being consumed in the very act of loving:

Blest pow'rs forbid, Thy tender life
Should bleed upon a barbarous knife;
Or some base hand have power to race
Thy Breast's chaste cabinet, and uncase
A soul kept there so sweet, o no;
Wise heav'n will never have it so.
Thou art love's victim; and must die
A death more mystical and high.

Into love's arms thou shalt let fall
A still-surviving funeral... (204)

This mystical death, "a still surviving-funeral", is another way of expressing this radical *un-selfing* of Teresa's martyrdom of love: it is a process of becoming nothing in the order of the self-centred world. Moreover, the murdering instrument – the dart – is dipped in the "rich flame" of all those who meditate God's radiance, i.e. those who have *un-selfed* themselves and are still doing so in letting "a sovereign ray" beat upon their "burning faces":

His is the *Dart* must make the *Death*
Whose stroke shall taste thy hallow'd breath;
A Dart thrice dipt in that rich flame

Which writes thy spouse's radiant Name
Upon the roof of Heav'n; where ay
It shines, and with a sovereign ray
Beats bright upon the burning faces
Of souls which in that name's sweet graces
Find everlasting smiles. (204)

This ongoing spiritual transformation is equated with an aggressive and painful piercing of the body. The choir of the seraphim turns into a band of soldiers whose "military mission" is accomplished again in inflicting "sweet and subtle *Pain* of intolerable *Joys*" upon the saint:

So rare,
So spiritual, pure, and fair
Must be th'immortal instrument
Upon whose choice point shall be sent
A life so lov'd; And that there be
Fit executioners for Thee,
The fair'st and first-born sons of fire
Blest *Seraphim*, shall leave their choir
And turn love's soldiers, upon *Thee*
To exercise their archery.
O how oft shalt thou complain
Of a sweet and subtle *Pain*.
Of intolerable *Joys*... (204)

These joys are, indeed, the joys of "death" as it seems in the unreformed, non-sacramental world. Once this "death" is accomplished, it ceases to threaten the anxious self. In that sense, it finds full satisfaction in the "ultimate horror of death" manifesting "the uncanny awareness of a 'collapse of the border between inside and outside'" (Sabine 111). What Julia Kristeva discusses in her *Powers of Horror*,¹² i.e. the power of abjection, can thus attain a new sacramental signification. It recreates the abject into a *sacrifice*, i.e. a sacramental event of "making it sacred (from Latin *sacrum facere*)"¹³:

Of a *Death*, in which who dies
Loves his death, and dies again.
And would forever so be slain.
And lives, and dies; and knows not why
To live, But that he thus may never leave to Die. (204–205)

The hierarchy of the self-centred *universe*¹⁴ is to be changed: the self – being informed from the inside – finds a brand new identity of a truly open and liberated self, i.e. the experience of a *dialogical* love. Therefore, it also loses its liability to death:

“[...] of a *Death*, in which who dies/ Loves his death, and dies again.” Death loses its power in an act of repetition and becomes an ultimate sign of life’s victory.

3. Towards a new unselfed identity

Crashaw’s “logic of ecstasy” finds another of its peaks in “Music’s Duel”, the opening poem of his second collection of poems *The Delights of the Muses* (first published together with *Steps to the Temple* in 1646). In fact, it is a free rendering of a Latin poem by the Jesuit Famiano Strada (1572–1649).¹⁵ It presents a symbolic contest between a “Lute-master” and a she-nightingale,¹⁶ which climaxes in an act of sacrificial self-destruction: the nightingale’s being-herself and her being-unto-her-purpose¹⁷ become one and the same thing.

A carefully laid-out conceit stresses the dynamic of the struggle: the player is a well-trained musician, a virtuoso, playing a complicated multi-voiced instrument. The nightingale, on the other hand, is a weak, tiny bird singing in a single voice. However, her performance has a remarkable quality. She gradually loses self-control and totally identifies with her singing:

Thus high, thus low, as if her silver throat
Would reach the brazen voice of war’s hoarse Bird;
Her little soul is ravisht: and so pour’d
Into loose ecstasies, that she is plac’t
Above herself, Music’s *Enthusiast*. (103)

