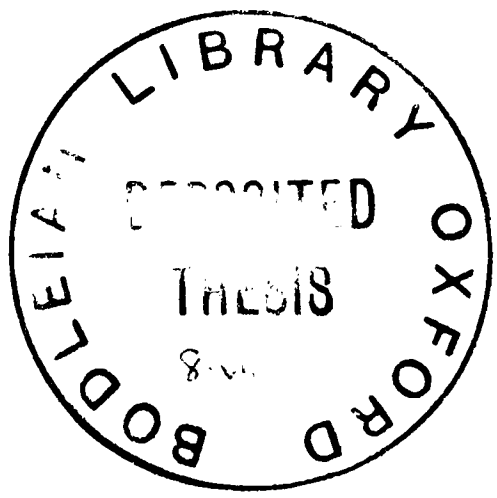
Thomas Traherne's View of Language in Restoration England

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate that the seventeenth-century religious writer Thomas Traherne—an individual who is almost never included in philological enquiries—was aware of linguistic issues and added his own unique view to the debates of the age. The project is divided into four main chapters. Chapter I, "Traherne's Word Definitions," analyzes Traherne's word definitions and places him within the context of philosophical language movements. I focus upon his unpublished *Commentaries of Heaven*, a large encyclopedia which purports to open "The Mysteries of Felicitie" and define "All Things" as objects of happiness. Despite the identification of this manuscript in 1982, much of Traherne scholarship ignores its existence. Chapter II, "Language and the Fall," investigates Traherne's view of prelapsarian speech. It discusses notions of Adam's language, the dumbness of infants, the Tower of Babel, and the way in which these are all sites of linguistic "falls." Chapter III, "Silence in Traherne's Writings," looks at the role of silence in religious practice, politics, and self-identity. At times Traherne celebrates silence as a special incubatory condition which nurtures the individual and blocks out the nefarious forces of language. At other times he describes it as dormant and sterile. The chapter offers an explanation as to why he fluctuates between these extremes. Chapter IV, "Traherne and the Seventeenth-Century Debate Over Metaphor," analyzes the conformist and nonconformist debate over metaphor which was indicative of deep theological and political controversies of the time. My Epilogue offers a discussion of Traherne's manuscript *The Ceremonial Law*, a work recently discovered in 1996. In my thesis I define Traherne's theological and linguistic views, while at the same time I call attention to the manuscripts *Commentaries of Heaven* and *The Ceremonial Law*, and their crucial position in the Traherne canon.

Acknowledgements

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I would like to thank the classicists who helped me translate some of Traherne's Greek and Latin passages: Shane Hawkins, Norbert Lane, and Kathrin Luddecke. Any errors in translation and transcription are my own.

Over the years many friends have given me academic advice, support and encouragement: Victoria Burke, Marianne Dorman, David Gowen, Michele Martinez, Heather Morrison, Sarah Poynting, Vivian Thiele and Sergei Zakin. I wish to give special thanks to John Freeh for helping me keep faith and Daniela Havenstein for preventing me from becoming a "lunatic." Finally I would like to express my greatest warmth and appreciation to my family without whom my graduate studies would not have been possible.

To my parents

Ruben and Aide Saenz

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List of Abbreviations

CB	*Commonplace Book* by Thomas Traherne, ms. poet.c.42, Bodleian Library, Oxford.
CE	*Christian Ethicks*, by Thomas Traherne, 1675, eds. George Guffey and Carol Marks (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968).
CH	*Commentaries of Heaven*, by Thomas Traherne, ms. Additional 63054, British Library, London.
CL	*The Ceremonial Law*, ms. v.a.70., Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D. C.
CM	*Centuries of Meditation*, by Thomas Traherne, *Centuries, Poems and Thanksgivings*, ed. H. M. Margoliouth, 2 vols. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1958).
Creation	*Meditations on the Six Days of the Creation*, 1717, ed. George Guffey, Augustan Reprint Society, no. 119 (Los Angeles: Augustan Reprint Society, 1966).
CYB	*Church's Year Book*, ms. Eng.the.e.51, Bodleian Library, Oxford.
PL	*Paradise Lost*, by John Milton, ed. Alastair Fowler (London: Longman Group UK Ltd., 1971).
PR	*Paradise Regained*, by John Milton, *John Milton, Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. John Carey (London: Longman, 1971).
SM	*Select Meditations*, by Thomas Traherne, ed. Julia Smith (Manchester: Fyfield Books, 1997).

Editing Specifications

I have used the *MLA Handbook* (by Joseph Gibaldi, 4th ed., New York: Modern Language Association, 1995) for styling my thesis. For seventeenth-century texts, I have modernized the typeface in one instance—I have substituted the long "s" with "s." In addition I use the following symbols for editing Traherne's unpublished manuscripts:

> < > indicate a conjectural reading of letters which cannot be clearly identified from the manuscript.
>
> [ ] are used for all editorial additions.

In transcriptions of both poetry and prose I have preserved the spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. I have expanded standard abbreviations, ampersands, contractions, and superscriptions. The lineation and marginals of the original manuscripts have not been preserved. The paragraphs of the text have been retained, however.

To cite passages from the *Church's Year Book*, *Commentaries of Heaven,* and *Commonplace Book,* I give folio number, followed by recto or verso and a period. The folios of the *Commonplace Book* and *Commentaries of Heaven* are divided into two columns which I indicate by using the numerals 1 or 2 (e.g., fol. 132v.1).

Introduction

Many religious and political thinkers of mid-seventeenth century England believed that the discord of the age arose from miscommunication caused by the inadequacies and misuse of language. Perfecting language, either by recalling prelapsarian speech or creating a new philosophical character, became their imaginative ideal. Debates over linguistic reform arose as numerous groups—the Royal Society, conformists of the Church of England, Latitudinarians, Presbyterians, Independents, and sectarians—claimed to have the appropriate style of speech and writing necessary to convey "Truth." For many years criticism on Thomas Traherne portrayed him merely as an isolated mystic, uninterested in philological, political, and theological movements of the Interregnum and Restoration, or a Wordsworthian poet who depicts idealized childhood states of Felicity. However, his vision is far more complex. Recent studies have done much to place him within his proper context, analyzing the ways in which he dealt with the events surrounding the Restoration, and demonstrating he is a writer keenly aware of socio-political events. However, an extensive study placing him within the context of the language movements has not been done. I wish to contribute to this drive in recent scholarship by demonstrating that Traherne clearly was aware of linguistic issues and added his own unique view to the language debates.

Several questions arising during the disputes over language are of particular relevance to Traherne: how should words be defined? Is it possible to overcome the corruption of worldly speech and achieve the linguistic purity enjoyed by prelapsarian Adam and Eve? Is silence preferable to speech? How does one compensate for the inadequacy of human words? My thesis divides into four chapters each corresponding to one of these questions. In each of them I delineate Traherne's views and illustrate his relationship to contemporaries. My overall purpose is to place him within the context of the language debates of his age,

demonstrating that his works should be included in philological enquiries of seventeenth-century England.

Central to my project is an explication of Traherne's unpublished works, in particular the *Commentaries of Heaven* [1] This work, a huge encyclopedia which views all things in relationship to Felicity, is equivalent in length to the sum of all his published writings. Yet, despite the discovery of this manuscript in 1967 and subsequent identification in 1982, much of Traherne scholarship ignores its existence. In the final stages of writing this thesis two new Traherne manuscripts came to light. I had the opportunity so see and study the smaller of these, the autograph poem *The Ceremonial Law* which is discussed in my Epilogue.[2] In my thesis I define the poet's theological and linguistic views, while at the same time I call attention to these manuscripts and their crucial position in the Traherne canon. The variety of Traherne's works is impressive, for indeed he is willing to try different literary genres in order to convey his doctrine of Felicity to his audience. *Christian Ethicks* treats the subject of morals[3]; *Commentaries of Heaven* reveals the all-pervasive nature of Felicity through linguistic means; his poetry and meditative verse contemplate the human-divine relationship and may have served as devotional aids or else personal reflections. Throughout this thesis I refer to Traherne as "the poet," for while studying the nature of his various works it became clear that his theology is distilled through poetic language as he both invites and entertains his audience.

Traherne is a thinker who cannot be easily classified into any one philosophical group, for throughout his work he displays a fluctuating sensibility towards different positions as well as a tendency to incorporate various, often disparate, elements into his theology. Repeatedly he embraces both sides of a given

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[1] Thomas Traherne, *Commentaries of Heaven*, ms. Additional 63054, British Library, London, fol. 2r. All references from this manuscript will henceforth be cited in the body of this thesis.

[2] Traherne, *The Ceremonial Law*, ms. v.a.70, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D. C. All references from this manuscript will henceforth be cited in the body of this thesis.

[3] Traherne, *Christian Ethicks*, eds. Carol Marks and George Guffey (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968). All references from *Christian Ethicks* are taken from this edition and will henceforth be cited in the body of this thesis.

argument and insists on the compatibility of contrarieties. Chapter I, "Traherne's Word Definitions," investigates the language movement—led by such figures as George Dalgarno and John Wilkins—which began in Oxford during the 1650s. The period saw a shift in the efforts of the language reformers, from seeking to revive already existing languages to endeavoring to create a wholy new language, or philosophical character, through elaborate taxonomies. Traherne mixes both these views, attempting to refashion English on the one hand, and showing an appreciation for systematic categorizing on the other. In the *Commentaries of Heaven* he purports to reveal the mystery of all things through word definitions and thus attributes immense signifying power to words themselves. And yet, occasionally he will claim that words are not capable of containing the spiritual magnitude of certain objects or concepts.

Chapter II, "Language and the Fall," explores seventeenth-century attitudes towards prelapsarian speech. Like numerous commentators of hexameral texts, Traherne focuses upon Adam's condition, an estate characterized both by his solitary perfection as well as his inherent need for human society in the person of Eve. Traherne meditates upon this dichotomy and relates it to the human condition in general; everyone experiences his/her personal paradise during infancy, a pre-linguistic state. Nevertheless the infant must grow and learn to overcome the corruptive forces of speech. In producing his theological vision Traherne garners the benefits of isolation as well as the benefits of communal living. For instance, Adam was created alone to show us that the individual is of primary importance:

> . . . in the Beginning, was it [the Earth] made Manifest to be mine, becaus Adam alone was made to Enjoy it. By making One, and not a Multitud, God evidently shewed One alone to be the End of the World, and evry one its Enjoyer. for evry one may Enjoy it as much as He. (*CM,* I.14)[4]

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[4] Traherne, *Centuries, Poems, and Thanksgivings*, ed. H. M. Margoliouth, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958). All references from the *Centuries, Poems,* and *Thanksgivings*, are taken from this text and will henceforth be cited in the body of this thesis.

Also, Traherne expresses intense solipsism, declaring himself the sole heir of the whole world:

> . . . I alone am the End of the World. Angels and Men being all mine. And if others are so, they are made to Enjoy it for my further Advancement. God only being the Giver, and I the Receiver. So that Seneca Philosophized rightly, when he said, *Deus me dedit solum toti Mundo, et totum Mundum mihi soli*. God gave me alone to all the World, and all the World to me alone. (*CM,* I.15)

His verse often holds a rapturous tone when meditating upon the self as seen in the poem "My Spirit":

> O Wondrous Self! O Sphere of Light,
> O Sphere of Joy most fair:
> O Act, O Power infinit;
> O Subtile, and unbounded Air!
> O Living Orb of Sight!
> Thou which within me art, yet Me! Thou Ey
> And Temple of his Whole Infinite!
> O What a World art Thou! a World within!
> (103–110)

But in addition to this self-absorbed vision he also shows an effusive desire to communicate with other people:

> In one Soul we may be entertained and taken up with innumerable Beauties. But in the Soul of Man there are innumerable Infinities. One Soul in the Immensity of its Intelligence, is Greater and more Excellent then the whole World The Ocean is but the Drop of a Bucket to it, the Heavens but a Centre, the Sun Obscurity, and all Ages but as one Day. . . . We need Spectators; and other Diversities of Friends and Lovers, in whose Souls we might likewise Dwell, and with whose Beauties we might be Crowned and entertained. (*CM,* II.70)

At another point in the *Centuries of Meditation* he celebrates the human ability to "prize," or to understand intimately and to enjoy, the Creation. Confined, these apprehensions are not as glorious as they would be if communicated to other people:

> All these relate to Enjoyment, but those Principles that relate to Communication are more Excellent. These are Principles of Retirement and Solitude; but the Principles that aid us in Conversation are far better: and help us, tho not so immediatly to Enjoyment in a far more Blessed and Diviner maner. (*CM,* IV.18)

The solitary estate is too narrow a confine for the ever-expanding soul of the individual. Traherne relishes the great variety within the cosmos and part of this variety is speaking with as many people as possible: "The World is best enjoyed

and most immediatly while we convers Wisely and Blessedly with Men. I am sure it were desirable that they could giv and receiv infinit Treasures" (*CM,* IV.19). The final section of this chapter analyzes Traherne's curious attitude toward the Tower of Babel. Typically, seventeenth-century writers viewed the episode as a curse. Traherne, however, while acknowledging its negative aspects, nevertheless revels in the consequences of this second linguistic fall—the great variety of languages in the world.

Chapter III, "Silence in Traherne's Writings," analyzes the reasons why the poet fluctuates between two different attitudes towards the role of silence in religious life. On the one hand he views it positively as a preservative of the human soul. Silence protects the soul from the disruptive discourse of "idle talk" (*CM,* III.14). The silent person nurtures a celebratory energy generated within him/herself creating a condition akin to that of prelapsarian innocence or infant purity. On the other hand a silent person can become desolate and his thoughts sterile without external stimulation. Traherne recounts a personal instance when the feeling of isolation is a terrifying experience:

> . . . in a Lowering and sad Evening, being alone in the field, when all things were dead and quiet, a certain Want and Horror fell upon me, beyond imagination. The unprofitableness and Silence of the Place dissatisfied me. . . . (*CM,* III.23)

Restoration conformists and nonconformists both advocated silence in religious practice, focusing upon the fostering of inwardness and submission of self-will, associated with speech. But Traherne resists any suppression of his personal voice, and instead projects it outwards by enthusiastic use of the first person in his writings. This tendency exposes a contradiction within his work, between following the doctrinal guidelines of the Restoration Church and his own individual inspiration. Traherne was a conformist who advocated the liturgical practice of the newly restored Church. Indeed, he pays homage to its central text, the Book of Common Prayer, with his own work the *Church's Year Book.* Though he is part of the Anglican meditative tradition, Traherne's personal voice in his poetry and

prose, with its enthusiastic quality, seems to run counter to the aim of conformists to quell disruptive individualism.

Chapter IV, "Traherne and the Seventeenth-Century Debate Over Metaphor," investigates the conformist/nonconformist disputes over the use of metaphor. Traherne clearly takes the side of the conformists. He exhibits Latitudinarian sentiments, promoting human reason, advocating scientific exploration, and believing that the intellect can penetrate divine mysteries. He talks about his intense desire to explore: "Evry New Thing Quickened my Curiosity and raised my Expectation" (*CM,* III.22). The poet can be said to be part of the philosophical tradition which celebrated sensory perception and exalted man to a high position within the cosmos. However, at other times he believes that divine truth is impenetrable by the human mind and his writings convey the numinosity of secrets, hidden treasures, and veiled messages. He differs from the scientific rationalistic movement with his subjectivity. For him humans do not merely analyze objective reality but rather, in apprehending the cosmos, their interpretive energy actually recreates it into a more perfect form than God's original creation. Coupled with his tendency to advocate individuality, this is one of Traherne's most unorthodox theological positions, for he shows humans not only as great spectators of the world, but also as creators.

Traherne has an imaginative preference for paradox. Repeatedly he marries contrarieties within his writing, insisting that they are complements to one another in the divine scheme. Often he draws together opposing philosophical and religious ideas at the expense of logical argument. One must ask why he does this. To say that he is confused or lacking in knowledge would be to undermine the intricacies of his theology. His fluctuating tendency is an attempt to show his audience that conflicting elements do indeed exist, as does human sinfulness and human goodness. This thesis will analyze the points of fluctuation and conflict within his linguistic theory, maintaining that Traherne endeavors to retrain his audience

through such means, showing them that "ALL THINGS" are "Objects of Happiness" (*CH,* fol. 2).

Chapter I - Traherne's Word Definitions

The ecstatic Thomas Traherne, with his exhaustively optimistic philosophy of Felicity, is almost never linked with any of the language movements of the seventeenth century. However his work bears evidence of his concerns for language and his awareness of some of the central linguistic debates of the age. Given the recovery of the manuscript *Commentaries of Heaven* in 1967 and subsequent identification in 1982, I believe a closer scrutiny must be made of Traherne's views of language. This work is a massive theological encyclopedia which purports, through its word definitions, to open the "Mysteries of Felicitie" by revealing "ALL THINGS" to be "Objects of Happiness" (*CH*, fol. 2r). Investigating the work's purpose and method of delineation proves fruitful, for it reveals Traherne's philosophy of word definitions as well as his linguistic concerns. Part one of this chapter provides a description of the *Commentaries of Heaven*. Part two focuses upon Traherne's method of defining words. Part three discusses taxonomic structures and categories of knowledge used by the language planners, and Traherne's reaction to them. And part four identifies areas in Traherne's writings where, in contrast to his optimistic enterprise in the *Commentaries of Heaven*, he describes words as inadequate for expressing certain divine truths.

An understanding of Traherne's doctrine of Felicity is crucial to understanding any of his work and, in particular, his language theory. Traherne believed that any attempt to create word definitions must have as its goal the revealing of Felicity. The poet's notions of linguistic clarity, plainness, and veracity—stated aspirations of the language movements of the seventeenth century—all rest upon this doctrine. Felicity is Traherne's word for paradise on earth. It is a condition linking the infinite capacity of humans for obtaining knowledge with the ability to perceive and apprehend clearly and perfectly things within the world, and with the understanding that the world was created expressly

for human enjoyment. All three of these components are reflected in the following passage from his work the *Centuries of Meditation*:

> That all the World is yours, your very Senses and the Inclinations of your Mind declare. The Works of God manifest, his Laws testify and his Word doth Prove it. His Attributes most sweetly make it evident. The Powers of your Soul confirm it. So that in the midst of such rich Demonstrations, you may infinitly Delight in God as your Father Friend and Benefactor, in your self as his Heir Child and Bride, in the Whole WORLD, as the Gift and Token of His Lov. Neither can any thing but Ignorance Destroy your Joys. for if you know your self, or God, or the World, you must of Necessity Enjoy it. (*CM,* I.16)

Traherne claims that humans were made for Happiness and that the key to achieving Happiness lies in perceiving the entirety of the Creation with a clear and penetrating eye. In particular, this includes maintaining a high regard for the seemingly common and mundane things in the world.

Traherne places much emphasis upon man's visual experiences and the application of his mental faculties to the obtaining of knowledge. He can be said to be part of the philosophical tradition—gaining prominence in the middle and latter part of the seventeenth century—which celebrated sensory perception and human reason. It is the same optimistic strain which characterizes the language planners of the mid-seventeenth century who believed that through careful scientific analysis, man could obtain a clear understanding of all things. Advocating a rational approach to the cosmos, Traherne insists that humans can comprehend the "Intelligible Heavens" (*CH,* fol. 142v.2) and this in turn brings happiness and delight. His theology marries the activities of the rational intellect with the overall divine scheme which has as its end the Felicity of humankind. When discussing the role of prelapsarian Adam (who, as we shall see later in this thesis, represents all humans) Traherne maintains that the triad, "Right Reason, GOD and Happiness" require Adam to perform his "Duty." This duty is to "prize" the Creation, that is, to achieve a perfect understanding of all things, organize them into a particular "order," and finally praise God for them. Fulfilling this duty will bring Felicity for Adam's "Duty and His pleasures were one" (*CH*, fol. 37v.2).

Traherne is deeply concerned with conveying his theological paradigm of Felicity. He believes that the proper vehicle for it is a clear, plain style of language which will reveal mysteries and present Truth. His poem "The Author to the Critical Peruser," illustrates his intentions. The first stanza praises the virtues of plain speech. The second stanza takes this even further, into an attack on figurative language:

> The naked Truth in many faces shewn,
> Whose inward Beauties very few have known,
> A Simple Light, transparent Words, a Strain
> That lowly creeps, yet maketh Mountains plain,
> Brings down the highest Mysteries to sense
> And keeps them there; that is Our Excellence:
> At that we aim; to th' end thy Soul might see
> With open Eys thy Great *Felicity*,
> Its Objects view, and trace the glorious Way
> Wherby thou may'st thy Highest Bliss enjoy.
>
> No curling Metaphors that gild the Sence
> Nor Pictures here, nor painted Eloquence;
> No florid Streams of superficial Gems,
> But real Crowns and Thrones and Diadems!
> That Gold on Gold should hiding shining ly
> May well be reckon'd baser Heraldry. (1–16)

By referring to "curling metaphors" he instantly evokes the seventeenth-century linguistic debate over the use of metaphor.[1] For Traherne, part of obtaining a clear style is utilizing words to their utmost capacity, thus he tries to rescue words from their "Bondage" (*CH*, fol. 22r.2) of misuse through his own word definitions in the *Commentaries of Heaven*: "it is the Design of this Book so to Discover it [Truth]. there being such an infinit union between Truth and felicitie, that it is impossible to see the Face of Truth fully, but we must see the Lineaments and features of Felicity" (*CH*, fol. 28r.1). Traherne thus offers a linguistic approach to his theology of Felicity in the *Commentaries of Heaven*.

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[1] This debate will be treated in more detail in Chapter IV, "Traherne and the Seventeenth-Century Debate Over Metaphor."

1. The Commentaries of Heaven

The *Commentaries of Heaven* was rescued from a burning rubbish heap in Lancashire in 1967. It was identified in 1982 as Traherne's work.[2] Traherne wrote the *Commentaries of Heaven* at the end of his life, some time between 1672 and 1674. It is a large theological encyclopedia treating various subjects and their relationship to the doctrine of Felicity. The work contains ninety-four alphabetically arranged entries.[3] Some entries are proper names—"Adam," "Second Adam," "Antichrist," and "Aristotle." Others treat more general categories of people—"Advocate," "Ambassadors," "Ancestor," "Atheist," "Author," "Babe," and "Bastard." He also discusses particular entities and objects as in the entries "Ant" and "Apparel"; religious terms or conditions in "Ascension," "Atonement," and "Baptism"; and the sciences in "Arithmetick," "Astrologie," and "Astronomie." Several of his words denote abstract states or emotions while others describe the human condition of moral deficiency ("Adultery," "Apostacie," and "Spiritual Absence"). *Commentaries of Heaven* is a massive work of 201 folio pages. Despite its size, the work is only a fragment of what the author intended to produce. This encyclopedia covers the letter "A" and part of the letter "B," beginning with "Abhorrence" and ending with "Bastard."[4] It is predominantly autograph, although some pages are in the hand of an unidentified amanuensis. It is comprised primarily of prose meditations but there are numerous poems as well, which often convey an exuberant celebratory tone.

Each word in an entry is approached from a number of different angles. The entry is divided into headed sections corresponding to these various approaches. The most common headings are "Its Nature," "Its Cause," "Its Original," "Its End," and "Its Value." But there are also less frequently taken approaches with headings like

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[2] The discovery of the manuscript is announced in Elliot Rose, "A New Traherne Manuscript," *TLS* (19 March 1982): 324.

[3] See Appendix I.

[4] For a description of the manuscript see Allan Pritchard, "Traherne's *Commentaries of Heaven*," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 53.1 (1984): 1–35.

"Its Diseases," "The Root of Its Difficulty," and "The Caus of its Glory." Traherne does not follow any precise method for dividing his entries into sections, although one can detect a rough pattern. He usually opens with a definition of the word under section headings "Its Definition" or "Its Nature." Frequently there is a section called "Scriptures" in which he lists all relevant Biblical passages. Towards the end of an entry he sometimes adds a section called "Instruction," in which he offers his own personal advice on how one might utilize the virtues revealed in the given entry.[5] Some entries contain over twenty sections, while others have no subdivisions of this kind at all.

How does the *Commentaries of Heaven* relate to seventeenth century dictionaries, concordances, and encyclopedias? The work is far more comprehensive than contemporary dictionaries. After looking at several dictionaries, I have observed that approximately half of his entries are similar to theirs.[6] The other half seem to be idiosyncratic. Words which were not found in these dictionaries include "Almighty," "Al-sufficient," "All in All," and "All Things" to name just a few. The first two are divine attributes. The second two connote vast quantities and are therefore attractive to the poet who was obsessed with the idea of infinity, a point which will be addressed later in this chapter. In addition to offering basic definitions to "hard" words, *Commentaries of Heaven* also provides etymologies, root derivations, examples of the words used in scripture, and figurative and spiritual uses of a given word.

Commentaries of Heaven is akin to concordances in that some of its word entries use examples from scripture to explicate certain concepts or decipher puzzling conundrums.[7] David Cram describes the concordance tradition in his

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[5] Pritchard, 4.

[6] I have looked at the following dictionaries: Robert Cawdrey's *A Table Alphabeticall* (London, 1604), John Bullocker's *An English Expositor* (London, 1616), Henry Cockeram's *The English Dictionarie* (London, 1623), Thomas Blount's *Glossographia* (London, 1656), Edward Phillips's *The New World of English Words* (London, 1658), and Elisha Coles's *An English Dictionary* (London, 1676).

[7] Fifteen entries have a section which uses scriptural passages to denote a word. Twelve use the heading "Scriptures" while the other three use "Remember these Scriptures," "Their Kinds" and "Its Encouragements" respectively. A full list of these entries is in Appendix II.

article "Concordances of Words and Concordances of Things."[8] Citing John Wilkins's *Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher*, Cram points out that concordances had a two-fold purpose: as a mnemonic aid and, more importantly, an interpretive aid. Wilkins says that they unfold "difficult Texts, by referring to parallel Scriptures."[9] Cram states that the prefaces to some of the concordances further advanced this notion. For instance, Daniel Featley describes the importance of Clement Cotton's *Concordance* (1631) in his "Advertisement to the Reader":

> Were that the onely, which is the most usuall employment of a *Concordance*, to serve as a remembrancer to helpe us out when we sticke at a quotation . . . the immense labours of the pious compiler of this worke deserved to be thankfully *remembred* by us, for thus steading our *memory*: But the use of his worke extendeth not onely to the helping of that faculty . . . To explaine this a little to such as are either utterly unacquainted with collections of this nature, or cast an eye of scorne upon them (and yet none make more use in secret of them than they;) if in their reading the Bible they fall upon some perplexed sentence & obscure place, let them according to the direction of S. Austin, *seek for other parallel texts or places of Scripture, in which the same matter is set down more plainly and evidently*. For as the Sun is best descried by his own beames, so the Scripture is best expounded by Scripture.[10]

In title page of his concordance, *A Christian Dictionarie*, Thomas Wilson purports to open "the signification of the chiefe *wordes dispersed generally through Holie* Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, tending to increase Christian knowledge."[11] He will remove certain parts of the mystery surrounding words, that is, those parts that are comprehensible to the human intellect, not divine mysteries. Stanley Stewart explains that "[h]is method will be to render 'true and familiar glosses' of the most striking or significant words in biblical discourse."[12] Traherne

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[8] David Cram, "Concordances of Words and Concordances of Things: A Neglected Aspect of Seventeenth-Century English Lexicography," *The World in a List of Words,* Sonderdruck aus Lexicographica, Series Major, Band 58 (1994): 83–93.

[9] John Wilkins, *Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher*, 1646 (London, 1679) 52; cited in Cram, "Concordances of Words and Concordances of Things," 86.

[10] Daniel Featley, Advertisement to the Reader, *A Complete Concordance to the Bible of the Last Translation*, by Clement Cotton (London, 1631) sigs. A3v–A4r. This passage is cited in Cram, "Concordances of Words and Concordances of Things," 86.

[11] Thomas Wilson, *A Christian Dictionarie* (London, 1612) sig. A2.

[12] Stanley Stewart, "Thomas Wilson's *Christian Dictionary* and the 'Idea' of Marvell's 'Garden,'" *New Aspects of Lexicography, Literary Criticism, Intellectual History, and Social Change*, ed. Howard Weinbrot (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972) 44.

shares a similar goal, but wishes to go further and actually open *all* the "Mysteries of Felicitie," revealing "the Transcendent Verities of the Holy Scriptures, and the Highest Objects of the Christian faith" to the "Ey of Reason" (*CH*, fol. 2r). Both Wilson and Traherne use scriptural texts to enhance their word definitions. In the entry for the word "Adulterie" Wilson gives the following definition:

> Uncleannes about the act of generation between two persons, whereof the one at least is married, *Heb*: 13, 4. Adulterers God will Iudge. Iohn 8.3. *A woman taken in adultery.*
> 2 All maner of uncleannes, about desire of sex, together with the occasions, causes, and meanes therof, as in the 7. Commandement. *Exod*: 20,14. Thou shalt not commit adultery.[13]

For the entry "Affections" he says:

> Passions which affect the mind with some griefe or paine, especially when they are strong and vehement. *Rom.* 7,5. The affections of sin wrought in us. In the original Text it is read, *The Passions of sinne.*
> 2 More entire feeling & harty loue, 2. *Cor.* 7,15. His inward affection is more aboundant towards you.[14]

Traherne provides scriptural passages for these two words as well, though he cites different ones than Wilson. For instance, for "Adulterie" he quotes Proverbs 5:3–6: "The Lips of a strange woman drop as an Honey combe, and her mouth is smoother than Oyl . . ." (*CH*, fol. 44v.2). He also cites Proverbs 6:27–32: "But whoso committeth Adultery with a woman lacketh understanding, he that doth it destroyeth his own Soul." (*CH*, fol. 45r.1). In addition he looks at Malachi 2.13–15 and 1 Corinthians 6:9–10. By referring to several passages from the Song of Solomon, Traherne gives a different sense of the word "Affection" than Wilson. He emphasizes the emotion of love when describing the word. He quotes Song of Solomon 4:10 (or, as he says "Cant.4"): "How fair is thy Love my Sister my Spouse! How much Better is thy Love than Wine! And the Smell of thine Oyntments than all Spices" (*CH*, fol. 53v.1). He also cites Colossians 3:1–2: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your Affection in Things above, not on things on the Earth"

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[13] Wilson, 6.
[14] Wilson, 6.

(*CH*, fol. 53v.1). It would be surprising if Traherne was not familiar with some concordances as they outnumbered dictionaries during Traherne's lifetime, and their aim—providing an interpretive device and index of terms in order to reveal divine messages—was one which Traherne would have admired and emulated.

The age of encyclopedias came in the eighteenth century and yet a few notable works were part of the landscape of the seventeenth-century language movement. John Amos Comenius was devoted to linguistic reform and expounding his Pansophic vision, the systematic description of nature and the placement of things within the framework of God's divine scheme.[15] Comenius visited England between 1641–42 and was a guest of Samuel Hartlib, but to what extent he influenced the English language movement is still a point of debate between modern philologists. For instance, Benjamin DeMott claims that Comenius' *Via lucis*, the precursor to his proposed Pansophia, influenced the movement towards a common goal of achieving religious unity. Along with this, he inspired the English linguists to move from a universal language, one taken from an old language and primitive root words, to a universal *and* philosophical language which would be isomorphic with reality.[16] Vivian Salmon provides a convincing counter-argument by pointing out that religious unification was not the primary goal of the language movement nor did any of its projectors acknowledge their debt to the *Via Lucis*.[17] However Comenius' vision of language reform certainly reached England through other sources such as his *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* (1658), a popular school book translated into English in 1659 by the teacher Charles Hoole. This work featured pictures of all visible things along with lists of words and definitions pertaining to them.[18] A popular work among the English language

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[15] Mary Slaughter, *Universal Languages and Scientific Taxonomy in the Seventeenth-Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 100.

[16] Benjamin DeMott, "The Sources and Development of John Wilkins's Philosophical Language," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 57 (1958): 1–13.

[17] Vivian Salmon, *The Study of Language in Seventeenth-Century England* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1988) 129–156.

[18] Murray Cohen, *Sensible Words: Linguistic Practice in England 1640–1785* (Baltimore: John's Hopkins University Press, 1977) 6–7; and, Slaughter, 101.

planners as well as schoolmasters was Comenius' *Janua Linguarum* (1631), a textbook for teaching Latin. This work is encyclopedic in nature, for it divides Latin sentences into classes of concepts and things, and arranges them into a sequential order along Aristotelian lines.[19]

Johannes Alsted and Joachim Bisterfeld, who studied at the Herborn Academy (circa 1611) had similar ambitions to those of Comenius. Alsted was Comenius's tutor at Herborn. Mary Slaughter describes their endeavors:

> The prevailing philosophy at Herborn was eclectic, combining the mysticisms of Lull, the Cabala and Bruno with the utopian ideas of Campanella, the logic of Ramus and the scientific notions of Bacon. Through their encyclopedias they endeavored to show the overall unity underlying these various methods of attaining knowledge.[20]

Traherne would have been interested in these efforts, particularly the attempt to see all objects and things within a divine scheme. He does in fact refer to Alsted when discussing Saint Philip in the *Church's Year Book*. However, the reference is to Alsted's history or Chronicle not to his *Encyclopedia* of 1630.[21] Whether or not he knew this work or Comenius's is a point of conjecture. Given Traherne's view that Felicity is all-pervasive, one may assume that, had he known it, the poet would have admired Comenius's Pansophic vision with its attempt to see the divine in all things. But *Commentaries of Heaven* does not follow Comenius's taxonomic structure which divides things into classes or categories. Nor does it follow Alsted's categories in his encyclopedia which is divided into the various philosophical divisions: "Præcognita philosophica," "Scientie philosophie theoretice," "Prudentiæ philosophiæ practice," and "Artes philosophiæ poeticæ."[22] Traherne's system of organization is alphabetic and all things are classified in

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19 Salmon, *The Study of Language in Seventeenth-Century England*, 134; Slaughter, 100–101.

20 Slaughter, 98.

21 The passage from the *Church's Yearbook* reads: "Our Holy St. Philip might have tenderd his Flesh: but He chose rather to Grace and Adorn his Inward Man, And therfore in the Reign of Vespasian, at Hieropolis, after all his Travails and Pains for his Dearest Lord, was first Stoned, and then Crucified. As Alstead in his Chronicle Chap.27 relates. And his Collegue St. James for preaching the same Faith was thrown from a Pinacle of the Temple, and so Died for his Lord as the same Alstead. Chron.c.27" (*CYB*, fol. 22).

22 Johannes Alsted, *Encyclopedia* (Herborn, 1630).

relationship to Felicity. Murray Cohen has noted that the "presentation of linguistics in visually convenient ways is motivated by theoretical assumptions and confirms, by the predicted success of the method, the truth of those assumptions."[23] Alphabetizing was a practical method of systematically addressing each topic or word and relating it to a unified vision in which all things relate back to Felicity. Because he is attempting to show the interrelatedness underlying all things and concepts, this system of organization suits Traherne's theological project. Thus we can conclude that the *Commentaries of Heaven* shares the alphabetical structure with dictionaries; acts as an interpretive aid using scriptural passages, like concordances; and surveys and collects information on various topics like some encyclopedias, though without using their structural method. The work has something in common with all of these, but nevertheless is difficult to classify.

2. *Word Definitions in* Commentaries of Heaven

Traherne is obviously concerned with properly defining words. In the entry "Account" he expresses his desire to rescue words from "Abuse" and "Bondage" (*CH*, fol. 22r.2). His desire to convey "The naked Truth" using "transparent Words" and "an easy Stile" ("The Author to the Critical Peruser") is characteristic of many linguists of the age who wanted to improve communication by producing a plain easy stile which would eliminate all verbal ambiguity. In order to achieve this they needed to establish accurate word definitions. Numerous individuals expressed anxiety over the proper method of producing effective definitions. Francis Bacon is reputed by later linguists to have instigated language reform in England. He saw the misuse of words as a major obstacle to scientific progress (*Novum Organum*, 1620). Later in the century the political theorist Thomas Hobbes highlights the dilemma of poor definitions:

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[23] Cohen, 18.

> Seeing then that *truth* consisteth in the right ordering of names in our affirmations, a man that seeketh precise *truth*, had need to remember what every name he uses stands for; and to place it accordingly; or else he will find himselfe entangled in words, as a bird in lime-twiggs; the more he struggles, the more belimed. . . . For the errours of *Definitions* multiply themselves, according as the reckoning proceeds. . . .[24]

Royal Society member John Wilkins is only one example of numerous universal and philosophical language planners who believed in the crucial role word definitions played in communication. He claims that "*the business of* Defining" was "*amongst all others the most nice and difficult.*"[25] Philologists speculated as to whether or not there could be a relationship of verisimilitude between language, thought, and reality. A language which accomplished this would eradicate verbal ambiguities and thereby solve many of the political and theological disputes of the age. A further discussion of the philosophical intricacies of the language movement will be provided in the next section of this chapter, when I discuss the vital role of taxonomies and categories of nature in word definitions. But for now I simply wish to describe Traherne's word definitions in the *Commentaries of Heaven* and save until later a more detailed comparison between him and other thinkers.

Generally speaking philologists saw language in one of two ways. It was either real, in which case words signify things and notions, or else it was nominal, in which case words do not capture the essence of the real world. Traherne, and most of his contemporaries believed that words, ideally, could represent things and notions.[26] They held the optimistic view that words could mirror reality accurately. A philologist needed to determine whether he believed words signified naturally, or whether humans arbitrarily assigned significations. Traherne's position on this issue is a complicated one. For the most part he believes in the arbitrary assignment of words to things. One finds evidence for this from his primary concern with

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24 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan,* ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 28.

25 John Wilkins, *An Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language,* 1668, A Scolar Press Facsimile (Menston: The Scholar Press, 1968) Epistle Dedicatory, sig. av.

26 Slaughter, 22. One exception to this generalization is Thomas Hobbes who was a nominalist. His views will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

human perception; understanding the things and notions *behind* words is important, not the words themselves. For the most part he does not concentrate upon morphology.[27] Neither does he wish to rediscover any natural language (Hebrew or Adam's prelapsarian speech) nor attempt to create a new philosophical language. As this section will illustrate, he focuses on the role of human perception in understanding the things and notions which a given word signifies, therefore, English word entries suffice for his project of linguistic reform.

Traherne believes that English words contain and yield treasures. In his first entry, "Abhorrence," he says: "Thou must know by this, that GOD infused no Faculty into thy Soul in vain. By this Thou mayst discern, that even Words contain Heavenly Treasures, when understood" (*CH,* fol. 4v.1). Traherne insists that all things within the cosmos contribute to human Felicity and words, used correctly, encapsulate their immense value. What is this "Heavenly Treasure" in the case of abhorrence? It is simply the realization that feelings of abhorrence help to secure man's happiness:

> No mans flower growing in His Garden is more Beautifull, or more His own, than Abhorrence in the World is evry Mans Treasure. It is wholy mine In GOD Angels and Men, as well as in me. The whole Tree with all its fruits is wholy mine. All those Holy Actions that hav Beautified the World did spring up from the Abhorrence of Evil. All that Lov which is unto me Springeth up from the Abhorrence of Evil. for Did not men Abhor the Evil of being Desolat, that is, of being Idle or Misemployed, which they must be when they love not, there had been no necessity moving them at all to lov me: or to Desire Lov. . . .
>
> (*CH,* fol. 4r.2)

The soul first penetrates, then apprehends the essence of things, and then a word can be assigned to them. The entry for the word "Abridgement" is, itself, concerned with the defining of words.[28] For Traherne, a word is a kind of abridgement, or "little Abstract," which holds the essence "in fit and convenient Repositories" of a given thing or object. In the following passage the poet

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[27] An exception to this trend is his concern for etymology, a topic which will be discussed in detail below.

[28] For complete entry see Appendix III.

celebrates the ability of the soul to understand objects and to provide significations for words,

> Concerning Abridgement I shall speak but little: Observing in it only the Glory of the Soul, that can frame an Abridgement; and instructing men how to use it. That the Soul can extend the Rays of its understanding to all Objects in Heaven and Earth is as Specious a Wonder, as infinit. But that it can draw all these into a little Abstract, and lodg them in fit and convenient Repositories, even in a Centre, containing in it self Rooms Enough wherin to Dispose them, in Clear Light, in fair Treasuries, in Distinct Accessible Orders, so that it can Approach and make a familiar use of them. intimats to us a far more Glorious Art then his was, that Enclosed Homers Iliads in a nut-shell. . . . (*CH,* fol. 7v.1)[29]

Traherne believes this receptacle, or word, does not require change, but rather, that human perception regarding what the word signifies must be altered. Later in the entry for "Abridgement," Traherne seems to contradict his position that all objects and things are part of Felicity, for he says that words are useless when applied to "insignificant Objects." No object is insignificant to Traherne so what does he mean here? Simply that anything can be made insignificant by devaluing its purpose, by not seeing it as magnificent, beautiful, and created for human happiness. He says:

> Words are many times made useless by[30] being applied to vile or insignificant Objects. But if you will Draw an Abstract of all Beings Possible or Imaginable, and see the Confines of all Existence, penetrat the centre and survey the Excellencies of Things; Discern your Interest and the Beauty of them; you shall find Abridgement a Glorious Essence, and sing Praises Eternally for so Divine a Being. (*CH,* fol. 7v.1)

So-called "vile or insignificant Objects," then, achieve their lowly status only through being neglected by humans.

Perception is critical in appreciating the nature of objects. Traherne employs simile to describe different types of human apprehension:

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[29] The phrase "Iliads in a nut-shell" is used by Joseph Waite in his preface to Cave Beck's *Universal Character* (London, 1657): "Speech is the Index of the mind: Loe, here Th' Index of Speech; the dumb Interpreter; The Iliads in a Nut-shell; Tongues in Brief; *Babel* revers'd . . ." sig. A6r. It is also found in Abraham Cowley's poem "To the Royal Society," in Thomas Sprat's *History of the Royal Society* (London, 1667): *Y'* [Royal Society members] *have taught the curious Sight to press / Into the privatest recess / Of her imperceptible Littleness. / She with much stranger Art than his who put / th'* Illiads *in a Nut, / The numerous work of Life does into Atomes shut. / Y' have learned to Read her smallest Hand, / And well begun her deepest Sense to Understand.*" sig. B2v.

[30] The manuscript reads "uselesssby" at this point.

> The names of Things are like the Titles only upon Apothecaries Boxes. Their first Ideas are but little more. There is as much difference between familiar and perfect Apprehension of things, and their names, as there is between a Childs Ey in seeing the Inscription, and a Physicians Soul in knowing Drugs. The one seeth only a Box and Painted Letters, the other is acquainted with the Color Consistence Properties and virtues of the Thing within. Thy Abridgement shall at last be like many Titles before thine Eys, by and through which thou shall enjoy a Prospect of all their Excellencies. (*CH,* fol. 7v.2)

Often Traherne invites his audience to picture the concept behind a given word by using graphic anecdotes. This technique of using visual representations is inviting to an audience and shows the poet's concern for their appreciation and even enjoyment of his work.

At times Traherne feels words are less than ideal repositories. Throughout *Commentaries of Heaven* he talks about the vulgarization, or simplification, of words as opposed to their spiritual reality. During the Restoration many writers commented upon sermon style, objecting to the "vulgar" use of language. They criticized a style, allegedly used by nonconformist ministers, of preaching to the common masses, or the "vulgar" people. Such a style often included the use of homely images or metaphors.[31] But for Traherne, the sound, structure, and spelling of the word does not make it vulgar or simple, but rather the manner in which one interprets the thing or object signified. The refinement of language required taking it to a spiritual level. In the entry for the word "Account" Traherne says that the word is used vulgarly by merchants and shopkeepers, to indicate keeping numbers in books, but in its abstract use it is elevated to a heavenly status: "In its Abstracted Notion, it is from vulgar use, from Merchants Shops and Princes Courts taken up into Heaven; and Shineth there like a Star in GODs Kingdom" (*CH,* fol. 22r.2). There are different types of accounts—military, civil, and ecclesiastical—but the true use of the word is to signify divine accounts of heavenly treasure. Humans have come to see such words as "Abhorrence," "Abuse," "Accusation," "Affliction," and "Avarice" as representing evil things. However

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[31] This topic will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter IV.

Traherne counters this by showing them as felicitous acts, or at least acts with felicitous beginnings. For instance, he states that "Abuse" is "a Turning away from the Use of Things" (*CH,* fol. 12r.2). However, the power to abuse comes from God: "The Power is an Orient Jewel, the Abuse of it a Deformed monster" (*CH,* fol. 12v.1). "Avarice" is the "Root and fountain of all, these dreadfull Abom[i]nations" (*CH,* fol. 183r.2) unless "it be employed in the Divinest Things, and feedeth upon those Objects that are most Sublime" for it will lead humans to the fullness of God. From the above examples we see that Traherne's language reform amounts to a change in human perception. He believes that this change will suffice in bringing about linguistic transformation.

It is important to note that Traherne exhibits different stances with regard to defining words. He ranges from being very personal and emotional to being objective and technical. In his entry for the word "Ages" he defines the word as meaning the life-span of a human being. This of course, is a perfect time to interject a personal anecdote about his own life. He reflects upon his early days of study, before he really understood Felicity: "When I devoted my self to study, and spend my Days as consecrated to Felicitie, I neither Knew its Objects nor the maner of enjoying them being therefore stark Blind" (*CH,* fol. 63v.1). At times the sections in his entries erupt into enthusiastic celebrations as seen in several of his poems. In the entry for the word "Abundance" Traherne talks about the great variety of things within the cosmos, but before listing them, he excuses himself to his audience and breaks into rapturous exclamations:

> A Meditation of Abundance
>
> The Author takes liberty to vent the naked
> Imaginations of His Soul,
> as they naturally rise upon this occasion.
>
> GOOD LORD! did I ever think of such an Abundance! I ever expect such Satisfactions! Did I ever hope for such Treasures! From mine Infancy indeed I did long after Happiness, and thought it must be infinit. But little did I think it was so infinite. I thirsted and Desired and coveted Enjoyments, but they were unknown: and above the Stars, among the Holy Angels thought I, but denied to Men in this World! I questioned whether it was possible there should be a GOD, and I so poor? and Men so Miserable? For if there be a GOD, He is infinit in

> Goodness, and nature suggested He was all Lov. But Goodness cannot be without Bounty, nor Bounty without Riches. And I poor Infant had nothing but a few Stools and Cups and Dishes! O my GOD! That I should be snatched from a Cottage and the Extremest Povertie to these Enjoyments! That all the Things in Heaven and Earth should be mine! And I surrounded with Celestial Treasures! All Worlds mine, and so Glorious! (*CH,* fol. 11v.2)

At other times he shows a technical concern and draws up etymologies and concise definitions for a given word. The sections entitled "Its Definition," "Its Signification," "Its Etymology," for the most part, reflect this concern.