The nightingale is absorbed with music; she is identified with the purpose of her creation. The Musician is taken aback by the ability of the nightingale, and her singing motivates him to an even better performance. The two contestants challenge each other in “a fury so harmonious”. The ecstasy of the nightingale is contagious: towards the end of the poem, the lutenist is taken into a similar state. It is worth noting that at this point Crashaw significantly interpolates Strada’s original. He emphasizes the Platonic ideal of the soul’s flight being ravished by the divine beauty¹⁸:

The Lute’s light *Genius* now does proudly rise,
Heav’d on the surges of swoll’n Rhapsodies.
Whose flourish (Meteor-like) doth curl the air
With flash of high-born fancies: here and there
Dancing in lofty measures, and anon
Creeps on the soft touch of a tender tone:
Whose trembling murmurs melting in wild airs
Runs to and fro, complaining his sweet cares
Because those precious mysteries that dwell,
In music’s ravisht soul he dare not tell,
But whisper to the world: thus do they vary
Each string his Note, as if they meant to carry

Their Master's blest soul (snatcht out at his Ears
By a strong Ecstasy) through all the spheres
Of Music's heaven; and seat it there on high
In *th' Empyræum* of pure Harmony. (104)

This Platonic “flight of the soul” into the highest sphere of the Renaissance cosmos, however, is based on this radical identification and transformation. Indeed, this peculiar contest of the lutenist and the nightingale ends in a paradoxical victory of the latter. The act of self-destruction and self-consummation blend into one another: the nightingale has fully identified itself with its created status and her being becomes her being-onto-her-purpose. At the end of the poem, she climaxes in “a Natural Tone”, dies, and falls onto the lute:

Alas! in vain! for while (sweet soul) she tries
To measure all those wild diversities
Of chatt'ring strings, by the small size of one
Poor simple voice, rais'd in a Natural Tone;
She fails, and failing grieves, and grieving dies.
She dies; and leaves her life the Victor's prize,
Falling upon his Lute; o fit to have
(That liv'd so sweetly) dead, so sweet a Grave! (105)

The capitalized “Natural Tone” seems to refer to the ontological status of the nightingale's being: becoming *herself*, i.e. giving herself in an act of total self-consummation. The final sacrificial identification is achieved in a paradox: the order of states is transformed into the order of dynamic being. It is a level of identity referred to by the very dynamic of the contest: a sense of integration (being-herself equals being-onto-her purpose) is a prerequisite for un-selfing oneself. This – translated into the order of language – means: the full identity of the referent and the object referred to. In other words, it aspires to a form of communication which is theologically referred to as “sacramental”, in which the “purpose” of the infinite *Word* of Christian theology also communicates His “being”, i.e. the communion and the communication of the Triune God.¹⁹

This logic of un-selfing presupposes a powerful transformation. Self-destruction becomes *self-consummation*. The mediation of language in Crashaw's poetry seems to imply a similar aspiration: by exploiting the possibilities of language, it becomes a sacramental process, anticipation of the final self-consummation in the *unio* and *com-unio* with God. In this transforming act, the Creation is *recentred* by God's omnipresence: it is reclaimed by a new centre and strives to become a “new creation” (2 Cor 5:17).

4. Un-selfing by decentring (or recentring) oneself – Crashaw’s Christocentrism²⁰

Crashaw’s poems often focus on the problem of decentring or recentring in an allusion to Pythagorean cosmology defined by a clearly defined centre and the rotating spheres around. In “To the Name above Every Name, The Name of Jesus, A Hymn” (from *Carmen Deo Nostrum*, first published in Paris in 1652), we find a number of words referring to Christ’s presence as a new centre of radiation in a recreated cosmology – the universe is turned upside down, since its foundation is ecstatic communication between God and man:

Regions of peaceful Light
Look from thine own Illustrious Home,
Fair *King of Names* and come.
Leave All thy native Glories in their Gorgeous Nest,
And give Thyself a while The gracious Guest
Of humble Souls, that seek to find
 The hidden Sweets
 Which man’s heart meets
When Thou art Master of the Mind. (151)

The ecstasy of ‘un-selfing’ starts with the decentring of the self: the limited concentrated self expands into the limitlessness of God’s omnipresence. The process of being both emptied of the self and then filled with the “unbounded Name” climaxes in an act of adoring ecstasy:

I sing the *Name* which None can say
But toucht with An interior *Ray*:
The Name of our New *Peace*; our Good:
Our Bliss: and Supernatural Blood:
The Name of All our Lives and Loves.
Hearken, And Help, ye holy Doves!
The high-born Brood of Day; you bright
Candidates of blisseful Light,
The Heirs Elect of Love; whose Names belong
Unto The everlasting life of Song;
All ye wise *Souls*, who in the wealthy Brest
Of This unbounded *Name* build your warm Nest. (148)

The theological context of this self-consuming ecstasy is the concept of *kénōsis* (κένωσις) related to the christology of Phillipians 2:5-8. *King James Bible* reads: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus who [...] *made himself of no reputation*,²¹ and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” The Greek verb *ekénōsen*

(εκένωσεν) means “self-emptying, depletion”²² and is related to the “self-emptying” of God in the process of becoming a man in obedience to the Father’s will. The paradox is theologically based on the theology of the inner relations of the Trinity: the Son realizes His sonship in a process of un-selfing Himself and becoming man.²³ Theological reflection has always stressed this un-selfed nature of God²⁴ as well as the spiritual implication for the *imitatio Christi*. In that sense, the mystical initiation takes the form of this paradoxical kenotic revelation.

This theme in Crashaw’s poetry is elaborated upon in a poem written to celebrate the feast of the Epiphany, “In the Glorious Epiphany of Our Lord God” (*Carmen Deo Nostro*, 1652), i.e. the feast of the “revelation of God” to humanity. The paradox of this revelation is *limitlessness* joined with *littleness*: the absolute fills the little and becomes a “little all”:

Cho. O little all! in thy embrace
 The world lies warm, and likes his place.
 Nor does his full Globe fail to be
 Kist on Both his cheeks by Thee.
 Time is too narrow for thy *Year*
 Nor makes the whole *World* thy half-sphere. (160–161)

The “neurotic verbosity”²⁵ of this poem, with its search for new metaphors, makes sense only as long as it refers to the always-new sensation of the ultimately unattainable: this simulates the mystery of the “union of wills” as we know it from the classical mysticism of St. John of the Cross.²⁶ The unity reshapes the experience of *oneself*: the *unio mystica* transforms the self into *a dialogue*, and *a dynamic whirl*. The poetic translation of this experience becomes wonderfully effective: the “logic of language” makes it possible and necessary to look for new expressions of this ecstatic, unheard-of experience. Moreover, the new ‘right proportion’ of the centre and the rotating “spheres”, i.e. the retuned Creation, not surprisingly abound in music.

Crashaw’s rendering of “Psalm 23” expands on the relation between the dialogical life of the “new self”. Being opened by God’s grace is expressed as a harmonious state, whose full expression is a song:

Happy me! o happy sheep!
 Whom my God vouchsafes to keep;
 Even my God, even he it is,
 That points me to these ways of bliss
 On whose pastures cheerful spring.
 All the year doth sit and sing,
 And rejoicing smiles to see
 Their green backs wear his livery:
 Pleasure sings my soul to rest,
 Plenty wears me at her breast.
 Whose sweet temper teaches me
 Nor wanton, nor in want to be. (54)

The fair Center of my mind
Thy Temple, and those lovely walls
Bright ever with a beam that falls
Fresh from the pure glance of thine eye,
Lighting to Eternity. (55)

It is perhaps no coincidence that a major text of the Christian tradition thematizing the theology of ecstasy, interestingly joining the notions of joy, self-consummation and music, also relates to the Psalms. This can be found in St Augustine's (354–430) *Expositions on the Psalms* (*Ennerationes in Psalmos*). There we find a striking exegesis of verse 3 of Psalm 32 "Bene cantate ei cum iubilatione" (It is good to sing him in jubilation):

Look what kind of singing God has given you: you must not search for words – as if you could explain yourself and thus please God. Sing with jubilation, because that, singing in jubilation, means singing for God in a good way. What is the meaning of 'singing in jubilation'? Not being able to comprehend with the intellect what can be sung in the heart. [...] A jubilum is an indefinite sound that shows how the heart is able to generate something that cannot be told. And to whom is this jubilation due, if not to the ineffable God?²⁷

The ecstasy is thus the aporia of "singing" without ultimately being able to comprehend the inner reality. The "abundance" alluded to in Crashaw's *Psalm 23* may be understood as a sacramental act opening up the invisible and ineffable reality beyond a visible sign.²⁸ It is an act of jubilation joining the logic of ecstasy (i.e. the longing for the separation from the body equals the effort to bring about a change in the very nature of existence) and the "logic of language": the effort to bring about a new event in language, to lose the aporia related to the tension between the signifier and the signified, i.e. to let the "inherited" language transcend its representational role.