Thirty entries, approximately one third of those found in *Commentaries of Heaven*, contain at least one section that attempts to address the more technical concerns of providing a definition, signification, or an etymology of a given word.[32] Thirty-four sections address these concerns: seven definition sections, fourteen signification sections, ten etymology sections, two sections with mixed headings, and one section called "The Derivation of the word." The two sections with mixed headings are "Amisse" with the section title "Its nature and Signification" (*CH,* fol. 91v.2), and "Assistance" with the section title "Its Etymologie, and signification" (*CH,* fol. 146v.1). For the most part, it is difficult to distinguish between Traherne's definitions and his significations. For instance, in "Accuratness" the two seem almost to repeat one another:

> Its Signification
>
> Accuratness is either the Adding of Care to work, or Care to Care. It signifies a care upon care, that the Work may be perfect which is undertaken
>
> Its Definition
>
> Accuratness is a Special care that nothing be Redundant,[33] Defectiv, or Deformed: Or the Effect of that care. (*CH,* fol. 24r.1)

In the etymology sections, however, Traherne is primarily concerned with analyzing the provenance of a given word. "Etymology" meant a number of

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[32] See Appendix IVa for a complete list of all the entries containing definitions, significations, and etymologies.

[33] The manuscript reads "Reduntant" at this point.

different things in the seventeenth century, therefore it is impossible to describe a standard etymology for the times. According to Ian Michael etymologies were primarily concerned with the divisions of grammar which described parts of speech rather than with investigations into the true origins of a word, though both meanings were used.[34] Some of Traherne's etymologies simply break a word down into its roots, as in the entry "Amisse":

> A in composition is a privativ particle and signifies Removal. Misse is a Word that implies our Aim at a Mark, and signifies our ill success in hitting beside it. (*CH,* fol. 91v.2)

More often, he claims to trace the origins of a word back to Latin and Greek (of course lacking the understanding of modern philologists that Latin, Greek, and English all come from Indo-European). Traherne's Latin and Greek are correct for the most part:

> Anger, if we consult the Etymologie of the word, is a troublesom vexatious passion, derived from the Latine word Angor, which signifies a Distress either of Body or Mind, as that is from Ango to choak, or strangle: and that from the Greek Ἄγχω to molest, or Streighten, the Jaws in particular. denoting how this passion suffocates and oppresses them that are violently troubled with it. (*CH*, fol. 97v.2)

According to modern etymologies, the word "anger" comes from Old Norse. It is cognate with the Latin "angor," and coincidentally similar to the Greek Ἄγχω. Despite lacking the knowledge of modern linguists, Traherne skillfully uses the limited knowledge available to him to create concise and effective etymologies. However, his attempts at etymology do seem amateurish in comparison to the detailed and thorough study of his contemporary, Stephen Skinner. Skinner's work, *Etymologicon Linguæ Anglicanæ*, is a massive alphabetically arranged etymology. It was composed in Latin and aimed at an international scholarly community. He displays a far greater knowledge of etymology than Traherne, tracing words back to Anglo-Saxon, continental languages, or Greek and Latin. Moreover, he shows sensitivity to phonological changes and the various social factors which may have impacted the evolution of various languages. Skinner's

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[34] Ian Michael, *English Grammatical Categories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) 185.

work is more technical as he reports his findings in a direct and objective manner. He too glosses "Amiss" and "Anger," but while his efforts provide thorough etymologies complete with bibliographical information, they are also dry and tedious.[35] In contrast Traherne, aware of the technical nature of etymologies and the attention span of an audience, utilizes visual representations—a person aiming and missing a mark, or suffocating as his jaw stiffens with strong emotion.[36]

At times Traherne's sections called "Its Nature" or "Its Uses" provide similar information to that found in the definition, signification, and etymology sections. For instance, in both kinds of sections for the word "Aspect" Traherne describes how the word is applied to a particular phenomenon—the influence of the stars:

> Its Etymologie
>
> The word Aspect comes from Aspicio, to Behold, as Respect comes from respicio to look Back. Respect is made a perfect English Word, and commonly understood among the vulgar But Aspect is a Terme of Art used by Astrologers, and it signifies the maner wherein the Stars behold one another. Where we may observ, it is perfectly metaphorical, for the Rayes of Light which they dart upon one another, are inferior to those of vision wherby we see one another. To shine and to see have some thing of Similitude, but to shine is not to behold in proprietie of speech. The Stars may shine upon, without seeing each other.

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[35] Stephen Skinner, *Etymologicon Linguæ Anglicanæ* (London, 1671). Skinner's entries are more thorough than Traherne's but they lack the latter's vivid descriptions. An example may be found in Skinner's entry for the word "Anger": "**Anger**, Ira, Indignatio, fort. *ab* AS.Anze, Vexatus, Teut. **Angst**, Angor, Dan. **Angrer**, Poenitet, & fane Ira, præsertim vehementior, semper-Angore quodam, & moestitia ex mali, quod detestamur, and vindictæ quam meditamur, apprehensione stipatur. *Minsevus* deducit a voce Græca apud Suidam, Ἄγχε's, Dolor, Longe justius deflectere possem *a* voce Lat. sequioris sæculi *Angariare*, quæ etiam apud *Florium*, ut & Germana ejus soror *Angarier* apud Cotgravium, occurrit: *Angariare* autem satis frequens legitur in Latino-Barbaris Scriptoribus, qui tum paulo ante, tum post Imperii lapsum vixerunt; non enim tantum invenies in versione vulgari Latina Bibliorum *Matthæi* cap.5. sed etiam in LL *Baioar*.tit.13. Sect.9. item in Epistola *Cnutonis* seu *Canuti* Regis apud *Malmesh.* de Gestis Regum lib.2. in Charta *Wilhelmi* Conquestoris Abb. *Rames.* apud *Britonem Armoricum Philippid.* lib.12. & alibi. Notum autem est plerrasque recentiorum linguarum voces, præsertim Franco-Gallicæ, Italicæ & Hispanicæ ab illis, quæ sequioribus illis sæculis irrepserunt dictionibus ortum ducere, & sensus plane idem est: In omnibus enim quæ innuimus locis *Angariare* idem quod Vexare designat. Si plura vis adi *Voss*.de Vit. Serm. & *Spelmannum* in Gloss." sig. Bb2r. See Appendix IVb for translation.

[36] Latin and/or Greek roots can also be found in "Acuteness," "Affinity," "Amisse," "Anger," "Antichrist," "Apostle," "Apostasie," "Appetite," "Aspect," "Assistance," "Atom," and "Atonement."

Its Nature.

> Aspects are appropriated to the Stars; They are as we said in its Etymology the maner wherin they shine upon one another. Which varying, according to Astrologers, produceth several Effects in themselvs and in the Earth commonly stiled this Inferior World. (*CH*, fol. 142r.1)

"Assistance" has a joint etymology and signification section, and immediately following it is one called "Its Nature." The former gives a brief account of the root words of "Assistance," but aside from this, the two are not significantly different:

Its Etymologie, and signification.

> Assistance is a word that comes from Ad and Sisto, To stand by one, To make more Strong, or to make to stand still. For it is with particular persons som times as it is with whole nations, which when they are not able to raise an Armie great enough among themselvs fly for Succour to their Confederat neighbors friends and Alleys; and the forces which they receiv and adde to their own from without, are called Auxiliaries, Aids and Assistances.

Its Nature

> An Assistance is a forrein Help, wherby our own power being too Weak, we are Aided by some other Power annexed to our own, in our Endeavor after some profitable End. (*CH*, 146r.1)

The first section provides the etymology and gives an example of worldly assistance. The second section is a kind of brief summary, tied to the first by the words "forrein Help" which is linked to "Alley," "Auxiliaries," "Aids," and "Assistances." In the above examples Traherne shows his poetic skill, for he entertains his audience with vivid representations as he provides Latin and Greek etymologies.

At the beginning of this section I claimed that, for the most part, Traherne did not have morphological concerns. One exception of course is his interest in etymology, both breaking words into roots and describing the origin. Looking at roots and origins may suggest that he believed an earlier form of a given word is more legitimate, or signifies more accurately the essence of a thing or notion.

Perhaps Traherne believes this is the case though he does not explicitly convey this sentiment. I would still maintain that his main interest is not lexical but rather, the focus of his linguistic enterprise involves human perception of things and notions behind words.

While being more technically oriented and objective than other sections, Traherne's definitions, significations, and etymologies, nevertheless resort to figurative language or touch on his theology. Four sections use figurative language to help provide the definition or signification of a word. Traherne refers to a fable in order to evoke an image of one going awry in his entry "Amisse":

> The end in general they [wayward humans] hit in desire, but generaly mistake it in particular, and therfore miss it. For like the Dog in the Fable they catch at the Shadow of Happiness, reflected in the troublesom sea of this world, and lose the Substance. (*CH,* fol. 91v.2)

In "Attention" he even describes an instance when the word is used figuratively: "Tend signifies to bend, or to stretch out To attend therefore if we regard the force of the word seems in a figurative sence to be applied to the Soul" (*CH,* fol. 180v.2). He then illustrates this figurative usage in a subsequent section of the entry entitled "The Nature of the Thing":

> Attention is an Act of the Soul wherby it diligently noteth and marketh what is spoken. The Soul of a pious Attender Hangeth on the Lips of the Speaker, and feedeth upon his Words, as if the Breath that carried them were the Life of the Hearer. It drinketh them in as if the sence of what was spoken were the only Waters of Comfort and Refreshment. (*CH,* fol. 180v.2)

Clearly the poet, despite attacking figurative language in his poem "The Author to the Critical Peruser," finds a use for simile in delineating the signification of the word "Attention." Some of the figures he uses refer to *exempla* from the Bible. In "Amisse" he talks about the Disciples asking "Amiss" (*CH,* fol. 91v.2). In "Atonement" he refers to the ancient Israelites offering an atonement of half a shekel to God. This type of means-oriented atonement, that which is made through the Old Law of the Old Testament, is figurative or "Typical" atonement:

> The Atonement made for Sin, is either Typical, or Real. All the Sacrifices of the Old Law Whereby Atonement was made, were meer

> Shadows, purely figurative, and accepted of the Jews in token only of GODs Acceptance of a greater Sacrifice. (*CH,* fol. 173r.2)

The "Real" atonement is that which is made by Christ in the New Testament. "Balm" and "Baseness" offer instances where the entire signification of the word is bound up with biblical passages. They are more like one of Traherne's sections entitled "Scriptures" than his normal significations, for they list various passages from scripture which use the words balm and base. A further discussion of figurative language, particularly metaphor, will be treated in greater detail in Chapter IV.

Eleven of the thirty entries address spiritual issues. The signification of the word "Abuse" is tied to Traherne's theology:

> If therfore GOD intended His Abundance to be used, not to use them is to Abuse them. And if he Designed the use of them to consist in Honoring, and in Serving Him, by and for them; to turn them against Him, is more to Abuse them. (*CH,* fol. 12r.2)

In the title page of the *Commentaries* Traherne claims that all things will be shown to be objects of happiness, and this includes the word "Abuse." In the entry "Abuse" he states that the power to abuse is a divine gift, but it becomes distorted by misuse. One can also look at "Amisse" which conveys a similar notion—the aim towards felicity is correct, but it has somehow gone awry:

> When we do Evil, we are said to do Amiss, because by Evil deeds we miss the Mark at which we aim. We aim at Felicity in all our Deeds, but when we endeavor it by Evil Deeds we miss of our purpose. And therefore are Evil Deeds said to be Amiss. (*CH,* fol. 91v.2)

"The Signification of the Word," modelled for concise delineation, nevertheless contains part of Traherne's theology.

The above examples serve as an introduction to Traherne's view of word definitions. What might otherwise be a technically tedious enterprise is instead an artistic display of the poet's knowledge. Always conscious of his audience, he endeavors not to overwhelm them with superfluous information. Rather he invites and entertains through personal anecdote, rapturous outpourings of thanksgiving, and

vivid pictorial representations of the thing or action defined. In the seventeenth-century listing and categorizing was a crucial part of defining. For instance, elaborate taxonomies were characteristic of the philosophical language projects of John Wilkins and George Dalgarno, for they believed that before definitions could be assigned to a character, and a character to a concept, everything needed to be broken down into its basic form, listed on Tables, and then grouped with other like things or concepts. Traherne does not have a taxonomic system of this kind which breaks things up into genus and species—his system of organization is alphabetical and the sections provide different angles for looking at a given word—but he does voice an understanding of the categorical systems in operation at the time. The next section will illustrate both his knowledge of the taxonomic systems and the manner in which he adopted and altered them to suit his particular theological message.

3. Traherne and the Language Planners

The seventeenth century was a time of intense intellectual activity for those engaged in philological endeavors. The age saw numerous attempts at finding the perfect mode of communication which would eliminate all verbal ambiguities. Many believed that linguistic reform would improve commerce, eradicate religious controversy, and aid science. A reformed language would facilitate communication and "*contribute much to the clearing of some of our Modern differences in* Religion, *by unmasking many wild errors.*"[37] Creating a new language which accurately mirrored reality would also promote the advancement of learning. Early language schemes in England aimed, for the most part, to achieve a common language or universal character. For instance, in *A Common Writing* (1647), Francis Lodwick tried to produce a scheme in which radical words were assigned characters.[38]

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[37] Wilkins, *Essay,* Epistle Dedicatory, sig. br.

[38] James Knowlson, *Universal Language Schemes in England and France 1600–1800* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975) 57–59.

Furthermore, the Ipswich schoolmaster Cave Beck wanted his project, *A Universal Character* (1657), to rectify the problems of learning language.[39] A common language would advance travel and commerce, disseminate the Gospel, and effectively render "Babel revers'd."[40] His project operated on a lexical-numerical system with Arabic numerals standing for things or notions.[41] Another facet of these early projects was the desire to reform an already existing language. John Wilkins's early project, *Mercury; or, The Secret and Swift Messenger* (1641) described a simple character based on Hebrew roots.[42] However, in the middle of the century there came a shift in linguistic reform; aspirations changed from wanting merely a universal character to wanting a philosophical one. The notion that a new language could be taken from an old one (such as Hebrew) was replaced by the belief that a new philosophical language could only come after the order of reality had been determined and careful taxonomic structures established.[43] Traherne shares elements of both the early and later trend in linguistic reform. On the one hand he maintains that the vernacular might be reformed through a change in mental perception. On the other hand he insists that words can describe the order of the cosmos (in his view, the doctrine of Felicity). Words for him will encapsulate and convey the essential felicitous nature of all things. Though the *Commentaries of Heaven* does not follow any taxonomical structure, it nevertheless shows the importance of categorization, as I shall demonstrate later in this chapter.

Scientific endeavors required a form of communication which provided a direct link between language, thought, and reality. For instance, the work of zoologists and botanists which attempted to describe nature and classify it went hand in hand with endeavors to achieve accurate linguistic representation. Instead of corresponding merely to words, written characters of a philosophical language would

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39 Salmon, *The Works of Francis Lodwick* (London: Longman Group, 1972) 18.
40 Waite, Preface, *A Universal Character,* by Cave Beck, sig. A6r.
41 Cohen, 4–5.
42 Slaughter, 137.
43 See: Knowlson, 72–73, Salmon *The Study of Language in Seventeenth-Century England*, 129; and, Slaughter, 1–6.

actually correspond to things and thereby mirror reality. A proper description and classification of things was essential to creating the ideal language, therefore taxonomical structures became a vital part of the language movement. Two of the most prominent philosophical language planners are George Dalgarno and John Wilkins who produced the *Ars Signorum* (1661) and *An Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language* (1668) respectively. Both men attempted to create a language from classifications of simple notions, or *a priori* language schemes.[44]

Despite their efforts to distance themselves from Medieval scholasticism and Aristotelianism, scientists and linguists of the Royal Society, such as Dalgarno and Wilkins, were nevertheless influenced by these philosophical traditions.[45] Aristotelian essentialism underlay many theories of language and Aristotelian categories informed taxonomical systems. For instance, they use the same terminology. To describe things seventeenth-century language planners refer to substances and accidents. Although their divisions of entities are not exactly the same as Aristotle's ten predicaments (Wilkins has forty major categories in his *Essay*), their principle of categorizing all things into a comprehensive order is the same. The language planners believed that nature must be analyzed and broken into simple elements or component parts before a language was developed. Many thinkers of the time believed that the world was intelligible to human understanding. They assumed that nature, and therefore language, could be ordered. Moreover, they believed that natural phenomena are comprised of essences which are both comprehensible and describable. Definitions are based on taxonomy and constitute a statement of essence.[46] In this sense, language could be "real" if it conveyed the essence of things. Although the planners' methods varied widely, they nevertheless shared common goals of enhancing the clarity, plainness, and veracity of language. I

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[44] Slaughter, 143.
[45] Salmon, *The Study of Language in Seventeenth-Century England*, 106–110; and, Slaughter, 15–37.
[46] Slaughter, 3–4.

therefore focus upon one of the leaders of this movement, John Wilkins, for he can serve as a representative of the language planners as a whole. I also investigate Wilkins's colleague, John Ray, for he shared similar theological tenets with Traherne. To illustrate an opposing position to most linguists, such as Wilkins, I discuss Thomas Hobbes's view of word definitions.[47] He did not believe the real world was intelligible and therefore maintained a nominalist position with regards to language ("Of Speech," *Leviathan*, 1651). Besides this Hobbes offers a fruitful point of comparison with Traherne. This section will analyze to what extent Traherne reflected and incorporated contemporary views into his theology and philosophy of language.

The language planners of the Oxford Circle, and later the Royal Society, were largely responsible for promoting linguistic reform through their experiments with philosophical language schemes. Wilkins's group began its enquiries into language reform at Oxford during the 1650s. This was precisely the time when Thomas Traherne was beginning his undergraduate studies at the University. In Oxford, Wilkins was joined by George Dalgarno and Seth Ward, author of *Vindiciæ Academiarum* (1654). The *Commentaries of Heaven* may have been inspired by the projects of the language planners—inspired, not by their taxonomic structures or methods of developing a philosophical character, but rather by the spirit behind the projects.[48] Like them, Traherne conceives of an enormous "Designe" that will consider everything known to man. He also shares the belief that language reform can open a pathway to Truth. Words can mirror reality. In

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[47] Cram points out that although Ray contributed much to Wilkins *Essay*, he nevertheless held a sceptical position believing that the enterprise was not practicable. Cram, "Universal Language, Specious Arithmetic and the Alphabet of Simple Notions," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft* 4 (1994): 216–217.

[48] Jonathan Sawday has drawn a comparison between the language planners of the Royal Society and Thomas Traherne, *The Body Emblazoned* (London: Routledge Press, 1995) 256–266. While I agree with his point that Traherne's theory of language in "The Author to the Critical Peruser" accords with theirs ("No Curling Metaphors that gild the Sence, / Nor Pictures here, nor painted Eloquence" 11–12) and shall discuss it in greater detail below, I do not agree in Traherne's "adoption of the weapons of science to counter science" (Sawday, 261). My discussions in this chapter and Chapter IV illustrate that he advocated the rationalism of Latitudinarianism and scientific pursuits even if he himself did not follow their methodology.

the Epistle Dedicatory of *An Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language* Wilkins refers repeatedly to the "design" of his project:

> *It is no easie undertaking to* Enumerate *all such matters as are to be provided for in such a design; But the business of* Defining, *being amongst all others the most nice and difficult, must needs render it a very hard task for any one to attempt the doing of this, for all kinds of* Things, Notions, *and* Words, *which yet is necessary to the design here proposed. . . .*[49]

We can hear the echoes of Wilkins when Traherne conveys his aspirations for his project. Traherne says his "Designe is . . . to supply the defects of learning as Much as Possible" (*CH,* fol. 130v.1). He also claims that the overall "design of the work is to produce Light in the understanding and make Apprehension more perfect" (*CH,* fol. 30v.1). He stresses that seeing Truth clearly, is his main objective (*CH,* fol. 28r.1). Truth for Traherne is his philosophy of Felicity; therefore, correcting the defects of learning and providing illumination and clarity are all part of revealing this central message. In other works Traherne claims to have the same mission, but the focus is different than that of *Commentaries of Heaven.* For instance, in the introduction to *Christian Ethicks*, "To the Reader," Traherne conveys a strong impulse to lead people to Felicity by treating the subject of morals. Similarly in the *Centuries of Meditation* Traherne speaks of his "design" to convey Truth:

> I will open my Mouth in Parables: I will utter Things that have been Kept Secret from the foundation of the World. Things Strange yet Common; Incredible, yet Known; Most High, yet Plain; infinitly Profitable, but not Esteemed. Is it not a Great Thing, that you should be Heir of the World? Is it not a very Enriching Veritie? In which the Fellowship of the Mystery, which from the beginning of the World hath been hid in GOD, lies concealed! The Thing hath been from the Creation of the World, but hath not so been Explained, as that the interior Beauty should be understood. It is my Design therfore in such a Plain maner to unfold it, that my Friendship may appear, in making you Possessor of the Whole World. (*CM,* I.3)

Though the above passage makes reference to the style of Traherne's delivery with the words "Plain maner," it does not propose a linguistic solution to the problem of

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[49] Wilkins, *Essay*, Epistle Dedicatory, sigs. av–a2r.

veiled Truth, as does the *Commentaries*. In the latter work, the poet insists upon the connection between words, truth, and the discovery of Felicity:

> . . . when felicity is seen Infallibility is seen. So that while under all Words placed in their order, we open the Nature of all Things, we shall even by Nature Discern all Things, clearly relate to Happiness, and in that to Religion. (*CH,* fol. 28r.1)

What exactly he means by "order" is unclear. That it is simply his alphabetized scheme seems unlikely. Rather, as the following discussion will demonstrate, the "order" amounts to having a clear understanding of what a given word signifies. Each entry's definition reflects Traherne's attempt to demonstrate the pervasiveness of Felicity within the cosmos, thus words mirror reality. Though this "order" is very different from a grand scheme like Wilkins's *An Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language*, Traherne nevertheless echoes the spirit behind such schemes.

Investigating Wilkins's system of categorizing will reveal how, like Traherne, he hoped to mirror reality through words. Salmon discusses the philosophical and grammatical tradition from the Middle Ages, a tradition which in turn borrowed heavily from Aristotelian logic and metaphysics. She points out that grammars from this time purported to hold the capacity to reflect reality as in a mirror. Wilkins's aim was to have a perfect correlation between language, thought, and reality where every written or spoken symbol was isomorphic with categories of reality. He determines his categories first by listing the elements to be characterized and then by grouping them so that related objects could be denoted by related symbols or syllables.[50]

Before assigning names to objects, Wilkins needed to account for the modes of existence of a given object. According to Salmon, Wilkins is partly indebted to medieval terminology. There are two main "modes" of existence for any object: its *ens* and its *essence*. The *ens* is the thing itself or concrete object, while the *essence* is the abstraction of the thing. But in the *ens*, the *essence* is always contained.

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[50] Salmon, *The Study of Language in Seventeenth-Century England,* 106.

Thus Wilkins first distinguishes things as concrete or abstract. This is an important distinction to note for as we shall see later, Traherne also believes that objects have both a concrete (or physical) meaning and an abstract (or spiritual) meaning. In other words, he posited two levels of being for every given thing or object. The concrete and abstract for Wilkins were further distinguished according to their mode of being, whether or not they were independent or dependent. Independent things exist by themselves while dependent things need to be incorporated within something. For instance, "whiteness" is a quality of a given object and is therefore dependent. There is another way in which an entity can exist; whatever has *essence* must also have *act*, thus there is both entity and active being. Salmon summarizes this saying "*[e]ns* 'concreteness', *essence* 'abstraction', and *existence* 'action' were therefore the fundamental properties of objects which Wilkins needed to provide for in his philosophical language." In addition to these properties there is also the Aristotelian notion of the four "causes" of entity: matter (indeterminate potentiality of an object), form (the shape of the matter), efficient cause (the operation which brings the entity into being) and lastly the final cause (the purpose for which the efficient cause worked in creating an object).[51] Wilkins uses these concepts for his description of causes of entity. The two "internal" causes are matter, from which a thing is made, and form, "*by which a thing is constituted in its being, and distinguished from all other things.*"[52] The external causes are the efficient and final causes.

While Wilkins wanted to have a philosophical language which had a perfect correlation between reality, thought, and speech, Hobbes believed there could be no relationship of verisimilitude between words and the external world. As part of the sceptical movement of the seventeenth century, the philosopher held that nothing definite could be known about the universe and the human mind was incapable of perceiving and knowing reality. However, if one accepted that cogitations could

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[51] Salmon, *The Study of Language in Seventeenth-Century England,* 112.
[52] Wilkins, *Essay*, 27.

not be directly linked to reality, there was still no reason why language and speech could not represent "Mentall Discourse" accurately. In fact, it is the only tool which man can reason with. In his chapter entitled "Of Speech" from *Leviathan*, Hobbes states: "The generall use of Speech, is to transferre our Mentall Discourse, into Verbal; or the Trayne of our Thoughts, onto a Trayne of Words. . . ." Speech is necessary for remembering things and communicating with other people. In order to record causes and effects, names must be imposed on designated things. The first distinction then is between Proper and Common (or Universal) names. Hobbes states:

> By this imposition of Names, some of larger, some of stricter signification, we turn the reckoning of the consequences of things imagined in the mind, into reckoning of the consequences of Appellations.[53]

Hobbes illustrates his point by using the analogy of counting:

> But the use of words in registring our thoughts, is in nothing so evident as in Numbring. A naturall foole that could never learn by heart the order of numerall words, as *one*, *two*, and *three*, may observe every stroak of the Clock, and nod to it, or say one, one, one; but can never know what houre it strikes. . . . So that without words, there is no possibility of reckoning of Numbers; much lesse of Magnitudes, of Swiftnesse, of Force, and other things, the reckonings wherof are necessary to the being, or well-being of man-kind.[54]

Names can be added to or subtracted from each other and thereby accounts can be kept to record and make transactions. He says that the Greeks used the same word, λόγος, for both speech and reason, and believed that there could be no reasoning without speech.[55] Traherne seems to share Hobbes's notion of numbering insofar as he believes adding things up is essential to fruitful cogitation. In the entry "Account" Traherne says:

> for were we not able to number and Esteem them [human riches] they would be of no Account. Its Beams therfore must Shine upon evry Thing. For as a field in the Sun, in the Light of Account only can Things be fair and fruitfull. (*CH,* fol. 22r.2)

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53 Hobbes, 26.
54 Hobbes, 27.
55 Hobbes, 29.

Also in the entry "Arithmetick" he observes that "Numeration alone is of such Transcendent use, that it is impossible to talk or converse well without it" (*CH*, fol.130v.1). Hobbes divides names into different categories which he calls the "foure generall heads." The first is "*Matter* " and contains all the things which signify matter or body. The second is called "*names Abstract*" and stands for some accident or quality which is in a thing or being. He lists examples: the word "life" is the accident or quality of living; "motion" the accident for moved; "heat" is the accident for hot, etc.[56] Hobbes's third general head is called "Properties of our own bodies," in other words, human fancy or the conception of a thing. This category consists of the ideas which are formed in the mind about a given object or thing. The fourth general head is called the names of names themselves, or names of "*Speeches*." He gives examples:

> For, *generall*, *universall*, *speciall*, *aequivocall*, are names of Names. And *Affirmation, Interrogation, Commandement, Narration, Syllogisme, Sermon, Oration*, and many other such, are names of Speeches.[57]

If words are the "counting" of things to record memories, thoughts, and ideas, and to communicate, then this fourth category can be said to distinguish between the respective "sums" from such accounts. This general head is akin to one of Wilkins's categories called "Words," or "Discourse," which he describes as the "most general name for those external expressions, whereby men do make known their thoughts to one another."[58] Within this category Wilkins has groups for grammar, logic, elements common to both grammar and logic, and modes of discourse.

For Wilkins the categorization of words corresponds with the categorization of knowledge. The philosophical character was intended to represent the real world and perfect communication for those who used it. Hobbes does not concede that knowledge of the real world is possible, but thoughts might be ordered and

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[56] Hobbes, 29.
[57] Hobbes, 29–30.
[58] Wilkins, *Essay*, 44

communication perfected if care is used in creating word definitions. Traherne, like Wilkins, seeks a means to convey reality perfectly and he states his intention clearly in the title page of *Commentaries of Heaven*. He is part of the movement which considered how words might capture the essence of things, though his method of doing this and final conclusion—that all things reveal Felicity—is different from those of the language planners. The fact that he has an underlying assumption before he begins his enterprise is also at odds with the aims of scientific movement which tried to eliminate all presuppositions in their approach to the cosmos (e.g. syllogisms of the scholastic tradition).

One must ask whether or not there are similarities between the above mentioned categories and Trahernian categories. At the outset of his project Traherne does not delineate any system of classifying save that of alphabetization. And yet nearly all the entries in *Commentaries of Heaven* are subdivided into titled sections or paragraphs (exceptions being "Ant" and "Babel"), some of which resemble the categories mentioned above. Frequently Traherne's entries represent the *ens*, *essence*, and *act* which Wilkins describes. Traherne seems to illustrate the distinction between the *ens* and the *essence*, or concrete and abstract, when describing the fundamental properties of objects. For Traherne, the abstract achieves a higher level of being. Humans obtain a deeper understanding when they can see the essence of things and it is the purpose of the *Commentaries of Heaven* to provide definitions which reveal this. For instance, in the entry "Ability" Traherne describes the basic definition of the word: Ability "implies a Power of Moving and Doing" (*CH*, fol. 4v.2). But he distinguishes between a physical concrete meaning, and an abstract one. The physical shows tangible evidence of "Moving and Doing" and "conveys strength into his little finger, or moves his Arm" but the abstraction, or higher sense of this action, has deeper and more profound significance:

> The one is Mechanick, and a Foundation only to support the Building, being prepared for the sake of the other. The other is the End, and as far above it, as the End is above the Means. (*CH*, fol. 5r.2)

He goes on to say the "Ability is a Spiritual Being in Material Things and the Glory of Immaterial." But what exactly is the immaterial essence? As always, it is the understanding that the entity described is part of the Felicitous design:

> All Abilities relate to all, and to me alone.
> By serving all, All Abilities are Enrichd to me: becaus I by Lov am the End of all.
> GOD the Fountain is the End of all, and I in Him.
> That GOD is the End of all Abilities, is so pleasing to me, as if only it had been so, for my sake. (*CH,* fol. 5v.1)

For Traherne, the concrete and abstract meanings of a word also correspond to an earthly and heavenly meaning. In the entry for "Account," quoted earlier in this chapter, Traherne talks about earthly and heavenly accounts. The word is used vulgarly by merchants and shopkeepers but in the section entitled "Of Divine Account" (*CH,* fol. 22v.1) he explains that in order to live in communion with God, one must keep divine accounts. Similarly in "Apparel" there is earthly and heavenly apparel. He opens the section by linking the need for apparel to the Fall; for only in man's fallen state does he need clothes to cover his shame. But then he also speaks of spiritual apparel which does not clothe external bodies, but internal souls:

> . . . for God who is rich in Bounty alloweth the use of Gold and Jewels, as well as of Hawks, and Magnificent Palaces, els he had not made them: but we should more study to pleas, him, and adorn our Souls, than our Bodies; even in very Gratitude. Put on therfore as the Elect of God holy and Beloved Bowels of Mercies, Kindness Humbleness of mind, meekness, Longsuffering And abov all these things put on charity which is the Bond of Perfectness. Be clothed with the Light of Wisdom as the Sun, and with the clean white Linnen which is the Righteousness of the Saints. (*CH,* fol. 110r.1)

Traherne's notion of *essence* is, once again, inextricably linked to his theological vision.

Traherne devotes an entire entry to describing "Act." He opens his discussion by stating "Philosophers, Lawyers, Historians, and Divines" use this word, while "Among the vulgar nothing is Known of it almost but the Name" (*CH,* fol. 30r.1). He goes on to list several different kinds of acts—as understood by

first Historians, then Lawyers, and then Philosophers. He analyzes why Philosophers call substances acts:

> Among Philosophers many solid and substantial Beings are called Acts by reason of their Resemblance to Enacted Laws; for as Acts of Parliament are first under deliberation, and by full consent receiv their Beings; when what was questioned is Decided, and exerted: so all Creatures whatsoever, receiv their Existence after a mature Deliberation of the Dietie, whether such and such a Thing should exist, or no. for which cause all substances are most fitly called Acts; it being enacted that they should be; their very Beings being effects of the counsel and Decree Enacting them. Of these Acts among the Learned there are many pertinent and Accurat Distinctions. which becaus they will scarcely receiv a Denomination in English, we will make uses of the latin Termes in which we find them. (*CH,* fol. 30r.2)

Traherne received instruction in Aristotelian philosophy as an undergraduate at Oxford and is referring to the Aristotelian-scholastic tradition when he says "Philosophers."[59] He discusses their various "Distinctions": "Actus purus" versus "Admixtus"; "Actus Absolutus" (an act which is not caused by any other) versus "Respectious" or "Relative Act" (an act which actuates another or proceeds from another).[60] He describes material acts such as "the whole being of a Beast" and immaterial acts such as "the soul of a man Actuating his Body" (*CH,* fol. 30r.2). He continues this discourse making other distinctions between "Actus primus" and "secundus." In the very next section of the entry entitled "An Observation" Traherne acknowledges the obscure nature of his discourse but also maintains that careful planning and categorizing are critical to true understanding:

> I confess this Discours to be Extremely obscure to vulgar understandings, and to those also that perhaps in a generous maner, hav shund the Termes of Art received in the Scholes. And I must seem a Barbarian to those who are not Acquainted with such Expressions. But as a little Crush in the mothers womb is of Great consequence afterwards; or a little Alteration in an Acorn produceth strange Effects in an oak, and somtimes destructive: so here a sleight mistake in the signification of words, may be of pernicious Importance in their continual use: and a little Accuratnes in the Beginning produce a mature and perfect understanding in the later End. which when it is attained, if we throw away the Engines by which we Ascended, as the care lying in

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[59] For an account of the Aristotelian influence on Traherne's thought see Marks and Guffey, eds. *Christian Ethicks*, xv–xxii.

[60] Sometimes Traherne's Latin terms are garbled. Here, for instance, "Respectious" is not a correct usage. Most probably he means to use some version of the word "respictus" which means "looking back," or else the verb "respicere" which means "to look back" or "to depend upon."

> foundations is forgotten, I valu it not: My Design being only to introduce Light into the understanding and make the Apprehension more perfect. (*CH,* fol. 30v.1)

Hobbes shares the same cautious attitude toward the inception of word definitions: "For the errours of Definition multiply themselves, according as the reckoning proceeds; and lead men into absurdities, which at last they see, but cannot avoyd, without reckoning anew from the beginning; in which lyes the foundation of their errours."[61] Also, like the language planners and Royal Society members who believed that it was vital to any scientific movement to lay an accurate empirical foundation, Traherne believes outlining the distinctions between various acts is a critical step before moving to a discussion about Felicity. The description of the mother's womb and the acorn may possibly be for the benefit of readers who could not follow his scholastic terminology. Sensitive to his prospective audience he provides a pictorial explanation—one which everyone would understand—to justify his more obscure discourse. Frequently the poet mentions the limitations of vulgar apprehensions, but in the above entry he also shows his aspirations for elevating the understanding.

In the following section, "The Application of this discourse" he wishes to elevate the understanding of the Philosophers as well, for he believes they have misunderstood the meaning of the word "Act." In a section called "An Examination of Philosophers in these Matters relating unto Act" Traherne exhibits his respect for the Philosophers but also contradicts them in one area: their interpretation of God as act. He opens by agreeing with their primary assertion that God is act:

> Wheras they say GOD is a pure and simple Act, necessary, Independent, of Himself, and by Himself Subsisting; they are infinitly right: but seem defectiv, becaus they do not improve what they so speak to the most noble Ends: of which therfore we shall treat particularly. (*CH,* fol. 30v.2)

He does not wish to oppose the Philosophers but nevertheless he contradicts their assertions in part:

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[61] Hobbes, 28.

> first of all whereas they define Actus Absolutus to be An Absolut Thing in itself Actualy existent, but Actuating nothing els, they seem to erre in Ascribing the Appellation to GOD Almighty: for He Actuats all Things. But for as much a Thing may Actuat another, Internaly or Externaly, Internaly as the form, or Externaly as the Author: They may very well be understood: for GOD Actuateth nothing as an Interior part of the Thing Actuated, but he Actuateth evry Thing as an Author infinitly abov them. It is true indeed, His Essence is not Actuated by any other, nor does it need any other to subsist; but being independant alone and abov all is Absolut: being in this respect Relativ only as All Acts whatsoever are, to what they Actuat, it eternally Actuateth all its Objects, and is that by which all other Things are perfected. (*CH,* fol. 30v.2)

Traherne rejects any kind of limitation a word or category may impose upon the divine and sees it as his duty to correct this misperception. And yet word definitions and categories inspire his vision for they provide a means for listing and discussing various aspects of the created world. Moreover, they attest to the belief that human cogitations can encapsulate and apprehend the created world.

Traherne uses the same terminology as Wilkins when he speaks of substances and accidents. Wilkins categorizes all things into forty major *genera* which themselves can be broken into the modes of being. Salmon summarizes his efforts succinctly:

> The members of each class were entities which contained an abstract essence, common to all members of the class, and certain properties by which further sub-groups were established. Each entity was concrete ("the thing itself") or abstract (its essence), and existed either independently (as substance) or dependently (as an attribute of something else). To every essence there corresponded an act of existence, and the realization of an entity depended on four moving causes.[62]

Wilkins divides all things into the General and the Special. Under Special, two of his categories are Substance and Accident. Substances are those things existing independently while accidents are attributes which adhere to or are dependent upon, a substance. The four types of accidents are Quantity, Quality, Action, and Relation.[63] Similarly Hobbes talks about *names Abstract*, or accidents. In his

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[62] Salmon, *The Study of Language in Seventeenth-Century England,* 112.

[63] Wilkins, *Essay*, 23.

entry "Accident," Traherne also discusses this category. At first he distinguishes between the vulgar apprehension of the word and the philosophers' apprehension:

> An Accident, in the Strength of its Signification, is any thing that befalleth or happeneth to another. In its common Acceptation among the vulgar, It is a Thing that befalleth another by chance. But among Philosophers it signifies any Quality, Affection, or property that is Inhærent by Nature, and that even by the understanding can be seperated from the Subject in which it is. So that whatsoever befalleth another either from without, or from within, is an Accident. (*CH,* fol. 19v.2)

Then, under the section "Its Nature" Traherne states,

> All Beings whatsoever are Divided into these two kinds, Substances and Accidents. So that Accident is put in Opposition to Substance. Which, whether it be material or Immaterial, is a Thing that Subsisteth of it self, under many Accidents. An Accident therfore is a Thing which cannot subsist alone, but needeth another to sustain it in its Being. As Redness in a Rose, Briteness in the Sun, Roundness in a Globe &c. And this is part of its nature. But its perfection, or perfect Existence, is described by this Definition. (*CH,* fol. 19v.2)

In his definition section, Traherne names four categories which, with the exception of "Operations," correspond with Wilkins's:

> An Accident is the Maner of a Being: Modifying, and yet truly Distinct from the Substance in which it is. The first part of the Definition is perfect, becaus tho there are several Accidents, Quantity, Quality, Relations, Operations, &c. yet are all these the Maner of the Thing in which they are. (*CH,* fol. 19v.2)

As with all his entries, Traherne turns his explication back to theology. For instance, in the section "Its use and Glory" he exclaims that the "Glory of Heaven and Earth" is discovered when accidents are apprehended:

> He that out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings ordaineth Prais, produceth Strength out of Weakness, and is Great in the Smallest Things. What is more Weak than an Accident? That cannot stand by it self, but needeth another to lean upon. What is more Contemptible? It hath no Being of its own; but Deriveth a Being from another Thing: and yet all the Glory of Heaven and Earth is Derived therfrom. Gross Apprehensions are apt to look for all Goodness in Substances. It must be Wine, or Oyl, or Gold, or som such Thing: els it cannot be Delightfull. I am sure it was my Mistake a great while. but now I am taught to look for all Glory and Delight among Accidents. (*CH,* fol. 20r.1)

Meditation upon the significance of accidents provides an opportunity for Traherne to describe the importance of human perception and enjoyment of the infinite variety of the Creation. Later in the entry he analyzes the operations of the soul and posits that all powers and inclinations of the soul are accidents:

> What then shall we conceiv the Soul to be which is the End of all? Truly its Substance is inconsiderable any further than as it is the Ground, of such Glorious Accidents as belong unto it: and no more able to be seen without them, than nothing. All its Powers and Inclinations are Accidents, their Usefulness, Immortality, Extent and Glory are Accidents: so is the Divinity and Soveraignety of its Estate. Which by the Easy operation of Life and Lov, is to see the Sun, and all upon which the sun doth shine: to see the Creator and End of the Sun: to see Angels those Glorious Spectators, and all its Enjoyers; to Shed its Beams upon Interior Objects, Illimited Distances, Invisible Things, in comparison of which the Sun, in all the Extention of its Beams, is no more, than the Spark upon a Gloe-Worms Tail. Here is a Miraculous Entertainment of Glory and Delight. Here we convers with a Higher Sphere and Degree of Accidents, which seemeth afar off meerly becaus we Think not of it: for it is nearer than any, being Seated in our Selvs.
>
> In this Accident there is Abundance of Wonder and Delight; Its Wideness is Universal, its Profitableness infinit, its Pleasure Eternal. (*CH,* fol. 20v.1)

One may think that, at this point in the entry, Traherne moves off on a tangent, creating a long list of the soul's accidents. However, he returns to his original discussion about describing "Accident":

> Philosophers in noting the several kinds of Accidents that are in nature, and reducing them to Order in nine Predicaments: giv us an occasion to observ both the Widenes and Discretion of the Soul. for since it is Impossible there should be an Accident Imagined, that is not under one of those nine Heads: and they know it certainly; by this we see that the Soul, like a Bee flying in a Garden, from Flower to flower, can rove over all Eternitie, from Creature to Creature, from Region to Region, and see the Limits of Existence and Possibilitie. for otherwise it could not certainly tell, but Accidents of som other Order might be created; and the Number of their predicaments be Defectiv. The Discretion of the Soul is Apparent in Dissevering into Kinds, and reducing into order, all Accidents, which are seen promiscuously Scattered over all the World: and in this the Empire of mans understanding.
>
> Tho little be Spoken in the nine predicaments of the Accidents of Angels; yet are they all contained under Quality, Relation, Action, Passion &c. (*CH,* fol. 21r.1)

Here Traherne is in accordance with Aristotelian logic, or rather the seventeenth-century understanding of Aristotle; the ten predicaments (one substance nine

accidents) were the ten fundamental classes of kinds of entities found in nature.[64] Traherne also exhibits the contemporary scientific belief that the world is intelligible. In the above passage Traherne exchanges the word "Passion" for "Quantity" when listing the four categories of accident. The passage is significant in that it illustrates Traherne's concern for ordering and categorizing knowledge into "Kinds." The poet is interested in this kind of activity because, as noted earlier in this section, Traherne is attracted to the grand design of taxonomic structures insofar as they exhibit man's perceptive capacities. The soul is capable of surveying all things and can therefore arrange them in a logical order.

A passage from the entry "Aspect" conveys the importance of ordering words. He defines aspect as "the maner wherin they [the stars] shine upon one a nother" (*CH,* fol. 142r.1). After contemplating the nature and multitude of the stars, and claiming that they are significant in their aspects of relations to other bodies (e.g., the sun, the earth, and each other), he then uses this visual image to make an important point about the nature of words in his project:

> The Words in these volumes are like the Stars, Simple in them selvs, but as they Shine in the firmament which we have conceived, for the Benefit of the Reader, so have they a secret and mutual Relation, or Influence on each other. For what ever is defective or Dissatisfactory in one; will in another Word be obviated and made plain and Easy. The Consent Agreement and Harmonie between them, being the chief Beauty and Strength of these Intelligible Heavens.
>
> As to see all the Stars in their Comely order and fair Aspects is Delightfull in nature; so is it much more Delightfull unto Grace, to see the Secret Nature and Beauty of all Objects and to be Acquainted with every Thing in the Intelligible Heavens. For he is a novice and stranger in the World (nay in his own World) that is ignorant of Things, for to him that is ignorant his own Enjoyments and Treasures are Strangers. As the Stars are unknown to him that is borne Blind. (*CH,* fol. 142v.2)

By referring to the "Intelligible Heavens" twice, Traherne once again exhibits his optimism regarding human perceptive abilities. The passage, in addition to providing a moving image of Traherne's project, illustrates his attitude regarding words and their proper arrangement. The first paragraph suggests the unity of the

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[64] Slaughter lists the ten predicaments: "The categories consist of substance (man) and accidents: quantity (two cubits long); quality (white): relation (double); place (in the Lyceum); time (yesterday); posture (sitting); possession (is shod); action (cuts); passion (is cut)" 16–17.

poet's vision—the words have a "secret and Mutual Relation" with one another. This relation is Felicity which underlies all aspects of the creation. Just as all things are united, so too do they have their special "order." This "order"—not only Traherne's revelation of Felicity but also his categories and lists—enables humans to understand and enjoy the cosmos.