5. Conclusion

The essay's aim was to draw attention to an often overlooked dimension of Crashaw's poetry: i.e. the theological context of his sacramental poetics. As we have seen, the "un-selfing of the self" in his work is a process of transformation of the closed, fallen self into the dialogical self. Crashaw uses the concept of the Platonic/Neoplatonic separation of the soul from the body, but its point is to bring about a change in the very nature of existence. The paradox of the transformation – the unheard-of reality of the union itself – is a poetic challenge of the highest degree; it requires a wholly new language, *apofatic*, i.e. negative in its ecstatic quality, and in its aspiration to the unspeakable. The nature of communication in his poetry is to constantly transcend the previous state, to be fully dynamic. The 'logic of ecstasy' thus becomes the 'logic of language' itself: i.e. transcending the nature of communication itself by constantly restating the already-stated.

The transforming nature of mystical union consumes the self in its insular nature. This ‘consuming’, however, is also its final ‘self-consummation’, the gate of a new existence, i.e. the sacramental restoration of a fallen, ‘selfish’ self and – as a consequence – of the whole cosmos.

In that sense, this sacramental restoration of reality is not only the key to understanding Crashaw’s logic of ecstasy, but also to much of his other work.

Notes:

¹ Indeed, one of the poems included in the collection is entitled “On Mr. G. Herbert’s book entitled The Temple of sacred poems, sent to a gentlewoman”. In fact, Crashaw identifies with the sentiments expressed by his admired predecessor: “And though Herbert’s name do owe/ These devotions, fairest: know/That while I lay them on the shrine/Of your white hand, they are mine.” Crashaw, Richard: *The Verse in English of Richard Crashaw* (New York City: Grove Press, 1949), 81.

² In recent critical literature, one may find a good discussion of Crashaw’s place in the canon of English literature in Lowell Gallagher’s article “Crashaw and Religious Bias in the Literary Canon” in *Early Modern English Poetry: A Critical Companion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 278–280 or in Maureen Sabine’s article “Crashaw and Abjection: Reading the Unthinkable in His Devotional Verse” in *John Donne and the Metaphysical Poets* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2010), 111–113.

³ E.g. *Another Collection of Philosophical Conferences of the French Virutosi*. Trans. G. Havers and J. Davies (London, 1665), or, of course, those works that associate ecstasy and demonology, such as James I’s *Daemonologie, In Forme of a Dialogue* (Edinburgh, 1597); or ecstasy and music, such as Robert Burton’s paraphrase of Cassiodorus in *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (Part 2, Sec. 2, Mem. 6, Subs. 3) or Richard Hooker’s *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (Book V, Sec. XXXVIII). For these references I am indebted to G.L. Finney. See Finney, Gretchen. L.: “Ecstasy and Music in Seventeenth-Century England.” *Journal of the History of Ideas* (8.2, 1947): 153.

⁴ Similar approach can be found in a recently published essay of Paul Cefalu: “Baroque Monads and Allegorical Immanence: A Reassessment of Richard Crashaw’s Imagery,” in *English Renaissance Literature and Contemporary Theory: Sublime Objects of Theology* (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 69–99.

⁵ When recalling his past life, Augustine distinguishes between his former experience of love as “loving to love” without being able to find satisfaction and the liberating experience of God’s love opening up the sinful “heart” closed in itself (*cor incurvatus in seipsum*). See e.g., Book 3 of his *Confessions*.

⁶ St John of the Cross: *The Dark Night of the Soul*. Trans. by K. F. Reinhardt (New York: Ungar, 1951), 91, reported by R. Strier: “Crashaw’s Other Voice.” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* (9.1, 1969), 141. John’s concept of the soul’s transformation in the “Dark Night” is related to an erotic longing and a full consummation of the Self in being purely a gift for the Other:

“O guiding dark of night!
O dark of night more darling than the dawn!
O night that can unite
A lover and loved one,

Lover and loved one moved in unison.” (stanza 5) Transl. by A. Z. Foreman, retrieved January 13, 2014. Quoted from *Poetry in Translation* <<http://poemsintranslation.blogspot.cz/2009/09/saint-john-of-cross-dark-night-of-soul.html>>.