The entry for the word "Abridgement" links the creation of word definitions and categories with a celebration of human perception. In the opening lines of the entry (see Appendix III) Traherne says that arranging things in "Distinct Accessible Orders" (*CH*, fol. 7v.1) enables the individual to first comprehend and second celebrate each object or entity of the Creation. He offers another categorical distinction when speaking about visible and invisible substances. Invisible substances may further be divided into the "Creable or Increable" (*CH,* fol. 7v.1). Visible things are termed "Corporeal Beings" and so forth. Traherne says,

> All Beings Actual or Possible are either visible or Invisible: for nothing can Exist but will be one of those. Beings Invisible are either Creable or Increable. Increable are Eternall: and all these are in the nature of the Dietie. His Essence, the Trinity of Persons, His Attributs and Counsels being Increable, Things Invisible that are Created are Angels and Souls, with all their Relations, Uses, Services, Properties and Ends: the Interior Beauties and Excellencies also of Material Things: The ways of Providence, Laws, Vertues, Powers, Promises, Affections, Joys, Thanksgivings, Praises &c. Visible Things are Corporeal Beings, with their External Affections, Magnitudes Colors and figures. such as are the four Elements, Minerals, vegetables Animals, Men Human Workmanships Crowns Scepters Cities Temples Streets Lanes Houses villages. Apparitions, Meteors Clouds Dew Hail Rain and Snow, the material Heavens, the Sun and Moon and Stars. Now of all these you are to Draw a Celestial Abstract in such a manner, that being familiarly acquainted with their Excellencies and your Interest in them you may daily prais GOD for them, Enjoy them, meet his Goodness in them receiv his Bounty in them, see His Love through them, liv in communion with Him among them, and Admire your Riches and Exaltation becaus of them.
> (*CH,* fol. 7v.1–2)

According to this passage the primary purpose of the catalogue or inventory is for the individual to become familiar with entities within the universe, to enjoy them, and to praise God for them. The poet is fascinated by the prospect of listing all things and creating a catalogue or inventory, for he sees these lists as a celebration of variety within the creation. He asks incredulously, "What Man is there, that will not hav a Terrier of His Estate, an Inventory of His Riches, A Catalogue of his

Goods?" (*CH*, fol. 7v.2). Carl Selkin has addressed Traherne's propensity to create catalogues and suggests that it is the poet's way of overcoming the inadequacy of language. He claims that Traherne's "cataloguing style" helps to rectify the limitations in everyday, discursive, linear language by transforming it into an enlightened vision characterized by circular unity.[65] Selkin's study focuses in large part upon the visual impact of Traherne's *Thanksgivings* with its peculiar groupings of words into columns and odd syntactic patterns. The *Commentaries of Heaven* does not offer these types of catalogues: it simply lists objects and concepts in regular prose (as in the above passage). Selkin also points out that Traherne uses "terms which are not obviously analogous and would therefore, in ordinary language, never occur juxtaposed."[66] But in the entry "Abridgement," Traherne's catalogue is meant to group like things or concepts in "Distinct Accessible Orders." Nevertheless Selkin's statements about the *Thanksgivings* hold true for the *Commentaries of Heaven* as well—the long lists offer a kind of unity by grouping things or concepts in one place and suggesting the groups enhance enjoyment and elicit praise from humans. They also, as Selkin suggests, demonstrate what it is like to see things from the perspective of God by showing that "the greatest and the smallest may be perceived as equally valuable. . . ."[67] Similarly they give insight into the divine vision by illustrating the great variety found within the Creation. An entry like "Abridgement," in celebrating the defining and ordering of words, promotes the notion that humans can obtain God-like capacities through the perceptive abilities of the soul. The closing poem of the entry confirms Traherne's views:

> His Nature is my sole and whole Delight,
> I in His Attributes am infinite.
> His Laws my Joys, His Works are all my Pleasures,
> Invisible, and visible my Treasures.
> His Ancient Ways in Ages my Delights;
> My Soul, my Body, and my Appetities.

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[65] Carl Selkin, "The Language of Vision: Traherne's Cataloguing Style," *English Literary Renaissance* 6 (1976): 93.
[66] Selkin, 95.
[67] Selkin, 96.

> All these are mine my Soul, as if I were
> Like GOD, their Glorious and eternal Sphere.
> (*CH,* fol. 8v.1)

And yet, he is not concerned with maintaining a consistent taxonomic method in the *Commentaries of Heaven*—not all the entries discuss the distinction between physical and spiritual, concrete and abstract; the notion of act; nor the distinction between substance and accident. Although he discusses the traditional categories and maintains they are crucial for comprehending the nature of things, he also moves away from traditional classifications in some of the entries in *Commentaries of Heaven*. Frequently he utilizes random lists instead of traditional categories.

The *Commentaries of Heaven* is filled with great lists and catalogues. In the entry "Abundance" for instance, Traherne attempts to describe all human "Joys and Treasures" (*CH,* fol. 10v.1). In the section entitled "Its varieties" he explains that God prepared a world of great variety for the active soul of man to apprehend. His first list describes the types of "Joys and Treasures" which exist, some of which are found in the above list from "Abridgement":

> Wherfore GOD hath prepared innumerable even kinds and varieties for the Poor of His Kingdom. Temporal, Eternal; Material, Spiritual; Substantial, Accidental; Visible, Invisible; Earthly, Heavenly; Permanent, Transeunt; Inward, outward; Created, Increable.
> (*CH,* fol. 11r.1)

A catalogue follows this passage and provides examples of "Joys and Treasures." The examples are roughly grouped with like things or concepts. For instance he lists the attributes of various heavenly bodies and objects found in nature. Then he groups together those things associated with the earthly rule of kings, prominent events of Christianity, and various human attributes:

> How many O Lord my GOD are thy Thoughts to us-ward? how Great is the Sum of them! When I would count them they are more in number than the sands of the sea! Light and Splendor in the Heavens, Heat and Beauty in the Sun, verdure in the Grass fruitfulness in the Trees, Ornaments in the Flowers, Rarities in the Minerals, Moysture in the Waters, Coolness in the Springs, verdure in the vegetables freshness in the Air, Transparency in the clouds, motions in the Stars, changes in the moon Glory in the Sun, and the Influences of all! Royalty in Dominions, Feasts in Palaces, Melodie in Feasts, Majestie in Kings, Order in Seasons, Riches in the nations, Kingdoms and Ages.

> Innocence in Paradice, Blessedness in Heaven, Sufferings upon the Cross, Calamities in the World, Torments in Hell, Angels in Blessedness Joys in Angels; the Features of his Face, the senses of His Body, the Powers of his Soul. . . . (*CH,* fol. 11r.2)

But these groups break down and the catalogue becomes a random list:

> Trades and Ocupations, the services of men, Beasts and fishes, Solitude in the Wilderness, Solemnity in the Temple; Praises and Thanksgivings, friendships and Affections, vices and virtues, Goverments and Disorders, Clouds and Darkness Nights and Days Summer and Winter, Heat and Cold, Spring and Autumn, Marriages and Contracts, Women and Children, Magistrates and Ministers, Counsellors and Physicians, Navies and Armies, Crowns and Scepters, And when he hath wearied himself with all these Created Things, he hath Eternal Peace and Holiness and Lov wherin to recreat Himself forever more. (*CH,* fol. 11r.2)

There is no logical connection between the vocations of man, beasts and fish, and the activities conducted within a temple. And yet, by starting off with more logical groupings and then accelerating into a random list of things, Traherne melds these disparate entities together in one unified vision, one which does not differentiate things into genus and species. Ultimately, they are all "Joys and Treasures" to be enjoyed as single entities (hence the need to list them) or, appreciated as part of a vast treasure trove. The list or catalogue serves to alter human perception and transform it into, as Selkin says, an enlightened vision. Thus we see that Traherne holds a contradictory position with respect to categorizing and defining words. He uses both traditional categories of being as seen in the entry "Abridgement" as well as a random list as seen in the above example from "Abundance." As shall be seen throughout this thesis, Traherne has the propensity to embrace contrarieties even at the expense of logical argument. For the poet, this inclusiveness is intrinsically linked to his theological position. Embracing paradox is often his way of retraining his audience to see that conflicting elements coexist. He also wishes to demonstrate that things or objects which seem pernicious (e.g. "Abhorrence," or "Abuse") are nevertheless "Objects of Happiness" (*CH*, fol. 2).

The strong desire to improve or correct human understanding is not only a driving force behind the *Commentaries of Heaven*, but is also found in Traherne's

other work. For instance in the *Centuries of Meditation* the poet both celebrates and finds fault with the intellectual disciplines. In the autobiographical "Third Century" Traherne gives an account of his experiences at Oxford:

> Having been at the University, and received there the Taste and Tincture of another Education, 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, Grammer, Musick, Rhetorick, all kind of Arts Trades and Mechanicismes that Adorned the World pertained to felicity At least there I saw those Things, which afterwards I knew to pertain unto it: And was Delighted in it. (*CM,* III.36)

In the following meditation, he also points out the inadequacies of his education: "Nevertheless som things were Defectiv too. There was never a Tutor that did professely Teach Felicity: tho that be the Mistress of all other Sciences" (*CM,* III.37). Traherne's encyclopedia is designed to illuminate and reveal the nature of all things, and perhaps improve the taxonomic structures created by others. He aims to mirror reality so there is a direct link between the essence of a thing, man's understanding, and a given word—the very goal of the language planners. He even speaks out against metaphor and other figurative language as the poem "The Author to the Critical Peruser" illustrates. From this poem we see him siding with the Oxford language planners, who themselves believed that elaborate, enthusiastic phraseology was confusing and destructive. I think the poet was inspired by the idea of a plain, easy style, but as we shall see, his definition of "plain" differs from theirs. While most of the language planners such as Wilkins aimed to reduce things onto Tables, to limit their meaning to one precise thing, Traherne resists this reduction. Part of changing one's perception amounts to refusing to limit the significance of a given word. In his entry for the word "Account" he says:

> It is a Grand Effect of the corruption of Nature, that we confine Words to a close Imprisonment, by a narrow use of them; and Debase them, by an Application, as we Do, only to vile Inferior things, when in realitie they relate to all, and signify what is done among the Angels. We will therfore rescue this, and its fellows from Abuse, and that Debasement under which they are in Bondage. for when they are at Liberty they are Denizons of the City of GOD, and of use evry where in His Eternal Kingdom. (*CH*, fol. 22r.2)

He contemplates the infinite understanding of the human soul, the vastness of the universe, and the remarkable variety in the created world.

A comparison between Wilkins's and Traherne's word definitions proves fruitful in revealing the primary aim of the *Commentaries of Heaven*. Careful not to succumb to "those pretended, mysterious, profound, notions, expressed in great swelling words," Wilkins in *An Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language* attempts to reduce things and notions to Tables.[68] However, Traherne's definitions swell and twist to encompass large spaces. For instance, for the word "admiration," Wilkins defines it using synonyms: "marvel, wonder, amaze, astonish."[69] It is grouped under the heading "Simple Passions" which is under the larger heading "Spiritual Actions." Wilkins describes the category which contains the word "admiration":

> V. *Acts of* the sensitive part, namely of the *Fancy*, and chiefly of the *Appetite*, whereby the mind is moved and disturbed with the apprehensions of things, are styled PASSIONS, *Affection*, Perturbation, pathetic.
>
> Those amongst these are called *more* SIMPLE which consist onely of one single Act. They are distinguishable into such as concern things under the notion of
>
> 1. New *unexpected* surprising: or else things *over-common* and too much repeated; without respect to the good or evil of them, being chiefly a disturbance of the Fancy, styled
>
> {ADMIRATION, marvel, wonder, amaze, astonish.
>
> {TÆDIUM, glut, loathing, cloy, dawl, nauseate.[70]

Wilkins maintains that the word holds a spiritual element, presumably one which cannot be precisely defined. Yet he nevertheless attempts to achieve exactness in his entry by starting with the broad category of "Spiritual Action" and then becomes more specific, narrowing the significance of the word. Traherne goes in the opposite direction, first giving a narrow definition of "admiration": "Admiration is that Affection of the Soul wherby it is Amazd at the Excellency or Strangeness of its Object" (*CH,* fol. 41r.2). Later in the entry he ties the word definition into his theology of human happiness:

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[68] Wilkins, *Essay*, sigs. br–bv.
[69] Wilkins, *Essay*, 230.
[70] Wilkins, *Essay*, 230.

> Its Excellency is Discernable by its uses, by the order of nature wherin it standeth, and the individual neerness wherin it is Allied unto Happiness. That I have this Faculty is my Joy and Admiration. It is Worth all the Gold in a thousand Worlds. More profitable unto me, and pleasing to others. All the Admirableness of Wonderfull Things would be lost to me were it not for this. It giveth their valu to them, which is infusd into it. Hills of Adamant and Pearl would be but Desolat without it. Ask not why Sweetness is in the Action, it is part of the Soul. All Materials are Dross without it, Useless Dregs without Life, and life without this a Burden. It is better then Life. And Love it self without this would lose one of its Graces. Admiration is an Ingredient in Happiness so Compleat, that without this it would be without the Crown of Glory: and Defectiv of its Sovereign Delight, its Excessiveness. All Extasie and Rapture in Blessedness is made of Admiration: All Ravishment in Love is made of Admiration. It is the Sweetest of Things. When a man loseth himself at the Greatness of the Good that hath betyded him. and is delightfully Blind at his own Happiness. He is as if the very Excess of Knowledg maketh him Ignorant: Amazd at the Greatness of his own felicity, and scarce knows Himself or any thing els, becaus beyond all Knowledg he enjoyeth Himself and all Things els. The Soul could not be so Capable of Bliss as it now is, were it not for this. (*CH,* fol. 42r.1-2)

Traherne uses hyperbole to describe the value of "admiration"—it is worth more than the gold of a thousand worlds. It is an intrinsic part of the human soul and as such, responsible for those emotions which transport humans to a state of Bliss. Moreover, Traherne would have a radically different view of "TÆDIUM" than Wilkins. He would reject associating this word with commonplace objects, for he believes all objects are precious and even the smallest and most mundane should be valued and esteemed as if it were the greatest treasure.

Traherne does just this in the entry for the word "Babe." A babe is tiny and helpless, but the poet celebrates its "immortal fire":

> A Babe is an helpless Infant; a litle naked MAN, wrapt up in the Swaddling clothes of his own Infirmities; a feeble Spark of immortal fire, that can never be extinguished; a Stranger newly come into the World, as Great in his Hopes and Possibilities, as he is Small in the Appearance of his present Attainments. If we consult either his Body, or his Soul, he is but a Seed of his future Perfection, He has all the Lineaments and Powers of a man, but is void of the use of them, till he grows a litle more acquainted with himself and the World.
> (*CH,* fol. 191r.1)

Traherne juxtaposes words which connote both the babe's diminutive size and the greatness of his soul. In the section "His Wonderfulness" the babe is both a "Slimy

Seed" and an immortal being capable of containing the "Heaven of Heavens in his Understanding" (*CH,* fol. 191r.1). Wilkins on the other hand, describes "Infancy" as the "first and most imperfect state" because it is a time when humans are without reason.[71]

When defining the word "ant" Wilkins is concerned with identifying precisely the physical properties of the creature. It is categorized as a sensitive, animate creature. In Wilkins's taxonomy sensitive creatures are further divided into two groups: the Exanguious and the Sanguineous. According to Wilkins the ant is an exanguious animal, or one of those "more imperfect Animals, which are destitute of that red juice, comonly called blood." It is under a category called "NAKED WINGED INSECTS" and has "Membranaceous" wings. Insects to him are "the most minute and imperfect" of animals.[72] Traherne is similarly concerned with placing the ant in its proper genealogical category and suggests that his reader look under the heading "Insect" (an entry which Traherne never composed) for further information on the creature: "It [the ant] is never truly seen till it is seen in its Original uses services Relations and Ends. for which see the Word Insect, that being the general Head of Ants Flies Bees Hornets &c" (*CH,* fol. 100v.2). But he goes beyond mere categorization to expand the meaning of the tiny creature. As is characteristic of his vision, objects are appreciated for their miniscule physical bodies while at the same time their "stature" spirals outwards. Traherne says,

> An Ant is a great Miracle in a litle room: a feeble Creature made to be an ornament of the Magnificent Univers: and no less a Monument of Eternal Lov, then mighty Power. (*CH,* fol. 100v.2)

For Traherne, even this tiny, commonplace creature, holds cosmic significance.

Though his entry for "Ant" offers a spiritual interpretation of the creature, Traherne also exhibits a great interest in scientific observation and experimentation. He himself is not the scientist or taxonomist, but rather an observer relaying the stories which he has heard:

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71 Wilkins, *Essay*, 194.
72 Wilkins, *Essay*, 122; 126; 121.

> I hav been told by a Knight, and Traveller, that hath made som curious observations, that one single Ant hath been seen coming into a room, and when searching up and down for prey, he had found an Heap of sugar, that without touching a grain of it, he went away, as it were to call his fellows; and that within a quarter of an hour after the chamber was as full of Ants as it could hold. . . . (*CH,* fol. 101r.1)

The identity of the Knight and Traveller remains a tantalizing mystery. One could generate all kinds of suppositions, such as him being a naturalist or taxonomist like John Ray, who himself travelled extensively throughout the country in the 1660s compiling data.

I now wish to turn to a comparison between John Ray and Traherne, one which emphasizes the spirit or impetus behind their projects. I believe they share similar theological views and this in turn inspires their respective encyclopedic works, *The Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of the Creation* and the *Commentaries of Heaven.* The two works differ structurally—Ray arranges his entries by topic while Traherne arranges his entries alphabetically—but they are similar in that their vast surveys attempt to reveal the divine within all things. At a time when scientific goals required taxonomies and, ideally, an objective and/or technical approach to words and things, Traherne and Ray found a need to infuse their theology into their works. Ray himself says:

> By Vertue of my Function, I suspect my self to be obliged to Write something in Divinity, having Written so much on other Subjects: For being not permitted to serve the Church with my Tongue in preaching, I know not but it may be my Duty to serve it with my Hand by Writing.[73]

The remainder of this section of Chapter I will compare their theologies, encyclopedias, and word definitions.

Ray was a scientist and naturalist. Although he was not part of the Oxford group, holding posts at Trinity College Cambridge during the 1650s, he nevertheless had some contact with these thinkers at that time. In 1666–67 he helped Wilkins compile tables of natural history for *An Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language* and in 1667 became a fellow of the Royal

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[73] John Ray, *The Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of the Creation* (London, 1691) sig. A6r.

Society. Although published in 1691, *The Wisdom of God* is comprised of his college exercises written earlier.[74] Like Traherne in the *Commentaries*, Ray attempts to offer a massive survey "*over all the visible Works of God.*"[75] Showing characteristics of the language movement, the work exemplifies his concern for systematic and thorough lists, or surveys, of known information in order to reveal "Truth". One difference between Ray's stated intent and Traherne's, is that rather than revealing the pervasiveness of Felicity, *The Wisdom of God* reveals the prevalence of Wisdom throughout the creation. Ray proposes tracing *"the Footsteps of his* [God's] *Wisdom in the Composition, Order, Harmony, and Uses of every one of them, as well as of those that I have Selected.*"[76]

The structure of the two works differ; *Commentaries of Heaven* is organized alphabetically while *The Wisdom of God* is organized by topics. A large table of contents at the beginning of *The Wisdom of God* lists forty-three different topics ranging from celestial bodies, to philosophical disciplines, to plants and animals, to the elements, to human physiology. Under each of these topics is a brief essay describing the nature of the object or thing in the heading. Nevertheless, despite structural differences, certain affinities remain between the authors' stated goals. Both celebrate the physical world and emphasize the wonder found in even the most mundane objects. Both express excitement over the infinite variety of the creation. Finally, Traherne and Ray claim that humans were created to use and enjoy the created world.

Traherne and Ray's theological concerns—highlighting commonplaces, celebrating variety, and enjoying the created world—have a linguistic impact, for their encyclopedias redefine things and notions with these concerns in mind. The emphasis on scrutinizing commonplaces easily accords with the spirit behind the scientific and linguistic movement of the Royal Society, which was optimistic with regards to human perception. Readers of Traherne are familiar with the poet's

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74 "Ray, John," *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1896 ed.
75 John Ray, sig. A6v.
76 Ray, sig. A6v.

exuberance when contemplating the divine within the cosmos. In the *Centuries of Meditation*, for instance, Traherne claims that God permeates all things, making them immensely valuable:

> Your Enjoyment of the World is never right, till you so Esteem it, that evry thing in it, is more your Treasure, then a Kings Exchequer full of Gold and Silver. And that Exchequer yours also in its Place and Service. Can you take too much Joy in your fathers Works? He is Himself in evry Thing. som Things are little on the outside, and Rough and Common. but I remember the Time, when the Dust of the Streets were as precious as Gold to my Infant Eys, and now they are more precious to the Ey of Reason. (*CM,* I.25).

Other examples include his enthusiasm for a grain of sand in the *Centuries of Meditation*:

> You never Enjoy the World aright, till you see how a Sand Exhibiteth the Wisdom and Power of God: And Prize in evry Thing the Service which they do you, by Manifesting His Glory and Goodness to your Soul, far more then the Visible Beauty on their Surface, or the Material Services, they can do your Body. (*CM,*.I.27)

In his poetry, Traherne celebrates the sky and air:

> The Skies in their Magnificence,
> The Lively, Lovely Air;
> Oh how Divine, how soft, how Sweet, how fair!
> The Stars did entertain my Sence,
> And all the Works of GOD so Bright and pure,
> So Rich and Great did seem,
> As if they ever must endure,
> In my Esteem. ("Wonder," 9–16)

In *Commentaries of Heaven* commonplace objects are of immense value because they are part of a felicitous design. Conveying their spiritual value and felicitous end is an intrinsic part of Traherne's word definitions. For instance, in addition to providing a standard definition for the word "Ages"—an age is the lifespan of a normal human—he also describes the divine influence found throughout ages. In the section entitled "The Delights of Ages" he says God dwells on earth through his "Goodness and Providence. . . . So that all his Works and Ways in all Ages are his pleasures. And if his, they must of necessity be ours . . ." (*CH,* fol. 62r.2). Elsewhere in the entry "Ages," he explains that these delights, though wonderful, are nonetheless mundane:

> Beside their Extent which maketh them Common to all Spectators, their presence and Multitude maketh them Common in another maner. They are as common as the Light and evry where scattered over all the Earth. in all Nations and Kingdoms to be enjoyed: not only among the Jews, but among the Gentiles too, in evry Age there are celestial Joys.
> (*CH,* fol. 63v.1)

As previously mentioned, he conveys enthusiasm for a simple insect, the ant. For the poet, the tiny creature is a source of reflection:

> An Ant in its Spiritual Capacity is a Symbol of a Wise Laborious Provident Industrious man, and well resembles an orderly Peacefull Christian. For which cause Solomon sendeth the Sluggard to the Ant, and so may we the Coward. for it is a Creature in all Appearance of an haughty Courage and high Stomach. for he assaults all things, and never rests when Entangled or endangered. In his Litleness as well providence he is the Embleme of a man, and many ways an Object of Felicitie, since truly an Ant is one of GODs Creatures.
> (*CH*, fol. 101r.1)

Here, part of the defining the ant is conveying its "Spiritual Capacity."

The enterprise of *Commentaries of Heaven* opens with a presupposition: all things are objects of Happiness and part of God's Felicitous design. Thus the poet's survey of all things and word definitions will reach the same conclusion. Ray's *Wisdom of God* operates in a somewhat similar manner of assumption; God's wisdom permeates all things. In his preface, Ray lists three main goals. First, he intends to illustrate that God is the foundation of all religion. Second, he wishes that "*The particulars of this Discourse, serve not only to Demonstrate the being of a Deity, but also to illustrate some of his principal Attributes, as namely his Infinite Power and Wisdom.*" Last, he wants the work to "*Stir up and Increase in us the Affections and Habits of Admiration, Humility and Gratitude.*"[77] The project of *The Wisdom of God*, by listing and describing, will provide ample proof for all of these:

> For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is: *it is a Matter of the highest Concernment to be firmly Settled and Established in a full Perswasion of this main Point: Now this must be Demonstrated by Arguments drawn from the Light of Nature, and Works of the Creation.*[78]

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[77] Ray, sigs. A6v–A8r.
[78] Ray, sig. A7r.

Ray emphasizes the importance of using "simple things" as "Proofs" so that the "meanest Capacities," or understandings, can comprehend them:

> *But these Proofs taken from Effects and Operations, exposed to every Mans view, not to be denied or questioned by any, are most effectual to convince all that deny or doubt of it. Neither are they only convictive of the greatest and subtlest Adversaries, but intelligible also to the meanest Capacities.*[79]

Like Traherne when he speaks of a crush in a mother's womb and the deformity of an acorn, and Hobbes' description of the bird caught in lime-twiggs, Ray also emphasizes the need to lay the proper foundations:

> I have been careful to admit nothing for matter of Fact or Experiment but what is undoubtedly true, lest I should build upon a Sandy and Ruinous Foundation; and by the admixture of what is False, render that which is True, suspicious.[80]

Ray also treats this subject of the ant in his section on Animate Bodies: Beasts, Birds, Fishes and Insects. Like Wilkins's categorization of the tiny creature, Ray shows a propensity to list, in an objective way, the physical qualities of insects:

> The *Insects*, if we take in the Exanguious both Terrestrial and Aquatick, may in derogation to the precedent Rule for number vie even with Plants themselves-For the *Exanguious* alone, by what that Learned and Critical Naturalist my Honoured friend Dr. *Martin Lister* hath already observed and delineated, I conjecture, cannot be fewer than 1800 or 2000 *Species*, perhaps many more.[81]

However, he is not merely concerned with a scientific description. Ray shows his theological concerns when he reveals the virtue of Prudence exemplified within a tiny ant:

> Another Insect noted for her seeming prudence, in making provision for the Winter, proposed by *Solomon* to the Sluggard for his imitation, is the *Ant*, which (as all Naturalists agree) hoards up grains of Corn against the Winter for her Sustenance. . . .[82]

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79 Ray, sig. A7r.
80 Ray, sigs. A6r–A6v.
81 Ray, 5–6.
82 Ray, 99.

He, like Traherne, draws upon the association of the ant with Solomon in order to delineate the spiritual significance of the insect.

Traherne echoes the stated goals of the universal and philosophical language movements to apprehend, assess, and order the Creation. At the beginning of this section I posited that Traherne may have been inspired by the spirit behind the language planners' projects rather than by their actual taxonomic structures. He does maintain the vital importance of categorizing things, or arranging them in "Distinct Accessible Orders" (CH, fol. 7v.1), but this is not the underlying organizational principle behind his linguistic enterprise in *Commentaries of Heaven.* True, he discusses and at times displays the traditional Aristotelian categories, but he fails to do this with any consistency in his encyclopedia. Instead, categories are exchanged for long random catalogues and lists which ultimately merge disparate elements together instead of distinguishing them. He of course, insists that he is still placing things within a proper "order." "Order" for him is describing all things in light of Felicity. In *Commentaries of Heaven* Thomas Traherne offers a linguistic solution to the problem of veiled Truth. He endeavors to reveal Felicity in all things, and thereby correct human misperceptions. Throughout his lifetime he was dedicated to his primary agenda—expounding Felicity. But he was also a great borrower of ideas. Traherne appropriates the language planners' medium to reveal his version of Truth.

4. The Failure of Definitions

Francis Bacon's statement "the ill and unfit choice of words wonderfully obstructs the understanding"[83] expresses one of the chief concerns of the seventeenth-century language movement: the proper use and definition of words. As mentioned earlier in section two of this chapter, Wilkins attests to the fact that

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[83] Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum*, 1605, eds. James Spedding and Robert Ellis, vol. 4 (London, 1858) Aphorism XLIII, 71.

word definitions are difficult to make though in his *Essay* he seems to believe that all things are describable including religious conundrums. For instance, one of his forty categories is that of "Creator" and the three parts of the Trinity are listed under it.[84] They are listed, described, and assigned a character just like any other thing or notion in the *Essay*. The language planners believed that definitions should reduce ambiguity by limiting the signification of a given word; definitions fail when they are not simple or precise. We have seen that Traherne moves in the opposite direction by insisting that all word definitions should expand beyond narrow limitations to encompass the Divine. Felicity must be revealed within all things. Thus for Traherne, the failure of definitions occurs when words do not expand into the spiritual realm but instead remain "limited" to the mundane realm.

Despite Traherne's view that words have the potential to encapsulate transcendent verities and his insistence that they make mysteries comprehensible, in several places in the *Commentaries of Heaven* he explains that words are insufficient for conveying certain divine truths. In the entry "Action" Traherne tries to define God's action. In a section entitled "Of Immanent Action" he delineates a type of action relating to spiritual beings, for instance, the soul which has invisible motion. He maintains that the less matter a thing has, the more divine it is. In contrast, "Transeunt Actions" are temporal, finite, and physical. However, Traherne adds, these lesser actions have an inward nature housing a soul or spirit which elevates them:

> They [Immanent Actions] are as it were the Soul of Transeunt Actions, Inspiring Life and Worth into them. For no Transeunt Action is Humane or Divine but that in which we see som Immanent Affection; or by which we see som Inward Action of a Spirit existing. (*CH*, fol. 33r.2)

Traherne distinguishes between a mundane order and a transcendent one, yet insists that the mundane always contains some transcendent property of which humans may or may not be aware. As previously mentioned, all things have essence or are

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[84] Wilkins, *Essay*, 51.

made up of "Immanent Actions." In the entry "Action" Traherne claims that "Immanent Actions" constitute the clearness and splendor of a soul in motion. His discussion then moves to one which is familiar to readers of Traherne: the greatness of human enjoyment of these essences. He says,

> To see, to Love, to prize, to rejoyce are the Sovereign Actions in God and Man. To enjoy is infinitely more than to make. yet that is an Immanent, this a Transeunt Action. To Enjoy is more necessary, more Blessed, and more Divine, to Create being Servile in Comparison and unprofitable. (*CH*, fol. 33r.2)

The act of creating ends in the material objects, but enjoying the creation ends in understanding true essence, and subsequently the individual can thrive in a spiritual state of comprehension. In previously cited passages pertaining to words, Traherne claims that they hold the potential to convey the spiritual state; yet immediately following the above-quoted passage he says: "It is impossible to open the Beauty of Immanent Actions, for lack of words" (*CH*, fol. 33r.2).

In the entry "Adoration" words are insufficient but for a slightly different reason. "Immanent Actions" are mysterious, go beyond the mundane order, and their ethereal quality cannot be described by the words available to the author. "Adoration" is a quality which has infinite expanse, and words are "too Weak" to hold this endless energy. He describes "Adoration" as,

> the Retribution of infinit Bounty, or the Paying back of all Things to GOD. It is an infinit Humility founded in an Endless and infinit Exaltation. It is an infinit Complacency in ones own and in GODs Blessedness. (*CH*, fol. 43r.1)

But despite this definition, words cannot in the end fully grasp the nature of "Adoration":

> It is the Love of GOD founded upon Knowledge, or rather an Act of infinit Homage founded in Love. Many Definitions of it might be framed, but words are too Weak to comprehend its nature. (*CH*, fol. 43r.1)

Transcendent spiritual states and infinite expanses are things which go beyond words and "framed" definitions. As we saw earlier, the poet is fascinated by

stretching and contracting properties, but in some cases words cannot stretch enough to represent infinite spaces. The change in human mental states which previously amounted to linguistic transformation and reform, is inadequate here.

Traherne describes the limitation of words in a poem found in "Affinity": "What words are worthy to depicture thee, / what Thoughts what Passions, O Affinitie!" (*CH*, fol. 54v.2). His main contention is that human fancy looks at "mean Particulars" instead of "Universal Things." Wilkins uses the same words to express his epistemological and linguistic views: we focus first upon particulars and then see universals. Wilkins' aim is to achieve precision and restrict the definitions of words for the sake of clarity and accuracy. Traherne differs from him in not wishing to narrow definitions or place restrictions upon ideas. In the above passage Traherne believes that words restrict objects to one concept or meaning instead of allowing them to encompass infinite meanings. The poem goes on to say that the soul is an endless sphere made to hold universals:

> The Soul of man was made an Endles Sphere
> Of pure and Comprehensive Light that there
> Things universal, Great, and Endless might
> In all their vast and Glorious Ends unite. (*CH*, fol. 54v.2)

In "Almighty," words are also found inadequate. In a section entitled "Its Incomprehensibilitie" Traherne states:

> That which hath no Confines to Limit or restrain it can never be Comprehended, nor can that be known that hath no Causes. Its Simplicitie therfore as well as its Extent make it Incomprehensible, because all its Interior Properties Causes and Effects are one. If it cannot be Comprehended much less may it be demonstrated, yet it may be felt. (*CH*, fol. 74r.2)

He seems to be admitting that a word without confines or limitations is incomprehensible. But losing comprehension does not mean loss of feeling, and feeling brings one closer to the essence of the thing which the word is supposed to represent. "Almighty Power" is difficult to define because it is simultaneously simple and complex. At the end of the section Traherne implies that it may be discerned but not comprehended, unless it is communicated in the abstract: "It is all

communicativeness, and Goodness in the Abstract" (*CH*, fol. 74r.2). But he never explains exactly how this is done.

In a section called "Its Difficulties" Traherne notes the problems with trying to convey the essence of "Almighty." Through questions and answers, he describes perplexing conundrums:

> The Difficulties that arise in the mind as Emergencies at evry turning in our former Discourse we have reserved till now, where they shall be represented together. by way of Question and Answer. (*CH*, fol. 75r.2)

Question seven asks what things are performed by "Almighty Power" and how are they infinite. At the end of the section he declares: "Almighty power doth all Things at once, but they cannot at once in Words be explained" (*CH*, fol. 75r.2). This conclusion suggests that defining "Almighty power" will, by necessity, break it down into parts and the impact of the whole thing will not be conveyed. Thus words cannot capture its intrinsic quality of being "all Things at once."

Finally, the entry "All in All" shows Traherne's view that words are inadequate. "All in All" refers to the ability to be one sole thing or essence while at the same time dispersed among many other things. When he talks about the soul, Traherne distinguishes between material objects, which remain in one place, and ubiquitous spiritual things:

> When we speak of the Souls being wholy in the whole, we do not speak of the vegetative Soul, that is a meer Mechanical Movement, or cause of Motion by variety of Spirits, indivisible and Material Atoms that are out of Each other, scattered all abroad over the Body by parts and particulars after the maner of numbers, or discreet Quantities. . . . (*CH*, fol. 83r.2)

"[W]holy in the whole" is another way of saying "All in All." Towards the end of the entry he states: "To be interwoven with the Deitie, according to that I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine; is Glorious for us" (*CH*, fol. 84r.2) and he goes on to celebrate the "All in All" nature of God and the human soul. He is interested in the commingling between the soul and its objects and, God and His creation. However, he says that words will not capture this glorious condition:

> Did Words at all exhibit any measure of this Transcendent Joy, I should perhaps continue to shew the Glory of all in All. But since they are inept and dead or insignificant Shadows, when compard to such powerfull and infinit Objects I shall rest after all, in Eternal Silence. (*CH*, fol. 84r.2)

But instead of falling silent, he produces a long poem which begins in a humble muted tone:

> Lord to be silent unto thee is all
> That I can offer being weak and small
> What can a Worm, a Grain of Dust, a Sand
> What can a poor vile Sinner understand.
> My Soul perhaps can ponder on thy Joys
> But then my Mouth's too narrow for thy prais
> It is as easy through a litle Quill
> Even Drop by Drop the ocean to Distill
> As when we have conceivd tis to Express
> The Sacred Mysteries of Blessedness.
> (*CH*, fol. 84r.2)

He laments the limitations of words, but this does not prevent him from an exuberant outpouring of praise. After these ten lines there is a clear tonal change. Lines eleven and twelve act as a pivot: "Thy very End is our Felicitie / In praising it O Lord we must prais thee!" (*CH*, fol. 84r.2). Why this sudden change in mood? Once he realizes human happiness is the end of the creation, many possibilities become evident to him. The conclusion he draws is that because God has a bountiful nature he may be found in all things, including himself, Traherne. Repeated exclamations suggest the excitement of discovery: "Art Thou in all O Lord! Art Thou alone! / Am I by Power in all! Am I thy Throne!" (*CH*, fol. 84r.2). He becomes empowered by his desire to praise and the need to be silent is forgotten. These lines are curious because they seem to begin with interrogative statements but ultimately culminate in exclamations of fact. The speaker moves from a hesitant and doubtful stance to one of assurance, especially assurance that his voice may be used. The above passages illustrate two impulses within his writing—the concern that words cannot express certain concepts and the belief that certain exclamations of emotion are preferable to silence. And yet, as shall be

shown in Chapter III of this thesis, there are still instances where the poet advocates silence and the special meditative state it fosters.

"All in All" provides an example of Traherne's complex view of language. He wants the concept of "All in All" to remain unrestrained by verbal definition, but nevertheless wishes to express its nature through an enthusiastic outpouring of words. He sees word definitions as being able to encapsulate essence and reveal the mysteries of all things, yet he maintains that some divine mysteries are impenetrable and words are inadequate vehicles for portraying them. Numerous individuals, particularly nonconformists, believed that certain notions relating to God could only be explained figuratively. For them metaphorical phraseology was the remedy for inexplicable mysteries. As shall be seen in Chapter IV, "Traherne and the Seventeenth-Century Debate Over Metaphor," Traherne adopts the conformist rhetoric and denounces metaphor. However, he frequently employs it to explain certain complex theological tenets. Throughout his writings Traherne exhibits a fluctuating sensibility to various philosophical traditions. In this chapter we have seen that he has an affinity for the scientific rationalistic movement of the age. He is optimistic about the human intellect and sees Felicity as a science or discipline to be explored. Yet simultaneously he shows a propensity towards mysticism. His speculative quests into the heart of the Christian faith are not characteristic of the Latitudinarian/scientific movement, nor is his subjectivity, conveyed by his numerous passages about "prizing," or assigning value to the creation.

Chapter II - Language and the Fall

Whether or not modern man could go back and obtain prelapsarian speech, or create a philosophical character incorporating the attributes of such a language, was a topic of great concern for seventeenth-century thinkers, including members of the Royal Society, nonconforming religious groups, biblical commentators and Thomas Traherne. This chapter will investigate Traherne's views of a linguistic Fall as well as seventeenth-century aspirations for returning to a prelapsarian linguistic condition. The first section discusses the prevailing views of Adam's language and demonstrates that, for the most part, Traherne agrees with biblical commentators in assessing Adam's speech. The second section describes Traherne's views of the language of infants and children, and illustrates that the poet is part of a Latitudinarian and Pre-Nicene tradition which became increasingly prominent towards the latter half of the century. The final section analyzes Traherne's attitudes towards what may be called the second linguistic Fall, the Tower of Babel.

1. Adam's Prelapsarian Speech

Before investigating seventeenth-century views of a linguistic Fall, it is logical to begin by establishing the prevailing ideas about prelapsarian speech. For, language planners and religious thinkers alike aspired to obtain the power inherent in this ideal language: a perfect understanding of the essence of all things, the subsequent ability to assign names to them and thereby have dominion over the creation, and finally a clear method of communication with other humans. As mentioned in Chapter I, some thinkers in the early and middle part of the seventeenth century believed that Hebrew was the original language and envisioned

creating a universal character founded upon its basic roots.[1] An example is John Wilkins's early work *Mercury; or, The Secret and Swift Messenger.* His fellow linguist George Dalgarno claims that his own enterprise of reform was inspired by the Hebrew character.[2] Eventually their plans for a universal character evolved into plans for a philosophical character. Later in the century philologists such as Wilkins and Dalgarno no longer tried to retrieve the ancient Hebrew or prelapsarian language but aimed instead at inventing a new character which held the properties of Edenic speech. Indeed the decision of whether or not to retrieve an older character or create a wholly new philosophical one was a central debating point in the mid 1650s between the Puritan John Webster and the mathematician (and later Royal Society member) Seth Ward in their respective works, *Academiarum Examen* and *Vindiciæ Academiarum* (both 1654).[3] Webster believed that universal language projects should try to restore the Adamic language of nature. Influenced by Jacob Boehme, Webster and other sectarians maintained that during Creation, God stamped "signatures" onto all things and these in turn revealed the mysteries of the divine.[4] Thus in one instance prelapsarian speech offered an idealistic backdrop and imaginative impetus to the language planners and their projects of reform, while in another instance it offered inspiration to recapture natural language for sectarian groups and linguists of a more mystical orientation.

Philologists were not the only ones intrigued with Adamic speech. Interest in prelapsarian language was widespread and can be found in numerous Biblical commentaries on Genesis and other hexameral texts. Biblical stories, including the Genesis episodes, were part of the cultural backdrop of the period, a history underlying the general thoughts of the time. Thus Traherne could get his ideas about prelapsarian speech from numerous places not just linguists. The remainder of this section will explore the hexameral tradition, particularly Biblical

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[1] Salmon, *The Study of Language in Seventeenth-Century England*, 129.
[2] Salmon, *The Study of Language in Seventeenth-Century England*, 136–137.
[3] Cohen, 21.
[4] Slaughter, 35–36; Salmon, *The Works of Francis Lodwick*, 15.

commentators although mention shall be made of a few others who refer to Genesis episodes in their writings. Traherne and numerous biblical commentators discussed Adam's language by examining the naming of the animals episode from the Book of Genesis. Arnold Williams, in his book *The Common Expositor*, points out that "commentaries on Genesis . . . occupy a central position in the intellectual life of the Renaissance."[5] Moreover, they express a deep concern for early human history and language. Towards the latter half of the seventeenth century this tradition of biblical commentary on Genesis began to wane.[6] Williams suggests that the reason for the decline in the commentaries and other Genesis material "into an ever smaller corner of the intellectual picture,"[7] is uncertain, but likely due in part to the increase in science which afforded alternate explanations for natural phenomena. However, the commentaries' influence as well as that of other hexameral texts was still felt in the latter part of the century. Like the episodes regarding Adam, the story of Babel informs the imagination of seventeenth-century thinkers. Robert Markley rightly concludes that for many, "Babel is a historical fact, not a parable or myth."[8]

When analyzing the naming episode from Genesis, commentators and authors of hexameral texts typically address three main topics—Adam's knowledge, his subsequent dominion over the creation due to this knowledge, and his need for human companionship and communication. As seen in the previous chapter, achieving perfect knowledge, dominion, and precise communication are all aspirations of the philosophical language movement. We can see how the Genesis story could be a source of inspiration for the language planners because describing and ordering elements within the cosmos, the taxonomical endeavors of such men as Dalgarno and Wilkins, were attempts at obtaining perfect knowledge and control. They endeavored to have a precise correlation between word and object, enabling humans to communicate, unencumbered by verbal ambiguities.

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[5] Arnold Williams, *The Common Expositor, An Account of the Commentaries On Genesis 1527–1633* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1948) 9.
[6] Williams, 258.
[7] Williams, 268.
[8] Robert Markley, *Fallen Languages, Crisis of Representation in Newtonian England, 1660-1740* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993) 69.

The first two topics, Adam's intimate understanding of and dominion over the creation, are found in numerous commentaries on Genesis.[9] The scriptural passage is quoted in full below:

> And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought *them* unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that *was* the name therof. (Gen. 2:19)[10]

The ability to use language indicated both knowledge and power as part of the Edenic estate. The commentator Andrew Willet says that one reason the animals were brought before Adam was so "that mans authority and dominion over the creatures might appeare."[11] Presbyterian minister George Hughes suggests Adam's clear understanding in *An Analytical Exposition of the Whole First Book of Moses Called Genesis*:

> 2. The end of the Act. That Adam should see or consider what to call creatures after their nature . . . [he gave] a name proper to the nature of every creature which doubtles then was exact.[12]

Hughes also believed that Adam had been granted authority over the creation, for if one could name one could control the thing named. The following list continues to explain the episode:

> 3. A constitution upon this naming the creatures, *And all that Adam called it even the living soul, that was the name of it*, wherein. I. The Authority of the imposer of names. God transfer's {sic} it on Adam. 2. The vast wisdom vouchsafed him that every thing was known in its nature, that he might call it. 3. The sanction or Constitution, That was its name, and no other.[13]

This passage illustrates the combination of imputed authority and profound knowledge of the true nature of things.

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[9] Williams, 81.
[10] Bible, Authorized King James Version (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1972). All quotations from the Bible will be taken from this text and cited in the body of the thesis.
[11] Andrew Willet, *Hexapla in Genesin, That Is a Sixfold Commentarie upon Genesis,* 1605 (London, 1632) 29.
[12] George Hughes, *An Analytical Exposition of the Whole First Book of Moses Called Genesis* (London, 1672) 22.
[13] Hughes, 22.

John Bunyan also comments on the naming episode in Genesis in *An Exposition on the First Ten Chapters of Genesis and Part of the Eleventh.* His commentary differs from the others in its emphasis upon the act as one of creation. Before discussing Genesis 2:19 Bunyan explains why Adam is an image of God. He is an image in part through the human soul, and an image "together" through the body and soul combined. Bunyan maintains that man is a shadow of Christ: "In this Adam was a lively type of the Lord Christ's sovereigne and glorious power over all flesh. . . ."[14] Adam reflects the hypostasis of Christ. His soul holds the rational and ethereal qualities of the divine:

> If as he is made a reasonable soul, then he is an excellent image of the eternal Godhead, the attributes of the one being shadowed out by the qualities and passions of the other; for as there is in the Godhead, power, knowledge, love, and righteousness; so a likeness of these is in the soul of man, especially of man before he had sinned. . . .[15]

And yet his body makes him human. Man has dominion over the flesh (for example, the animals) because he is able to name them. But this naming goes beyond mere control for it is both a judgement and a creative act:

> So Christ nameth the world; whom he will he calleth saints; and whom he will he calleth the world, 'ungodly,' 'serpents,' 'vipers,' and the like. 'I pray for them, I pray not for the world.' Jn xvii.9.
>
> 'And whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that *was* the name therof.' Even as Christ passes sentence, so shall their judgement be.[16]

Bunyan links the Genesis episode with the naming of the elect: a creature is named, created, and judged. Traditionally human agency has no part in the Election but here Bunyan is speaking of prelapsarian man and he allows for Adam's active role in the creative process. Adam is the one who supplies the names, he does not merely discover names which the Divine has already assigned.

The Cambridge Platonist Henry More, whose works we know Traherne read, analyzes the Genesis episode and Adam's knowledge in *Conjectura*

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[14] Bunyan, *An Exposition on the First Ten Chapters of Genesis and Part of the Eleventh, The Whole Works of John Bunyan*, vol.2, ed. George Offor (London, 1862), 427.
[15] John Bunyan, *An Exposition,* 422.
[16] Bunyan, *An Exposition*, 427.

Cabbalistica.[17] More calls his work a three-fold cabbala and divides it into sections which use three different approaches to analyzing the Book of Genesis: the literal, the philosophical, and the mystical or divinely moral. Therefore, Genesis 2:19 has three different interpretations. The literal is mostly a paraphrase of the Bible. More's philosophical cabbala offers a more in-depth reading, emphasizing Adam's wisdom:

> Those higher and more Intellectual accomplishments I must confesse, made *Adam* very wise, and of a quick perception. For he knew very well the natures of the beasts of the field, and fowls of the air: I mean not only of the visible and terrestrial creatures, but also of the fallen and unfallen Angels, or good and bad *Genii*, and was able to judge aright of them, according to the principles they consisted of, and the properties they had.[18]

Not only does Adam have terrestrial knowledge, but he has an understanding of heavenly matters. Moreover he can distinguish between good and evil and this knowledge gives him the ability to choose between the two. In the moral cabbala, recognizing the nature of the animal life (which represents the corporeal realm) allows man to control it: "*The meer Contemplative and Spiritual Man sees the motions of the* Animal Life, *and rigidly enough censures them.*" The moral displays a Neoplatonic perspective as Adam's mind soars upwards when he names:

> Now the powers of the soul working so wholly upwards towards divine things, the several Modifications or Figurations of the *Animal Life* (which God acting in the frame of the humane Nature, represented to the Man, whence he had occasion to view them and judge of them) by the quick Understanding of Man was indeed easily discern'd what they were, and he had a determinate apprehension of every particular Figuration of the *Animall Life*. . . .[19]

A look at John Milton's version of the naming episode enhances the points demonstrated above regarding Adam's special elocution. In *De Doctrina Christiana*

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[17] Henry More, *Conjectura Cabbalistica* (London, 1653). Excerpts from More's *Divine Dialogues* (1668) are found in Traherne's *Commonplace Book* and the *Church's Year Book*. See: Carol Marks, "Thomas Traherne's *Commonplace Book*," *PBSA*, 58 (1964): 458–465. For a discussion of the connections between Traherne and the Cambridge Platonists see "Thomas Traherne and Cambridge Platonism," *PMLA* 81.1 (1966): 521–534.