The process of the Dark Night is, therefore, the process of *re-centring* one’s self, or *un-selfing* in a process of negative purification.

⁷ For further reference on this topic, see S. K. Heninger, Jr.: *Touches Of Sweet Harmony: Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1974).

⁸ In this essay I quote from the GROVE edition of Crashaw’s poetry based on the early editions of Crashaw’s works. For the variorum readings of the poems in the numerous later editions see *Crashaw’s Poetical Works* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1927), ed. by L.C. Martin.

⁹ Cf. Chapter XXIX; Part 17. Strictly speaking, Teresa distinguishes between ecstasy as essentially a technical term related to a detachment from worldly things and visions, which can be of two types – one in which the divine presence is invisible and the other type in which the soul enjoys God’s sovereign glory. See a good discussion of this topic in Susanne Warma’s article “Ecstasy and Vision: Two Concepts Connected with Bernini’s Teresa.” *The Art Bulletin* (3, 1984): 508–511.

¹⁰ The italics used in the quotations are Crashaw’s, unless specified otherwise.

¹¹ I am using this word in the original meaning: “in-dividuum”, i.e. “indivisible”.

¹² See Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).

¹³ Cf. the theology of the prime sacrament, i.e. baptism, with its “dying and rising in Christ”, as we find in St. Paul’s letter to the Romans: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 6:3–11).

¹⁴ Here I emphasize the etymology of the word: rotating (lat. *vertere*) around a single (lat. *unus*) centre.

¹⁵ “The Delights of the Muses” opens with a celebrated piece, entitled *Musick’s Duell*, which Crashaw paraphrased from the Latin of Famiano Strada. The pretty fable of the rivalry between the lutenist and the nightingale occurs in Strada’s *Prolusiones et Paradigmata eloquentiae*, published at Cologne in 1617 and at Oxford in 1631; it is in the sixth lecture of the second course on poetic style, where Strada introduces it simply an exercise in imitation of the style of the Roman poet Claudian. Before the appearance in Crashaw’s poem, John Ford made use of the fable in his tragi-comedy, *The Lover’s Melancholy* (1629). In our own time François Coppée has used with charming effect in his fine little comedy, *Le Luthier de Cremone*, Scene 7. See *Famianus Stradae Romani... Prolusiones...Academicae*, etc. (1631), in M. A. Scott: *English Translations from the Italian* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1916, reprinted 1969), 188.

¹⁶ In fact, Crashaw addresses the nightingale as a female and endows it with feminine qualities.

¹⁷ Analogically speaking, this reiterates the famous theological unity between the *economic* and *ontological* aspect of God's Incarnation: Jesus' redemptive mission follows His ontological status of the Logos, i.e. being the co-eternal Son of God.

¹⁸ See also Finney's discussion of the topic (Finney 181).

¹⁹ I would here refer to a classic textbook by the Oxford theologian Aidan Nichols O.P. *The Shape of Catholic Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 181ff.

²⁰ Here I expand on my previous analysis in "The Perverted Cosmology of Richard Crashaw." *Ostrava Journal of English Philology* (1/2012): 7–22.

²¹ Emphasis is mine.

²² Tufts University. Greek Word Study Tool. 30 January 2013 <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=KE%2FNWSIS&la=greek&prior=GE/NHTAI>>

²³ The *interpretatio christiana* of God is elaborated upon in the classic work of Walter Kasper *Jesus der Christus* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1974), 198ff.

²⁴ The so-called "kenotic theology" emphasizes both in theological reflections and its spiritual implications the notion of the un-selfed God. In modern theology it is often related to the work of the German Lutheran theologian Gottfried Thomasius (1802–75).

²⁵ See Kerrigan's sharp criticism of Crashaw's verse in "The fearful accommodations of John Donne." *John Donne and the Seventeenth Century Metaphysical Poets*. Ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publ., 1986), 47.

²⁶ See note 5 above.

²⁷ Translation quoted from Ulrike Hascher-Burger's article "Music and Meditation: Songs in Johannes Mauburnus's *Rosetum exercitiorum spiritualium*", originally published in *Church History and Religious Culture* 88.3(2008): 361. The text is available on <<http://www.ulrikehascher-burger.com/Mauburnus.php>> (Retrieved 13 January 2014).

²⁸ Further on sacramental theology in Stasiak, Kurt. *Sacramental Theology: Means of Grace, Ways of Life*. (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 2001).

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