[18] More, *Conjectura Cabbalistica*, 41.

[19] More, *Conjectura Cabbalistica*, 63; 67.

Milton states that naming the creatures evinces Adam's extraordinary wisdom.[20] Raphael in *Paradise Lost* praises Adam's speech:

> To whom thus Raphael answered heavenly meek,
> Nor are thy lips ungraceful, sire of men,
> Nor tongue ineloquent; for God on thee
> Abundantly his gifts hath also poured
> Inward and outward both, his image fair:
> Speaking or mute all comeliness and grace
> Attends thee, and each word, each motion forms.
> (*PL*, VIII, 217–223)[21]

Adam is endowed with knowledge at the time of his creation and can understand the true nature of things. He recounts his first moments of consciousness:

> But who I was, or where, or from what cause,
> Knew not; to speak I tried, and forthwith spake,
> My tongue obeyed and readily could name
> What e'er I saw. (*PL*, VIII, 270–273)

Of course, this knowledge is incomplete and Adam's identity must be explained to him by God as well as Raphael. He can name the creatures and therefore has control over them, but he cannot name himself, and this indicates his subordination to the divine.

Curiously, despite his minimalist philosophy and scepticism, Thomas Hobbes uses Genesis' account of the naming episode and writes about Adam's speech in *Leviathan*. He says that speech originated with God and He instructed Adam to name the animals:

> The first author of speech was *God* himself, that instructed *Adam* how to name such creatures as he presented to his sight; For the Scripture goeth no further in this matter. But this was sufficient to direct him to adde more names, as the experience and use of the creatures should give him occasion; and to joyn them in such manner by degrees, as to make himself understood; and so by succession of time, so much language might be gotten, as he had found use for. . . .[22]

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[20] John Milton, *De Doctrina Christiana,* ed. Charles Sumner, trans. James Hanford and Waldo Dunn, *The Works of John Milton*, vol. 15 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933) 53.
[21] Milton, *Paradise Lost,* ed. Alastair Fowler (London: Longman Group UK Ltd., 1971). Hereafter all quotations from *Paradise Lost* will be taken from this edition and cited in the body of the thesis.
[22] Hobbes, 24.

Hobbes maintains that words are arbitrarily assigned to things (signifiers to signified). Language cannot be isomorphic with reality because humans cannot truly know reality; the only thing they can verify is that their minds exhibit change and they feel a strong desire for self-preservation. For Hobbes, Adam's language was not fully developed but merely initiated by divine stimulus; through experience (changing thoughts) Adam's speech is augmented. Thus we see that different commentators and authors of hexameral texts, though varying in temperament an precise interpretation of Genesis, nevertheless agreed that prelapsarian speech demonstrated both Adam's knowledge of and dominion over the Creation.

In his *Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language*, Wilkins ruminates over the origins of speech. He acknowledges that "There is scarce any subject that hath been more throughly scanned and debated amongst Learned men, than the *Original* of *Languages* and *Letters.*"[23] He suggests that perhaps certain primitive peoples maintained that no one language is natural to mankind, positing instead that the need to communicate gave rise to speech. However, with "the revelation of Scripture" Wilkins and his contemporaries know that the first language was created along with Adam and Eve:

> But to us, who have the revelation of Scripture, these kind of scruples and conjectures are sufficiently stated. And 'tis evident enough that the first Language was *con created* with our first Parents, they immediately understanding the voice of God speaking to them in the Garden.[24]

In chapter three of the first part of his *Essay*, Wilkins addresses the question of the origin of letters. He suggests that there is a deeply spiritual element that went into the invention of them.

> the Invention . . . was a thing of so great Art and exquisiteness, that *Tully* doth from hence inferr the divinity and spirituality of the humane *soul*, and that it must needs be of a farr more excellent and abstracted Essence then mere Matter or Body, in that it was able to reduce all articulate sounds to 24 *Letters*.[25]

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[23] Wilkins, *Essay*, 2.
[24] Wilkins, *Essay*, 2.
[25] Wilkins, *Essay*, 10.

He goes on to say that although there is no scriptural evidence for it, he believes that Adam invented the ancient Hebrew character.

The third main topic associated with the Genesis naming episode is prelapsarian communication. Genesis 2:19 is frequently linked to Adam's societal needs and the creation of Eve. In knowing the true nature of each creature, Adam realizes that they are not fit companions and he needs someone else for conversation. In More's literal cabbala Adam determines that there is no creature fit to be his companion: "he could not so kindly take acquaintance with any of these, or so fully enjoy their society. . . ."[26] This is a paraphrase of verse twenty which claims that "Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not an help meet for him (Gen. 2:20)." In the moral cabbala, humans have two parts, a "Masculine" or spiritual element, and a "*Feminine*" or "*kindly Joy of the Life of the Body.*"[27] Adam cannot dwell solely in spiritual contemplation, but rather becomes complete by merging spirit and body; this is the marriage of Adam and Eve.

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton's Adam feels acutely the absence of one with whom he may commune:

> I named them, as they passed, and understood
> Their nature, with such knowledge God endued
> My sudden apprehension: but in these
> I found not what me thought I wanted still. . . . (*PL*, VIII, 352–355)

He complains to God that he is alone despite being surrounded by living creatures:

> Thou hast provided all things: but with me
> I see not who partakes. In solitude
> What happiness, who can enjoy alone,
> Or all enjoying, what contentment find?
> . . . . . .
> Among unequals what society
> Can sort, what harmony or true delight?
> Which must be mutual, in proportion due
> Given and received. . . . (*PL*, VIII, 363–386)

Milton links Adam's linguistic purity with an inherent need to communicate.

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[26] Henry More, *Conjectura Cabbalistica,* 14.
[27] More, *Conjectura Cabbalistica*, 68-69.

In addition to adhering to Biblical accounts, Hobbes posits that societal needs gave rise to the invention of speech:

> But the most noble and profitable invention of all other, was that of SPEECH, consisting of *Names* or *Appellations*, and their Connexion; whereby men register their Thoughts; recall them when they are past; and also declare them one to another for mutuall utility and conversation; without which, there had been amongst men, neither Common-wealth, nor Society, nor Contract, nor Peace, no more than amongst Lyons, Bears, and Wolves.[28]

He has not mentioned the creation of Eve in connection with the naming episode, but this reference to societal needs emphasizes the connection between speech and human communication. The above examples illustrate that thinkers of varying philosophical persuasions held similar views regarding the human need to communicate. Whether they believed in a natural language or an invented one, they acknowledge that verbal communication was an essential part of the prelapsarian condition.

Traherne shares many of the commentators' views, positing in his writings that first, Adam has a special understanding of the creation; second, he has dominion over the creation; and third, he has an intense desire to communicate with other humans. In addition, Traherne highlights a fourth topic; praising God, or "prizing" the Creation, is the goal of prelapsarian speech or perfected speech. Though the poet does not mention specifically the naming of the animals in his entry "Adam" from the *Commentaries of Heaven*, he conveys certain ideas—namely Adam's dominion over the creatures and ability to "weigh" the world around him exactly—which are characteristically found in discussions of Genesis 2:19. Traherne describes Adam's condition:

> the World was his House, and he the Lord and End for which it was made. in which respect he was infinitely Greater, and Higher than the Heavens. He was Crowned with Glory and Honor, and had Dominion over all the Creatures. (*CH*, fol. 37v.1)

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[28] Hobbes, 24.

Then he explains that Adam understood nature and had an intimate knowledge of its essence.

Traherne does not make a direct link between the naming episode and the creation of Eve, but nonetheless he does emphasize the importance of her society and conversation when discussing Adam. In the entry "Adam" from *Commentaries of Heaven* he describes "His Superadded Treasure," namely Eve:

> Besides these He had Eve Created for him, of whom he was to beget a numerous offspring of Illustrious children, more than the Stars of Heaven in Multitude, evry one of which was to be a Greater Treasure than the whole World. . . . Yea Eve alone was a Mysterious Treasure Greater than the World. A Beautifull Companion, a Living Soul, a loving Soul, and the Divine Image. Being made on purpose for his Enjoyment. The World was his as much after as before: yea much more becaus it was Richer by her person, served him in her, whom it served for his sake, she yeelding him greater pleasures than the World could; not in her Body only but in her Soul and Conversation; and pleasing him again in her, becaus he loved to see her Happy.
> (*CH*, fol. 37v.1–2)

In a section entitled "His Pleasure," Traherne describes among other kinds of enjoyment, Adam's pleasure in human conversation: "In Eve he had a New Delight and in all his posterity, with whom he was to converse in a sweet and heavenly maner" (*CH*, fol. 38r.1). Traherne expresses similar views in *Christian Ethicks* when he speaks of Charity being "natural and Easie in the Estate of Innocency" (*CE*, 144). Adam's natural love for Eve includes having conversation with her:

> He had a Noble Creature made in the Image of GOD for him alone! Her soul was far more excellent in Beauty then her Face, a Diviner and more Glorious Object than the whole world. Her Intelligence and Vivacity, Her Lofty and clear Apprehensions, Her Honour and Majesty, Her Freedome of Action, her Kindness of Behaviour, her Angelical Affections, Her fitness for Conversation. . . . (*CE*, 145)

Part of the unfallen state included a natural desire for society and persons with whom to commune.

The previous chapter explored Traherne's fascination with listing and cataloguing in order to celebrate the great variety within the creation. Meditation upon Adam's "Illustrious children, more than the Stars of Heaven in Multitude" (*CH*, fol. 37v.1) offers Adam (as well as Traherne) another opportunity to convey

this enthusiasm for diversity. And yet, the poet also conveys an intense solipsistic vision in his writings, maintaining that alone, the individual is exceptionally important. This runs directly counter to his position that Adam, and indeed all humans, need to communicate with others. In his entry "Alone" from *Commentaries of Heaven* Traherne acknowledges the contradiction in these two positions:

> There is a Property in the soul of man, wherby he cannot endure to be alone, and yet loves to enjoy a Kingdom or a Crown by himself, abhorring Rivals Sharers and Competetors, as much as Desolatness and that as much as Death and Desert Solitariness. Both these Inclinations in him are natural and yet incompatible. They are Good Humors in themselvs, were it not for two faults, the one in us, the other in them. We are apt to misunderstand and abuse them, and they are as repugnant and contentious, as difficult to be satisfied. One would think God had put himself to task here: for both these properties are rational and must be satisfied, otherwise we cannot be compleatly Happy. Neither of them Springs from corruption, but primitive and pure nature Either is to be indulged, neither is to be Crucified, both are to be filled, and in both nature it self is to be Gratified. For the uniting of such contrary Interests doth more Glorify the Wisdom of God, and as both these were on purpose given us, that we might have more Capacities to be replenished, so he whose Bounty infinit is, is All-sufficient, as well able as willing to perfect these opposit Inclinations, with their full Enjoyments. Their warfare shall be converted into an Amicable Agreement conspiring to further the perfection of our Bliss and Glory. (*CH*, fol. 79v.1)

Traherne is drawn to contradictions and, refusing to relinquish the benefits of one side of an argument in order to uphold the other, he insists that contradictory messages can be united within the divine scheme, thus augmenting the human experience. On the one hand, Adam is created perfect and feels so much pleasure in the creation that he must communicate it to Eve and their posterity (*CH*, fol. 38r.1). This is a situation not only true for prelapsarian man but also for humans after the Fall. Numerous times in his writings Traherne claims that human love, gratitude, and enjoyment of heavenly treasures are so immense that they must overflow into recipients, or other humans:

> All these [God and the Joys and Inhabitants in Heaven] relate to Enjoyment, but those Principles that relate to Communication are more Excellent. These are Principles of Retirement and Solitude; but the

> Principles that aid us in Conversation are far better: and help us, tho not so immediatly to Enjoyment in a far more Blessed and Diviner maner. For it is more blessed to giv then to receiv: and we are more happy in Communication then Enjoyment, but only that Communication is Enjoyment; as indeed what we giv we best receiv. for the Joy of Communicating and the Joy of receiving maketh perfect Happiness. And therfore are the Sons of Men our Greatest Treasures, because they can giv and receiv: Treasures perhaps infinit as well as Affections. But this I am sure they are our Treasures. And therfore is Conversation so Delightfull becaus they are the Greatest. (*CM*, IV.18)

Indeed man was created to be a social creature:

> Man is . . . a Sociable Creature, of all other Creatures the most capable of Company and most desiring it, Speech is given him on purpose for Communication, He delights to see and bee seen, he can hear and understand anothers Language. . . . (*CH*, fol. 79v.1)

And yet on the other hand, Traherne celebrates the solipsistic individual. In the *Centuries of Meditation* he entreats his audience to realize that each one of them is the "Heir of all the World" (*CM*, I.35). In *Christian Ethicks* everyone is the "Sole heir" of God's kingdom (*CE*, 55). This of course does not prevent others from being sole heirs as well. In the entry "Adam" from *Commentaries of Heaven* he explains why it is sometimes necessary to focus entirely on the individual, why originally, Adam was created alone:

> . . . it was expedient he should be alone: That all Eys might see the Univers was made for one. Nay rather, becaus the Univers was made for one; and for him alone. The former being a shady, this a substantial Reason. for For GOD Creating the World for one; intended to Exalt him to the utmost Height of all possible Exaltation as the only Object of his Eternal Love. And designing to give the World peculiarly for him, out of him made a Creature more Excellent than the World, and gave her to be his. . . . (*CH*, fol. 38v.1)

Traherne fluctuates back and forth, celebrating solitary solipsistic states as well as human society. Both hold a place in the prelapsarian world as well as one after the Fall.

Traherne addresses a fourth topic when analyzing the nature of prelapsarian speech: the theme of prizing. His poem "Adam," from *Poems of Felicity*, refers directly to the naming episode:

> The World its self was his next Theme,

> Wherof himself was made Supream:
> He had an Angel's Ey to see the Price
> Of evry Creature; that made Paradise:
> He had a Tongue, yea more, a Cherub's Sense
> To feel its Worth and Excellence. ("Adam," 25–30)

Much of the poem centers around Adam's speech which is characterized by its truthfulness:

> Sin is a Deviation from the Way
> Of God: 'Tis that wherin a Man doth stray
> From the first Path wherin he was to walk,
> From the first Truth he was to talk. ("Adam," 3–6)

But what is the right path or right way of talking? In the poem it is solely praise and thanksgiving. In line eleven Adam is "in thankful sort to meditate" and in the fourth stanza he kneels down to give thanks for his "Treasures" (23). In this particular instance the poet makes no suggestion that Adam needs someone else to talk to or that communication with another human is the primary purpose of speech. Rather he emphasizes the importance of praising God for the creation. Having a "Native Truth, and Virgin-Purity, / An uncorrupt Simplicity" (17-18) results in being able to apprehend the value of the creation and then give verbal thanks for it. The image of a kneeling Adam, depicted in stanza four, carries over into stanza five where Adam uses speech not only to convey his thanks but also to evaluate the creation.

Praising God is a central theme for some writers in the hexameral tradition. Andrew Willet claims that one of the main reasons the animals were brought before Adam was so that he could praise God for their creation:

> . . . all the beasts, by Gods secret instinct were gathered to *Adam*, for these causes,: 1. that man seeing his excellent creation farre surpassing all other, might thereby be stirred up to praise his Creator.[29]

In *Paradise Lost* Milton highlights the importance of praise in Adam and Eve's morning hymn. Adam and Eve awake and give thanks to God before starting their work:

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[29] Willet, 29.

> Lowly they bowed adoring, and began
> Their orisons, each morning duly paid
> In various style, for neither various style
> Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise
> Their maker, in fit strains pronounced or sung
> Unmeditated, such prompt eloquence
> Flowed from their lips, in prose or numerous verse,
> More tuneable than needed lute or harp
> To add more sweetness, and they thus began.
> (*PL*, V, 144–152)

Milton depicts their language of praise as being not only eloquent but rich in variety, employing prose, verse, and music. Adam and Eve convey the immense variety within the cosmos:

> Air, and ye elements the eldest birth
> Of nature's womb, that in quaternion run
> Perpetual circle, multiform; and mix
> And nourish all things, let your ceaseless change
> Vary to our great maker still new praise.
> (*PL*, V, 180–184)

The hymn is "quasi-liturgical," and is based on Psalm 148 and on the Canticle *Benedicite, omnia opera,* which is found in the Book of Common Prayer, 1549, and used for Matins during Lent.[30]

Traherne links the naming episode to one of his basic tenets about human apprehension—humans are great "Spectators" (*CM*, I.41) who are capable of prizing, or apprehending correctly the whole of the creation. In order to prize the creation, Adam must be able to understand its value and weigh it precisely. In the entry "Adam" from *Commentaries of Heaven* Traherne says that part of Adam's duty is to "prize" the creation:

> His Duty and His pleasures were one . . . Right reason required Him to Prize all the Blessing he had so newly received. And not only to prize them but according to right. That is to say to prize nothing over or under its value, but evry thing according to the measure of its goodness, justly and truly. in doing which His Happiness was Enjoyed. Which GOD commanded which Gods Lov to him required. . . . (*CH*, fol. 37v.2)

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[30] Alastair Fowler, ed., *Paradise Lost*, by John Milton, 265.

The theme of prizing is prominent in his other works as well. In the poem "Sight" he speaks of a pure "Infant-Ey" which has "Two Sights." One is from his two physical eyes while the other, and more important one, is from an interior Eye. This Eye moves into "New Regions" beyond physical restraints towards an "Infinit Space." It sees the visible world and prizes it spiritually. In the fifth stanza of the poem he says the Eye is,

> A Looking-Glass
> Of signal Worth; wherin,
> More than mine Eys
> Could see or prize,
> Such things as Virtues win,
> Life Joy, Lov, Peace, appear'd: a Light
> Which to my Sight
> Did Objects represent
> So excellent;
> That I no more without the same can see
> Than Beasts that have no tru Felicity. ("Sight," 51–60)

The act of prizing appears numerous times in the *Centuries of Meditation*. In the first Century he explains the ways in which humans are like God:

> we are like Him when our Minds are in Frame. our Minds are in Frame when our Thoughts are like his. And our Thoughts are then like his when we hav such Conceptions of all objects as God hath, and Prize all Things according to their value. (*CM*, I.13)

A subsequent meditation goes so far as to say that prizing correctly places one in Heaven while failing to do so places one in Hell:

> To have Blessings and to Prize them is to be in Heaven: To hav them, and not to Prize them, is to be in Hell, I would say upon Earth: To prize them and not to hav them, is to be in Hell. (*CM*, I.47)

A passage from *Select Meditations* links prizing the Creation with Justice. Traherne says:

> Justice is that vertue by which we render unto all Their Due. And of infinit use from the First moment even to the End in Heaven. For it is at once the Payment and Enlargement of our Selves in the Fruition of our Blessedness. The Enlargement of our selves because the Extention of our Selves unto all objects, the Payment of our Selves because we owe our Selves to all Beings. which we Accomplish in Rendering a Due Esteem. (*SM*, IV.59)

Giving something or someone its "Due Esteem" is Justice, or prizing it correctly. When one does this not only does it honor God, but also it enlarges the self. A reciprocal energy develops and all the prized objects reflect back towards the observer. Traherne's passage continues:

> we Transfer our selves into them whom we Prize as our selves, and are Seated there, are there affected, feel and receiv, do the work of nature and Delight, are by them received. But Justice Extendeth further. Inanimat creatures are capable of it. We ought to do Right to the Sun and Sea and Stars, to the skie the Earth Beasts and Trees. to value the Services which they already do us, which are by being Prized all Enjoyed. To them also do we giv our selves (in Pondering their Excellencies) and in them to God Almighty. Justice is a Kind of Bartering of ware, a commutativ vertue Exercised in giving and receiving, to the Common Benefit and Good of all. we are Enlarged in the Sun while we are there Esteeming it, becaus each of them are our Second Selves in God Almighty, becaus He is more. (*SM*, IV.59)

These examples demonstrate that prizing is a major theme in Traherne's writings. Like Bunyan who posits that Adam's naming was a creative act, Traherne, taking one of his most radical positions, insists that humans assign value to the creation. God needs spectators to enjoy and give value to his works, thus a "symbiotic link" exists between Himself and humans.[31] The results of his theology are audacious expressions such as the following from the poem "The Demonstration":

> The GODHEAD cannot prize
> The Sun at all, nor yet the Skies,
> Or Air, or Earth, or Trees, or Seas,
> Or Stars, unless the Soul of Man they pleas. (43–46)

Traherne magnifies human stature until he appears to be nearly equal with God.[32] For Traherne, one of the primary functions of language is praising God and prizing the Creation. These activities are an intrinsic part of experiencing Felicity.

Having discussed some of the central views pertaining to prelapsarian language, it is now important to ask how seventeenth-century thinkers hoped to regain this language. Chapter I of this thesis described the works of some of the philosophical language planners who began various language schemes in the middle

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[31] Robert Uphaus, "Thomas Traherne: Perception As Process," *The University of Windsor Review* 3.2 (1968): 20.

[32] John Carey, "Seventeenth-Century Writers: Bacon, Burton, Browne, Herbert, Vaughan, Crashaw, Traherne," lecture series, St. Cross Building, Oxford, 27 Nov. 1996.

and latter part of the century. They hoped to invent a new character that would function like Adam's speech—words would actually mirror reality perfectly thus eliminating all verbal ambiguities. Such a character could be the panacea for the turbulent religious disputes as well as help to promote the advancement of science.

The Quakers used a different method of returning to linguistic purity. Believing that honors conferred by formal address were a form of pride and the work of the devil, they employed informal words such as "thee" and "thou" in their discourse. Worldly honors were inconsequential and speech which conveyed them degenerate. By taking away honorific words which human custom had created, the Quakers helped to eradicate postlapsarian speech and return to a purer form of communication. Hugh Ormsby-Lennon states that

> the Society's testimony on oaths was not primarily intended as a challenge to the legitimacy of government—ready to affirm, Friends were denied the opportunity—but was designed to recall folk to standards of veracity obtaining in Eden, upheld by Christ, and appropriate for England's Last Days.[33]

In addition to theological concerns Quakers also had political ones and asserted their autonomy through refining, in their view, their style of speech.

As the opening of this chapter mentioned, some linguists believed that the pure language which Adam spoke was Hebrew, and the revival of this language would return man to his Edenic estate. Additionally Radical groups of the 1640s and 50s devoted much time to Hebraic studies and were intent upon exploring possibilities of obtaining prelapsarian speech. As the millenarian attitude of the Puritans gained momentum people expected the imminent return of the Jews to England and their subsequent conversion to Christianity. The study of Hebrew was to prepare for this momentous occasion. In addition, they viewed Hebrew as being the closest language to the original one spoken by Adam. By returning to it for both prayer and preaching, one was moving back to a purer form of communication, and in turn was reforming or perfecting oneself.

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[33] Hugh Ormsby-Lennon, "From Shibboleth to Apocalypse," *Language, Self and Society*, eds. Peter Burke and Roy Porter (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991) 78.

Some sectarians saw the possibility of a "linguistic utopianism."[34] Nigel Smith points to the interest in translating into Hebrew in order to evoke a truer sense of reality. The Independent and Fifth Monarchist John Rogers legitimizes his texts by naming them with Hebrew words:

> Hebrew titles and words are used to frame interpretation and to invoke the Hebraic 'reality', as a kind of typological shadow to the New Testament reality.[35]

William Aspinall provides a version of the book of Daniel entitled *An Explication and Application Of the Seventh Chapter of Daniel* (1654), in which he is able to give his own view of internal inspiration based on what he thinks to be a more accurate reading of the original Hebrew. Smith states that "[i]t is important to remember that the language functions as a means of magnifying individuals, or attributing to them forms of agency."[36] Returning to a purer form of speech and commanding or controlling things by naming them with unfallen words is one of the basic ideas of the Genesis episode.

Traherne believed that Hebrew was the original language. In the entry "Babel" from the *Commentaries of Heaven* he says that without Babel "Hebrew had been the Tongue / Of all the World" (*CH*, fol. 192r.1). Also, as both Christopher Hill and Nabil Matar point out, he was aware of millenarian views which maintained that the Jews would be converted.[37] In "Thanksgivings for the Beauty of his Providence," Traherne prays for the restoration of the Jews:

> Restore them, O Lord!
> That as we have obtained Mercy
> Through their unbelief,
> So they by our Mercy (and our Faith prevailing) may obtain Mercy. (373–377)

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[34] Nigel Smith, "The Uses of Hebrew in the English Revolution," *Language, Self and Society,* 56.
[35] Smith, "The Uses of Hebrew in the English Revolution," 57.
[36] Smith, "The Uses of Hebrew in the English Revolution," 58–59.
[37] Christopher Hill, *Writing and Revolution in Seventeenth-Century England* (Brighton: The Harvester Press Limited, 1985) 231; and, Nabil Matar, "The Anglican Eschatology of Thomas Traherne," *Anglican Theological Review* 74 (1992): 289–303.

While describing typological references in *Commentaries of Heaven*, Traherne recalls a time when he himself converted a Jew:

> Moses and the Prophets writ of our Saviour, so, that it is the Easiest thing in the World to convince and confound a Jew, as I my self have done, out of the books of the Old Testament. (*CH*, fol. 139v.1)

However, his own enterprise for linguistic reform did not entail a revival of Hebrew. It is uncertain to what extent he knew the language; he appears to use it only when quoting from the seventeenth-century Hebraist Theophilus Gale. Traherne cites Part II of Gale's *The Court of the Gentiles* in three entries from the *Commentaries of Heaven*—"Amendment," "Aristotle's Philosophie," and "Astrology."[38] He also copied passages from Part II into his *Commonplace Book* and Carol Marks claims that "the *Commonplace Book* originated as a container for extracts from Gale."[39] Traherne's citations do not focus upon Gale's passages about Adam and the original language, but nevertheless he may have read them. Moreover, they offer a contemporary view of Hebraic studies.

Gale took his BA in Oxford in 1649 and his MA in 1652, a few years before Traherne. He was an Independent, preaching at Winchester Cathedral in 1657. At the Restoration he did not conform. He devoted his life to the study of Hebrew, for he believed that all ancient learning and philosophy was derived from it.[40] In his introductory poem found in Part I, "*Upon this* Elaborate Work," Gale talks about the creation story. In the first stanza he talks about the six days of creation:

> If with attentive eye we look
> Upon the six dayes volume of the Book,
> Where *God*, and mighty *Nature* doth appear,
> Wrot in a *Vniversal Character*:
> We still shall find in ev'ry part
> Space, and dominion left for Art. (1–6)[41]

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[38] Pritchard, 5.
[39] Carol Marks, "Studies in the Reading of Thomas Traherne," B.Litt. Thesis, University of Oxford, 1962, 157.
[40] "Gale, Theophilus," *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1889–1900.
[41] Theophilus Gale, *The Court of the Gentiles, Part I*, 1669 (Oxford, 1672) Upon this ELABORATE Work, * *3r.

"Vniversal Character" most likely refers to the projects of the language planners, who were Gale's contemporaries at Oxford. But for Gale, the perfect language must be modelled after Hebrew. He poses a question—"where does everything come from?"—later in the poem:

> And would we know from whom
> *Philosophy* did come,
> With all her handmaid Train
> Of Sciences, again
> To make the *Tree of Knowledge* grow,
> And unto all, her pretious fruites bestow:
> Whose taste does ne'er from *Paradise* dethrone,
> But would the *Vniverse* make one
> Though yet of Knowledge it has bin the fate,
> To have a *streight*, and *narrow gate*;
> Like that of *Life*, which few do enter at.
> To find the Sacred pedigree,
> To *Ancient Hebrews* look, and see
> How thence *this Saviour* too did spring,
> And to mankind Salvation bring
> From black Ignorance rushing in,
> As the *great Shilo* did from *blacker Sin*. (29–45)[42]

By mentioning the Tree of Knowledge, Gale alerts his reader to the dangers inherent in seeking knowledge. But he poses a rhetorical question at the beginning of the stanza and the correct answer, the "Ancient Hebrews" and the knowledge derived from them, will not dethrone anyone from Paradise. Ignorance, not Hebraic knowledge, causes sin. In stanza three Canaan flows with milk, honey, *and* knowledge. In Book I, chapter ten Gale includes a section entitled "the original philology." He claims that all words and languages come from Hebrew and that God is the first institutor of names. But through divine inspiration Adam gave suitable names to the creation:

> . . . *Adam*, by his *appointment*, and special *inspiration*, gave *names*, *suitable* to the *Natures* of things: according to *Gen.*2:19. This is the first . . . *rectitude of words*, which (as *Plato* here observes) God *instituted by the ministerie* of *Adam*, that great *Naturalist*, who imposed *names* on things, *proper* and fitted to their *Natures*.[43]

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[42] Gale, Upon this ELABORATE Work, * * 3r–* *3v.
[43] Gale, Book I, Chapter 10, 53.

Prelapsarian speech inspired many thinkers to create or recapture a perfect language. For Wilkins it was an impetus for embarking on the huge project of the *Essay*. The Quakers maintained that the original tongue had been devoid of worldly vanities and therefore used an informal method of address in order to return to a pre-fall simplicity. Gale on the other hand simply believed that using Hebrew was the answer to the linguistic fall. One could recapture the unfallen state merely by speaking Hebrew. For Traherne there are two conditions under which one might achieve the Edenic state. One is during the pre-linguistic and isolated purity of infancy (a topic which will be addressed in the next section), and the other is in regenerate adulthood, when one is able to prize the world correctly.

Before concluding this section of the chapter, mention must be made of *Meditations on the Six Days of the Creation*, a work which is clearly part of the hexameral tradition. The work has been associated with Traherne since 1932 though to date his authorship is still in question. George Robert Guffey, Catherine Owen, and Gladys Wade maintain that the work's style and content are reminiscent of Traherne.[44] Owen points out that certain tenets characteristic of the poet—righteousness associated with the correct valuation of things; the intrinsic goodness of humans; the glory of the body and senses—are displayed in their early stages of development in the work. While convincing, her study does not consider the more negative tones found in *Select Meditations*, an early work by the poet. Owen also suggests that phrases in the *Meditations on the Six Days of the Creation* are strikingly similar to those in an established work by the poet, "Thanksgivings for the Glory of God's Works." However one might also garner passages uncharacteristic of Traherne. Looking at the Sixth Day, the creation of the animals and man, one detects a humble tone which is at odds with his typical exuberance.

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[44] George Robert Guffey, ed., *Meditations on the Six Days of the Creation*, 1717, the Augustan Reprint Society, no. 119 (Los Angeles: the Augustan Reprint Society, 1966); Catherine Owen, "The Authorship of the 'Meditations on the Six Days of Creation' and the 'Meditations and Devotions on the Life of Christ,'" *MLR* 56 (1961): 1-12; Gladys Wade, *Poetical Works of Thomas Traherne* (London: P. J. and A. E. Dobell, 1932) xvi–xx; and, Wade, *Thomas Traherne* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944) 145–156. All references from *Meditations on the Six Days of the Creation* are from this edition and will henceforth be cited in the body of this thesis.

The "I" lacks agency which Traherne's other works emphasize: "I beseech thee, into thy Protection, and make me serve and obey thee, and then I know thou wilt subdue them to me (*Creation*, 69). Traherne's ecstatic tone is absent from much of the work: "Make me to remember what thou hast taught us in the Use of the Creatures, that they are all given unto us conditionally" (*Creation*, 69). Unlike the passages quoted above from the poems "Adam" and "The Demonstration," this one indicates that God must instruct humans, and the word "conditionally" is tonally at odds with Traherne's other statements about the cosmos being expressly created for him and other humans. And yet the passages which resemble Traherne's work cannot be ignored. A reference to man as the Mirror of God could easily be his:

> God was satisfied in all his Works when Man was made, for now he had the Mirrour of all Excellencies before his Eyes, having one to enjoy all he had made and to sing Praises unto him for them. (*Creation*, 81–82)

Here man's enjoyment is crucial to the fulfillment of God's plan in the Creation, for he is a spectator assigning value to all things. He is the "clasp" between God and the Creation. This passage recalls to memory one in *Christian Ethicks*:

> Man seems to be the Head of all Things visible, and invisible, and the Golden clasp whereby Things Material and Spiritual are United. He alone is able to beget the Divine Image, and to multiply himself into Millions. (*CE*, 104)

One can draw different conclusion regarding authorship depending upon the evidence one analyzes. I believe the following scenarios might be true: the work is a collaboration between Traherne and other people, or, the work was written by someone else who was exposed to Traherne's thought. No precise claim about authorship can be made at this point however.

Allowing for these possibilities of authorship regarding *Meditations on the Six Days of the Creation*, one can still analyze the passages regarding Adamic speech, seeing it either as a possible work by Traherne, or else as merely another representative example of attitudes towards prelapsarian speech. Using the first person, the speaker adopts Adam's position:

> And since thou hast given me the Glory of Speech, and therein exalted me above a Beast, let not the Pleasures of my Tongue, which in Taste I have in common with them, defile me, but grant I may ever use it in the more noble Part, to thy Honour and Glory. (*Creation* 77)

He continues by celebrating "this little Member," the tongue. Once again the passage verbally echoes that of an established Traherne poem, "Adam" from the Poems of Felicity (29).

Like many of the commentators and writers of hexameral texts Traherne highlights Adam's dominion over the creation and ability to understand the essence of all things. He contemplates both Adam's prelapsarian condition and the contemporary human condition; not only do they understand the creation but they also assign value to it through verbal expression. Traherne argues for a progression from naming, to prizing or weighing precisely, and ultimately to praising God. More, Hobbes, Milton, and Willet emphasize the human need to communicate with others, though they do so in different ways. For Traherne original purity is both solipsistic in nature and communal for it entails both silence and conversation. The next section of the chapter concerning infants analyzes ways in which the discovery of human speech corrupts the individual and interrupts a state of perfect isolation.

2. Language and Infancy

Traherne talks about each person's personal experience of paradise, or potential for experiencing it. One of his hallmarks is a celebration of the human potential for goodness and consequently the ability to achieve Felicity while on earth. He carries the optimism of the Platonists, Latitudinarians, and the Pre-Nicene tradition espoused by St. Irenaeus. If all men are like Adam in Eden or have the potential to achieve that state, then what are the implications for obtaining a perfect language and what will it be like? An answer depends on what phase of

development the human is in: the prenatal state; infancy and childhood; or, adulthood. This section investigates Traherne's views of language at these different human phases and their relationship to the individual falls which everyone experiences.

In the latter half of the seventeenth century some religious thinkers exhibited an increasingly positive view of human nature. Members of the Latitude movement attacked the Calvinist doctrine of innate depravity and promoted the idea that each individual had the ability to become like the unfallen Adam. Traherne, with his belief that everyone could obtain Felicity and enjoy Paradise on earth, was a part of this movement. He posits that infants are born innocent and have a pure "Infant-Ey" which apprehends the world perfectly. Human custom and language eventually infect the infant or child, but the Edenic state can be reclaimed again as an adult.

Latitudinarianism became prominent in the later seventeenth century.[45] The movement championed many different causes ranging from a rejection of Calvinism, to an endorsement of religious toleration and comprehension of nonconformists, to rationalism in religion. Isabel Rivers describes two generations of latitude-men. The first consisted primarily (but not exclusively) of students, fellows, and heads of colleges at Cambridge before the Civil War. The second generation were students, mostly from Cambridge, during the late 1640s and early 1650s. They were influenced by and overlapped with the first generation. The emphasis of the earlier part of the movement—led by such men as Benjamin Whichcote, Henry More, John Smith, and Ralph Cudworth—was a repudiation of predestinarian theology.[46] Traherne shares their views in rejecting Calvinism and in celebrating the human potential for goodness. Isabel Rivers points out that some confusion may have surrounded the view of human nature; "confusion can arise from the fact that the portrait of human nature given sometimes refers to ideal nature

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[45] Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England 1660–1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 28–29.
[46] Rivers, 25–30.

before the fall, and sometimes to what all men have within themselves."[47] She uses the example of Whichcote who hearkens back to an ideal time before the Fall of Adam and Eve. In contrast the clergyman and mathematician Isaac Barrow talks about the present state of man and the Edenic qualities within all humans. One must be alert to this same fluctuation within Traherne's writings since he talks about Adam's particular situation as well as that of humans in general, sometimes making a distinction between the two and other times ignoring any distinction.[48]

In *The Transformation of Sin*, Patrick Grant points out the connection between Irenaean theodicy and Traherne's views of human nature.[49] He posits that the Pre-Nicene Father, St. Irenaeus, greatly influenced the poet as well as the Latitudinarians. Taken from the Pre-Nicene tradition are notions of the preexistence of the soul and universal salvation. In making the comparison between Irenaeus and Traherne, Grant notes that Adam is both the archetype and everyman in the poet's works.[50] The drive for church unity and overcoming doctrinal differences was coupled with a revival of Pre-Nicene doctrine in the seventeenth century. Grant says:

> Irenaeus became part of that latitudinarian ideal of transcending doctrinal disputation which received such significant development in England during the later seventeenth century.[51]

Treatises which advocated a return to the early Church fathers and Pre-Nicene tradition appeared. Examples include Denis Pétau's *Theologicorum dogmatum* (Paris, 1644) and Jean Daillé's *Traicté de l'employ des Saincts Peres* (Geneva and

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[47] Rivers, 79.

[48] Barrow and Traherne were contemporaries and held similar views. Marks says that both had an "exalted conception of human dignity," and she points out that the poet took great care in copying six of Barrow's passages into his *Commonplace Book.* See Marks, "Studies in the Reading of Thomas Traherne," 198–201.

[49] Traherne refers to Irenaeus Bishop of Lyens in his entry "Antiquitie" from the *Commentaries of Heaven* (fol. 106v.1). In this entry he quotes from Irenaeus in order to discredit the Church of Rome. He also refers to Irenaeus in *Roman Forgeries*: "*Irenæus*, one of the most Ancient Fathers, scholar to S. *Polycarp*, S. John's Disciple, in his Book against Heresies, giveth us four notable marks of their Authors. . . " *Roman Forgeries* (London, 1673) An Advertisement to the Reader.

[50] Patrick Grant, *The Transformation of Sin* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974) 170–197.

[51] Grant, 177.

Paris, 1632). Traherne quotes from the works of Daille in the *Roman Forgeries*, his own polemical work concerned with returning to the primitive church. He also quotes Irenaeus, who warns against heresies and false gospels.[52]

Traherne's theology and Irenaeus' bear striking resemblances. Irenaeus views the fall of man in Genesis as being less serious than the repeated transgressions of contemporary man.[53] Sin results from bad moral choices and is essentially a misevaluation of things. He also believed that Adam was created with child-like innocence and needed to grow to maturity, as well as that the creation should be utilized by man, and it is part of the maturing process of all humans. We find similar beliefs in Traherne's work. The "I" of a poem or prose piece is used interchangeably with "Adam," indicating that the experience of moving from purity and innocence to a degenerate individual is common to all humans and not just one incident in history.

An emphasis upon infant perception is a prominent feature in Traherne's work. The infant shares similar characteristics to those of Adam except one primary difference is that for Adam, language becomes corrupt after he falls while the infant is pure until he is infected with postlapsarian speech. The infant has dominion over his world-view and he feels possessive:

> 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.
> (*CM*, III.3)

Also, he knows the essence of things. The infant or child has pure unencumbered vision which enables him to apprehend and thereby enjoy the creation. "Innocence" illustrates this well as the speaker of the poem declares he once was perfect: "I felt no Stain, nor Spot of Sin" (4). In infancy or childhood one's vision and apprehension are perfect and the soul is pure as stated in the poem "Eden":

> Those Things which first his Eden did adorn,
> My Infancy

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[52] Grant, 177-79.
[53] Grant, 181.

Did crown. Simplicitie
Was my Protection when I first was born.
Mine Eys those Treasures first did see,
Which God first made. The first Effects of Lov
My first Enjoyments upon Earth did prov. . . . (36–42)

Two other qualities characterize Traherne's infant and will be discussed at a later point in this chapter. The first is that the infant is ignorant and the second is he is solipsistic. The infant is ignorant of all adult boundaries and inhibitions and Traherne frequently praises this condition:

A learned and a Happy Ignorance
Divided me,
From all the Vanitie,
From all the Sloth Care Sorrow that advance,
The madness and the Miserie
Of Men. No Error, no Distraction I
Saw soil the Earth, or overcloud the Skie.
("Eden," 1–7)

In the entry "Adam" from the *Commentaries of Heaven* Traherne echoes the famous third meditation from the Third Century in which the speaker claims to have known no boundaries: "No Hedges and Ditches did bound his possessions, nor did the fields and mountains yeeld him any other Revenews beside their Beauties. . . ." (*CH*, fol. 37.v.1). Leah Marcus draws a comparison between Traherne's views and Jeremy Taylor's. Taylor praised ignorance and went so far as to say that since knowledge removed Adam from Paradise, ignorance would help him regain it.[54] The infant is solipsistic to the extent that he fuses his own consciousness into the things around him. He does not draw any boundaries between himself and the empirical world. Marcus says "the infant is therefore unable to distinguish between objective reality and his own mental creations."[55] Although the infant's ignorance allows for special vision and a fusion between himself and his surroundings, Traherne does not advocate adult ignorance. In fact, in the *Centuries of Meditation* he insists that Christians must grow up:

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[54] Leah Marcus, *Childhood and Cultural Despair* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1978) 177.
[55] Marcus, 180.

> And till we see into the Beauty and Blessedness of Gods Laws, the Glory of His Works, the Excellency of our Souls &c. we are but Children of Darkness, at least but Ignorant and imperfect: neither able to rejoyce in God, as we ought, nor to liv in Communion with Him. (*CM*, IV.4)

Indeed, he says that "evry man ought to spend his time, in studying diligently Divine Philosophy" (*CM*, IV.3). Just as he vacillates between the benefits of society and the benefits of solitude, so too does Traherne vacillate between the "Happy Ignorance" ("Eden,"1) of the infant and the learnedness of the Christian philosopher.

If everyone experiences Adam's unfallen state in their own infancy or childhood, then presumably there is a time when they have perfect speech. However, this is not always the case in Traherne's writings. True he is optimistic about the reform of language and in a project like *Commentaries of Heaven* conveys the signifying power of words to capture reality, but he also disparages human speech as seen in his poem "The Author to the Critical Peruser." He has a curious position regarding the infant and speech which can be analyzed by looking at a selection of his poems and the entry "Babe" from the *Commentaries of Heaven*. In the "The Salutation," Traherne not only celebrates the fusion of the mind and body but also the ability to speak:

> These little Limmes,
> These Eys and Hands which here I find,
> These rosie Cheeks wherwith my Life begins,
> Where have ye been,? Behind
> What Curtain were ye from me hid so long!
> Where was? in what Abyss, my Speaking Tongue?
> (1–6)

Silence in the poem signifies chaos: "When silent I, / So many thousand thousand yeers, / Beneath the Dust did in a Chaos lie" (7–9). In the chaotic silence the speaker does not think of "Joys as Ears or Tongue, / To Celebrat or See" (15–16). In the poem the Tongue and speech are part of an awakening or birth and subsequently a jubilant revelry over the senses.

But, while Traherne celebrates the organ of speech he nonetheless depicts the introduction of language as a linguistic fall from infant purity. The poem "Dumnesse" provides a good example of this phenomenon. The perfect state of infancy is characterized by speechlessness, a state conducive to meditation:

> . . . he
> Might in himself profoundly Busied be:
> And not vent out, before he hath t'ane in
> Those Antidots that guard his Soul from Sin.
> (5–8)

The infant, in his dumbness, is in an incubatory state where he builds up immunities before moving into the outside world: "Thus was I pent within / A Fort, Impregnable to any Sin" (53–4). The incubator cuts out sound:

> Wise Nature made him Deaf too, 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. For Sin and Death
> Are most infused by accursed Breath. . . . (9–14)

Breaking silence in the poem is equated with breaking with the blissful state: "I *then my Bliss did, when my Silence, break*" (20).

And yet perfect "silence" is curiously auditory. The "fair Face / Of Heav'n and Earth" (18-19) speaks to him before he is corrupted. This "Face" uses the "Pulpit in my Mind," "Temple," "Teacher," and "Text" to instruct (57–59). All of these imply auditory or written instruction and therefore a kind of language. The poet insists that "No Ear, / But Eys them selvs were all the Hearers there" (59–60). There is clearly a great deal that the infant is subject to hearing for the Heavens are an oracle, the Earth a Priest, and all things have a voice. It seems that only the "Human Words" of line 21 are corrupt and in fact, the speaker's Tongue in line 67 is what begins killing these benevolent "Voices." Man starts off as a listener but his own speech and the words of other men corrupt his infant purity.

Traherne believes that deafness and dumbness are part of the solipsistic purity of the infant. John Bunyan sees deafness in another light in *The Holy War*.

The King's army attacks Mansoul through Eargate in order to regain it from the Diabolonians. Realizing that this is a vulnerable spot, Lord Willbewill assigns Mr. Prejudice to the Gate. Mr. Prejudice protects the Gate with the help of Deafmen, "men advantageous for that service, for as much as they mattered no words of the Captains, nor of their Souldiers.[56] In this episode deafness works negatively against Mansoul, the human soul, because it helps to block out the good words of the King's army. Ultimately, however, the positive forces penetrate Eargate:

> Now when the Captains saw the answer of the great ones, and that they could not get an hearing from the old Natives of the Town, and that *Mansoul* was resolved to give the Kings Army Battel: they prepared themselves to receive them, and to try it out by the power of the arm. And first they made their force more formidable against *Eargate*. For they knew that unless they could penetrate that, no good could be done upon the Town. This done, they put the rest of their men in their places. After which they gave out the word, which was, *ye must be born again*. Then they sounded the Trumpet, then they in the Town made them answer, with shout against shout, charge against charge, and so the Battel began.[57]

Both Traherne and Bunyan see the ear as a vulnerable spot. Positive forces—in Traherne's poem the voices of the "fair Face of Heav'n" (presumably the Church) such as the "Pulpit," "Temple," "Teacher," and "Text"—can enter as well as negative ones.

Other writers interested in deafness and dumbness viewed these conditions as purely physiological disorders. William Holder, fellow of the Royal Society, wrote a treatise entitled *Elements of Speech: An Essay of Inquiry into The Natural Production of Letters: with An Appendix Concerning Persons Deaf and Dumb.* In it he investigates how sounds and letters are formed by the mouth. This he calls the "natural Elements of Speech."[58] Language is mechanical and artificial:

> And the Learning of a Language is (or at least needs be) nothing else, but the informing our selves, and remembering what Composures of

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[56] Bunyan, *The Holy War*, eds. Roger Sharrock and James Forrest (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1980) 50.
[57] Bunyan, *The Holy War*, 50.
[58] William Holder, *Elements of Speech* (London, 1669) 9.

> Letters are, by consent and Institution, to signifie such certain Notions of things, with their Modalities and Accidents. . . .[59]

Once a person, presumably an adult person, can understand the mechanics of creating sound, then he can teach a deaf and dumb person how to speak and communicate. George Sibscota, in *The Deaf and Dumb Man's Discourse*, sees deafness as an unfortunate disease. He poses the question why hearing is the most prejudiced sense in humans, and then answers it by citing "*Aristotle's* Observation long ago":

> . . . the Hearing and Voice seem to be derived from the same principle: For Speech (saith he) which is a kind of Voice, may easily be depraved, and not without great difficulty restor'd to its perfection; a sign whereof is, that we continue mute for sometime after we are born (for in our Infancy we cannot speak at all) then at length we begin to stammer; since therfore Speech may be easily perverted, and that the principle of Hearing and Speaking is the same. . . .[60]

Again the ear is a vulnerable organ. But Sibscota does not take a moral angle on this issue of auditory corruption, instead he is more interested in medical explanations. In describing why infants are unable to speak, he uses a physiological explication:

> Besides, the organs of Infants are then but infirm, and by degrees arrive to perfection. . . . as Children cannot rule and govern their Limbs, so their first impotency and imperfection appears in the Tongue, and 'tis long before they are freed from it; which is the reason that for the most part they stammer, and speak with difficulty.[61]

Hearing is the most sensitive of all the senses, "soonest prejudic'd from the Birth," primarily because the ear is a delicate organ with,

> labyrinthean structure of the inward part of the Ear, which may be soon perverted or obstructed; into which the more tender Nerve hath a *mæandrous* passage, which also is soon affected with the smallest thing and from the filth of those humors which descend thither partly and primarily proceeding from the moisture of the Brain.[62]

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[59] Holder, 10
[60] George Sibscota, *The Deaf and Dumb Man's Discourse* (London, 1670) 2–3.
[61] Sibscota, 10.
[62] Sibscota, 12–13.

The language planner George Dalgarno in his *Didascalocophus, Or the Deaf and Dumb Mans Tutor*, sees language as an arbitrary construct, therefore he insists, deaf persons can be taught languages and can communicate through signs:

> All signs, both vocal, and written, are equally arbitrary and *ex instituto*. Neither is there any reason in Nature, why the mind should more easily apprehend, the images ofthings {sic} imprest upon Sounds, than upon Characters; when there is nothing either natural, or Symbolical, in the one or the other.[63]

Like Sibscota and Holder, Dalgarno is not interested in moral interpretations of deafness and dumbness, but rather in the mechanics of speech and method of teaching languages.

The entry "Babe" from the *Commentaries of Heaven*, suggests that speech corrupts the infant. At first the babe only knows himself and the wonders of the world around him; he is all apprehension and can see the beauty and glory of nature. But language destroys this and introduces human inventions which distract the babe from the wonders of the creation:

> But when he begins to speak, he ceases to be a Babe, and is infected with the Corruptions and Customs of Men, taken off from all the Works of God, and entertained as a child with Hobby horses and Rattles, a leading Inducement to all other Pomps and vanities. (*CH*, fol. 191r.2)

How does one account for the difference in attitude in "The Salutation" in which the speech organ is celebrated, and "Dumnesse" and the entry "Babe," in which language is a corruptive force? One explanation may be that although Traherne speaks of the early stages of the human, they are slightly different. "The Salutation" talks about a preexistent state before the mind and body merge, before birth, while "Dumnesse" and "Babe" are about the infant. In the former Traherne celebrates the "Speaking Tongue" and perhaps the potential for language. The latter two look at a fall from a perfect, isolated, incubatory state.

In "Silence" Traherne displays a cautious attitude towards human speech. As in "Dumnesse," silence is an ideal state where the meditative faculties may

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[63] Dalgarno, George, *Didascalocophus, Or the Deaf and Dumb Mans Tutor* (London, 1680) 2.

flourish. Traherne opens the poem by talking about a "quiet Silent Person" that can achieve "All that is Great or High in Blessedness" (2). The inward realm can hold the highest perfection: "The Inward Work is the Supreme: for all / The other were occasioned by the Fall" (2–3). Thus the "Idle" man, or silent one, may do the "Greatest Business" (6) which is like Adam's actions (7). Here too the "silence" has an auditory quality for the person has an internal voice: "Within, is better than an Empty Voice" (30) which produces a sweet melody that is better than an organ, lute, or harp.

Traherne seems to be showing ambivalence, for silence in the poems always entails a great deal of sound which comes from an interior voice. Both infant and adult are in a protective enclosure and the voices they hear are pure and benevolent. This "ideal" situation is solipsistic in nature and at first glance there appears to be no place for communication with others and the outside world. A parallel may be drawn between Traherne and Thomas Hobbes for they both look at language in relationship to a solipsistic condition as well as talk about the expansion of the individual. Hobbes' solipsist is a floating mind which he believed was capable of having a working language.[64] Traherne's is the infant or adult of the above poems and the entry "Babe." His version of the floating mind is found in such poems as "My Spirit" and "The Salutation."

However in "Silence" Traherne also mentions "outward Busy Acts" (9) which are not found in the silent person. One would expect him to list all kinds of undesirable actions resulting from this outwardness, but this is not the case for he lists virtuous ones: the building of churches, giving to the poor, administering justice, and preaching are a few of them (10–20). All these things are necessitated by sin and elsewhere in his writings Traherne views them as an expansion of the human experience, or a kind of Felix Culpa. By looking at a passage from the *Select Meditations*, we can see that Traherne believed man's Fall and his ability to win back his original state add "Victory and Triumphs" to his estate. Without sin,

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[64] Richard Tuck, *Hobbes*, Past Masters Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) 41-42.

> there had been no Punishments: no Patience no Longsuffering no meekness no contrition no Penitent sinners, no Incarnation of Jesus christ, no Redemption, no new obligations, no Heights and Depths and Enlargments of soul in the Abisses of misery and the Heights of Blessedness seen at the same time. No victory and Triumph infinitly Sweeter than Quiet Possession, no miracles, no Revelations from Heaven no use of patriarchs Prophets and Apostles. (*SM*, III.52)

In some of his writings the ideal state calls for silence and inwardness and yet, there is a time for breaking this silence. Speech corrupts the individual but if sin can bring new "Heights and Depths and Enlargments" to a person, perhaps a fallen language can be beneficial. The ambiguity expressed in the poems indicates that this may be the case. Irenaeus posits that the child must mature. This is also true in Traherne's writings for the child grows and learns about the "Churlish Proprieties" (*CM*, III.3) but overcoming these boundaries enlarges his soul. In his writings Traherne anticipates the growth and increasing comprehension of the infant, and thus suggests that silence may no longer be necessary or preferred. The tone in "The Salutation," where the speaker looks at the preexistent phase of human life before the soul merges with the body, is one of anticipation for human language. The disembodied speaker recounts his birth into bodily sensations, and the acquisition of a "Speaking Tongue" (6). Before this he is in a silent chaos, his latent energies poised to experience "New Burnisht Joys" (19) and presumably to use the "Speaking Tongue." In "Shadows in the Water" the child has outgrown the protective confinement of the incubator and silence is no longer desired. True he has clear vision but this does not suffice without additional knowledge. Although the poem holds a tone of wonder and self-discovery, it also carries a plaintive tone due to the incommunicability between the child and the shadowy people: "I call'd them oft, but call'd in vain; / No Speeches we could entertain" (33–34). It is not enough to be a simple "Ey" focusing on inward things as in "The Preparative." The growing child in "Shadows in the Water" requires answers to his many questions:

> What *Secret* borders on those Ends?
> Are lofty Hevens hurl'd
> 'Bout your inferior World?
> Are ye the Representatives

> Of other Peopl's distant Lives? (68–72)

According to Traherne, the manner in which one perceives things determines their value. Leah Marcus summarizes this idea:

> 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."[65]

Attaining true Felicity as an adult amounts to overcoming the knowledge of boundaries; seeing the true nature of the creation; and finally, prizing and in turn praising God, a thing which the infant is incapable of. In his work *Commentaries of Heaven*, Traherne calls for this same mental transformation in every individual in order to bring about linguistic reform.

3. The Tower of Babel

The story of the Tower of Babel occupied the imagination of religious thinkers and philologists during the seventeenth century. The episode was seen as an actual historical event, its consequences being the multifarious languages. It was indeed a "curse" causing strife between different peoples. Those who attempted to reform language hearkened back to a time of peace and harmony before this linguistic Fall. For instance, the language planners believed reversing the consequences of Babel—finding a common universal character—would eliminate religious and political strife. The episode of the Tower of Babel occurs in Genesis Chapter 11:

> And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. 2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. 3 And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for morter. 4 And they said, Go to, let us

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[65] Marcus, 182–3

> build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. 5 And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded. 6 And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do. 7 Go to, let us go down and there confound their language that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. 9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

This episode is frequently discussed in the biblical commentaries of the seventeenth century. They give multiple reasons for the building of the Tower which include a place of refuge against another flood or fire, a desire to achieve domination, a desire to remain unified, and a memorial to human strength. They also provided reasons why these were nefarious acts—humans attempted to reach a God-like status, they wanted to achieve worldly fame, and they were proud of human endeavors. God's punishment was to confuse the languages and thereby frustrate human ambition.

The divine William Whately expresses these views in his work *Prototypes, or the Primarie Precedent Presidents out of the Booke of Genesis.* In Chapter six of his work, Whately speaks of the bad and good examples of early man. Citing a bad example, he looks at King Nimrod and the Babylonians of the Old Testament and recalls the Babel episode of Genesis 11. The men of Babylon build a city and tower so that they may reach heaven and achieve a great name for themselves. He says,

> Here we must informe you of their sinne, which was not simply the building of a City, nor building of it of such matter, but ambition and vaine glory, and carnall confidence, and then the punishment of their sinne in the dividing of their tongues, and scattering them abroad.[66]

Andrew Willet gives several reasons why the Babylonians built the tower: "the ambitious desire of dominion" and "to maintaine society, that they might dwell together, and not be scattered here and there."[67] A common language is a unifying

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[66] William Whately, *Prototypes, or the Primarie Precedent Presidents Out of the Booke of Genesis* (London, 1640) 88.
[67] Willet, 108.

force and the people of Nimrod attempt to "get them a name" for "*They thinke their houses shall endure for ever, and they call their lands by their names.*"[68] Because of their pride and refusal to be dispersed, God gives them a linguistic punishment:

> Pride bringeth confusion of tongues, humility as in the Apostles abtained uniting of tongues, *Act.2.Greg.2*. It appeareth how hurtfull the conspiracy of the wicked is, for if now in the beginning, they abused the uniting of their tongues to so great madnesse, how outragious is it like they would have beene afterward, when their multitudes had beene more increased.[69]

A common language has a unifying force, the confusion of language a dispersing effect. The "uniting of tongues" is a reference to Pentecost when the apostles are able to speak in different tongues.

Thomas Hobbes sees the confusion at Babel as divine reparation for human rebellion:

> But all this language gotten, and augmented by *Adam* and his posterity, was again lost at the tower of *Babel*, when by the hand of God, every man was stricken for his rebellion, with an oblivion of his former language. And being hereby forced to disperse themselves into severall parts of the world, it must needs be, that the diversity of Tongues that now is, proceeded by degrees from them, in such manner, as need (the mother of all inventions) taught them; and in tract of time grew every where more copious.[70]

Babel is usually seen as a "curse of confusion" tarnishing the linguistic purity of the first language. In his project, *An Essay Towards a Real Character, and a Philosophical Language*, Wilkins frequently mentions the "Curse": "It cannot be denied, but that the *variety* of *Letters* is an appendix to the Curse of *Babel*, namely, the multitude and variety of *Languages*."[71] His main goal is to amend the problem of multiple forms of communication with his philosophical character. Uniformity and precision are crucial for returning to the prelapsarian condition where knowledge was conveyed perfectly,

> So that if men should generally consent upon the same way or manner of *Expression*, as they do agree in the same *Notion*, we should then be

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[68] Willet, 108.
[69] Willet, 109.
[70] Hobbes, 25.
[71] Wilkins, *Essay*, 13.

> freed from that Curse in the Confusion of Tongues, with all the unhappy consequences of it.[72]

The consequences he refers to are religious disputes and "*wild errors*"[73] in relaying scientific discoveries.

Traherne's view of Babel fluctuates. In "The Author to the Critical Peruser" he mentions "*Babel-Hell*" with derision. He evokes Babel's negative connotation when describing the corruptions of a man-made world:

> Truly there are two Worlds. One was made by God, the other by Men. That made by GOD, was Great and Beautifull. Before the Fall, It was Adams Joy, and the Temple of his Glory. That made by men is a Babel of Confusion: Invented Riches, Pomps and Vanities, brought in by Sin. (*CM*, I.7)

However, Babel is not always seen as a curse. Unlike the language projects of Wilkins and Beck, for instance, Traherne's *Commentaries of Heaven* does not propose to undo its consequences. In his entry "Babel" he acknowledges the common beliefs surrounding the episode but reinterprets them in a unique way.[74] He begins by making thematic links with the entry "Babe" which initially suggest that Babel is a fall from linguistic purity:

Babel

> Many Difficulties are introduced into the World to the great Disorder and Trouble of Infants, which nature in it self never intended. When we enter first upon the yeers of Discretion, we find ourselves Babes still to the Forrein Nations and Kingdoms on Earth: for by reason of the variety of Languages we are dumb (as it were) to all men but those of our own Country. . . . (*CH*, fol. 191v.1)

He draws a parallel between an infant's confusion over the introduction of speech and an adult's confusion over a foreign language. However, rather than seeing the episode as only a contamination of a pure incubatory space, the Confusion is also shown in a positive light. In the entry "Babe" the infant is "infected" by the introduction of speech, but in "Babel" Traherne softens this assessment calling

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[72] Wilkins, *Essay*, 20.
[73] Wilkins, *Essay*, Epistle Dedicatory, sig. br.
[74] See the entire entry in Appendix V.

speech merely a "difficultie" which can trouble an infant. The infant is associated with adults who are unable to understand foreign languages, suffer for this, but ultimately obtain "a vaste Advantage" when overcoming the language barrier and knowing "the Wisdom and the Beauty of other nations" (*CH*, fol. 191v.1).

At another point Traherne links the two entries. In "Babe" the infant inherits "Hopes" from its parents which rescue it from original sin, or "the Miserie of their first Parents." "Babel" talks about inherited sinfulness and benefits from parents:

> Children are by nature Subject to the Errors and miscarriages of their parents; as they are by nature also capable of their Advantages. Their condition is such, that their Interest is interwoven: They are joynt partakers of the same Benefits, and of the same miseries. (*CH*, fol. 191v.1)

Though language has an initial corrupting influence Traherne maintains that this will not always be the case. With Babel, the infusion of languages into a previously perfect space (humankind with one language) can be a beneficial occurrence depending on one's perspective:

> Whether Babel be an object of Bliss, or miserie, may much to be disputed, especialy by men not well acquainted with the nature of Bliss: but by men of a discerning Spirit may easily be decided. For they that Know, that all Things are objects of Miserie to the Wicked, and of Bliss to the virtuous can easily divide to evry man his Share in Babel also, which is a woe to the one, and a Joy to the other. (*CH*, fol. 191v.1)

As mentioned above silence, solipsism, and inwardness can be seen as a perfect condition but there is a time for sound and language. In "Silence" there is a distinctly auditory quality present and the "outward Busy Acts" suggest a beneficial verbal action present in the fallen state.

Traherne characteristically celebrates the great variety in the creation and infinite expanse of the cosmos. Expansion and having multiple possibilities are ideals which frequently stimulate his theological vision. This is true of his attitude toward the multiple languages resulting from the Tower of Babel. The confusion, the appearance of several languages, followed by dispersion are all celebrated

because they contribute to the variety in the world. Traherne employs the image of a fountain to relay the effusive effects of Babel:

> Babel is a Fountain of Great Alteration, and has occasioned many changes in the World. The Eternal Continuance of which changes flowing from a few in the Beginning of the World, and Spreading abroad in such a maner show us two Things of considerable Importance. (*CH*, fol. 191 v.2)

The first of the two things is free will. All the major events relating to the degeneration of humankind are the result of human actions. Traherne says,

> the Hearts and Actions of men are the great Stars that overrule the world for no Conjunction of the Planets begot the Confusion of Languages, no more then it did the Fall of Man, or the Deluge itself, or the Destruction of Paradise. (*CH*, fol. 191v.2)

The second thing of "considerable Importance" is "the Diffusive nature of evry Object" (*CH*, fol. 191v.2). The poet sees all actions as having ever expanding consequences. Babel for instance touches all ages and transforms them. The vibrant activity of free choice resulting in ever expanding consequences is a phenomenon that should be celebrated. Later in the entry he states: "The variety of Languages is a marvellous Ornament and Beauty to the World: which maketh Babel the more fit to be enjoyed" (*CH*, fol. 192 r.1). Traherne says that Pentecost answers the Confusion:

> As Mount Sion answereth Mount Sinai which is in Arabia, and the crucifixion[75] of Christ, the Giving of the Law: so doth the Coming down of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, the Confusion at Babel. For, for evry man to speak all Languages, or all men but one, is the same in Effect; except it be more glorious to be acquainted with all. (*CH*, fol. 191 v.2)

The assumption here on Traherne's part is that in speaking several languages, the Apostles also understand them, and thereby negate the effects of the Confusion. Again Traherne views human "falls" as being a Felix Culpa because of the multifarious possibilities they create. Having one prelapsarian language is good, but not as wonderful as overcoming the Confusion and understanding multiple

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[75] The manuscript reads "crucifififixion" at this point.

languages which were occasioned by the Tower of Babel and dispersion of the people.

Traherne is not alone in seeing Pentecost as a remedy for Babel. Edward Sparke contemplates the "Cloven Tongues" of the Apostles and their resulting ability to convert the Nations:

> They spake with divers tongues, as, &c. these tongues then betokened the *Gift of Languages*, wherby they were enabled to perform that great taske Christ had set them, *Go forth and teach, &c.* See, God never giveth a burthen, but withall strength to bear it: if he will have them teach, he will furnish them with Tongues. . . .[76]

Similarly Anthony Sparrow, in *Rationale Upon the Book of Common-Prayer*, says that multiple tongues of the Apostles was a divine gift. Traherne cites the works of both authors in his *Church's Year Book.* However he differs from these writers in associating the gift of tongues with the Babel episode itself; the Confusion is a blessing.

Looking at another facet of the "vaste Advantage" of learning new languages, Traherne dramatically depicts the moment when two people meet and find they can communicate. In the poem at the end of the entry he enacts the Babel episode:

> They feel no Hurt; and yet they all complain.
> There's nothing seen in all the troubled Throng,
> But Hurrying and Confusion: Crowding here,
> And scattering there! A Blasted Facultie
> Is the Sole cause of all their miserie. (*CH*, fol. 192.r.1)

Amidst this terrifying confusion two people meet and find they have the same language: "At last some one or two meet; that conceiv / What either speaks; then all the rest they leav" (*CH*, fol. 192 r.1). Communication becomes the primary link replacing blood ties, as the people at Babel leave their families and join with those who have the same language. This new discovery is made all the more sweet having been preceded by loss and confusion: "This sad Distress made nothing else so Sweet, / As the Convenience of a Soul to meet" (*CH*, fol. 192r.1).

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[76] Edward Sparke, *Scintilla-Altaris*, 1652 (London, 1663) 318.

Traherne's interpretation of the Babel episode gives us insight into his definition of perfection. Diffusive energy and ever expanding possibilities excite the poet and surmount initial restrictions found in a given act, in this instance a linguistic Fall. He acknowledges that there may be a debate amongst language reformers as to whether or not Babel is an object of bliss or misery, but the outcome depends upon one's perspective. His entry in *Commentaries* depicts both sides, the negative and the positive interpretation of Babel. His concluding poem beginning with the ambiguous words, "A Spiritual Stroak upon the Tongue, / Is now the Object of my Dubious Song" (*CH*, fol. 192r.1), alerts his reader to the two interpretations of the Babel episode. Though he ultimately celebrates the resulting variety of languages, he is not oblivious to the strife between different countries due in part to the difference in language:

> There had no English been,
> No French, no Spaniards, no contest between
> The Dutch and France: Hebrew had been the Tongue
> Of all the World, nor had I made this Song.
> Well then may Babel be a Joy to me
> Tho tis to some perhaps a miserie. (*CH*, fol. 192r.1)

Here he alludes to the wars of religion between Protestant Netherlands and Catholic France. Also, he shows a nationalistic tendency in the poem "The Author to the Critical Peruser," when he interprets utterances which are not in a "native vein" (17), to be "*Zamzummim* words," and part of "A Tale in tongues that sound like *Babel-Hell*" (21–22).

St. Irenaeus posits that sin is essentially a misevaluation of things and this is the philosophy which Traherne ultimately adopts. Being acquainted with Bliss, he sees Babel as a glorious occurrence. The project of the *Commentaries of Heaven* is to reveal all things as objects of happiness. The commonplace and miserable may be reevaluated to reveal Felicity. Thus he shows the Confusion unfolding into blissful diversity. In this chapter we have seen Traherne fluctuating between varying points of view—the benefits of Adam's solitude and the necessity of Eve's conversation; solipsism and communal living; silence and speech; the curse of

Babel and the blessing of multiple languages. This trend is found throughout the poet's works as he insists on marrying contrarieties. The same is true with regards to the role of silence in religious practice. At times the poet views silence in positive terms, saying it fosters an inward meditative state and is part of our prelapsarian innocence. But at other times silence is sterile and signifies the desolation and solitude of the individual. Chapter III offers an explanation as to why he fluctuates between these two points of view.

Chapter III - Silence in Traherne's Writings

Some Restoration thinkers believed that a silent person was more likely than a loquacious individual to hear the inward voice of God and thereby stay closer to the divine plan. Verbosity, they believed, led to worldly concerns, carnal desire, and the promotion of one's own will instead of God's. Others advocated silence in their devotional manuals and conduct books; it was seen as a form of patience, humility and, submission to God's will without complaint. While Thomas Traherne encourages both inwardness and respectful humility, his vision includes the assertion of personal identity, as evinced by the celebratory tone which accompanies his frequent use of the first person in much of his poetry and prose. As with most issues, Traherne tries to utilize two sides of an argument for his theological paradigm; he wishes to garner the benefits of silence without in any way subverting his own voice. We see him at one point advocating silence while at another objecting to it; thus his linguistic theory appears inconsistent. This chapter endeavors to explain why and when the poet alters his views. The first section discusses the role of silence in religious practice, emphasizing in particular the relationship between silence and personal identity. The second section discusses censorship and enforced political silence.

1. Silence in Religious Practice

Silence is used in religious practice by nonconformists and conformists alike, sometimes to create a meditative space for the fostering of inward spirituality, other times to quell complaints and display respectful humility and patience. Voluntary silence might also represent the intentional submission of the individual's personal voice, thus allowing the divine will to replace the individual's self-will. The Quakers, for instance, believed that languages were not inherently evil, but had become corrupt through time to the point where, in some cases, speech was synonymous with carnal

desire. Richard Bauman states that "Quakers viewed speaking in essentially negative terms and disvalued it."[1] They believed that God was dwelling within everyone and human words might distract the individual from the divine message and draw them towards worldly matters. Speech represented the flesh, and fleshly activity the assertion of one's own will. Therefore ceasing to speak helped suppress the individual's will.[2] Since speech held the danger of moving the mind away from inwardness and the divine will, silence was employed to counteract this. William Penn in his Preface to George Fox's *Journal* explains the way in which silence "preserve[s]" the Quakers:

> They recommended *Silence* by their Example, having very few words upon all Occasions: They were *at a Word* in *Dealing*; nor could their *Customers* many words tempt them from it; having more regard for *Truth* than *Custom*, to Example then *Gain*, they sought *Solitude*; but when in *Company*, they would neither use nor willingly hear *Unnecessary* as well as *Unlawful Discourses*; whereby they preserved their Minds pure and undisturbed from unprofitable *Thoughts* and *Diversions*.[3]

Fox himself, in his *Gospel-Truth Demonstrated*, uses a pastoral metaphor to convey the peaceful benefits of silence; but speaking is associated with restless wandering:

> CONCERNING *Silent Meetings*; the Intent of all Speaking is to bring into the Life, and to walk in, and to possess the same, and to live in and enjoy it, and to feel God's Presence, and that is in the Silence, (not in the Wandring Whirling Tempestuous Part of Man or Woman) for there is the Flock lying down at Noon-day, and feeding of the Bread of Life, and drinking at the Springs of Life, when they do not speak Words; for Words declar'd are to bring People to it, and confessing God's Goodness and Love, as they are moved by Eternal God and his Spirit, and so all the Ravenous Spirits that are from the Witness of God in themselves, cannot be Still, cannot be Silent, it is a Burthen to them; so cannot keep at home in their own Houses, but are the Hunters before the Lord like *Nimrod*, the first Builder of *Babel*; but God confounded them, for they went out of the Stilness and Quietness.[4]

Words are unnecessary if one is in communion with the divine. Speech is used to draw people to God's fold; once there, it is superfluous. With phrases like "Whirling Tempestuous Part of Man or Woman," and "Ravenous spirits," as well as a description

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[1] Richard Bauman, *Let Your Words Be Few* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) 10.
[2] Bauman, 22.
[3] William Penn, Preface, *Journal*, by George Fox (London, 1694) sig. D2r.
[4] Fox, *Gospel-Truth Demonstrated* (London, 1706) 103.

of a roving nature that takes humans away from home, Fox depicts an agitated state which accompanies speech, and an inability to stay within the benevolent pasture. Though Traherne was critical of Quakers his views do bear some similarity to theirs. This wandering inclination in Fox's treatise is akin to the "vent[ing]-out" which Traherne talks about in "Dumnesse."[5] Fox's reference to Nimrod, the builder of Babel, evokes images of linguistic confusion and strife. The passage also criticizes people who try to find spiritual answers within themselves: "all the Ravenous spirits that are from the witness of God in themselves, cannot be Still, cannot be Silent."

Richard Baxter, a moderate nonconformist, offers a similar view of silence when claiming that it is a form of respect, an indication that the individual surrenders himself to the divine will. The link between silence and submission is clearly seen in *A Christian Directory* :

> *Remember that God is your* Lord *our* Owner: *and see that you make an absolute Resignation of your selves, and all that you have to him as his* Own*: and Use your selves and all accordingly; Trust him with his Own; and rest in his disposals* . . . . It should silence all *murmurings* and repinings against the Providence of God, to consider that we are *his Own*. Doth he afflict you? and are you not *his own*?[6]

Silence, contemplation, and retirement from worldly life were also espoused by Anglicans and Arminians in their conduct books and devotional manuals. During the 1650s an increasing number of books devoted to private devotional practice were being written or reprinted from earlier editions. Examples include the anonymous work *The Whole Duty of Man*, Jeremy Taylor's *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living*, Henry Hammond's *A Practical Catechisme*, and Daniel Featley's *Ancilla Pietatis.* These works—in large part, a reaction against the Puritan establishment which had outlawed the Book of Common Prayer in 1645—encouraged the use of written or formalized forms of prayer in devotional practice. The Prayer Book became a symbol and inspiration for theologians and writers who favored the Anglican position and believed

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[5] Nabil Matar cautions against drawing too close a tie between Traherne and Quakers, pointing out that the former was critical of the latter in his *Early Notebook* and *Christian Ethicks*. See: Matar, "A Note On Thomas Traherne and the Quakers," *Notes and Queries* ns 28.1 (1981): 46–47. Also for a critical view of Quakers and Baptists see: "Baptism" in the *Commentaries of Heaven*, fol. 193r.2.

[6] Richard Baxter, *A Christian Directory*, Tome I (London, 1673) 83–84.

in ecclesiastical structures.[7] Even after the Restoration, manuals for private devotion were still being used and writers like Traherne continued to emulate them, as in his unpublished work, the *Church's Year Book*. And indeed, Richard Jordan has demonstrated that Traherne can be seen as part of the Anglican meditational tradition.[8] In the *Church's Year Book* he borrows passages from the works of such prominent Anglican divines as Edward Sparke, Daniel Featley, Anthony Sparrow, John Donne, and Lancelot Andrewes. The *Church's Year Book* was largely inspired by the Book of Common Prayer, being comprised of devotions on the days of the Church calendar, spanning from Easter to All Saints' Day.

Traherne's *Christian Ethicks* begins very much like *The Whole Duty of Man* and may have been inspired by it. Moreover, despite saying he will not cover the same materials as the author of *The Whole Duty of Man*—"I need not treat of Vertues in the ordinary way, as they are *Duties* enjoyned by the Law of GOD; *that* the Author of *The whole Duty of Man* hath excellently done" (*CE*, 3)—Traherne does in fact borrow passages from it in his chapter entitled "Of Charity towards GOD."[9] The author of *The Whole Duty of Man* says Patience is "a willing and quiet yielding to whatever afflictions it pleases God to lay upon us" and makes it "impossible for us to grudge or murmur at whatever he does."[10] He paraphrases Psalm 39:9 in saying:

> *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it;* God's doing it silenced all murmurings and grumblings in him. And so must it do in us, in all our afflictions, if we will indeed approve our humility to God.[11]

In this passage, silence represents respectful humility. Jeremy Taylor describes twenty-three methods for achieving virtue and removing vice. Method number six cautions not to "talk with any man, or undertake any trifling imployment *meerly to*

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[7] Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975) 116.
[8] Richard Jordan, "Traherne and the Art of Meditation," *JHI* 46 (1985): 381–403.
[9] Carol Marks and George Robert Guffey, eds., *Christian Ethicks*, 305.
[10] *The Whole Duty of Man* (London, 1635) 38.
[11] *The Whole Duty of Man*, 38.

passe the time away"[12]—Silence is preferred to inconsequential talk. He encourages meditation in number twenty-one:

> Let him that is most busied set apart some *solemn time every year*, in which, for the time quitting all worldly businesse, he may attend wholly to fasting and prayer, and the dressing of this soul by confessions, meditations and attendances upon God. . . .[13]

It is possible that Traherne read *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living*, as he was familiar with and quoted from another of Taylor's works, *The Great Exemplar*, in the *Church's Year Book*.[14] Similarly Traherne believes the individual should avoid frivolous talk. In *Select Meditations* he addresses the problem of associating with the wrong people:

> that wee are So suddainly forgettful of all our Glory is a solid trouble and Great Diseas. That we are Soe Apt to take the seal of impression from a nothers Thoughts, and suffer them to steal us a way from our Kingdom, And by a secret contagion, to Annihilate our Joys! To the Intent I may be more fixed therefore I will be more silent when they talk of vanitie And since I cannot accompany their Imaginations and the thoughts of God; I will either overrule their Souls or Depart the company. if I must needs tarry there I can goe away by Attending Heaven. (*SM*, III.2)

Henry Hammond refers to silence and patience in his section "Of Meekness" from *A Practical Catechisme*. He describes meekness as "a softnesse, and mildnesse, and quietnesse of spirit, expressing it selfe in many passages of our life."[15] Moreover Patience is a

> chearful-fulnesse in affliction, contentednesse with our lot whatsoever it is, (contrary to all murmuring and repining, and *enmity to the crosse*, and all rest lesse unsatisfiednesse) the being dumb or silent to the Lord, Psal. 37.7.[16]

Here again silence and dumbness are ideal states for they quell these complaints that normally arise from affliction. Traherne may be making a reference to Hammond in "Of Humility":

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[12] Jeremy Taylor, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living* (London 1650) 8.
[13] Taylor, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living*, 15.
[14] See: Carol Marks, "Traherne's Church's Year-Book," *PBSA* 60 (1966): 55; "Studies in the Reading of Thomas Traherne"; and, Marks and Guffey, eds., *Christian Ethicks*, xiii.
[15] Henry Hammond, *A Practical Catechisme*, 1645 (London, 1648) 75.
[16] Hammond, 75.

> It is of so much concernment, that a Great Divine* in our *English* Zion said, *The greater part of our eternal happiness will consist in a grateful Recognition* (not of our Joyes to come, but) *of Benefits already received.* (*CE*, 213)

Although Marks and Guffey identify several echoes of Hammond in the *Christian Ethicks*, they say the marginal note in "Of Humility," claiming that the "Great Divine" is Hammond, may be a printer's contribution and not Traherne's, as the passage above cannot be found in any of Hammond's works.[17]

In *Christian Ethicks* Traherne describes the virtue of Patience. He says, "PATIENCE then is that Vertue by which we behave our selves constantly and prudently in the midst of Misfortunes and Troubles" (*CE*, 187). Patience prevents one from indulging in "Murmerings and Repinings" which is futile since "TIMES of Affliction are Seed-times for a future Harvest" (*CE*, 188). Traherne describes Patience as a virtue which is asleep until awakened by "Trials" (*CE*, 189). He says,

> For Vertues to lie asleep in the Soul, and for Vertues to be actually and fully perfected, is as great a difference, as for a Vine to be of a generous kind, and prone to bear, but to remain without Fruit. . . . (*CE*, 191)

Later in the chapter Traherne describes the stunted growth of the plant, or soul, as being a "silent Habit":

> The Excellency of its Nature is vain, if its Fruit be never brought to perfection. There is a Glory in the Work which the silent Habit is incapable of. It is the Life and Vigour of the Exercise in which all the brightness consisteth. (*CE*, 191)

Although in other devotional manuals the virtue of Patience sometimes requires silence in order to still human complaints, in Traherne's passage silence represents inaction and sterility, a time when the virtue of Patience lies dormant.

Traherne vacillates, sometimes praising silence and other times using it to represent sterility, isolation and inaction. As discussed previously, the poems "Silence" and "Dumnesse" and the entry "Babe" from the *Commentaries of Heaven* depict Traherne's ideal silent condition. The poems celebrate the quiet inwardness of a silent person where personal and celestial energies nurture clear vision. "Silence"

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[17] See Marks and Guffey, eds. *Christian Ethicks*, note 361.

reveres the contemplative person who seems inactive, but whose inwardness produces the "Greatest Business" (6). In "Dumnesse" isolation is a key component in creating a private meditative space. Throughout the poem Traherne emphasizes his solitary condition with words like "one" (35), "Self alone" (36) and "Single" (52). The speaker in the poem recalls the time when he was isolated through deafness and dumbness:

> There I was in the World my Self alone;
> No Business Serious seemd but one; No Work
> But one was found; and that did in me lurk.
> D'ye ask me What? It was with Cleerer Eys
> To see all Creatures full of Deities;
> Especialy Ones self: And to Admire
> The Satisfaction of all True Desire. . . . (36–42)

This is a description of a particular phase of life when the speaker focuses his perceptive energies on "inward Things" (11), meditates upon the divine, and thereby protects himself from language. Human speech corrupts this simple life by "vent[ing] out" (7) certain energies and allowing harmful influences, or "*Mortal Words*," to penetrate the soul. In "Babe" the use of language destroys the infant's purity. At first the infant only knows himself and the world around him; he is all apprehension and can see the beauty and glory of nature. But language destroys this clear-sightedness and introduces human inventions which distract him from the wonders of the creation: "But when he begins to speak, he ceases to be a Babe, and is infected with the Corruptions and Customs of Men. . ." (*CH,* fol. 191r.2). Traherne displays a deep distrust of human language in these passages which are in sharp contrast to ones quoted previously from the *Commentaries of Heaven*. Indeed, his proposed project of the encyclopedia revealing the mysteries of Felicity through words seems to run completely contrary to the sentiment in "Silence," "Dumnesse," and "Babe."

In adulthood silence operates as a preservative of the human soul. An example may be found in the *Select Meditations* when Traherne talks about living in the divine image. The passage addresses the problem of corruptive forces that might interfere with this goal:

> Heed not the Trifles of thy Body, nor the Impertinoncies of mens Ignorances. pursue not the flies, Liv not a mong the frogs of their Empty Thoughts. for such swarm in their fairest chambers. (*SM*, III.15)

The proposed solution is to stay within the protective enclosure of the house and remain silent:

> But keep at home and retain thy Majesty within Doors. Remember thy Treasures; be sencible of thy kingdom. Move always with a Due Estate, and Reverend Behavior. A venerable Deportment becomes a God. Be more Silent. Less apt to mingle with other mens words; unmoved in thy passions. The Eternal Deity is seldom Angry. Be Great and Active, And becaus thou art a Man be ever Watchfull. (*SM,* III.15)

A peaceful enclosure is conducive to God-like behavior. Taken on their own the above passages suggest that Traherne favored a retreat from worldly concerns, but the final statement of this passage from *Select Meditation*s alerts us to the fact that the poet did not advocate passivity: "Be Great and Active." Like many religious thinkers of the time, he advocated both the life of action and the life of contemplation.

However, despite this positive view of silence, Traherne also represents silence as desolation and painful solitude. In the poem "Dissatisfaction" the speaker is "Panting and faint, full of Complaint" (29). Throughout the poem he searches for satisfaction, solace, and Felicity. He says,

> But then, Where is? What is, Felicity?
> Here all Men are in doubt,
> And unresolv'd, they cannot speak,
> What 'tis; and all or most that Silence break
> Discover Nothing but their Throat. (66–70)

He is frantically asking (12) and complaining (29) and bursting with speech. But instead of seeing silence as a remedy for a complaining individual, silence itself is a problem. He finds his reprieve from silence and lack of communication in the Bible (112), which provides special kinds of "Counsels" (81), "Songs" (82), and use of "Tongues" (83). A comparison might be made between this poem and George Herbert's "The Collar," another poem in which the speaker is dissatisfied and impatient. At the opening of "The Collar" the speaker strikes out violently and exclaims that he will depart. His "lines" (4), or words, are "free; free as the road, / Loose as the

wind, as large as store" (4–5). He asks indignantly if he should stand by and wait for others: "Shall I be still in suit?" (6). But, as he builds momentum, and becoming "more fierce and wild / At every word" (33–34), he is suddenly stilled by one single word– "*Child!*" (35). Unlike Traherne's speaker whose restlessness ends with the arrival of Biblical voices ("Counsels," "Songs," and "Tongues"), Herbert's speaker retires peacefully with one simple reply–"*My Lord*" (36).[18] In Traherne's poem "Solitude" the speaker is searching for relief from his desolation and silent surroundings: "I do believe, / The Ev'ning being shady and obscure, / The very Silence did me griev" (26–27). This leads to a strong desire to receive some kind of response from the world around him and he shouts impatiently,

Ye sullen Things!
Ye dumb, ye silent Creatures, and unkind!
How can I call you Pleasant Springs
Unless ye eas my Mind!
Will ye not speak
What 'tis I want, nor Silence break?
(41–46)

But they do not answer him and although he has momentary relief when he hears the sound of the church bells, ultimately he remains in solitude. And finally in "Poverty" the speaker is isolated and desolate in his "silent Hall" (6), and laments the sterility of his material surroundings. Ultimately he finds solace in the realization that he has God-given treasure: "His Lov must surely be / Rich, infinit, and free" (43–44). Although some of the key conformist writers saw silence as a form of humility and a relinquishing of the self to the divine will, the above passages illustrate that Traherne does not always follow their example. He agrees that complaints or murmurings are degenerate forms of speech but silence does not always suffice as the answer. This is not to say that Traherne denied the benefits of a life of contemplation, for indeed, as Richard Jordan points out, he elsewhere favors this life:

> When I came into the Country, and being seated among silent Trees, had all my Time in mine own hands, I resolved to Spend it all, whatever it cost me, in Search of Happiness, and to Satiat that burning Thirst which Nature had

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[18] Matar has demonstrated Traherne's indebtedness to Herbert's "poetic inventiveness," particularly in the area of stanzaic experimentation. See: Matar, "*The Temple* and Thomas Traherne," *ELN* 25.2 (1987): 25–33.

> Enkindled, in me from my Youth, In which I was so resolut, that I chose rather to liv upon 10 pounds a yeer, and to go in Lether Clothes, and feed upon Bread and water, so that I might hav all my time clearly to my self: then to keep many thousands per Annums in an Estate of Life where my Time would be Devoured in Care and Labor. (*CM,* III.46)[19]

On the whole however, the poet prefers "the Life and Vigour of the Exercise" (*CE,* 191) to that of quiet retirement.[20]

But when and in what manner should one be active linguistically? Although he advocates silence in certain instances, on the whole Traherne prefers speech generated by a special level of consciousness. The poet distinguishes between a mundane order and a transcendent one. Silence is beneficial in the mundane order for it suppresses undesirable speech which may, in its effusiveness, release all the inward spiritual qualities of the individual. A person living in this state must protect his inward contemplative life. However, when a person enters a more transcendent state he can expand his quiet reflection outwards into the natural world, other humans, and even the Godhead. A passage from *Select Meditations* illustrates that Traherne had two different conditions in mind when talking about silence. In meditation III.65 he differentiates between "here" where language is a vice and "there" where it is a form of praise and communion:

> Their [Man's] Incapacity hath made that saying Eminent and necessary. Silere Tibi, Laus est. There we Shall have one open and Eternal Day, here our Lives must be Intermingled as Time is in this world, with Speech and Silence, Dayes and nights. (*SM*, III.65)

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[19] This passage is quoted in Jordan, 395.

[20] At this point mention must be made of *Inducements to Retiredness*, one of the works in the Lambeth Palace manuscript, ms. 1360, Lambeth Palace Library, London. The manuscript was announced by Jeremy Maule, "Five New Traherne Works: the Lambeth Manuscript," *Thomas Traherne Conference*, Brasenose College, Oxford, 30 July 1997. As the discovery occurred during the final stages of this thesis project and initial investigations into the work are still being conducted, a detailed discussion of it is not provided here. It may at first appear that Traherne's enthusiastic endorsement of retirement (as opposed to an active public life) in this manuscript runs contrary to my statements above and in the remainder of this chapter. However, this is not the case. In *Inducements to Retiredness* Traherne advocates retirement for much the same reasons he advocates silence in "Dumbnesse" and "Silence," particularly with regards to the fostering of inwardness. For Traherne retirement is instrumental to a better understanding of God, self, and Felicity. In addition it protects individuals from external adversities and regenerates the soul. He sees it as a preparation for the public life. He also maintains that the solitary person who is without individual attachments is better able to benefit and love numerous people. A single passage in the manuscript may serve to describe Traherne's attitude toward the private and public life, retirement and activity: "Hence we conclude, that our Life is to be spent, not only in Retirement, nor only abroad: our Life is made Harmonious, by a Sweet mixture of these Extremes, and a wise Improvement of both" (*Inducements to Retiredness*, fol. 7r). Retirement ultimately aids action.

"Here" indicates a mundane temporal realm where speech and silence are dichotomies but "There" indicates the transcendent realm—Heaven, or else a temporal condition in which humans on earth obtain divine understanding—where the contemplative space is "open." In the mundane order one must practice self-preservation by staying within the protective incubator of silence, blocking the vices of the world. But by making a movement to the transcendent order one can break this boundary without fearing speech.

Can humans talk too much about divine matters? Traherne addresses this question in another passage from *Select Meditations*. At first he says garrulity is his "Diseas" and he desires "Profound Inspection, Reservation and Silence." However, he also seems to imply that although his words seem excessive and indulgent, they are erroneously interpreted as such, for, his loquaciousness, in its original form, is one of "the Perfections of Heaven":

> Too much openness and proneness to Speak are my Diseas. Too easy and complying a Nature. Speaking too much and too Long in the Best Things. Mans nature is Nauseating and weary. Redundanc is Apprehended even in those Things of which there can be never Enough. by Exposing Himselfe a man Looseth Him Selfe, and becometh cheap and common. The vices of men have made those Things vices, that are the Perfections of Heaven.
> (*SM*, III.65)

The opening lines of the meditation are contrite, and one can picture the talkative Traherne acknowledging his own tendency to ramble. But the tone changes and becomes persuasive, gently remonstrating, and even slightly sarcastic as he points out that man has turned heavenly perfection (taking about "the Best Things") into a vice. A passage from the *Commonplace Book* shows concern for the frequency of speech. Referring to the Pythagorean theory of silence, Traherne claims that periods of silence can enhance speech:

> He that would speak as the oracles of God must be long silent, because Oracles speak but Seldom: Silence adding much to the Authority and majesty of the Speaker. The greatest Treasures are seldom exposed, and the emptiest Casks and shallowest Waters sound the loudest. As Silence therfore is an Argument of Wisdom it breeds veneration, and begets an opinion of worth and fulness. All Harmony consisteth of Notes and Stops, Pauses being if not a Part, yet the Grace and Ornament of all. . . . He that

> speaketh seldom is like unto God. for God is infinitly wise yet speaketh seldom.[21]

He maintains that strength and wisdom come from an infrequent use of language. What can be made of his claim that even God "speaketh seldom," for surely that negates considerations of a spiritual order being a place for loquaciousness? In the mundane realm this kind of approach by the divine is necessitated because repetitions "here," make things ordinary and therefore ineffectual. Perhaps the phrase "the emptiest Casks and shallowest Waters" from the *Commonplace Book* expresses the same idea as "cheap and common" in the passage from *Select Meditations* (III.65). Traherne says that the "greatest Treasures are seldom exposed" (*CB*, fol. 88r.1) and the reader expects him to reveal a treasure, not an empty cask and shallow water. The juxtaposition of treasure and an empty or shallow container readjusts the reader's expectations—great things may come in minute quantities and unimpressive forms. Caution must be used when ascribing certain beliefs to Traherne based upon the passages from the *Commonplace Book,* as many of the passages are by other authors and were copied into the book by Traherne's amanuensis. This particular passage is in Traherne's hand. The material coming directly before it, discussing the nature of Pythagorean silence, is taken from Part II of Theophilus Gale's *Court of the Gentiles*. However, the passage quoted above regarding the speech from "oracles of God" appears to be Traherne's own words.[22]

Traherne's "silence" conveys a vibrant oral quality. In "Silence" an internal voice and divine voice make more pleasurable sounds than all the noises of the external world. The silent person gets to "Sing Praises with a Sweet and Heavnly voice, / See, Prize, Give Thanks within, and Love / . . . To see, Approve, take Pleasure, and rejoyce" (24–30). The "Blessed Case" (17) in "Dumnesse" provides a plethora of lovely sounds and instructive voices:

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[21] Traherne, *Commonplace Book*, ms. Eng. poet.c.42, Bodleian Library, Oxford, fol. 88r.1. All subsequent quotations from this work will be cited in the body of this thesis. This passage is quoted in Marks, "Studies in the Reading of Thomas Traherne," 162.

[22] Carol Marks claims that Traherne inserts aphoristic comments of his own in some of the entries and an "adagial insertion occurs in the middle of Gale's account of the Pythagorean practice of 'Silence.'" See: Marks, "Studies in the Reading of Thomas Traherne," 162.

> a Pulpit in my Mind,
> A Temple, and a Teacher I did find,
> With a large Text to comment on. No Ear,
> But Eys them selvs were all the Hearers there.
> And evry Stone, and Evry Star a Tongue,
> And evry Gale of Wind a Curious Song.
> The Heavens were an Orakle, and spake
> *Divinity*. . . . (57–64)

The speaker seems to have whole religious communities within his head with the "Pulpit," "Temple," "Teacher," and "Text." Thus one can say that Traherne revels in sound even as he praises silence.

The celebratory energy generated within the private encasement does not remain confined, but instead radiates outward. One distinguishing characteristic of Traherne's work is his ecstatic use of the first person of which Joan Webber offers a detailed study. Traherne and the Cambridge Platonist Peter Sterry use much of the same imagery. Sterry says that the Hebrew word signifying "eye" is the same as that which signifies "fountain." Webber does not propose an influence, but she does point out the similarity between them for Traherne uses the "I"/"eye" in his poetry in such a way as to represent a fountain which overflows to other people and things.[23] One almost never receives the impression that the poet subverts his own identity and replaces it with the divine will. Instead, he projects his sense of selfhood to embrace other people, places and the Godhead. He insists that the desires and needs of the individual are in fact part of the divine plan of self-expansion, inclusion, and indeed union with the Godhead and fellow humans. The poet is aware of the admonishment he will receive "Here" from his use of the first person, but he insists that "There," it will be the proper thing to do:

> Here I am censured for Speaking in the Singular number, and Saying I. All these Things are done for me. Felicity is a Bird of Paradice So Strang, that it is Impossible to flie a mong men without Loseing some feathers were She not Immortal. There it shall be our Glory and the Joy of all to Acknowledge, I. I am the Lords, and He is mine. Every one shall Speak in the first Person, and it shall be Gods Glory that He is the Joy of all. Can

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[23] Webber, *The Eloquent "I": Style and Self in Seventeenth-Century Prose* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968) 224.

> the freind of GOD, and the Heir of all Things in Heaven and Earth forbear to say, I. we must attend the Reverence Due unto our Persons.
> (*SM,* III.65)

His strong sense of personal identity leads one to conclude that for Traherne, silence and the submission of selfhood are appropriate acts in the mundane world, but they are far from ideal. The divine plan is to have human consciousness transcend boundaries and permeate the cosmos. Analyzing his notion of self-love proves useful in understanding his paradoxical view that intense solipsism and introspection can project outwards, breaking down boundaries and establishing communication with others.

In the mid-seventeenth century the topic of self-love associated with the "libertine" Thomas Hobbes sparked much debate over human nature.[24] Hobbes believed that love and any other primal desire in humans was selfish, motivated by an instinct for self-preservation. But Traherne and many of Hobbes's other critics did not believe that all human behavior was motivated by selfishness (*CE*, 261). Traherne speaks of love as a primal desire. In the poem "Nature" the desire to love is innate: "I was by Nature prone and apt to love" (13). However, this impulse will not lead to conflicts of interest because surprisingly, satisfying any kind of desire always entails an altruistic self-expansion. All human desire may be satisfied with divine glory until "we are so full, that we know not what to do with it, we are in danger of bursting, till we can communicate all to some fit and amiable Recipient. . . " (*CE*, 258). This "Recipient" may be God or other people. True love, which is a desire divinely implanted within us, extends outward.

According to Traherne, genuine, altruistic self-love can be found in humans after the Fall. He asks, "what is becom of us since the Fall?" (*CM*, IV.53). Once man is restored through the coming of Christ, he is in a position to love himself. Traherne poses the question whether or not "Lov principaly intends its own Glory, or its Objects Happiness" (*CM*, IV.63). He acknowledges that on the one hand it is "Mercenary" to be "Self Ended," but that on the other hand God Himself exhibits self-love. Traherne

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[24] Samuel Mintz, *The Hunting of Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) 134–146.

again asks a question: did God then create the world for Himself or for humans? The subsequent meditations attempt to answer this puzzle. As in the poem "Nature," in these meditations love is self-centered as well as altruistic:

> How can God be Lov unto Him self, without the Imputation of Self Lov? Did He lov Him self under any other Notion then as He is the Lover of his Beloved: there might be som Danger. But the reason why He loves Himself being becaus He is Lov: nothing is more Glorious then his Self Lov. (*CM*, IV.65)

In essence, humans display a God-like attribute in their own self-love provided it ultimately expands to include others. Again he makes the "here" / "there" distinction which he made with regards to silence and speech:

> Here upon Earth, it [Love] is under many Disadvantages and Impediments that maim it in its Exercise. But in Heaven it is most Glorious. And it is my Happiness that I can see it on both sides the Vail or Skreen. There it appeareth in all its Advantages for evry Soul being full, and fully satisfied, at Eas, in rest, and Wanting nothing, easily overflows and shines upon all. It is its perfect Interest so to do, and nothing Hinders it. Self Love there being swallowed up and made perfect in the Lov of others. (*CM*, IV.60)

Richard Baxter similarly allows for human ability to love the self as well as God. However, he displays a far more cautious attitude than Traherne whose poetry holds an exuberant tone when using the effusive "I." After praising the benefits of passion and the senses in his introduction to *Poetical Fragments*—though he still maintains that this passion is "rational and holy"[25] —Baxter then moves to a discussion of God's love in his first chapter on love. Unlike Traherne who believes humans should imitate the Divine in self-love, Baxter cautions his reader by saying that sinners try to make themselves into God and God into man. Self-love is a dangerous emotion: "But sinners lost in SELF rise not above / The lower Region of their own SELF-LOVE." Altruistic love for Baxter is loving that which is greater or more noble—for instance a King or country—than oneself:

> Reason convinceth me, that I should erre,
> If the known BEST, my Love should not prefer:
> Should I not rather chuse my self alone
> To be annihilated, or undone,
> Than the whole world should bear the same distress,

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[25] Baxter, *Poetical Fragments*, 1681, introd. by V. de Sola Pinto (Farnborough: Gregg International Publishers, 1971) sig. A4r.

Or towns, or countries; seeing I am less?[26]

Traherne does not subvert the "I" in his work in such a manner. Once Baxter gives his warning, he is willing to allow for the compatibility of loving God and loving oneself:

But O how wisely hast thou made the twist!
To *Love Thee* and *My Self* do well consist.
Love is the closure of Connaturals;
The Soul's return to its Originals:
As every Brook is towards the Ocean bent;
And all things to their proper Element. . . .[27]

True, these words are in accordance with Traherne's own beliefs that it is natural for the soul to return to its original, but for Baxter the sense of selfhood is subsumed by the divine while this does not occur in Traherne's writing.

Baxter's sentiments are reminiscent of those of George Herbert in "The Holdfast," a poem which describes the necessity of relinquishing one's identity. In "The Holdfast" the speaker questions whether or not there is any autonomous self. The speaker is determined to devote himself to God but with each attempt to act or obey, he is told that nothing is done by his own volition. The diminishing self in the poem is like a diminishing mathematical limit. In the last part of the poem the authoritative voice with whom he is speaking reveals shocking news:

I heard a friend express,
That all things were more ours by being his.
What Adam had, and forfeited for all,
Christ keepeth now, who cannot fail or fall. (11–14)

It seems complete self-possession is a condition enjoyed only by prelapsarian man. The friend, or Christ, reveals this truth.

Baxter's words are reminiscent of Herbert's:

The more I do *my self* in Love neglect,
And only to *thy Goodness* have respect,
When most *my self* I from my self abstract,
This is the *sweetest*, and *self-pleasing* act!
Even when I see, to leave *my self* behind,
Coming to Thee, with *Thee my self* I find.[28]

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[26] Baxter, *Poetical Fragments*, 5.
[27] Baxter, *Poetical Fragments*, 6.
[28] Baxter, *Poetical Fragments*, 7.

Traherne differs from Baxter and Herbert in his refusal to diminish the voice of the individual and in his conviction that self-love is both a full expression of selfhood, and an altruistic expansion into other persons and God. Again the poet insists that contrarieties can coexist without one diminishing the other.

Traherne realizes that it is not natural to love something more than oneself, but he suggests a way to climb to a higher level of expanded love. Humans can begin with self-love and ultimately work towards loving God:

> Even *Jacobs* Ladder will not bring us to Heaven, unless we begin at the bottom. Self-love is the first round . . . the more we love our selves, the more we love those that are our Benefactors. It is a great mistake in that arrogant *Leviathan*, so far to imprison our love to our selves, as to make it inconsistent with Charity toward others. It is easie to manifest, that it is impossible to love our selves, without loving other things: Nature is crippled (or if it has her feet, has her head cut off) if Self-preservation be made her only concern. . . . (*CE,* 260–261)

Here Traherne evokes the traditional view of Platonic love with the reference to Jacob's Ladder. Through self-love one begins the ascent to the divine. Nabil Matar demonstrates how the poet was influenced by St. Bernard of Clairvaux's *Liber de Diligendo Deo,* and used the Saint's writings to attack the views of Hobbes.[29] In his treatise St. Bernard outlines an individual's progression from self-love to loving God. There are four stages of the journey beginning with the self and moving towards the divine—first the individual loves himself; then he loves God because He is the individual's Benefactor; then he loves God irrespective of His relationship with humans; and finally the individual feels self-love not for his own sake, but for God's sake. Traherne follows a similar pattern in "Of Gratitude" from *Christian Ethicks.* The individual moves from self-love (stage one) to loving "Benefactors" (stage two). Then he loves God ("my Love to my self, being thoroughly satisfied, turns into the Love of GOD" *CE,* 265). Finally, he loves himself because of God: "for his sake it is that I love my self, and for the glory and joy of delighting in him, I desire my continuance . . ." (*CE,* 265).[30]

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[29] Matar, "Thomas Traherne and St. Bernard of Clairvaux," *Notes and Queries* ns 32.2 (1985): 182–184.

[30] Matar, "Thomas Traherne and St. Bernard of Clairvaux," 182. Matar refers to this passage in his

The notion of climbing incrementally from self-love to loving God is also found in Richard Baxter's *A Christian Directory*:

> 9. SELF-LOVE is *Sensitive* or *Rational*: Sensitive as such is *necessary* and *not free*; And it is purposely by the Most Wise and Blessed Creator planted in Man and Brutes, as a Principle useful to preserve the world, and to engage the Creature in the use of the means of its own preservation, and so to bring it to perfection, and to endue it with those *fears* and *hopes* which make us subjects capable of Moral Government. . . . 67. Whether this be done by first knowing God as the *Beginning* and *End*, above our selves, and then knowing (effectually) that he is *mans felicity*; or whether self-love be first excited to Love him as our *own felicity*, and next we be carryed up to Love him *for himself* as our *highest End*, it cometh all to one when the work is done; And we cannot prove that God tyeth himself constantly to either of these methods alone. But experience telleth us, that the latter is the *usual* way; and that as Nature, so Grace beginneth with the smallest seed, and groweth upward towards perfection: And that self-love and desire of endless felicity and fear of endless misery, are the first notable effects or changes on a repenting soul .[31]

In addition to describing the human ascent towards God Baxter suggests another, though much more unlikely scenario, in the above passage—knowledge of the divine is inherently within humans, and love for Him will naturally occur. Traherne also says that something has been implanted or infused within all creatures, but it is the impulse to feel self-love, not yet the understanding that one should love God:

> It is very observable by what small Principles infusing them in the Beginning GOD attaineth infinit Ends. By infusing the Principle of Self lov he hath made a Creature Capable of Enjoying all worlds. . . . (*CM,* IV.49)

Traherne claims that an impulsive communicativeness is linked to altruistic desires: "When a man hath the glory of all Worlds, he is willing to impart the delights wherewith he is surrounded, to give away himself to some amiable Object . . ." (*CE,* 259). Related to this passage is another which describes the diffusive quality of love:

> THE Capacity of Love being so exceeding vast, multiplies and heightens in the Soul of man, that is apt to overflow of its own Accord. For nothing is so prone to communicate it self as that Active Principle of Love. . . . (*CE,* 48)

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article.

[31] Baxter, *A Christian Directory*, Tome I, 183–186.

This altruistic impulse is the topic of much of Traherne's imaginative writing. Stanley Stewart points out the nature of this love in his discussion of "Shadows in the Water."[32] He says that the speaker of the poem is a kind of counter-Narcissus. Instead of collapsing inward with his narrow solipsistic love, the speaker has true self-love which radiates outward: "In a godlike manner, the child's affections populate the other world with creatures to be loved."[33] As mentioned in Chapter II, the child in "Shadows in the Water" has outgrown his silent encasement and has a strong need to communicate.

Traherne does not believe in relinquishing personal identity. Although he advocates silence in certain circumstances, his enthusiasm for the diffusive powers of the "I" runs counter to the submission of selfhood which usually accompanies silent practice. The poet insists that the desires and needs of the individual are in fact part of the divine plan of self-expansion, inclusion, and indeed union with fellow humans and the Godhead. Though some of his work reflects the Anglican meditational tradition and he himself was a political conservative, Traherne's theology nevertheless exhibits radical elements when focusing upon personal expression and glorifying the individual.

2. Silence in Religious Practice - Politics

Two kinds of silence existed in the political sphere of the early 1660s: enforced silence imposed by authorities in order to prevent the proliferation of subversive ideas, and voluntary silence, a reaction to the former which nevertheless became the hallmark of certain nonconformist groups and a form of expression. After the Restoration there seemed to be some room for compromise between Puritans and Anglicans, for Charles II published his *Declaration of Breda*, a work which encouraged religious toleration. However, negotiations at the Savoy Conference between twelve Church bishops and

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[32] Stanley Stewart, *The Expanded Voice* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1970) 139–69.
[33] Stewart, *The Expanded Voice*, 153.

twelve Puritan divines ended with the former maintaining control and establishing the liturgy of the Church by reintroducing the Book of Common Prayer. On St. Bartholomew's Day 1662, Charles established the Act of Uniformity which threatened to remove all ministers who did not conform to Anglican ecclesiastical rule; this included using the Book of Common Prayer, declaring it unlawful to use arms against the king, and taking episcopal orders.[34] A series of Acts from Parliament, attempting to contain any who deviated from the dictates of the Church, followed. The Clarendon Code, as these Acts were called, did not distinguish between nonconformists who wished to be part of the church and more radical separatists.[35] Both were thought of as dissenters who disrupted the nation and threatened its safety. As a precaution, the Code attempted to silence all nonconformist clergymen. For instance, the Conventicle Act (1664) prohibited anyone over the age of sixteen from attending religious meetings which did not conform to Church of England liturgical practice. The 1666 Five Mile Act prohibited all nonconformist ministers from coming within five miles of their previous work place.[36]

In his study on nonconformist literary culture, Neil Keeble claims that Puritan literature after the Restoration was not merely comprised of leftover sentiments from the earlier part of the century. Rather, it was derived from the Restoration experience, one filled with persecution and censorship.[37] In *The Farewell Sermons of the Late London Ministers*, nonconformist ministers presented their last sermons upon being removed from their livings. Along with acknowledging the predicament of these ministers, the work at times defies the Restoration establishment. The introduction claims that the sermons are the "words of dying Men," and yet there is force in these words:

> *In this Manual, there is no Design, but against Sin; No Plot, but against Hell's Policy; no Treason, but to seize upon the Treasury of Heaven, and*

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[34] John Moorman, *A History of the Church in England*, 3rd ed. (London: Adam and Charles Black Ltd., 1973) 248–252.
[35] Neil Keeble, *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity in Later Seventeenth-Century England* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1987) 39.
[36] Moorman, 252–3.
[37] Keeble, *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity*, 22–24.

> *purchase Glory's crown. It shows how to act, to thy God Fidelity, in thy self Humility, and to thy Prince Loyalty.*[38]

In place of a Prologue, the speaker says he will remain silent:

> To commend them, for Non-conformity, I will not; to condemn them I dare not; but will draw the curtain from before our Subject, and present each glorious Scene: and because a Pen cannot paint out their Praise, Silence shall here be the Prologue.

Declaring a silent stance in the introduction makes the position of the ministers more conspicuous. The implication is that they are beyond praise and that simply revealing their words will suffice. Silence here serves to accentuate a certain stance, perhaps one of defiance, or caution, or humility, or a combination of all three.

In varying tones, the sermons offer different advice for their audience. Some of them promote defiance. Edmund Calamy recalls the story of Charles IX of France. The king gives an ultimatum to a "zealous Protestant": take the Mass or choose death or banishment. The Protestant, behaving in an exemplary fashion, refuses the mass and awaits his fate. Joseph Caryl's sermon describes "the righteous" who fulfill their duty and will not remain silent:

> *The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable*: The lips are instruments of Speech, not faculties of Knowledge. Ay, but there is a great deal of commerce and converse between the Speech and the understanding; and a righteous man will speak nothing with his lips, but what he understands. . . . *The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable to God* for they are acquainted with his Rule, and God hath shewed them his Covenant, he hath shewed them the pattern of his House, and the way of his Worship: now because they are pretty well skilled, and know what is acceptable to God, therefore they will run any hazard, undergo any affliction, rather then do any thing that will not please God, or be hurtful to their own consciences. . . .[39]

Mr. Jenkins recalls biblical figures such as Jonathan and Esther who speak their righteous views before kings despite the danger involved. Jenkins conveys Esther's words, "*If I perish, I perish*: resolved I am, come what will come of it, in I will go, I can die, but I cannot be silent."[40] When he recalls Ebedmelech's rescue of the prophet

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[38] London Ministers, *The Farewell Sermons of the Late London Ministers* (London, 1662) To the Reader, sigs. a4r–a4v.
[39] London Ministers, Mr. Joseph Caryl's Sermon, sig. C8r.
[40] London Ministers, Mr. Jenkins Forenoon Sermon, sig. E7v.

Jeremiah, Jenkins not only advocates outspokenness but also action, saying that Ebedmelech would "never be quiet, till he had got the Prophet out of the dungeon."[41]

Other nonconformist ministers advocate a more moderate stance. Thomas Manton's sermon suggests using patience in order to maintain a virtuous life:

> *Wherefore seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of Witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.*[42]

The nonconformists believe they must be exemplars or "witnesses" for their audience. Thomas Case speaks out against complaining:

> God seems to speak such a word as that was, Numb.7.5. in displeasure and anger, *I will make your murmurings to cease*: I will take away the cause of your murmuring: I would have reformed you, and you would not be reformed. . . .[43]

This statement could be a criticism against conformists who attempt to suppress nonconformist views, or it could be a criticism against the nonconformists themselves, who murmur in the face of defeat.

Nonconformist minister Richard Baxter encouraged prudence and silence in the interest of peace. In *A Christian Directory* he recommends silencing disruptive opinions:

> *If Controversies occasion any Divisions where you live, be sure to look first to the interest of Common Truth and Good, and to the exercise of Charity: And become not passionate contenders for any party in the division, of censurers of the peacable . . . But suspect your own unripe understandings, and silence your Opinions till you are clear and certain; and joyn rather with the moderate and the peace-makers than with the Contenders and Dividers.*[44]

Those who did not agree with Restoration policies—censorship, intolerance towards religious groups, support for ecclesiastical authority—may nevertheless have conformed in the interest of "Common Truth and Good." Baxter did not conform during the Act of Uniformity (1662) but he hoped to end controversy which arose, he

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[41] London Ministers, Mr. Jenkins Forenoon Sermon, sig. E8r.
[42] London Ministers, Dr. Manton's Sermon, sig. A8v.
[43] London Ministers, Mr. Case's Sermon, sig. D4r.
[44] Baxter, *A Christian Directory*, Tome I, 52.

believed, from the misuse of words. Silencing "unripe understandings" and employing reason and moderation in religious discussions were the means to eliminate the disputes between conformists and nonconformists. Baxter encouraged verbal expression in the form of praise and thanksgiving:

> *It is the end of all Gods wondrous works, and especially the end which man was made for, that all things else might Praise him Objectively, and men* (and Angels) *in estimation and expression.* That his Glorious excellency might be visible in his works, and be admired and extolled by the rational creature: For this all things were created and are continued: For this we have our *understanding* and our *speech:* This is the fruit that God expecteth from all his works. Deny him this and you are guilty of frustrating the whole creation, as much as in you lyeth."[45]

Hill points out that with censorship, writers of the seventeenth century had to adopt certain literary forms and styles for expression such as allegory, pastoral, employment of biblical texts, irony, and praising past rulers.[46] Similarly praising God was a method of expression for some Restoration writers.

Though silenced politically, certain individuals nevertheless found room for literary expression. Milton's *Paradise Regained* addresses the nonconformist dilemma of being forcibly silenced. Silence and retirement from worldly matters offered a space for the individual to focus upon his internal regeneration in the present (e.g., the Restoration establishment) in order to prepare for a time of action in the future. Milton's views of the Christian kingdom changed throughout his lifetime, as did his views of the appropriate action one must take in order to obtain this kingdom. In *Milton and the English Revolution*, Christopher Hill outlines these changes. In the early 1640s the coming of King Jesus was expected in the near future, but gradually this expectation changed to a mere hope that the establishment of a kingdom would occur in the more distant future. Finally, when the Restoration became a reality, many nonconformists had to settle for a kingdom that would manifest itself internally rather than externally.[47] Milton and the other millenarians had to rethink the Second Coming

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[45] Baxter, *A Christian Directory*, Tome I, 173–174.
[46] Christopher Hill, *Writing and Revolution in Seventeenth-Century England*, 54–58.
[47] Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Faber and Faber, 1977) 415–16.

to fit with the political realities of the 1660s. Thus the tone and purpose of Milton's earlier message in his antiprelatical tracts from the 1640s, encouraging outward political action, are reversed in *Paradise Regained.* In the latter work, the Apostles, Mary, and even Satan do in fact express the views of early Puritans. However if the Son is to be a model for Restoration nonconformists, then the prevailing message of *Paradise Regained* is one which encourages a heightened awareness of the individual's personal kingdom, a fostering of inwardness, and a preparation for action in the future.

The Son is a solitary figure, meditative, and inactive. His apparent inactivity causes much confusion for the other characters who expect the imminent establishment of a divine kingdom on earth. The Apostles, Andrew and Simon, express their disappointment:

> Alas, from what high hope to what relapse
> Unlooked for are we fallen, our eyes beheld
> Messiah certainly now come, so long
> Expected of our fathers; we have heard
> His words, his wisdom full of grace and truth,
> Now, now, for sure, deliverance is at hand,
> The kingdom shall to Israel be restored:
> Thus we rejoiced, but soon our joy is turned
> Into perplexity and new amaze:
> For whither is he gone, what accident
> Hath rapt him from us? will he now retire
> After appearance, and again prolong
> Our expectation? (*PR*, II. 30–42)[48]

After all the Son's words, action is expected. Mary also shows her disappointment at finding no significant change between Jesus's earlier life and the present:

> . . . in Nazareth
> Hath been our dwelling many years, his life
> Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,
> Little suspicious to any king; but now
> Full grown to man, acknowledged, as I hear,
> By John the Baptist, and in public shown,
> Son owned from heaven by his Father's voice;
> I looked for some great change; to honour? no. . . .
> (*PR*, II. 79–86)

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[48] John Milton, *Paradise Regained., John Milton, Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. John Carey (London: Longman, 1971). All references are taken from this text and cited in the body of this thesis.

However, she is resolved to wait patiently keeping her thoughts and concerns to herself. In his article, "Inaction and Silence: the Reader in *Paradise Regained*," Stanley Fish says "in the course of their soliloquies they [the Apostles and Mary] display the pattern of inaction that is writ larger in the more extended temptation scenes."[49] Fish goes on to suggest that the expectation of action is the basis for Satan's temptations as seen in his offers of worldly power:

> The world thou hast not seen, much less her glory,
> Empires, and monarchs, and their radiant courts,
> Best school of best experience, quickest in sight
> In all things that to greatest actions lead.
> (*PR*, III. 236–9)

In *Paradise Regained* the Son repeatedly counters Satan's temptations by substituting his own physical needs, his own will, with God's. He relinquishes rather than asserts himself: "Besides to give a kingdom hath been thought / Greater and nobler done, and to lay down / Far more magnanimous, than to assume" (*PR*, II. 481–3). The Son asserts that it is not right to try to take something that can only be given:

> Yet so much bounty is in God, such grace,
> That who advance his glory, not their own,
> Them he himself to glory will advance.
> (*PR*, III. 142–4)

Fish claims that Christ voluntarily lays down his own identity and is appropriated by God the Father.[50]

Paradise Regained does not directly state that silence is preferable to speech, but instead suggests that a certain type of speech may be governed by inward impulses coming from the divine will. These impulses are fostered by a quiet contemplative mind. Milton thus offers a contrast between two different styles of communication. Satan is perpetually talking to his followers, rallying them with his speeches. He uses words to create elaborate scenarios focused on worldly treasures. The Son identifies his deceptive strategies saying, "But what have been thy answers, what but dark / Ambiguous and with double sense deluding . . ." (*PR*, I. 434–6). In contrast to

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[49] Stanley Fish, "Inaction and Silence: the Reader in *Paradise Regained*," *Calm of Mind*, ed. Joseph Wittreich Jr. (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University Press, 1971): 29.
[50] Fish, 43.

Satan, the Son retires to the isolated wilderness: "It was the hour of night, when thus the Son / Communed in silent walk, then laid him down" (*PR*, II. 260–261). When he does speak his words are simple and straightforward, accompanied by an inwardness attuned to the divine will:

> God hath now sent his living oracle
> Into the world, to teach his final will
> And sends his spirit of truth henceforth to dwell
> In pious hearts, an inward oracle
> To all truth requisite of men to know.
> (*PR*, I. 460–64)

The oracle of God will replace Satan's corrupt words and result in the establishment of an internal kingdom. The concluding scene of *Paradise Regained* is peaceful and quiet as Christ moves back to his mother's house. Hill points out that this does not promote a "quietist doctrine;" rather, it is the prelude to embarking on his mission to save humanity.[51]

Although Traherne, unlike Milton, enthusiastically endorsed the return of the monarchy and a national church, both poets saw silence and contemplation as a precursor for action. In his meditation on John the Baptist in the *Church's Year Book*, Traherne describes the saint's thirty-year retreat in the wilderness.[52] At such time the Baptist garners his spiritual energies in preparation for his ministry. Though much of the devotion is dedicated to describing the isolated and silent state, it makes clear to the reader that this is only a temporary condition, a preparation for future action in the public world. The devotion opens by focusing upon the voice of St. John:

> A voice is an Articulat sound framed in the mouth, yet spreading over the Air, and wholy evry where wherever it spreadeth. It seemeth nothing to the feeling or Ey, its presence being only manifest and apparent to the ear: They in secret Saint John the Baptist is ever present. His greatness filleth all Kingdoms, for He is a voice that is heard throughout all Ages. (*CYB*, fol. 70v)[53]

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[51] Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution*, 421; 427.

[52] Several passages of Traherne's meditation on St. John the Baptist, including those comparing the solitary life and public life, are taken from Jeremy Taylor's *The Great Exemplar* (London, 1649). For a further comparison between the two authors see Marks, "Studies in the Reading of Thomas Traherne," 93–95.

[53] Thomas Traherne, *Church's Year Book*, ms. Eng.th.e.51, Bodleian Library, Oxford, fol. 70v. All subsequent references to this work will henceforth be cited in the body of the thesis.

Then the devotion moves to a description of St. John's solitude and inward meditation. His "Dialogues" are with God and remain pure by not venturing into the outside world of humans:

> It is probable that after his long Convers with Angels, and Heavenly Dialogues with GOD himself, it was som trouble to him to mingle with the Impurities of men. For in Solitude he did breath more pure Inspiration. Heaven was more open, God more familiar. And O the Contentment he Enjoyed in the Innocence of his Silence! Which we can best feel who have felt the Burden of Extravagances; both in our own evil Tongues and others. Since there is no Greater perfection scarcely to be expected here, then not to offend with our Tongue; nor any greater vice then to be offensiv therin. How much did the Word of Wisdom itself lov Retirements, to teach us at once, both how to obtain Spiritual Enjoyments, and by Holy Silence to avoid Offending! (*CYB*, fol. 73r)

But St. John is only in a preparatory state here. Traherne distinguishes between times of solitary prayer and devotion and times when the individual must enter society with mercy and charity. He claims that "In Solitude there are fewer occasions of vice: but in Society more Practice and Exercise of vertue" (*CYB*, fol. 73r). In fact, he goes so far as to say that solitude can actually be detrimental to the individual's soul; one can have an overdose of solipsistic introspection: "Pride is apt to creep in to a Retired Person: and to feed him so with self-complacency as to poison his Spirituality" (*CYB*, fol. 73v). The cure for pride and complacency is human conversation: "That Pride which is begot in Retirement is heald in Conversation" (*CYB*, fol. 73v). The meditation of St. John the Baptist as a whole serves as a detailed explanation as to why Traherne sometimes favors retirement, silence, and solitude, and why at other times he views them as sterile and dormant. In his poetry and prose he celebrates the solipsism of the individual as seen in "Silence," "Dumnesse" and "Babe." But his preference is for human society, companionship and conversation.

Chapter II of this thesis pointed out that in the entry "Alone" from the *Commentaries of Heaven*, Traherne makes two claims: humans have an innate desire to be solitary and to claim everything they survey as their own, while simultaneously they have an instinctive need to communicate and share the wonders of the world with others. The contradictory positions coexist and "Neither of them Springs from

corruption, but primitive and pure nature" (*CH*, fol. 79v.1). But the solipsistic state is a beginning, appropriate to infancy or early childhood, and the individual must move beyond it and operate in society. The passages on St. John describe what can happen if this does not occur:

> . . . a man long alone is apt to think all the World full of Ignorance in Comparison: and that himself is the Sole Beholder of all Heavenly perfections in the Mirrour of his Soul. (*CYB*, fol. 73v)

When the individual moves away from introspection to observe the outside world, "he finds thousands in the World, that had been hidden as it were in the Secrets places of Gods Kingdom" (*CYB*, fol. 73v). Traherne also mentions that Christ's life combined retreats into the wilderness with public ministry. Borrowing passages from Jeremy Taylor's *The Great Exemplar*, Traherne, like Milton, refers to the episode in the wilderness when Christ practiced "special Devotion, retired to prayer and Contemplation" and "It was in Solitude that He kept his Fasts" (*CYB*, fol. 73v). Traherne, again using Taylor's words, neatly summarizes his position on the contemplative and active life: "So that Solitud is a good Schole to learn piety and virtu in, the world the best Theatre to practice it. The Wilderness hath the Advantage of Discipline, Society the opportunity of perfection" (*CYB*, fol. 73v).

Traherne's writings exhibit an understanding of the political forces at work which necessitated prudent speech and, at times, silence. In the *Church's Year Book* he says,

> The Prudent man holdeth his Peace in Evil Times. But O Lord deliver us from such an Evil Time. And let not our Tongues be restrained, but walk at Liberty in Singing thy Praises. (*CYB*, fol. 83r)

After the 1660s many clergymen and religious thinkers followed this advice, remaining silent in deference to the censorship which had been reinstated during the Restoration. It seems the poet was aware of the need to be cautious when voicing religious beliefs. The above quote comes from a meditation on St. Bartholomew and celebrates the saint's quiet and patient approach to King Astyages who eventually executes him. Although Traherne reveres silence in this instance, he means silence is good for a

particular amount of time or in a particular place. At the correct moments and in the right spirit the saint takes the opportunity to speak out:

> when the Time and Oportunity came, of Giving Glory to Thy Name, by a true Confession, and Preaching of thy faith: then none more Couragious, none more forward none more zealous, and none more Stout in Suffering, than He [Bartholomew]. (*CYB*, fol. 83r)

Later in the meditation, when thinking about his own method of serving, he asks God to "Awaken my Dulness into Diligence; Giv me a resolute Activity in thy Service" and to "teach me Prudence to find the Time, wherin I may serv Thee, both in Word and Deed to the uttermost of my Power, and might" (*CYB*, fol. 83r). With the increasing absolutism of Charles II and the persistence of the censor under the Secretary of State and Archbishop of Canterbury, they could easily have been "Evil Times" for one wishing to publish works on religion and philosophy, requiring prudence on the part of the devotional writer.

Caution must be used when citing passages from the *Church's Year Book* and ascribing them to Traherne, for the work contains writings from other authors. In particular, Traherne uses Edward Sparke's *Scintilla-Altaris* and William Austin's *Devotionis Augustinianae Flamma. Or Certayne Devout, Godly, and Learned Meditations* for his reflection on St. Bartholomew.[54] For instance, the passage quoted above from the *Church's Year Book* regarding the prudent man is taken from Sparke's *Scintilla-Altaris*.[55] And yet the poet has been selective in choosing and modifying his sources. Marks points out that Traherne "departs widely from Sparke's phraseology, turning formless sentences into his own more brisk and rhythmically patterned prose." Also, she says that the passages taken from Austin's meditations on St. Bartholomew are changed from "Austin's ponderous arguments into a crisp proof" describing the need to commemorate the saint's day.[56]

A reference to Bartholomew would certainly have evoked memories of St. Bartholomew's Day in 1662, when nonconforming clergy lost their livings and were

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[54] Marks, "Traherne's *Church's Year-Book*," 45–50.
[55] Julia Smith, "Thomas Traherne and the Restoration," *The Seventeenth-Century* 3.2 (1988): 220.
[56] Marks, "Traherne's *Church's Year-Book*," 46; 50.

"silenced." Traherne of course was not at odds with Restoration authorities, having conformed before it was required. He celebrated national unity under the king and Church in the early 1660s.[57] However, when the *Church's Year Book* was written, possibly in 1670, he probably had a more critical view of the establishment.[58] This passage expresses sensitivity to the situation—silence is a tempering act and speech should be guided by prudence. Most likely the Bartholomew of Traherne's meditation does not represent the silenced nonconformist clergy of Bartholomew's Day, but rather the saint may be associated with anyone who found it necessary to temper his own voice in the interest of peace. As is characteristic of Traherne, he is not content with quiet retirement. While celebrating Bartholomew's reserve he simultaneously describes a new awakening into "Activity in . . . Service." Through praise and thanksgiving, the energies which produce speech are rechanneled from simple "talk" to action. He conveys zeal and strength while expressing gratitude:

> Shall not all these Miracles, Examples, Labors, Successes, Privileges, Doctrines, Converted Kingdoms, Ages, Empires, impregnate my Soul with Strength! All these Things were don for Me! And ought to fill and Inspire me with Zeal and Glory! For my Sake was the Holy Ghost Poured forth upon Him. That I might abound with faith in Peace, and being filled with Joy, overflow with Thanksgiving. (*CYB*, fol. 83r)

Christopher Hill posits that a great deal of self-censorship must have meant that much remained unpublished: "Locke kept many of his ideas to himself even after 1689: so did Newton, Samuel Butler and Thomas Traherne left much unpublished."[59] In his meditation Traherne does not openly critique censorship, but he does sympathize with those whose tongues are restrained and must contend with "Evil Times"; he subsequently offers an alternative way to "walk at Liberty" (*CYB*, fol. 83r). Julia Smith suggests that Traherne's words—"The prudent man holdeth his peace in Evil Times"—might refer to the fact that Traherne published little of his own writing. She points out that the future of the Church of England was uncertain and Traherne's

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[57] Julia Smith, "Attitudes Towards Conformity and Nonconformity in Thomas Traherne," *Bunyan Studies* 1.1 (1988): 26–7.
[58] For the date of the manuscript see Marks, "Traherne's Church's Year-book," 34.
[59] Hill, *Writing and Revolution in Seventeenth Century England*, 52.

earliest known work, *Select Meditations*, conveys a sense of anxiety over the precarious situation of Church and state:

> It [*Select Meditations*] displays both relief and gratitude that God has brought his people 'out of Egypt into y^{e} land of Canaan' (II. 80), but its dominant mood is one of anxiety, fear of the judgment of God and earnest prayer that it might be averted.[60]

It is difficult to gauge to what extent Traherne felt the strictures of the Restoration censor and the need to modify his speech to fit the "times and Season." An analysis of his views of kingship and how he expressed these views can partially answer this question. Although Traherne embraced the Church of England's liturgy and praised the Restoration, he also held many unorthodox views which, regardless of his intention, were potentially subversive. His solipsistic vision and the intensity of his voice when using the first person are one example. Another is his belief that every individual is the sole heir of the world; everyone is a king.

Traherne was thankful for the Restoration establishment for he believed it brought unity and peace to the nation.[61] However, he nevertheless shows some caution towards the king. Nabil Matar says Traherne's attitude towards Charles II changed by the 1670s due to the monarch's policy towards Protestant Holland and to his pro-Catholic stance. Matar refers to a passage from the *Commonplace Book*, taken from Thomas Jackson, which explains the need to temper the "Tyrannicall abuse of Kingly Authority" (*CB*, fol. 66v.1). He also describes the relationship of Traherne to his patron, Sir Orlando Bridgeman. In 1672, Bridgeman, likewise critical of the king, lost his position as Keeper of the Great Seal because he refused to support Charles' Declaration of Indulgence. Subsequently, "he began to embody for London the Protestant cause. To praise him, as a few courageously did, was perforce to discredit the king. That is why most adulation addressed to Bridgeman was anonymous."[62]

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[60] Julia Smith, "Thomas Traherne and the Restoration," 206.
[61] Julia Smith, "Thomas Traherne and the Restoration," 209–10.
[62] For a discussion of Traherne's typological references to David see: Matar, "The Political Views of Thomas Traherne," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 57.3 (1994): 249.

Traherne dedicated *Roman Forgeries* to Bridgeman but remained anonymous as its author. These examples support the belief that Traherne was wary of the Restoration censor. But he was not inhibited by it. *Christian Ethicks*, which is not anonymous, praises the then-deceased Bridgeman. Also, like other writers of the time, Traherne adopted modes of expression—the use of images and typology for instance—to convey his views. Traherne effectively criticizes Charles II by praising his father; Charles I is the biblical David not his son (*CM*, I.61).[63] Discussion of the Biblical king and the nation of Israel enabled him, as it did many other writers of the time, to write about sensitive political issues.

In the introduction to her edition of *Select Meditations*, Smith describes Traherne's intense desire to communicate his thoughts. Analyzing the mode of compilation of *Select Meditations*, Smith shows that Traherne did not write in isolation but was involved in a collaborative effort. The themes within the work—concern for the unity of the nation, anger over the disruptive influence of Sectarians, celebration of the national Church—suggest the date of its composition is shortly after the Restoration in 1660, a sensitive time when prudence was required for any literary work treating the subject of the king and his authority. At this point it is impossible to state who was the intended audience of *Select Meditations*—it is not obviously written for publication as is the *Commentaries of Heaven,* with its formal title page and address—however, in the work Traherne does use certain literary modes which offer some degree of concealment when he treats sensitive political topics. Smith points out that he "largely operates through scriptural quotation and allusion, a ubiquitous idiom for interpreting current affairs. . . ."[64] An example can be seen in meditation III.17 when Traherne refers to Jacob and the nation of Israel:

> He hath Shewed his word unto Jacob, his Statues and his judgments unto Israel: he hath not dealt so with any nation, and for his judgments they have not known them. This was the Joy and Glory of Israel, that She alone of all the nations in the whole world was acquainted with the wayes and judgments of the Lord. But it is His Glory and Joy, that notwithstanding our Apostasie [from] his covenant in former Ages, (When it was offered to

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[63] Matar, "The Political Views of Thomas Traherne," 245.
[64] Julia Smith, ed. *Select Meditations*, xx.

> us in Adams house, and in Noahs Family) After a long night of Ignorance Fantasies and Apparitions wherewith we weare troubled, by the Labor and mighty power, and miracles, and sweat and bloud of his Apostles, He broke open the doores of the Nations and came in upon us. We had Shut them by our Rebellions against Him, and barrd them fast on the inside, While we kept wreaks within doors, in wantoness and Lusts and Banquetting and Revelling in our private chambers, in Idle Supersti[t]ious, Bloody Sacrifices, monstrous Idols, with cheating Preists in our Higher Places, Yea Drunkenness and Revelling, in our Lower Roomes. All the House was out of order. Till He came in upon us, who might in Fury Like an Armed man, have overwhelmed and Devoured us. But He came in Mercy to restore the Family and Set us all in order. (*SM*, III.17)

Israel refers to England, the long night of "Ignorance Fantasies and Apparitions" to the Interregnum confusion.

Traherne appears to have respected the censor, at times showing care for his treatment of delicate issues, and yet, it did not prevent him from communicating his views. In the *Commentaries of Heaven*, he is openly critical of the government and disparages the corruption of the court in a satirical poem from his entry "Affairs:"

> The Weighty Affairs
> Of Plackets and Players
> Now busy the Heads of our Great ones.
> It is a vast shame
> but even to name
> The Sordid Employments of neat ones.
> Feathers and Ladies and Laces Creat
> Both the Shame and Business of State
>
> Things more Divine
> That they Brightly shine
> Are all despisd and conceited abov
> The Pulpits preach,
> Things quite out of reach,
> And nothing is ours but sensual Love
> Princes are brutish and nobles are beasts,
> While panders and Queans are their Guests.
>
> If serious Tears
> And seasonable fears
> Become not the Business of state
> Pain in the Bones
> Attended with Groans
> And gnashing of Teeth when too late:
> The Greatest Affair and Business will be
> In a long wofull Eternitie. (CH, fol. 47v.2)[65]

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[65] Matar and Julia Smith refer to this poem in their respective articles "The Political Views of Thomas Traherne," 248; and, "Thomas Traherne and the Restoration," 212–213.

Charles and his court are condemned to an eternity of hell where there will be groans and gnashing of teeth. *Commentaries of Heaven* was intended for publication but we cannot know if it would have been anonymous. The poem, a blatant criticism, is curiously situated after a thoughtful meditation on the affairs of the individual, nation, and heavens. Traherne sees a link among personal, public, and celestial affairs:

> Neither are Carnal and Spiritual, Divine and Humane, Terrestrial and Celestial Affairs so far disjoyned, but that they meet together by a virtual contact, and immediately as it were in som respect touch one another. for he that wisely and conscientiously behaveth himself in earthly things, purchaseth Heavenly. . . . (*CH*, fol. 47r.2)

Since God is "the sole and perfect Disposer of all Affairs" (*CH*, fol. 42r.2), ideally all personal and state matters would be divinely inspired. To have all things stemming from the divine is Traherne's ideal. But the derisive and satirical poem above shows he recognized the realities of the times. Interestingly the poem itself is followed by another thoughtful verse passage, a meditation on Traherne's own mental state in which he pleads: "O let me eternize {sic} / My moments with Affairs most great and Wise" (*CH*, fol. 48r.1)—in other words, celestial affairs.

Traherne's vision of kingship and the national Church in the entry "Authoritie" celebrates the station of the King, but its tone is not without ambivalence. In the section "The Authority of Kings" Traherne begins by wondering why one man should have authority over others when "GOD and Nature made all Men Equal" (*CH*, fol. 187r.1). Originally, authority seems to have been equally dispersed among all people, but in the interest of peace men transferred it to one person so that he could rule them:

> But such is the Authority of Men, and of such high Esteem is their Preservation and Peace with GOD, that when necessity requires it, they have power to dispence with the ordinance of nature, and to make a King, and establish a Sovereign over them. A multitude of People that are oppressed and injured by each other, may conspire together, and give their Power to a Single person, that shall rule them with Equitie. (*CH*, fol. 187r.1)

Traherne continues to highlight the importance of unity under one person, however, the earlier part of the entry nonetheless conveys a democratic vision. Traherne explains that "Sin is the Caus of Subjection, and mans Sin the original of Human Authority. . . ."

(*CH*, fol. 187r.1). He implies that an egalitarian society is closer to the prelapsarian condition. As is characteristic of his writings, Traherne "holds a conservative political view, and also undermines it" for, all humans have the potential to become a spiritual king.[66] But because Traherne consistently maintains that perfection and returning to the Adamic estate is possible for every individual while on earth, these sentiments are potentially revolutionary. It is only in the fallen state that God sanctions earthly authority to maintain some order and peace among humans:

> [Kingly Power] nevertheless is established by GOD, because he is the Lover and Preserver of men. . . . And again we are exhorted, that first of all, Supplications prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks be made for all men, for Kings, and for all in Authority, that we may live a peaceable and quiet Life, in all Godliness and Honesty. (*CH*, fol. 187r.1)

In one of the sections, "Of Divine Authoritie," Traherne says "In point of Right no Authoritie in all the World ought to be more Absolute and Compleat than GODs. His is the Sovereign and Supreme Authority over all creatures" (*CH*, fol. 186v.1). But later Divine Authoritie is transferred to another authority, the Church:

> For where no Authority before engageth us, we are liable to the next and Greatest Authoritie. And as God was Silent in the Beginning What maner of Goverment he would have, and left that to the Investigation and choise of man, yet was not offended, so doth he leav the Affairs of the Church to the Discretion of his Spouse, where his Word is Silent. (*CH*, fol. 189r.2)

Here Traherne expresses a different type of silence: divine silence. God's silence creates a space for the lawful establishment of human authority. The Church is like a faithful bride who is entrusted with the care of children and the home. Here we see Traherne, the conformist, advocating ecclesiastical rule over divine matters. It would seem that the poet is truly conforming to Restoration structures until one comes to the next section of the entry, which is entitled "The Authoritie of the Holy Scripture." Filled with ambiguities, the complex passage attempts to answer the conundrum of man's conscience in relationship to hierarchical authorities. Traherne says,

> The Authority of a mans Conscience is next under God the Greatest and most immediat within his own Soul. But such is the Authority of the Holy

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[66] Julia Smith, "Thomas Traherne and the Restoration," 215; 217.

> Scripture, that if all the Church should oppose and corrupt it the Church would be condemned. (*CH*, fol. 189r.1)

The first sentence would indicate nonconformist sympathies and directly contradict his words on the king and Church. However, the antecedent of the pronoun "it" in the following sentence is unclear. "[I]t" could be the "Conscience," in which case Traherne concedes that individual consciences have supremacy over a corrupt Church, or "it" could mean "Scripture." If one follows the rest of the passage perhaps it becomes more clear that in fact "Scripture" (or "Scriptures") is the antecedent:

> And great Reason. For if Man can advance Gold to so great an Esteem by stamping his face upon it: How much more shall the Scriptures be reverenced Wherin the Image of God so apparently shineth. The Authority of Gold is great upon Earth, but the Authority of the Scriptures is great in Heaven. Heaven and Earth shall pass away; but not one Jot or Title of the Law shall fail. I hav heard that the Church should be judged by the Scripture, but never that the Church should judg the Scripture: nor ever did I hear, that not one Jot or Title of the word she spake should fail. So Great a Reverence ought we to have for Gods Word, that whatsoever is enjoyned in Holy Scripture constantly to be done, or els avoided; we ought to observ its Behests against all Angels and Men Kings Emperors Councels Fathers Bishops Husbands Wives Children friends, Companions, and remaining Stedfast in our Conformity therunto, to sacrifice our Bodies Honors Relations friends Lives and Estates. Amen. (*CH,* fol. 189r.2–v.1)

This passage suggests that "Scriptures" have authority over "Angels and Men Kings Emperors Councels Fathers Bishops Husbands Wives Children friends, Companions." But the passage holds an ironic tone as well when making the crude comparison between the authority of "Scriptures," with the face of God shining through them, and money. There is the possibility that Traherne is mocking a nonconformist position which emphasized the importance of individual conscience as well as the supremacy of scripture. In any case it seems clear that in the decade after the Restoration the poet understood the points of contention between conformists and nonconformists.

Traherne's attitudes towards silence illustrate once again that the poet cannot be easily classified into a religious or political group. True, he was a conformist and his writings, particularly the *Church's Year Book*, show his loyalty towards the Church of England. But his imaginative ideals are at odds with conformist positions. The Book of Common Prayer and the numerous works—*The Whole Duty of Man*, *The Rule and*

Exercises of Holy Living, *A Practical Catechisme*, and *Ancilla Pietatis*, for instance—provided an orderly and reliable framework on which to base religious practice. One central aim of this practice (according to the Anglicans) was to quell the diverse and politically disruptive influence created by the wild fancies of Puritans. Though Traherne is part of the Anglican meditational tradition, the personal voice in his poetry and prose display his individuality even as it conveys his exuberance. He distinctly prefers sound to silence, loquaciousness to reserved retirement, as well as the exertion of his own voice as evinced by the repeated use of the first person in his work to submission. Moreover, he displays an impulsive communicativeness and expresses his political and theological views whether or not they are in accordance with Restoration conformity.

Chapter IV: Traherne and the Seventeenth-Century Debate Over Metaphor

> No curling Metaphors that gild the Sence,
> Nor Pictures here, nor painted Eloquence;
> No florid Streams of Superficial Gems,
> But real Crowns and Thrones and Diadems!
> That Gold on Gold should hiding shining ly
> May well be reckon'd baser Heraldry.
>
> An easy Stile drawn from a native vein,
> A clearer Stream than that which Poets feign,
> Whose bottom may, how deep so'ere, be seen,
> Is that which I think fit to win Esteem:
> Els we could speak *Zamzummim* words, and tell
> A Tale in tongues that sound like *Babel-Hell*;
> In Meteors speak, in blazing Prodigies,
> Things that amaze, but will not make us wise.
> ("The Author to the Critical Peruser," 11–24)

In the above passage Thomas Traherne contributes to one of the central debates of his age, the debate over language, specifically the use of metaphor to delineate religious and philosophical truths. Traherne's "clearer Stream" is reminiscent of Abraham Cowley's description of Philosophy's "*candid Stile like a clean Stream.*"[1] Indeed, like members of the Royal Society, Traherne voices his concern over the use of metaphor, the "idle Fancies, Toys, and Words" (61–62) which cloud the "naked Truth" ("The Author to the Critical Peruser," 1). Chapter I of this thesis described how the language planners wanted to improve communication by eliminating verbal ambiguities through precise definitions. They believed words used inaccurately or carelessly as verbal embellishments could not convey reality. In his *Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language* Wilkins describes the "Imperfection[s] in words," one of which is the ambiguity produced by metaphorical phraseology.[2] Metaphors by nature obliterate any precise correlation between a word and a thing. Just as Wilkins and his fellow language reformers decry "great swelling words"[3] so too Traherne objects to

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[1] Abraham Cowley, "To the Royal Society," *History of the Royal Society*, by Thomas Sprat (London, 1667) sig. B3v.
[2] Wilkins, *Essay*, 17.
[3] Wilkins, *Essay*, 5.

"curling Metaphors" for they counter any endeavor to obtain a clear simple style of language and convey truth.

The impetus for language reform arose from numerous aspirations—improving communication, facilitating trade, improving science, and eradicating religious controversy. Eliminating or modifying the use of metaphor was seen as necessary to achieve these goals. Additionally the debate over metaphor was indicative of deep rooted political and religious conflicts. This chapter explores some of the political and religious issues surrounding the use of metaphor. Restoration conformists and nonconformists debated over who understood and conveyed truth and who was in error and expounded dangerous falsehoods. Consequently, each side produced a different argument which to the proponents of the other seemed confusing and deceptive. A shared belief was that leaders and instructors should advocate a "plain" style of speech and writing in order to convey the truth about religious doctrine. Traherne's message in "The Author to the Critical Peruser" is exemplary of the kind of argument used: a clear "easy Stile" is the way to fathom the truth and obtain wisdom. However, having different ideologies, various groups had different definitions of "plainness," and each presented itself as the upholder of this virtue. Some advocated the elimination of metaphorical language while others believed it aided the human understanding of divine mysteries. Traherne aligns himself politically with the conformist Restoration establishment with its emphasis on religious unity, plain speaking, and antagonism toward metaphor. However, like many of his contemporaries, he employs metaphor even while denouncing it. Sections one and two of this chapter provide a brief analysis of seventeenth-century attitudes towards the use of metaphor while investigating Traherne's position on this theological and linguistic argument. Section three describes Traherne's use of metaphor in his writings. And section four gives a detailed analysis of one of the poet's most frequently employed images, the mirror, and its function within the poem "Shadows in the Water."

1. Conformists and Metaphor

Restoration conformists believed that religious leaders should encourage moral behavior in accordance with Church doctrine. Concentrating more on the practical aspects of upholding Church and State authority, they taught people to follow the moral guidelines put forth by ecclesiastics. They accused the nonconformists of distorting the truth by placing emphasis upon personal quests for divine enlightenment and using figurative language to convey what they had allegedly found. In addition, they sought to align moderate nonconformists with radical sectarians of the Interregnum, thus clumping together disparate groups into one group labelled "dissenters." Neil Keeble states that the "[c]onformists present themselves as the guardians of lucidity and perspicuity against the extravagant excesses of the nonconformists' metaphorical and figurative indulgence, imprecise and obscurely evocative phraseology, and wild flights of fancy."[4] For instance, in *A Discourse of Ecclesiastical Politie,* Samuel Parker links morality with discursive methods and insists upon the need to follow moral virtues governed by the Church, as opposed to the fanatical words of a "Brain-sick People":

> And by this means they have brought into fashion a Godliness without Religion, Zeal without Humanity, and Grace without good Nature or good Manners; have found out, in lieu of Moral Vertue, a Spiritual Divinity, that is made up of nothing else but certain Trains and Schemes of effeminate Follies and illiterate Enthusiasms; and instead of a sober Devotion, a more spiritual and intimate way of Communion with God, that in truth consists in little else but meeting together in private to prate Phrases, make Faces, and rail at Carnal Reason . . . And herin lies the most material difference between the sober Christians of the Church of *England*, and our modern Sectaries, That we express the Precepts and Duties of the Gospel in plain and intelligible terms, whilst they trifle them away by childish Metaphors and Allegories, and will not talk of Religion but in barbarous and uncouth Similitudes. . . .[5]

Parker maintains that the religious zeal of the nonconformists, with its emphasis on individual experience and personal expression, is manifested in their discursive techniques. He attempts to discredit their religious ideals by associating all

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[4] Keeble, *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity*, 242.

[5] Samuel Parker, *A Discourse of Ecclesiastical Politie* (London, 1670) sig. A2v; 74–75.

nonconformists with "sectaries," and ignoring the fact that several moderate thinkers such as Baxter also advocated plain and simple speech.

Conformists Simon Patrick and Joseph Glanvill were part of the Latitudinarian movement. Although many Latitudinarians endorsed religious toleration and encouraged the comprehension of nonconformists into the Church of England,[6] members of the group nevertheless repudiated the discursive techniques of nonconformists. In *A Seasonable Defence of Preaching: And the Plain Way of It* Joseph Glanvill denounces those who use metaphor because it contributes to misleading and confusing discourse:

> *Plainness* is one of the best characters any Sermon, or other Discourse can have; and he is the Speaker that hath the *art* to be *plain*. But one of the greatest faults I find with those mens Sermons is, that they are not so. They generally state their doctrines confusedly, in words *metaphorical* and *ambiguous*; and direct to practice *mystically*, and obscurely in *phrases*, and odd schemes of speech, not understood, and scarce intelligible. . . .[7]

Simon Patrick's *A Friendly Debate Between a Conformist and a Non-conformist* offers a humorous critique of nonconformist discursive techniques in the following dialogue:

> N.C. You use your Reason too much.
> C. You have some reason to say so; for if I had used it less, these things had not appeared so ridiculous.
> N.C. By that time your *heart hath lain so long a-soke in the Bloud of* Jesus *as his* hath done, we shall hear other language from you.
> C. You are taken, I perceive, with that new phrase in the Epistle to the Reader, and onely because it is new: else it would seem very irreverent, being taken from a Toast in a Pot of Ale, or a Sop in a Dripping-pan; a great deal more fit for a Preface before a Book of one of those you call *Old Sokers*, then of such a Reverend Authour.
> N.C. You are merry, Sir.
> C. Truly I do not make my self merry with any mens Sins: but at their little foolish Affectations how can one chuse but smile? Why could he not as well have said, that he had a long time thought of the efficacy and virtue of the Bloud of *Christ*; or, that he was much acquainted with the Love of *Christ* in dying for us? But to say that he had *lain long a-soke* in his bloud, is as absurd as if he had told us that he had *lain long leaking himself* in the Beams of the Sun of Righteousness; or toasting himself before the Fire of the Divine Love.[8]

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[6] Rivers, 32–33.

[7] Joseph Glanvill, *A Seasonable Defence of Preaching: And the Plain Way of It* (London, 1678) 41.

[8] Simon Patrick, *A Friendly Debate between a Conformist and a Non-conformist* (London, 1669)

In the above passage Patrick conveys one of the key points in the dispute over metaphor—the role of reason in religious practice. Conformists believed individuals should approach the scriptures guided by moral laws and reason. For instance, in *Philosophia Pia* Glanvill pits Reason against emotional enthusiasm:

> . . . it (Reason) helps to overthrow this principle of Enthusiasm . . . By teaching us to *state* matters *clearly*, and to draw out those conclusions that are lodged in them. For 'tis *confusion* of *notions*, and a great *defect in* reasoning, that makes dark *zeal* to *rave* so *furiously* against *Reason.*[9]

Believing that humans were rational and had an innate knowledge of God, Latitudinarians promoted a reasonable approach to religion. For them the moral law was not only universal, but also self-evident. They attacked nonconformists for disrupting national unity and peoples' minds with their confusing and enthusiastic method of preaching which fostered strange notions and speculative thinking. Isabel Rivers says,

> In this emphasis on methodical structure and on convincing the hearer's understanding through rational proof lies one of the chief differences between the latitudinarian tradition of preaching and that of the puritans and their nonconformist and dissenting heirs.[10]

They criticized the nonconformists' use of figurative phraseology. John Tillotson, another Latitudinarian divine, disparaged the use of non-scriptural metaphors. Metaphors from scriptural texts could be used, but only if religious concepts were clearly delineated and the metaphors helped to clarify not to confuse.[11] Wilkins, Tillotson's friend and colleague, denounces the use of "*pretended, mysterious, profound notions, expressed in great swelling words.*"[12]

As previously noted, Traherne places emphasis upon the human ability to obtain knowledge. Also, he repeatedly proclaims that humans can find Felicity and

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33–34.
[9] Glanvill, *Philosophia Pia* (London, 1671) 73–74.
[10] Rivers, 52.
[11] Rivers, 56.
[12] Wilkins, *Essay,* Epistle Dedicatory, sig. br.

achieve a state of mind which allow them to understand the mysteries of the Divine. The way to tap into this mental power is by realizing the full capacity of the soul which, being created in God's image, is like a limitless sensory organ that is capable of apprehending the infinite God. Traherne's theological model seems to be greatly influenced by Latitudinarian thinking. Their basic tenet is that the rational and spiritual do not oppose one another; reasoning faculties enable humans to gain access to God, to apprehend Him.[13] The human ability to perceive the cosmos is due to both innate ideas, or common notions, and sense experience, the latter of which collects information and enlarges the sphere of knowledge.[14] For the most part Traherne agrees with this premiss for he celebrates man's access to the divine through the infinite capacity of the soul. Also, he describes both innate ideas and sense experience as sources of knowledge. He supports the notion that humans can use their intellect without, as the sceptic fears, being deluded. Humans are creatures expressly created with the capacity to comprehend, act freely, and seek the divine. The speaker in the poem "The Preparative" is "All Life and Sense / A Naked Simple Pure *Intelligence*" (19–20) ready to apprehend the cosmos. In the *Centuries of Meditation* humans have "Glorious Principles implanted in [their] Nature" that enable them to comprehend and "Enjoy the World aright" (*CM*, I.38). And finally, God places "The Evidences of Religion in the Greatest and Highest Joys" (*CM*, II.6) and these joys are not only owned by humans but are also intelligible to human intellect. The latitude-men believed reason would naturally lead one to God and Traherne's own position accords with theirs: "we by Right Reason discover all the Mysteries of heaven" (*CM*, IV.81), and "REASON, which is the formal Essence of the Soul of Man, guides Him to desire those Things, which are absolutely supreme" (*CE*, 14). Reason and faith are intimately linked because,

> Faith and Reason are not so divided, but that (tho formally Distinct) they may enter into each others Nature, and Materially be the same. The very same Object (I mean) that is Known to Reason, may by Faith be

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[13] Rivers, 59–66.
[14] Rivers, 62–63.

> believed: *Reason* not destroying but confirming *Faith*, while it is *Known* upon one account, and *believed* on another. For there is a Mutual Convenience between these two, *Faith* is by *Reason* confirmed, and *Reason* is by *Faith* Perfected. (*CE*, 112)

The Latitudinarians and Traherne believed that their own discursive methods which repudiated metaphor (or at least, the wrong type of metaphor) were the appropriate reasonable way with which to convey theological truth.[15]

Another heated topic of disagreement between conformists and nonconformists was the role of a minister towards the uneducated populace. In *An Essay Concerning Preaching* Glanvill accuses the nonconformist preachers of craving popularity with the masses and catering to their tastes for "conceited, fashionable phrases."[16] John Eachard also touches on the dilemma of the ignorant masses, claiming that, through brute force, the nonconformist ministers inflict their useless doctrine upon the common people:

> Amongst the first things that seem to be useless, may be reckon'd the high tossing and swaggering Preaching; either mountingly Eloquent, or profoundly Learned. For there be a sort of Divines, who if they but happen of an unlucky hard word all the week, they think themselves not careful of their Flock, if they lay it not up till *Sunday*, and bestow it amongst them in their next Preachment. Or if they light upon some difficult and obscure Notion, which their curiosity inclines them to be better acquainted with, how useless so ever, nothing so frequent as for them for a month or 2 months together, to tear and tumble this Doctrine; and the poorPeople {sic} once a week shall come and gaze upon them by the hour, until they Preach themselves, as they think, into a right understanding.[17]

According to Eachard, nonconformist speeches are used for personal glory, or simply gaining attention as one might expect from a stage show.[18] As previously shown in Chapter I of this thesis, Traherne consciously takes a conformist position in the *Commentaries of Heaven* by disparaging the vulgarization of words such as "Account," for he maintains that it restricts the spiritual signification of words. In

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[15] Traherne does not always maintain that humans have innate ideas. Sometimes the human mind is a "Table Rasa" or a spotless mirror. For a more detailed discussion see section three of this chapter, "Traherne's Use of Metaphor."

[16] Glanvill, *An Essay Concerning Preaching* (London, 1678) 26.

[17] John Eachard. *The Grounds and Occasions of the Contempt of the Clergy and Religion Enquired into* (London, 1670) 38–39.

[18] Eachard, 39.

the entry for the word "Assurance," Traherne claims that "vulgar use" is the "great Arbiter of Words" and have "made Assurance generaly to relate to Absent Things" (*CH,* fol. 153r.1). Religious discourse must be freed of these fetters through clear and plain language. Of course definitions of "clear" and "plain" differed depending on one's point of view. The above attitudes towards the "vulgar" people were in direct contrast to a nonconformist position such as Baxter's, which maintained that one must write sermons which could be understood by everyone. Plain speech for Baxter was speech which could be understood by the "vulgar" masses.[19]

Traherne conveys his loyalty to the conformists' position in the debate about linguistic style: "No curling Metaphors that gild the Sence, / Nor Pictures here, nor painted Eloquence" (11–12). Moreover, he alludes to sectarians' outrageous exclamations and unreasonable behavior with his reference to "*Zamzummim* words," "A Tale in tongues that sound like *Babel-Hell*" and "Things that amaze, but will not make us wise" (21–24). Metaphors cloak the real gems of the creation by clouding human perception. Readers familiar with Traherne will realize that clear vision and clear understanding are frequently synonymous in his work. According to him, two of the primary causes of evil in the world are man's faulty vision or his misapprehension, and the valuing of false treasures above real or "Naked" things.[20] For instance, in "The Person" Traherne opens by celebrating the treasures of his physical body, his "Sacred Lims" (1). In stanza two he says,

> The Naked Things
> Are most Sublime, and Brightest shew,
> When they alone are seen:
> Mens Hands then Angels Wings
> Are truer Wealth even here below:
> For those but seem.
> Their Worth they then do best reveal,
> When we all Metaphores remove,
> For Metaphores conceal,
> And only Vapours prove. (17–26)

Humans must remove the false metaphors that confuse their apprehension:

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[19] Keeble, *Richard Baxter: Puritan Man of Letters* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982) 49.
[20] Uphaus, 19–21. He explains that Traherne believed the Fall resulted less from original sin than from a distortion of perception.

> While falser Treasures only seem,
> My real Joys.
> For Golden Chains and Bracelets are
> But Gilded Manicles, wherby
> Old Satan doth ensnare,
> Allure, Bewitch the Ey.
> (53–58)

Malcolm Day's informative study, "Naked Truth" and the Language of Thomas Traherne," scrutinizes the phrases "naked Truth" and "transparent Words" from the poem "The Author to the Critical Peruser." Day rightly points out that, for Traherne, revealing the "naked Truth" requires the "intellectualizing or 'spiritualizing' of things."[21] He observes that the poet's use of abstractions and paradox are an attempt to expand human consciousness. He further suggests that Traherne intends to reveal the "inward Beauties" (2) and "highest Mysteries" (5) either through "clear and readily understandable" words or else by drawing "the Mind away from its limited and limiting perspective toward the perception of eternity and infinity."[22] Day favors the second of these two. I agree with both observations. The poet's use of the words "easy Stile drawn from a native vein" and his repudiation of metaphor recalls the debates of the times. Traherne aligns himself with conformists, but then moves on to enumerate his own theological and linguistic concerns—the expansion of the human mind and reform of narrow word definitions.

For Traherne a metaphor is a falsehood which conceals spiritual truth. Examples from his work reveal that, not only is he concerned with cloaked reality, but also he fears humans will mistake spiritual truth for unreal metaphor. For instance, in his entry "Spiritual Absence" from the *Commentaries of Heaven*, he insists that spiritual absence is far from being an intangible shadow:

> A Good Intention in the Cure of this Evil, is a Discovery of its Greatness. Yea the first of all in nature is the Knowledg of its Being. Therfore I would hav men acquainted with their Error in thinking no Absence Real, but Bodily. One great occasion of detaining men in

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[21] Malcolm Day, "'Naked Truth' and the Language of Thomas Traherne," *Studies in Philology* 68 (1971) 313.
[22] Day, 312.

> Ignorance and unbelief, is a Persuasion that Spiritual Absence is meerly metaphorical. for the Dangers and Effects of a Metaphorical Absence are but Metaphorical; and our Apprehensions about them at last but Shadows. O my Beloved Reader, the Absence of the Soul is more real and Destructiv than that of the Bodie. (*CH,* fol. 8v.2)

The poet insists the ethereal qualities of a spiritual world are substantial and real and describing them with words does not mean employing metaphorical language. In the entry "Armour," Traherne takes a Platonic view, positing that the spiritual world is the actual one and the physical world is a shadow of it. He says there are two kinds of armor: a bodily one and a spiritual one. The former protects the body from physical harm in times of warfare, while the latter "is a certain Habit or Endowment of the Mind that covers and adornes the Soul, and makes it truly Impenetrable to all Assaults, as long as it is Worn" (*CH,* fol. 131v.1). Humans are mistaken if they believe the spiritual armour is merely a shadow of the corporeal one:

> It is usual with men, when they hear of Crowns and Thrones in Heaven, or of a Marriage made between the Church and the Lamb, or of the Robes of Righteousness, or of a Spiritual Warfare and Armor of Light, to take all these for metaphorical Expression: as if Marriages and Wars and Crowns and Thrones and Armor here upon Earth, were the only True ones, and those in Heaven but Shadows and Similitudes of these. (*CH*, fol. 132r.2–v.1)

Later in the passage he declares that Satan is the true enemy and "It is no Metaphorical Bondage from which we are redeemed, tho it be truly Spiritual" (*CH,* fol. 132v.2). Traherne is aware that he may be accused of using metaphor, hence his insistence that his metaphorical expressions should be taken literally. He emphasizes, to the point of absurdity at times, that what he renders with metaphor is actually true:

> one Broken Sigh, or Contrite Groan is more Acceptable to God, then Thousands of Rams, and ten Thousand Rivers of oyl, and maketh more pleasant musick in his Eares, then all the fained musick of the Spheres. Which because it is so He Botleth up our Tears. for they Abide in the places wherever because they are pearls, Dissolved pearl, Tho not vanishing; which he reserveth in Store for the Holy Angels. Neither is this Metaphorical, He really Bottleth all our Tears. (*SM,* I.93)

He maintains that there are two kinds of understanding—a physical, or literal, one and a spiritual, or figurative, one—but they do not offer a double meaning to a

given object or situation. Rather, the literal and the spiritual (expressed often with metaphorical language) combine to produce a singular meaning.

Barbara Lewalski describes the "Protestant Poetic" which relies in part upon a modification of the traditional medieval/ Augustinian distinction between the literal and figurative truth in scripture. She describes Augustine's formula for the literal and figurative interpretations of scripture; the former refers to the actual things signified by words, while the latter refers to events which are beyond these actual things, to their spiritual significance. Augustine further defines four senses or modes of scripture: the literal and the three spiritual senses (typology, tropology, and anagogy). The kinds of spiritual and allegorical meanings found in scripture are varied and complex. Lewalski explains that for Augustine,

> the figurative or allegorical sense includes the covert or obscure meanings conveyed by metaphors or parables or other such tropes, the symbolic meanings embodied in nature or in number, and also Old Testament foreshadowings or types.[23]

The primacy of the figurative, or spiritual, overshadows the literal and particular so that historical events do not have any autonomous significance, but merely foreshadow future ones (e.g., all Old Testament events prefigure the coming of Christ). Protestant reformers objected to the doctrine of the four senses, maintaining that there is one sense of scripture only, the literal one.[24] They collapsed the literal and spiritual into one:

> . . . the new Protestant emphasis is clear: it makes for a different sense of the Bible as a unified poetic text, and for a much closer fusion of sign and thing signified, type and antitype. The characteristic Protestant approach takes the Bible not as a multi-level allegory, but as a complex literary work whose full literal meaning is revealed only by careful attention to its poetic texture and to its pervasive symbolic mode—typology.[25]

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[23] Barbara Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979) 113–14.
[24] Lewalski, 116–117
[25] Lewalski, 117.

Traherne shares in this "Protestant Poetic" insofar as he tries to eliminate the distinction between the literal (or mundane realm) and the spiritual realm. Traherne's own selection of metaphors still constitute, for him, a "plain" manner of writing for he sees them as a synthesis of literal and spiritual truth. As seen in Chapter III, Traherne projects individual human experience to the forefront of religious writing and thus historical, individual experience is vitally important. This focus upon individual experience is another characteristic of the Reformation discourse which Lewalski outlines in her discussion of typology and the religious lyric.[26] But it should be noted that her study, for the most part, precludes the conformist/nonconformist distinction which came into effect in 1662 and the subsequent debate over metaphor which each side took up. Many of the Protestant Reformers who believed in the fusion between the literal and spiritual senses of the Bible as well as the importance of individual religious experience, became nonconformist ministers after the Act of Uniformity. However, drawing a strict correlation between the two is unwise for it does not allow for the confusion of the times where consciences were divided and often the theological and linguistic differences between those who conformed and those who did not is imperceptible. Traherne, aware of the discursive battles which were prevalent, is careful to state which side he is on, that of the Restoration conformists who promoted ecclesiastical guidelines as opposed to individual inspiration. After safeguarding his own political position, Traherne shows ultimately that his own emphasis regarding metaphor has less to do with these disputes—his mission is not to discredit nonconformist ministers—than with his own theological message which necessitates a collapsing of the literal and spiritual and an emphasis upon individual experience.

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[26] Lewalski, 131–144.

2. Nonconformists and Metaphor

The debate over metaphor was indicative of deep conflicts, both religious and political, between conformist and nonconformist ideals. In religious matters, the importance of the individual's personal experience was strongly contested; the conformist position emphasized the need for a unified church governed by ecclesiastics while the nonconformist position celebrated personal divine revelations. Individuals placed themselves in various positions between these two poles, sometimes selectively choosing elements of a given argument while rejecting others, or adopting the philosophy of one but the discursive techniques of another. For instance, Traherne adopts a conformist argument, but nevertheless exploits the imaginative possibilities of nonconformist thinking which highlights individual spirituality. Chapter III of this thesis demonstrates that Traherne is captivated by the power of the "I"; even when advocating silent practice his enthusiasm for the personal voice of the individual produces an "audible" silence. Traherne often employs figurative phraseology when describing the man-God relationship or the spiritual world to fellow humans.

The Puritan approach to religion rested on the belief that individuals could commune with God in an intimate fashion. For these groups, a straightforward, honest approach to divine truth entails celebrating this internal phenomenon. A "plain" style, representing these genuine experiences, would have to rely upon metaphorical descriptions to communicate the mysterious, ethereal workings of the divinely inspired soul.[27] The nonconformists defended their use of figurative language, claiming that it aided the individual in understanding the divine message. Richard Baxter acknowledges that problems may arise when "metaphors are chosen *needlessly*, instead of more plain significant termes" but he also insists that certain notions relating to God can only be discussed with figurative language:

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[27] Keeble, *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity*, 249-250.

> It is not about a *created subject*, where we have store of proper notions; but about the *Creator*, and our communion with Him, where we must have improper thoughts, and borrowed notions, or none at all: It is a controversie between the *Thomists* and the *Scotists*, whether one syllable *Ens* be spoken *Univocally* of GOD and of the Creatures? But that no other word is spoken *Univocally* of them, they are agreed. And the *Scotists* do not without reason maintain, that *Analogical Attribution* is not a third member, betwixt *Univocal* and *Equivocal*, but is truly *Equivocal*, as *Metaphors* are. Talk not then against all Allegorical expressions about God, till you would forbid Mortals to talk of *God at all.*[28]

John Owen counters Samuel Parker's claims by saying that nonconformist metaphors may in fact be expressions of Gospel Mysteries:

> What if the *Metaphors* they are charged with, are no other but their expression of Gospel Mysteries *not in the words which mans wisdom teacheth, but which the holy-Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with Spiritual*?[29]

The nonconformists, to justify their use of figurative language, frequently pointed out that the Bible used "multitudes of . . . *Metaphors*" as well as parables, allegories, typologies and analogies.[30] John Bunyan appropriates the voices of the ancient Hebrews in *Grace Abounding* as their journey from Egypt into the land of Canaan becomes his personal spiritual journey.[31] He insists that his words are God-inspired as well as simple and straightforward:

> *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 then this in which I have here discoursed, and could have adorned all things more then here I have seemed to do: but I dare not:* God *did not play in convincing of me; the* Devil *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 my relating of them, but be plain and simple, and lay down the thing as it was: He that liketh it, let him receive* it; *and he that does not, let him produce a better. Farewel.*[32]

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[28] Richard Baxter, Epistle to the Reader, *Dwelling with God,* by John Bryan (London, 1670) sigs. A7v–A8r.

[29] John Owen, *Truth and Innocence Vindicated: in a Survey of Discourse Concerning Ecclesiastical Polity* (London, 1669) 20.

[30] Henry Lukin, *An Introduction to the Holy Scripture* (London, 1669) 107.

[31] John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding*, 1666, ed. Roger Sharrock (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962) 1.

[32] Bunyan, *Grace Abounding*, 3-4.

Bunyan feels he can move freely through the experiences of others and thereby clearly convey his personal experiences.

Another factor which encouraged the use of metaphorical phraseology was the tendency of the nonconformists to view the cosmos analogically. God is immanent and confers to each physical element divine significance. The simple everyday environment expresses supernal truths. For some, not to see these correspondences was to pronounce the physical world sterile and useless.[33] Henry Lukin describes a sympathetic universe where invisible divine attributes are understood through observing the empirical world. In *An Introduction to the Holy Scripture*, Lukin says,

> There is nothing more ordinary in Scripture, then to represent *Spiritual* things by *natural*, that we may more clearly apprehend them: all our knowledge beginning at our *senses*. Indeed if we have onely the *Protasis* without the *Apodosis*; or Metaphors and Similitudes without any *Explication* of them, they remain dark and difficult, Matth.13.10, 11. but the Scriptures shewing the *Analogy*, which is between *Natural* things, and *Spiritual*; and how the *invisible things of God are clearly seen, and understood, from the things that are made*, Rom.1.20. they are therby much illustrated, and made more intelligible, *John* 3.12. we are likewise more lively affected with such things as are represented to our senses. . . .[34]

Even as the physical world merges with the divine, so too does man. Nigel Smith points out that "[v]ersions of self were created which moved increasingly towards the merging of the individual with the Godhead." He goes on to say,

> the language of the radical religion was founded upon irrationality in theory and in practice as the difference between the internal and external, the literal and figurative, disappeared. Self, church, and Godhead become one.[35]

It would follow that lessons of instruction would find *exempla* within this interfused universe.

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[33] Keeble, *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity*, 258.

[34] Lukin, 101.

[35] Nigel Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed, Language and Literature in English Radical Religion 1640–1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) 18.

In part, Traherne shares this world view for he believes all things are interrelated because they are all part of a felicitous design. A project like the *Commentaries of Heaven* exemplifies this with its basic tenet that "ALL THINGS" will relate back to Felicity. A passage quoted earlier from *Centuries of Meditation* also speaks of divine immanence:

> The Sun is but a little Spark of His infinit Lov. The Sea is but one Drop of His Goodness. But what flames of Lov ought that Spark to Kindle in your Soul; what Seas of Affection ought to flow for that Drop in your Bosom! The Heavens are the Canopy and the Earth is the footstool of your Throne: who reign in Communion with GOD: or at least are called so to do. How lively should his Divine Goodness appear unto you; how continually should it rest upon you; how deeply should it be impressed in you. Verily its Impressions ought to be so deep, as to be always remaining always felt, always Admired, always seen, and rejoyced in. (*CM,* II.14)

Traherne believes that the natural world can instruct humans in divine matters and he revels in the physical properties of things.

Nonconformists John Owen, Henry Lukin, and Robert Ferguson all state that humans can have two kinds of understanding, rational and spiritual, for all things have a rational and spiritual component. In his preface to Henry Lukin's treatise, Owen, showing his concern for the proper manner of reading scripture, highlights these two components:

> *It is also on that especial concernment of it, on which all other excellent things that belong unto it, do depend, which he hath chosen to insist; namely, the* right understanding of it, *and the means therof. And wheras there is a* Spiritual saving understanding *of the Mystery and Truths contained in the Scriptures, and a* rational understanding *of the words, and Propositions, wherein those Mysteries and Truths, are contained and exhibited unto us, (which is not a double, or twofold understanding of the Scriptures, but the same act of our minds under various qualifications is intended.)*[36]

Later in his discussion, Owen insists the reader will comprehend the "rational" meaning of a given thing and Lukin's discourse will ensure he/she will not become confused by figurative language. He insists Lukin will make the "Genuine sense," or meaning in "Tropes" and "Figures" apparent.

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[36] Owen, Christian Reader, *An Introduction to the Holy Scripture*, by Henry Lukin (London, 1669) sigs. A7r–A7v.

Lukin himself maintains that both a natural and spiritual world exist and the later may be explained with examples from the former: "There is nothing more ordinary in Scripture, then to represent *Spiritual* things by *natural*, that we may more clearly apprehend them. . . ."[37] The best way to reach humans is through their senses, which can be stimulated by metaphors. And finally, Robert Ferguson in *The Interest of Reason in Religion* suggests that the literal sense of a word also entails its mystical, or figurative, sense:

> sublime Truths lye under Metaphorick expressions. Metaphors are not used to impregnate our Minds with gawdy Phantasms, but to adjust the Mysteries of Religion to the weakness of our Capacities. I Shall not here repeat what I have elsewhere proved, namely, that every Text of Scripture hath a Literal sense. For as that is the literal sense of a place, where words are used properly, which flows from their Natural and Immediate signification, so the Literal sense, where words are imploy'd Tropically, is that which ariseth from their Figurative acceptations. I also suppose it universally acknowledged, at least in Words, though too many depart from it in effect, that we ought to conform our opinions and expositions to the sense of the Scripture, and not wrest Scripture-Words to them. We are not to frame to our selves *Ideas* of Religion, and then to accommodate the Scripture to their defence and patronage.[38]

The literal sense arises from the figurative. Traherne's views are closely related to Ferguson's, for Traherne insists upon a close connection between the mundane world (the literal) and the spiritual world. However, Traherne refuses to say that the spiritual world is figurative or metaphorical, or that an image merely represents a spiritual ideal. Words themselves are somehow the actual thing, with all its literal and figurative significance combined.

As noted previously, an aspect of nonconformist thought which bears resemblance to some of Traherne's beliefs is the mysterious element surrounding divine revelation. True, he celebrates the human capacity to understand divine mysteries through the intellect, but he simultaneously insists this clairvoyance is not always possible. Looking at the works of John Bunyan and William Spurstowe, Keeble draws the conclusion that, whereas the nonconformists were aware of the

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[37] Lukin, 101.
[38] Robert Ferguson, *The Interest of Reason in Religion* (London, 1675) 343.

new scientific methods for analyzing the world, for them the universe was "mysterious and numinous."[39] Analytical observation worked with the sciences, but was inadequate for spiritual matters. In the *Academiarum Examen* nonconformist minister John Webster says,

> . . . though it be grown to a mighty height of exactness, in vulgar *Anatomy* and dissection of the dead bodies of men, or the living ones of beasts, birds, and fishes; yet it is defective as to that vive and *Mystical Anatomy* that discovers the true *Schematism* or signature of that invisible *Archeus* or *spiritus mechanicus*. . . .[40]

Webster would have been familiar with the scientific work of the Royal Society and he engaged one of their leading mathematicians, Seth Ward, in a debate over the existing academic curriculum. Moreover, he was in favor of universal language plans. Mary Slaughter states:

> John Webster is a good example of the reformative zeal of the more radical Puritan sectaries as well as a good example of the sectarian sympathies with the more mystical of the scientific movements and their affiliation with 'natural magic'.[41]

For Webster, obtaining truth was a mystical experience which could not be achieved by mere reason and logic. This belief was in line with one of the Reformation (and also Puritan) tenets, salvation by faith.[42] Instead of using a methodical, pragmatic system of following moral guidelines they encouraged an ineffable leap of faith, a personal and private phenomenon within each individual. For radical groups, and for Puritans in general, there was always an element of the unknown with regard to salvation.

One can see a contradiction in Traherne's stated goals and his writing style. Despite wanting to clear away all misperceptions and find the "naked Truth"—in other words, strip away metaphor—he still maintains that there are certain divine mysteries and utilizes metaphors to delineate them. The contradiction is evident

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[39] Keeble, *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity*, 257.
[40] John Webster, *Academiarum Examen* (London, 1654) 74. Cited in Keeble, *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity*, 255.
[41] Slaughter, 135.
[42] Roger Pooley, "Language and Loyalty: Plain Style at the Restoration," *Literature and History* 6 (1980): 5.

when comparing the poet's views of Aristotle and Plato: the former proposes to strip away the "veil" of nature in order to see things as they really are, while the latter insists temporal things are a shadow of the true images of heaven. In "Aristotle's Philosophy" Traherne talks about Aristotle's as well as his own approach to nature:

> For Learning is but an Acquisition of that Knowledg which we enjoyed by Nature. that which was lost by Sin being recovered by Labor. As therfore Aristotle being resolved to reduce Philosophie to rules of Art and Reason, utterly rejected that Mythologick, Symbolical Mode of Philosophizing, which his Predecessors, Thales, Pherecydes, Pythagoras and Plato had introduced; so do we strip nature of her vail, and expose her in her nakedness to the Ey of the Beholder. Becaus tho a vail (tis confessed) addes much to Beauty, becaus it kindles a Desire of Seeing Things forbidden; the Scales upon our Eys supply the place of a vail upon the face of nature, and make her, in her simple and naked difficult to be conceived. (*CH*, fol. 129r.1–2)[43]

The natural world is there to be scrutinized by the "Beholder." As stated before, Traherne believes humans have the capacity to apprehend all things, for the soul is infinite and there is nothing it cannot digest. He also points out the implications this kind of philosophy has for linguistic endeavors:

> For the Philosopher ever avoids Rhetorical flourishes, and wholy endeavors to set forth the nature of things. Which is our design in these present volumes under our Hand. accounting clear and perfect Apprehensions of all Objects, in their several Classes, in all their Circumstances, to be the most immediat Way to Philosophie and Happiness. And the first Cause of all is our Sovereign End, as well as his. (*CH*, fol. 129r.1)

The symbolic mode is abandoned in favor of a clear method of delineating natural phenomena.

Countering this view of a real world waiting to be apprehended by humans, is the Platonic view in the entry "Armour." As stated earlier in this chapter, the "Crowns and Thrones in Heaven" (*CH*, fol. 132r.2–v.1) are real and the ones on

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[43] Much of the material from "Aristotle's Philosophy" is taken from Theophilus Gale's *Court of the Gentiles, Part II*. See Pritchard, 5. However, this passage appears to be Traherne's for I have not found it in Gale's section on Aristotle in *The Court of the Gentiles, Part II*.

earth are shadows. The subsequent passages in "Armour" continue to relay this view:

> . . . if that of Plato be true Æterna sunt vera Temporalia autem verisimilia, Temporal things are the Shadows and Eternal the Substance. Temporal things are Dreams, Eternal Realities. Eternal Things are the only true ones: and Temporal the Signes or Similitudes of these. No War in all the World is so true and real, no Enmitie so deep and serious, no victory so Glorious, no Danger of being over come so Dreadfull, no Enemie so Malicious, Hatefull and Dangerous as Satan is: no force, no Policie, no Stratagem so pernicious, when successfull, as his: no Armor so worthy to be called Armor, as that of Light. Tis true indeed tis Spiritual Armor, but yet tis Armor: And as the Body is an inconsiderable nothing, in comparison of the Soul; so is Corporeal Armor a meer Idea, in comparison of Spiritual.
>
> (*CH*, fol. 132v.1)

Unlike the passage from "Aristotle's Philosophy," in this passage laboring to acquire knowledge of the phenomenal world will bring no true understanding. The world of shadows conceals "Eternal Realities." Thus Traherne vacillates on the issue of the physical world revealing or concealing truth. For the most part the views expressed in "Aristotle's Philosophy" prevail in Traherne's thought, for he encourages human reason, science, and human exploration of the phenomenal world. Traherne had a Latitudinarian outlook, and his project in the *Commentaries of Heaven* bears the imprint of the spirit behind the scientific movements. But again, Traherne is unwilling to wholy concede to one point of view and unknown mysteries still feature within his writing and offer the impetus for some of his best poetical writing.

3. Traherne's Use of Metaphor

In the passage from "The Author to the Critical Peruser," Traherne speaks of "real Crowns and thrones and Diadems" as opposed to the false ones mentioned in "The Apostacy": "Robes, and Stones enchas'd in Gold, / Rich Cabinets, and such like fine / Inventions" (32–3). In one poem jewels and gems are true and in

the other they are false; the only distinguishing factor is the adjective supplied by the author. Mary Cole Sloane analyzes the use of imagery in Traherne's poetry and refers to the poet's message in "The Author to the Critical Peruser." She says that Traherne does not wish to exclude metaphor from his own works but rather, he criticizes those who obscure the truth by adorning poetry. These individuals overlook God's works and focus on their own.[44] Her statements are true, for while Traherne declares conformist beliefs and says he will strip away metaphor, he does not actually mean that he will not use figurative language. He is certainly not unique among the conformists in deviating from his stated intention to abolish metaphor. Joseph Glanvill softens his views toward figurative language in *An Essay Concerning Preaching:*

> I do not by this reprehend all Wit whatsoever in Preaching, nor any thing that is truly such: For true Wit is a perfection in our faculties, chiefly in the understanding, and imagination; Wit in the understanding is a sagacity to find out the nature, relations, and consequences of things; Wit in the imagination, is a quickness in the phancy to give things proper Images; now the more of these is in Sermons, the more judgment and spirit, and life: and without Wit of these kinds Preaching is dull, and unedifying. The Preacher should indeavour to speak sharp, and quick thoughts, and to set them out in lively colours; this is proper, grave, and manly wit, but the other, that which consists in inversions of sentences, and playing with words, and the like, is vile and contemptible fooling.[45]

Simon Patrick in *Mensa Mystica; or a Discourse Concerning the Sacrament of the Lords Supper*, acknowledges that God manifests himself to human sense, therefore, "a Picture and Image of a thing doth more affect us then an Historicall Narration; and that the more lively and express that Image is, the more lively motions it makes within us."[46]

Like many other writers of the time, conforming and nonconforming, Traherne employs Biblical imagery as seen in the poem "Thy Turtle Doves O Lord

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[44] Mary Cole Sloane, *The Visual in Metaphysical Poetry* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1982) 90–91.
[45] Glanvill, *An Essay Concerning Preaching*, 71–72.
[46] Patrick, *Mensa Mystica or a Discourse Concerning the Sacrament of the Lords Supper* (London, 1660) Introduction, sig. A8v.

to Dragons turn!" from *Select Meditations*. In this poem he creates an apocalyptic vision to describe the corruption of the human soul. Several of the preceding meditations mention tears, dragons, and human corruption, and these images culminate in this poem about a world turned into a wasteland (a dragon's den) and the speaker's soul fleeing from humanity:

> His Image in themselves laid in a Grave,
> Is Dead and Buried! The Treasure
> Which they lik Dragons in them have
> Unknown's unknown! They feel not any pleasure,
> But Snuffe! Snuffe up the wind
> And wallow in their filth like Adders Blind
> Their Skins Like Dragons clad with Golden Ore
> Shine Brightly, overcast with Greenish Gore.
> Their Scales Display
> A poysond Day.
> His Image in them's laid within a Grave!
> (*SM*, II.17, stanza 4)[47]

Julia Smith points out that the imagery in this poem, taken from the Old Testament and the Book of Revelation, relates to contemporary political events:

> Many royalists writers had spoken of the dragons which inhabited the chaos of the Commonwealth, and the turtle dove, traditionally a symbol of the church or the people of Israel, was also used as a symbol of Charles II. Traherne's poem, however, sees the salvation of the English church not in political means, but in the call to repentance.[48]

Traherne's work is replete with typological references and several critical studies have analyzed this propensity in his writing.[49] In addition to Biblical imagery and typology, Traherne also borrows from classical mythology, though he does so infrequently. For instance, he makes reference to the "Elizian fields . . . Steeped in Lethe" (*SM*, III.1) and "Apollos oracle" (*SM*, IV.6). He also uses homely images, sometimes with awkward results:

> Blessednes Naturaly Loveth to be seen, and is Like milk in a womans Breasts more Delightfull in being Distributed, then in Lying Still in its

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[47] The third line of the stanza suggests simile with the word "lik." The overall poem is a metaphor for mens' lives but Traherne often uses both metaphor and simile in a given work. For instance, sometimes the soul *is* a mirror and other times it is *like* a mirror.

[48] Julia Smith, ed. *Select Meditations*, 159–160.

[49] See: Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics*; Matar, "Prophetic Traherne: 'A Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Nation,'" *JEGP* 81 (1982): 16–29; Matar, "The Political Views of Thomas Traherne"; Michael Ponsford, "Thomas Traherne, the New Jerusalem, and Seventeenth Century Millenarianism," *Durham University Journal* (1995): 243–250; Julia Smith, ed. *Select Meditations*, x–xxiii.

> own Fountaine. It curdleth there and recoyling upon it selfe: in flowing from the mother it feedeth a nother and becometh usefull. (*SM*, III.79)

Had he been a nonconformist, John Eachard might have accused him of debasing religion by using crude commonplace images to convey religious messages to the vulgar masses.

Traherne is also well-known for images that convey luminescence, expansiveness, or reflecting and refracting properties. With these images he attempts to link human experience, both physical and psychological, with the divine. Several studies provide detailed analyses of Traherne's mystical symbolism. For instance A. L. Clements maintains that Traherne's poetic theory comes from a mystical contemplative tradition, a tradition which tries to see the numinous in the phenomenal. This reading supports the points made earlier that Traherne wishes to combine the literal (physical) world with the spiritual one. What implications does this have for his poetic theory? Clements rightly shows that Traherne believes words can actually reveal the "naked Truth" of all things, they can perfectly represent a combination of the physical object with its spiritual significance. To implement this, Traherne uses catalogues; the repetition and simple statements simply assert what exists. Clements provides a list of the poet's principle symbols: the Eye, Sphere, Sun, Mirror, King, Dwelling Place, and Fountain.[50] Gerald Bullet also sees Traherne within the mystical tradition and reiterates Clements's interpretation that clear sight enables humans to see the divine within all things: "Because [Traherne] retained the unclouded vision that sees heaven in everything and everything as for the first time, the note of wonder and delight never falters."[51] Finally, Alison Sherrington says, "Traherne, like all other mystics, believes that there is a mystical analogy between the spiritual and the sensory realms. . . ."[52] While this is indeed true, Traherne himself would not wish

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[50] A. L. Clements, *The Mystical Poetry of Thomas Traherne* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969) 35–44.
[51] Gerald Bullet, *The English Mystics* (London: Michael Joseph, 1950) 110.
[52] Alison Sherrington, *Mystical Symbolism in the Poetry of Thomas Traherne* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1970) 7.

to use the word "analogy" to describe the relationship. For him the two realms though different, are one and the same. This cosmological and metaphysical view informs his linguistic theory. Inspired by the language planners' insistence that words can actually mirror reality and encapsulate the essence of things, Traherne maintains that there is a relationship of verisimilitude between a word, an object, and the essence of the object.

His theory described, it is now important to see how Traherne's figurative language actually works. Images, metaphors, and similes are often mentioned briefly and without much delineation. Unlike Henry Vaughan, who in "I walked the other day"[53] develops the image of a plant extensively to give a unifying structure to his poem, Traherne rarely sustains a given image in this way.[54] For instance, in "Fulnesse," he refers to a "Mirror of an Endless Life" (5) and seems to mean some kind of reflective energy within humans; however, the mirror is not developed in the body of the poem. Other objects which show a projection or effusive outpouring of energy replace it (the "Fountain," "Spring," "Tower," and "Root"), and the overall effect is one of vaguely similar objects which the poet strings together in a list to convey "That Light, that Sight, that Thought" (1) within the soul. Readers of Traherne will already be familiar with his Orbs of Sight, Spheres of Light, Pools of Water, and Mirrors, and from these can gather a sense of their collective significance. The poet finds certain images irresistible devices for conveying some of his abstract theological tenets, particularly if they can be used to evoke ethereal qualities. He was fascinated by the imaginative possibilities in the dynamics of the mirror—notably its characteristic feature of being able to absorb and project—as well as other related images such as veils, hemispheres, and spheres. The remainder of this chapter will focus upon these images.

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[53] Henry Vaughan, *George Herbert and Henry Vaughan*, ed. Louis Martz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) 337.

[54] An exception of course is "Shadows in the Water" which will be discussed later in this thesis, and "On Leaping Over the Moon."

Traherne uses the image of the veil to explain the revealing and concealing phenomenon which occurs for the individual. The veil, representing clouded human vision, must be taken away in order for the individual to see divine truth. Traherne's entry for "Atheist" in the *Commentaries of Heaven* attempts to analyze the cause of an atheist's "blindness":

> The blind and ignorant Atheist must consider the root of his Disease, which is generaly filthiness of Life, and Carelessness of Spirit. For as Dirt in the Eys hindereth a man from seeing the Beauty of the Heavens, so do vices in the Soul interpose between itself and Eternal Objects, and by defiling the understanding they darken the Sight of the inward man. He must therfore follow peace with all men, and Holiness without which it is impossible to see GOD. And since there are many Thousand Things in the World of which they never dream whose Trade of Life is altogether vain and idle, he must apply his mind diligently to study those Things which will open his Eys, and spend much time in meditating on them, that he may receiv the Information and Knowledg which he needeth. In the midst of the ocean it seemeth as if there were no Drie Land in the world, in the heart of a Kingdom it seemeth as if all the World were drie Land, and there were no Sea; I have seen a valley covered with mistes and foggy Exhalation, under which while I was passing, I conceived all the World to be buried in Obscuritie; but coming to the Top of an Hill, I found the vapor beneath my feet like Seas in the vales, or Cloudy Oceans underneath; abov which the Hills and mountains (like litle Ilands) lifted up their Heads, and over them the Sun Beams were so Bright and Glorious, as if there were no such thing as a Cloud in nature. Markets and Tavernes and Baudy houses where Avarice and Fraud Drunkenness and Lust do reign discover nothing of GOD to the frequenters of them, all is covered with the Appearance of Things opposite and contrary unto Him. The Temple is the Place where the Beauty of Holiness is seen, and God appeareth in the Beauty of Holiness. No Art nor Science is attained without Labor and Study. In the Places and Things wherin GOD hath manifested himself, we must needs be busied, if we mean to find him. (*CH*, fol. 163v.1)

The poet employs simile to describe the clouded inner-eye of the Atheist's soul. Dirt obstructs the physical eye just as vice obstructs the soul, preventing it from clearly apprehending "Eternal Objects." Traherne transports his reader to imaginary situations—the middle of the ocean and center of a landmass—where vision is limited and therefore knowledge incomplete. At least one of these situations is within the ken of everyone and can readily be apprehended by his audience. He then moves to a very personal experience—climbing a hill and piercing through a thick cloud until he can see the sun and sky. The image provides us with an odd

perspective—a kind of two-way veil which masks one or the other side depending on where one stands. On one side of the veil of clouds he sees the world but not the radiant "Sun Beams," and on the other he sees the heavens, but not the world of the valley which contains the "markets and tavernes and Baudy houses." One either sees the heavens or the earth, depending upon one's location and perspective. On earth there are three things to focus upon, the world of the Tavern, the world of the Temple, and the world of Labor and Study. If one is diligent and "busied" with devotion and reason, one might see God manifested in the lower regions below the cloud.

The passage above from *Commentaries of Heaven* is reminiscent of one quoted earlier from the poem "The Person." The "vapors" or "Cloudy Oceans" which at first conceal the heavenly sunbeams are akin to the "Metaphores" which "conceal, / And only Vapours prove" ("The Person," 25–26). The cloud-veil fits Traherne's definition of a corruptive metaphors which distort human perception. But which view of the world prevails here in the passage from *Commentaries of Heaven*, the Aristotelian or the Platonic? It is clear from the passage above that the speaker delights in the heavenly vision and disparages the world beneath the cloud. And yet undoubtedly there is a certain blindness on either side of the cloud-veil. Moreover, there are ways to see the divine even beneath the cloud. Traherne ultimately has more of an Aristotelian outlook, relishing the quest for knowledge and his experience of the physical world. Certainly in "The Person" Traherne magnifies the mundane world, even beyond "Angels Wings" (20). If only humans would remove metaphors then the phenomenal world—in the poem, the physical body of a human—will reveal true "Glory" (30).

In his writings, the mirror is a metaphor for the human body, Nature, and most frequently the soul.[55] An example can be found in the poem "Amendment" in which the speaker celebrates his critical role in the divine scheme:

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[55] When describing the mirror as a soul Traherne usually uses metaphor, but he will also employ simile. In general, Traherne is primarily interested in conveying the properties of the mirror and applying them to the soul. But his vacillation between the two devices may be an indication that he hesitates to say that the soul is always able to mirror the divine. This hesitation may be a

That all things should be mine;
This makes his Bounty most Divine.
But that they all more Rich should be,
And far more Brightly shine,
As usd by Me:
It ravisheth my Soul to see the End,
To which this Work so Wonderfull doth tend.
(1–7)

The idea that man can take the bounty of the world and reproduce it in a more spectacular way is commonplace in Traherne's writing. This subjectivity is, of course, contrary to scientific aspirations of obtaining knowledge objectively. Humans are God's "Spectator[s]" (*CM*, II.90) and assign value to the creation by apprehending and then reproducing it. In "Amendment" the soul is a mirror, first absorbing and then in turn reflecting the wonders of the creation:

Am I a Glorious Spring
Of Joys and Riches to my King?
Are Men made Gods! And may they see
So Wonderfull a Thing
As GOD in me!
And is my Soul a Mirror that must Shine
Even like the Sun, and be far more Divine?
(29–35)

The poet answers his question; yes the soul is a reflecting mirror:

Thy Soul, O GOD, doth prize
The Seas, the Earth, our Souls, the Skies,
As we return the same to Thee;
They more delight thine Eys,
And sweeter be,
As unto Thee we Offer up the same,
Then as to us, from Thee at first they came.
(36–42)

The above passage may be read in two different ways. It may be saying "Thy Soul, O GOD, doth prize / The Seas, the Earth," while "our Souls," prize "the Skies," in which case we can visualize two soul-mirrors lying horizontally: God is above reflecting the terrestrial realm below; man is below reflecting the skies which are above him. The two face each other reflecting human and divine attributes one to the other. Alternatively it may be saying God prizes: "The Seas, the Earth, our

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symptom of his doubt as to whether or not the human and divine can ultimately fuse. Section four of this Chapter will examine reasons for this hesitation.

Souls, the Skies" and we return the same. In either case we can see a kind of intermingling which blurs the distinction between what is human and what is divine. Two mirrors facing each other will reflect infinitely what is contained in, as well as what is beyond, the other. If God reflects the physical world, is it not somehow a part of him? And the reverse is true; if man "Offer[s] up the same," is he not somehow a part of the divine? Traherne is intrigued with the imaginative possibilities of the fusion between human and divine. This passage may remind us of Nigel Smith's point about sectarian discourse: the individual merges with the Godhead.

Traherne is able to employ the figure of the mirror to convey an important aspect of his religious philosophy: the unity between the physical and spiritual, the human and divine. He points out the dual nature of man: "There is in a man a Double selfe, according as He is in God, or the world. In the world He is confined, and walketh up and Down, in Little Roome: but in God He is evry where" (*SM*, II.92). He insists upon incorporating the human body and the physical world into the divine plan, which of course must include the evils of man's corporeal existence. In the past some critics have not thought of Traherne as dwelling upon evil and original sin. Richard Jordan discusses Traherne's work in the context of the mid-seventeenth century surge of interest in private meditational practices. He points out the rise of a trend which focused less and less on man's sin and more on the infinite capacity of the soul to comprehend the divine, a notion inspired by the Neoplatonic movements. Influenced by the meditative practices, Traherne rarely talks about evil and tries to move his reader by positive means.[56] In the introduction to *Christian Ethicks* Traherne himself says:

> I do not speak much of *Vice*, which is far the more easie Theme, because I am intirely taken up with the abundance of Worth and Beauty in *Vertue*, and have so much to say of the positive and intrinsick Goodness of its Nature. (*CE*, 3)

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[56] Richard Jordan, 381–403.

James Blair Leishman in *The Metaphysical Poets*, contends that "Traherne never really faces the problem of evil, but he contrives to avoid both Pantheism and Dualism."[57] While Jordan's point is true, Traherne most definitely addresses the problem of evil. In *Select Meditations*, for example, one will find several instances where he looks at man's corruption. In the opening passages from the incomplete First Century, he speaks of a corrupt nation, evil prophets, priests, and statesmen, and blind men who refuse to see what is before them. Further investigation of the text reveals that Traherne believes in a *Felix Culpa*; Man's Fall and his ability to win back his original state add "Victory and Triumphs" to his estate. Without sin,

> there had been no Punishments: no Patience no Longsuffering no meekness no contrition no Penitent sinners, no Incarnation of Jesus christ, no Redemption, no new obligations, no Heights and Depths and Enlargments of soul in the Abisses of misery and the Heights of Blessedness seen at the same time. No victory and Triumph infinitly Sweeter then Quiet Possession, no miracles, no Revelations from Heaven no use of patriarchs Prophets and Apostles. (*SM*, III.52)

Repeatedly he asserts that man's humanity is a necessary complement to God's heavenly glory; they are like two hemispheres (or one set up against a mirror) united to make a perfect sphere:

> How is it possible that all the Things in the whole Hemisphere should be represented in a Looking-glass, and that all the Things in Heaven and Earth should not in a Soul, which is a more Glorious Mirror. Seest thou not How vigorously and realy thy face is seen in a Glass, bring it out to the open Heavens, and the Heavens shall be as truly represented in it. The sun shall shine as strongly in it as it doth in the skies, O the Reality! (*SM*, III.27)

Spheres and hemispheres are found throughout Traherne's work representing perfect unity and harmonious form. In some of his best poetry, most notably "Shadows in the Water," Traherne takes this spatial concept, the highness of God and the lowness of man, and combines it with the image of the mirror. He lays the mirror upon its side and contemplates the "half spheres," one above and the other below:

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[57] James Blair Leishman, *The Metaphysical Poets: Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, Traherne* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934) 197.

> Mans Humility and Gods Highness are wedded objects to each other. Let me see the Nothing out of which I was taken and I Shall See the Glory to which I am exalted. Thy Glory and my Lowness increas and perfect my Happiness. of both which while I am Sencible I Sencibly feel my Eternal Fulness. For as the Heavens a bove are in a Mirror seen, as far beneath them, as they are a bove, and both Conjoyned make an Intire Sphere, Seeming Divers but the very Same; So doth God and my nothing, both Apprehended. (*SM,* III.78)

God's glory is above *and* below him; or in the heavens where he would expect to see it, and surrounding his human form in the reflection. The mirror imparts a lesson: humanity is exalted as part of the perfect sphere.

Traherne also uses mirror imagery to analyze the topic of innate ideas. The poet celebrates access to the divine through the infinite soul. He describes both innate ideas and sense experience as sources of knowledge. As mentioned previously, this belief is characteristic of Latitudinarian thinking. In "The Preparative" the speaker describes the perfect vision in his preexistent state. Before his senses "knew" his physical body, he had an awareness of his Endless Soul. This soul is like an all encompassing Eye and its primary purpose is to see; thus he is "All Life and Sense, / A Naked Simple Pure *Intelligence'* (19–20). This is a creature having some kind of knowledge before terrestrial existence, or innate ideas. The poet also seems to imply that the preexistent state is a forerunner to another kind of existence which will involve sense-experience. In stanza five he says:

> Be'ing thus prepard for all Felicity,
> Not prepossest with Dross,
> Nor stifly glued to gross
> And dull Materials that might ruine me,
> Not fetterd by an Iron Fate
> With vain Affections in my Earthy State
> To any thing that might Seduce
> My Sence, or misemploy it from its use
> I was as free
> As if there were nor Sin, nor Miserie. (41-50)

He is a being prepared for an earthly existence of active understanding, or Felicity. The implications of this passage are significant; like the Latitudinarians Traherne discounts Calvinist ideas of predestination. He supports the notion that man can use his intellect without, as the sceptic fears, being deluded. He is a creature

expressly created with the capacity to comprehend, act freely and seek the divine. Traherne cannot believe that a Perfect Being would create a physical world in which creatures with faulty sense perception walk about deluded. Such a creation would be hopelessly futile. Instead, the message in "The Preparative" corresponds with the points mentioned earlier; the terrestrial human state is part of the whole "sphere" of perfection, not some obstacle to divine revelation.

How does the image of the mirror operate in "The Preparative"? The Endless Orb of Sight, the speaker's soul, has powers which operate like a mirror:

> Pure Empty Powers that did nothing loath,
> Did like the fairest Glass,
> Or Spotless polisht Brass,
> Themselvs soon in their Objects Image cloath.
> (51 -4)

The soul absorbs and then conveys objects perfectly as the comparison with the mirror would suggest. It has infinite expansiveness, depth, and the ability to comprehend everything. But the words "Empty" and "Spotless" are problematic, suggesting that the soul is only a reflecting surface, or sensory organ, which does not have images of its own but must rely on external objects to "fill" it. This use of the mirror counters the notion of innate ideas or "Pure Intelligence." In the final stanza he says he is "A Disentangled and a Naked Sence / A Mind thats unpossest . . . An Empty and a Quick Intelligence" (61–64). How can one be empty and intelligent at the same time? Traherne is very inconsistent at this point for in the attempt to convey the clearness of the glass, the perfection and purity of the soul as an apprehending agent, he contradicts the notion of innate ideas and intelligence before corporeal existence. The mirror seems to be an inadequate simile for conveying innate ideas, for its nature is to be "empty" until "filled" by an object.

Select Meditations provides us with another example of the poet's inconsistency with regard to the empty soul and innate ideas. In the second meditation of the Fourth Century Traherne explains that man's comprehension is the foundation of all his certainty. He is a creature made to apprehend:

> The Foundation of all mans certainty, Hope and Glory: is His compr[e]hension. To which in all my Thoughts I have continual recours, as to a Strong Tower on every occasion. For by it is He a Divine and celestial creature. It is a Rasa Tabula Prepared in Him for the Drawing afterward of all the Pictures in Gods kingdom: An inward Theatre of all His Actions: An infinit Mirror of His Divine Glory: A concealed Centre of His Eternal Being: yea a Temple of His omnipresence, made so visible, and Powerfull in the Soul, that when we reflect upon it, it is impossible to avoyd it. on purpose we might be sure we are Eternal Creatures. (*SM,* IV.2)

In this passage the soul is a blank slate, a "Rasa Tabula," a clear mirror, waiting to be filled with the wonders of the creation. But in the third meditation it is hardly that. He opens this passage ecstatic about his endless comprehension. He celebrates the magnitude of his soul:

> The Heaven of Heavens are not able to contain me. For my Soul exceedeth all Limitations. It is so Like God Almighty, that it comprehendeth the Heavens as the Dust of a Ballance, Spanneth the world, seeth all Ages as one Day, Surmounteth the Heavens and Searcheth further. (*SM*, IV.3)

Then he declares that infinite space "prevents," or comes before "the Information of all Sence":

> This Infinit space is a Thing So intimately known to the soul, that tis Impossible to remove it. It prevents the Information of all sence: and Endureth for Ever. It is the onely Primum, et necessario Cognitum in rerum natura. It is Impossible so much as once to unsuppose it. we may annihilate the Heavens and the Earth and suppose them gon. But the Space will remain behind, wherein they stood, and will be as necessarily seen, as the soul is, or as the Power of seeing it. (*SM,* IV.3)

Here there is no empty slate or "Spotless" mirror but knowledge. In *Select Meditations* IV.2 perhaps Traherne still has in mind the Platonic model; the empty slate *is* the Primal Form implanted within the individual before his/her terrestrial existence. We can compare two passages that will suggest that he does, the first by Traherne and the second by Benjamin Whichcote, a leading Cambridge Platonist:

> 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 hav a Mind to fill this with Profitable Wonders. (*CM,* I.1)

Here, the empty space is a site of potential knowledge in accordance with the belief that man must be an active agent in receiving knowledge. Whichcote's passage explains that God created an empty space or room within the human mind:

> . . . the Grace of God doth its own work besides; it empties the Mind of fond Persuasion, foolish Self-conceit and presumption, and so makes room, gives a Man Capacity to receive from God, both the grace of Assistance, and also makes him capable of Forgiveness.[58]

Here Whichcote links God's Grace and man's free will; God provides the space for man to act. Nevertheless, in juxtaposing the idea of an empty mirror and preexistent knowledge Traherne creates a paradoxical situation. Essentially he insists upon the co-existence of knowledge and ignorance. We must conclude that Traherne has an imaginative preference for paradox and is less interested in logical explanations. This is another aspect of fusing the human-divine relationship, the lowness and highness of the spheres. Traherne wishes to be inclusive, having both the perfect spotless mirror and preexistent intelligence. Previously in this thesis I said that the soul's ability to comprehend infinity is one of Traherne's main tenets. But if knowledge and ignorance can coexist, one must account for times when the soul *is* limited. Upon further investigations of his work, we can find that he does indeed have a place for ignorance and boundaries in general within his theological paradigm.

When exploring Traherne's religious paradigm one finds that, as Carol Marks says, he displays an "eclectic intellect."[59] Politically he can be aligned with the conformists but it must be realized that he adopts many nonconformist techniques without much regard for espoused principles. His desire for unity represented by a strong national church also includes a desire for a union between the individual and the Godhead which he represents with the image of the mirror. As Traherne experiments with different spatial concepts to delineate the man-God

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[58] Benjamin Whichcote, *Several Discourses*, vol. III (London, 1703). Cited in C. A. Patrides, *The Cambridge Platonists,* (London: Edward Arnold, 1969) 21.
[59] Marks, "Thomas Traherne and Cambridge Platonism," 521.

relationship, the co-union of the physical and spiritual, he also uses the mirror to make a statement about the acquisition of knowledge.

4. The Mirror in "Shadows in the Water"

This discussion about the nature of Traherne's mirror imagery must include one of his most celebrated poems, "Shadows in the Water." Much criticism has been devoted to interpreting this Wordsworthian poem about a childhood vision which enables the speaker to achieve a state of heightened awareness as an adult. Two outstanding discussions of this poem are by Stanley Stewart and Alvin Snider.[60] Stewart explains that Traherne's poetry is full of figures suggesting a "mingling" or "twining" of man with objects outside him. The child's mistake allows him to perceive something more than view; to go beyond the normal adult boundaries of selfhood and expand to include others. Stewart compares this episode to Narcissus' experience by the pool. But unlike the inward-turning love of the Ovidian Lover, the speaker's true self-love inevitably turns outward to include innumerable "unknown Friends." Snider points out that "The child's error becomes a source of visionary understanding that he carries over into adulthood; he learns about the existence of a duplicate, inward, and seemingly insubstantial world that suddenly impinges upon reality. . . ."[61] Indeed, the poem *is* about expanded consciousness, for the pool of water, acting as a mirror, expands the speaker's "center." However, although it emphasizes one of Traherne's basic tenets, that our childhood vision enables us to transcend boundaries, the poem also involves things unknown and the limitations of individual understanding, for this mirror conveys shadows and not a perfect reflection.

A careful reading of a passage found in the *Select Meditations* proves fruitful. The passage resembles the poem and will help illuminate its meaning:

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[60] Stewart, 139–169; Alvin Snider, "The Self-Mirroring Mind in Milton and Traherne," *UTQ* 55.4 (1986) 313–327.
[61] Snider, 313

> Shadows in the water are Like their Substances. And So reall, that no Painter can againe Express them. even here beneath the sun is seen, and the face of Heaven. O give me more of that Spirit, wherby we strongly Lov and Delight each in other. whereby we Liv in each other[s] soul, and feel our Joys and sorrows! The Father is crowned in God the Son, The Eternal Son in God the father. And both obeyed in obedience to the Holy Ghost. one will in three persons. But are they not one in Essence too! one in Felicity, one in Lov! All Treasures are the fathers in the Son, All Joys are the sons in the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the Lov of the father and the Son Dwelling in us, or to speak plainly seene by us.[62] For as the sun when it shines on a Mirror, is seen within it: So Love when it is seen, Ravisheth the Soul becaus it toucheth it, and Dwelleth in the understanding by which it is seen, and the sight of it Enflameth the soul with Lov againe. the Lov seen is the Lov returned. or else Exchangeth, Dwelling there and Begetting its Similitude. Three Persons united in Lov, are one in Essence: or what ever Difficulty is in that word, one by the Best of all possible unions. (*SM,* II.72)

The passages preceding the meditation are missing from the manuscript (68–71) and we may have lost much in the way of context. Neither do we have all of meditations seventy-three and seventy-five, nor any of meditation seventy-four. But since "Shadows in the Water" is the title of the poem as well as the opening words of the above meditation, perhaps we may assume that the two pieces were similarly inspired.

The connotations of the word "Shadow" cannot be ignored. The water produces dark and hazy reflections. The shadows are "Like" their Substances, or similar to but not exactly equal to them. But what even are the Substances? They could either be the objects reflected, or the essences of objects which are defined by the eyes of the beholder. We should remember that Traherne repeatedly states that human thoughts assign value to the physical world. Unless the Creation is apprehended by people, it has no value. Also, one of the "Substances," or objects, is presumably the speaker himself who stands above the water gazing at his reflection.

A reference to "Painter" may evoke Neoplatonic ideas of art and artists. In Platonic terms, Nature is a replica of the true Ideals that are supraterrestrial. An

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[62] Here Traherne clarifies his use of the figurative word "Dwelling." He is self-consciously aligning himself with conformist discourse. But he is not always so cautious as seen in *Centuries of Meditation* II.45 (see page 186 below).

artist, in copying Nature (physical forms) is making a copy of a copy and therefore reproducing something that is yet one more step removed from the original. The Neoplatonists had a slightly different view, one derived from Plotinus, which states that Nature is a replica and so is art, but art is an image in the artist's mind that may actually be closer to the original form.[63] Quite possibly, the "Painter" recalls these theories which talk about original forms and copies (or inferior reflections). And yet Traherne emphasizes the authenticity of the reflection by saying the shadows are so real that a Painter cannot improve them. The words "so real" are at odds with the connotations of the word "Shadows" and we must be attentive to the fact that the poet is showing two impulses within the passage: a desire to show the natural difference between objects and reflections, and a desire to merge the two by emphasizing their similarity. The pool of water opens up visual possibilities like the mirrors in other poems, but strictures still remain.[64]

Traherne seems to have difficulty determining whether the two sides of a mirror are like one another or equivalent to one another and hence he vacillates between simile and metaphor. Similarly, he is inconsistent when he describes the soul; sometimes it is like a mirror and other times it is a mirror. In *Centuries of Meditation* he prays his soul will reflect God's Brightness and the reciprocity of this action will merge him and the divine:

> O Let me so long Eye Thee, till I be turned into Thee, and look upon me till Thou art formed in me, that I may be a Mirror of thy Brightness, an Habitation of thy Lov and a Temple of thy Glory." (*CM*, I.87)

As seen previously, some of Traherne's poems describe a pure soul-mirror reflecting perfectly. They also demonstrate that the human state is part of a whole sphere of perfection and an element of the divine plan. Although this optimism is prevalent in Traherne's poetry, the vacillation between simile and metaphor and the

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[63] C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954) 319–20.

[64] Most mirrors in the seventeenth century would have been made of polished metal instead of glass, and therefore would have offered a dark or imperfect reflection. When using mirror imagery, Traherne shifts back and forth, at one time talking about shadowy reflections and at other times perfect reflections.

disparity hinted at in *Select Meditation* II.72 point to an inner insecurity. Perhaps a perfect mirroring will not happen, and barriers will prevent a clear reflection (the shadows are *like* their substances, but perhaps not quite as good, or real, or true). This insecurity will be discussed in more detail later in this section, but for now meditation seventy-two requires further analysis in order to reveal why Traherne shows a strong impulse to unite the two sides of the mirror.

Traherne tries to disseminate individual consciousness into others and ultimately into the Godhead. The speaker gazes into the watery pool and sees his reflection; the reflective action in "Delight each in other" confirms this. "[E]ach in other" suggests more than the speaker just talking to a form he knows to be himself. There is somehow another person, or other people reflected in the water with whom he communes. He proposes that he and the reflections eliminate boundaries and unite. Thus the mirror, a watery surface, helps diffuse individuality into "otherness." The speaker continues by suddenly transferring the discussion from himself and the shadows in the water to the Trinity. It is a logical transition for he can continue his meditations on having many in one and vice versa. The Father reciprocates love with the Son, they in turn with the Holy Ghost. He exclaims that all three are of the same essence. Hence we have the speaker in an intimate relationship with the shadows in a pool, and the three parts of the Trinity in an intimate relationship with one another.

Further in the passage Traherne brings these two relationships together using a mirror (no longer the pool of water, but an idealized mirror imagined by the speaker after his experience with the pool). The union of the Trinity moves to encircle mankind as well and Traherne likens this phenomenon to the experience of the speaker gazing into a mirror: "For as the sun when it shines on a Mirror, is seen within it: So Love when it is seen, Ravisheth the Soul becaus it toucheth it" (*SM*, II.72). As seen before, the poet uses the dynamics of a mirror to illustrate the action of the soul. As this soul-mirror perceives Divine Love it simultaneously

absorbs and reflects it. Traherne shows the reciprocity of this kind of phenomenon, the likeness between subject and object, and their continuity. I have mentioned the hemispheres, a human being the lower one and God the higher, and that together they make a perfect sphere. The above passage expresses the same idea but additionally brings our attention to the paradox of the Trinity and invites us to see it with the model of the mirror in mind. Though not explicitly stated, another conundrum which we are invited to ponder is the hypostatic union.

The hypostatic union is behind the poet's use of the mirror, as looking at two other meditations will reveal. The paradox of the union, the Godhead within a lowly human form, is mysterious:

> God is a Fulness in all Extremes: Happieness a mistery in which contrarieties are coincident: And Glory an Abysse in which contradictions unite, and reconcile them selves. (*SM,* III.82)

Both the human and divine are crucial parts of the complete sphere. Another passage from the *Select Meditations* shows the poet's explanation for the hypostatic union. He explains why God should have a human form at all:

> The End for which our Saviour was ordained of God to relate to the Second Person in the Trinity is Plain and Evident. God and Man became one in Person that God and Man might be one in covenant. (*SM*, III.95)

Traherne holds an orthodox view of the person of Christ; He contains two natures in one person. Just a human element or just a spiritual element does not make the complete "Person":

> The Humanity of our Saviour is a Perfect nature, not a Person, becaus it relateth to the Deity. The soul of Man is a Perfect Nature, not a person, because it relateth to its Earthl[y] Body. (*SM*, III.95)

The poet mingles the human and divine in this passage by choosing to highlight the human element of God and the divine element of man. Chapter III discussed Traherne's belief in a *Felix Culpa,* and meditation ninety-five reflects this belief by showing that imperfections are all part of a plan: "And if by reason of that relation it be imperfect, that impe[r]fection is wholy founded upon the will of God." The

remainder of the passage is an explanation as to why it is important that the Soul relate to a Body and not be pure spirit like the Angels, "Separat" and "Single":

> But why shoul[d] the soul be made so to relate to the Body? For what Soveraign End could that be ordained. certainly it is far more Difficult to tell then why our Saviour relateth to his GodHead. Separat Souls are Single Angels, relateing in Heaven to Earthly Bodies, Able to Enjoy the celestial world, to see and Delight in Spiritual Things as Angels do: to Lov the Divine Essence and to reign in communion with God as do the Holy Cherubims. Why then should they Pertaine unto Bodies, being So Divine and Perfect Beings, why not made Single as the Angles are! why not absolute and Eternaly separat? Surely for Some High and Lofty End. If not Equal to that for which Jesus christ became a Man, yet like unto it, and the End of it. He came that we might be restored to that End for which we were made: to relate to Bodies. which was that there might [be] room and Place among invisible Things for Material creatures, use and Benefit in a Material world. It was Impossible that Heaven and Earth Should be created did not our Souls relate to Bodies. were it not for us no Sun, no Sea, no Star, no day, would in the Kingdom of God have either Place or Being. Where no eye is, no Light is needfull. where no breath, no Air, where no visible Body, no Dominion over Fowles and Fish and Beasts. where no soul informing Such a Body, no such Body can at all be usefull. To the Intent Therefore all the Glory of Divine Wisdom Goodness and Power Seen and Exprest in visible Things, might be commodious in all our Eys our Souls were made to relate to Bodies, That For the Benefits they receive even by there Bodies, in all the Glories of the visible Heavens, they might returne the Sacrifices of Prais and Thanksgiving, which no Bodie without a Soul is able to Return. Man being thus made the Soveraign End of all visible and Invisible Things. the centre of union wherein all the Fulness of Godhead closeth. meet with the Angels to Enjoy By his Soul the Eternity of God, with all the Invisible Treasures of his spiritual kingdom, and by his Body meet to Enjoy all the Materials of the created world. He Being the head of all the Creatures. (*SM*, III.95)

The traditional hierarchical structure of the cosmos, from lesser to greater, moves from earthly elements to spiritual ones: vegetables, animals, humans, angels, and the divine. But for Traherne, an angelic order is not above one in which a spirit merges with a body. The poet assumes a divine "Intent" or "End" behind all physical phenomenon and reasons that since humans interact with the physical world there is a purpose for it; divine expression within physical things is part of God's immanence and perfect plan. Humans, with all their imperfections and limitations, are a focal point within this plan. We can see the attraction of the mirror as representative image, for it conveys concretely the intermingled relationship of the two halves of a "person," the lowness and the highness of the hemispheres.

Traherne's view of the Trinity is in accordance with Anglican teachings and the orthodox Christian tradition. The three persons in the Godhead are indivisible: "But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the holy Ghost is all one: the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal."[65] Although Traherne had close affinities with the Latitudinarians perhaps here, with his meditations upon the Trinity and application of its mysteries to the condition of the individual, he does not follow the same vein or spirit of their rational movement. Though they believed in fundamental Christian mysteries, the Latitudinarians did not relish disputations upon the doctrine of the Trinity and mystery of the Hypostatic Union. Rivers points out that,

> The latitude-men repeatedly emphasise that Christianity is plain and easy to understand, and though they accept that it contains mysteries above reason, they tend to play them down.[66]

Their insistence upon rational proof for all phenomena and claim that the intellect—aided by reason and scientific methodology—could fathom them, was not conducive to treatment of certain theological conundrums. However this dilemma does not daunt Traherne and he welcomes the paradox of a perfect union between the human and divine. In the *Centuries of Meditation* he meditates upon the Passion (*CM*, I.89), the Trinity (*CM*, II.45), and the relationship of them both to the human condition:

> . . . the Son is in the father: In us it is the H. Ghost. The lov of GOD being seen, being GOD in us. Purifying, Illuminating, Strengthening and Comforting the Soul of the Seer. For GOD by shewing communicateth Himself to Men and Angels. And when He Dwelleth in the Soul, Dwelleth in the Sight. And when He Dwelleth in the Sight Atchieving all that lov can do for such a Soul. And thus the World serveth you as it is a Mirror wherin you Contemplat the Blessed Trinity. for it Plainly sheweth that GOD is Lov, and in His being Lov you see the Unity of the Blessed Trinity, and a Glorious Trinity in the Blessed Unitie. (*CM*, II.45)

The divine nature is found within all humans. Sense experience informs individuals ("the World serveth you") and reveals the nature of the Trinity. The nature of the

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[65] Book of Common Prayer, Church of England (London, 1662) Evening Prayer, sig. C3.
[66] Rivers, 70.

Trinity, the highness and lowness of man and the immanence of the Holy Ghost, is directly related to the human condition in general. Traherne appropriates the mystery of the Trinity using it in a self-referential way:

> O Adorable *Trinity*! What hast Thou don! Thou hast made me the End of all Things, and all the End of me. I in all, and all in Me. In evry Soul whom Thou hast Created, Thou hast given me the Similitude of thy self, to Enjoy! (*CM*, I.69)

Accompanying his appeals to reason are Traherne's other ideals, namely, the primacy of the individual. In meditation seventy-two Traherne connects his investigations of the "Shadows in the water" with his vision for unity, ideally represented by the mysterious union of the Trinity. Bearing this relationship in mind helps elucidate the poem "Shadows in the Water."

Daniel Jaeckle has written an informative piece entitled "Traherne's Dialectic in 'Shadows in the Water'" which accounts for the poet's impulse to bring together opposing strands of human behavior. He says that Traherne is concerned with the seventeenth-century theory of estates and that the poem shows "stages in the life-process—the innocence of infancy, the misery of a maturity dominated by custom and common sense, and an enlightened adulthood."[67] According to Jaeckle, these stages are part of a "dialectical process" within the poem in which one estate is presented, and due to deficiencies inherent within that estate, replaced or "negated" by the following estate.[68] The estates are as follows, though they are not all represented in the actual poem: innocence, misery, enlightenment, and glory.[69] In the first estate the child or infant in the opening stanza is innocent and has clear uncorrupted vision. He is able to appreciate and acknowledge the world beneath the watery surface, however, his understanding is deficient for he cannot see that the underworld is a mere reflection of his own world. He accepts what he sees at face

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[67] Daniel Jaeckle, "Traherne's Dialectic in "Shadows in the Water," *South Central Review* 4. 4 (1987): 3–13. Jaeckle focuses on three estates at first, the three terrestrial estates, but then mentions the fourth one, which is glory after death, at the end of his article.

[68] Jaeckle, 3.

[69] When describing the third estate Jaeckle replaces the word "grace" with "enlightenment."

value without understanding the ethereal nature of the shadows. The second estate—one which is not clearly presented in the poem but which Jaeckle supposes would be the next logical step of development—is the rational adult who realizes that the reflection is not part of the physical world, that he was mistaken to have thought of it as a world at all: the empiricist. The final terrestrial estate is one of adult enlightenment, the one that can perceive that the vision, although a childhood "mistake," has imparted higher truths about a spiritual world:

> Mistake tho false, intending tru;
> A *Seeming* somwhat more than *View*;
> That doth instruct the Mind
> In Things that ly behind,
> And many Secrets to us show
> Which afterwards we com to know. (3–8)

The speaker in the poem is at this enlightened adult stage recounting his experiences as a child (stage one). The fourth and final estate, glory, is not yet achieved, it is mysterious to the speaker and prompts his many questions at the end of the poem:

> What *Secret* borders on those Ends?
> Are lofty Hevens hurl'd
> 'Bout your inferior World?
> Are ye the Representatives
> Of other Peopl's distant Lives?
>
> Of all the Play-mates which I knew
> That here I do the Image view
> In other Selvs; what can it mean?
> But that below the purling Stream
> Som unknown Joys there be
> Laid up in Store for me;
> To which I shall, when that thin Skin
> Is broken, be admitted in. (68–80)

This final estate can only be reached after death when the "thin Skin / Is broken." Jaeckle's discussion serves to delineate the different levels of perception the speaker of the poem has obtained. The clairvoyance of the infant-eye is ultimately eclipsed by the understanding of the enlightened adult.

Although "Shadows in the Water" is a poem of self-discovery, several barriers arise which inhibit a perfect understanding of divine truths. One barrier is the absence of language. The speaker sees his other selves in the water, identifies

with them, but ultimately cannot communicate with them. Despite use of the mirror in other poems, which shows that spiritual mysteries are accessible to the human intellect, in this poem he depicts a degree of uncommunicability: "I call'd them oft, but call'd in vain; / No Speeches we could entertain" (33–4). Another obstacle is the shadows themselves, for as mentioned before, shadows are not as vibrant as an original: "Tho it did not to View exceed / A Phantasm, 'tis a World indeed" (43-4). The speaker's ignorance also hampers a perfect vision. He sees the world but wonders what is beyond it: "O ye my Friends / What *Secret* borders on those Ends?" (67–8). This question is followed by a series of others which one could imagine hold a plaintive tone. Here we might recall the slight hesitancy detected in meditation seventy-two, the insecurity that the reflection is not always complete.

Traherne suggests hemispheres (or a half sphere separated by a mirror), the heavenly divine one of God and the lowly corrupt one of man, with reference to the "*Antipodes* " (38) which are part of a globe. In his editorial note about the "Heat and Cold" (32) Margoliouth says, "this is mere thinking, which is a pity, since it gets away from close observation of the looking-glass world."[70] However, Traherne is actually explaining the natural properties of a pool of water from the point of view of a person standing above it. The pool is dark (as "Shadows" indicates), while the world behind the speaker is light; the water would be cold just as the world above comparatively warm. In addition these words are opposites and bring out the corresponding contrast between God and man. The phrase "Beneath the Water Peeple drown'd. / Yet with another Hev'n crown'd," (17–18) also sets up a dichotomy.

The last barrier I wish to mention is the "Film" or "thin skin" which keeps the speaker from passing into the other realm. The first thing to note is that it is not an insurmountable barrier, solid and forbidding. The speaker even assumes at the end of the poem that he will break through it: "I shall, when that thin Skin / Is

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[70] H. M. Margoliouth, ed., *Centuries, Poems, and Thanksgivings*, Volume II, by Thomas Traherne, 377.

broken, be admitted in" (79–80). Several passages from the *Select Meditations* may shed light on the poem:

> Eternal Life is an object of our enjoyment here beneath. God the father Creating the world, Hereafter. There being a Thin vail in this Endless Tabernacle, between the Holy, and the Holy of Holies. which vail was rent at the passion of Jesus christ. by Tran[s]formation to the Divine Image is Tran[s]portation caused. The objects of our Glory are ever present: but our Thoughts are Absent. If our Souls were present we should be present with them. For our Treasures Glitter round a bout us evermore. (*SM*, III.60)

The words "Thin vail" closely resemble the thin film and skin in "Shadows in the Water." In the Scriptures, the tearing of the curtain represents the transcendence of Old Testament laws and the making of a new covenant through the sacrifice of the Son. The boundaries separating the common man are eliminated so all can enter the "Holy of Holies." This directly corresponds with Traherne's philosophy and use of the hypostatic union as theological model. So often in his works the soul transcends walls, rooms, and other man-made boundaries to reach the divine. An example is seen in the poem "Hosanna:"

> No more shall Walls, no more shall Walls confine
> That glorious Soul which in my Flesh doth shine:
> No more shall Walls of Clay or Mud
> Nor Ceilings made of Wood,
> Nor crystal Windows, bound my Sight,
> But Rather shall admit Delight. (1–6)

The speaker offers praise for the transcendence of the soul which bypasses corruptive enclosures that restrict his enjoyment of "Treasures" (25). In *Select Meditations* Traherne speaks of the dual nature of humankind—one confined, and one unrestricted:

> There is in a man a Double selfe, according as He is in God, or the world. In the world He is confined, and walketh up and Down, in Little Roome: but in God He is evry where. Hence it is that his Thoughts can touch any part of Eternitie. (*SM*, II.92)

A scriptural passage about the replacement of the Old Testament by the New may have been on Traherne's mind at the end of "Shadows in the Water:"

> 6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life

. . . . . .

11 For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.

12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:

13 *And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:*

14 *But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.*

15 *But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.*

16 *Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.*

17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

18 *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* (II Corinthians 3:6–18)[71]

Contemplation of the hypostatic union and replacing the old covenant with the new is like removing the veil (breaking the "skin") from one's face, and seeing divine truths reflected in a clear mirror.

Traherne's poem "Fullnesse" contains elements as well which will help to elucidate "Shadows in the Water." The first stanza reads,

That Light, that Sight, that Thought,
Which in my Soul at first He wrought,
Is sure the only Act to which I may
Assent to Day:
The Mirror of an Endless Life,
The Shadow of a Virgin Wife,
A Spiritual World Standing within,
An Univers enclosd in Skin. (1–8)

The first few lines mention the gift of Divine Grace which enables the speaker to rise. The gift is a mirror of Endless Life. This is a commonplace in Traherne's belief system: the soul is infinite in its capacities. Margoliouth says he can only understand line six in light of Traherne's celibacy.[72] However, most likely the "Virgin Wife" is a reference to the Virgin Mary.[73] The shadow is obviously a

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[71] The italics are mine.

[72] Margoliouth, 352.

[73] See J. E. Barnes' article, "A Caroline Devotion to the Virgin Mary," *Theology* 73 (1970): 535–541, for further information about Traherne and mariological writings of the age. Barnes states that an unpublished work from the *Church's Year Book* may be a Caroline litany to the Virgin

reflection of her. So again we have the symbol of the mirror superimposed. If these attributes of the Soul (or gifts) are a shadow of her, perhaps the passage suggests that the soul, being another version of Mary, is another Bride of God through Divine Grace. The following line reads, "A Spiritual World Standing within," and the Universe within is a human soul within a body. Or perhaps the skin is a womb and the human inside a microcosm, or small universe, and this stanza suggests an imminent nativity. Thus, in conjunction with a description of ascension, endless life, and the Universe, Traherne injects a human element (the flesh of the body) in the latter half of the stanza. The spiritual world at first seems to have no bounds but ultimately is enclosed by skin. Breaking the skin may indicate freedom from bodily constraints or the birth of new life. The last lines of "Shadows in the Water" declare "Som unknown Joys there be / Laid up in Store for me; / To which I shall, when that thin Skin / Is broken, be admitted in," and they refer to the fourth estate, glory, which comes after death. But if we interpret the breaking of the skin as a nativity (even the divine Nativity), then death is a rebirth.

Hence, in "Shadows in the Water" the breaking skin has many meanings. The speaker's mind has wandered into a nether world and realized the possibilities of the expanding soul. However despite the sense of security, the speaker's words are also tinged with some hesitancy. He knows that the thin skin will break but it has not yet, emphasizing separation from the divine. A passage from the *Select Meditation* is revealing:

> When we hear or read of the Hypostatical union; Divine Lov, or the Passion of our Lord: These objects appeare as Divers, as the Eys are several, that behold the Same. The Things are open and obvious to all: but the Right Apprehension of them Inaccessible. To some Eys they Seem False, to some Dubious and uncertain, to others Dim and to others Light and of Little value. To all the world distant and Sublime: to the most of all Cold and unEffectual. onely to the wise and holy they appear what they ought. to me they appear infinitly Less, weaker and Inferior then what they are. (*SM*, III.97).

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written by Thomas Traherne. One should note the "titles" given to the Virgin in this work: "Mirror of Humility and Obedience. / Mirror of Wisdom and Devotion. / Mirror of Modesty and Chastity. . . ."

The poet has often said such things, that it is our own corrupt vision that hinders us from seeing the truth. In "Shadows in the Water" we hear his own plaintive voice amidst the sense of wonder. This voice might also be speaking through a meditation:

> But O that I could see them with a Sad yet Great and serious Eye, fain would I have a Stable, Sound, and venerable Esteem, a Profound and Reverend Apprehension of them, as they are indeed infinitely Deep True and Serious. (*SM,* III.97)

Traherne's theological paradigm is based upon his vision of unity and the juxtaposition of human and divine elements. The mirror-metaphor is a device for conveying this relationship and the poet plays with various spatial arrangements in an attempt to visualize it for his reader—the "highness" and "lowness" prompts considerations of the hypostatic union; many elements within a single object recalls the Trinity; the relationship between the physical object and its nonphysical reflection represents the mixture of the terrestrial and spiritual. Contradictions are part of his felicitous vision and he embraces paradox, for in his mind human deficiencies are part of a special plan. An exception of course is the hesitant tone found in "Shadows in the Water." In this poem Traherne gives voice to human confusion over religious mysteries which are ever-present despite the union of the hemispheres. This same hesitancy is coupled with a plaintive note because the "Right Apprehension" is sometimes "Inaccessible" (*SM*, III.97).

This chapter has shown that Traherne adopts the conformist rhetoric against metaphor. As seen in his poem "The Author to the Critical Peruser," he espouses their stated goal of using a plain style of speech and eliminating metaphor. However, like many contemporaries he does not always adhere to his linguistic theory. Often his own adjectival statement—for instance, his description of the "real" jewels as opposed to "false" ones—determines what is clear, plain, and genuine. True, he does not use elaborate conceits as did the metaphysical poets of an earlier generation but he does rely upon metaphor to convey abstract theological

tenets. For instance, he uses the mirror as a metaphor for the soul and through this image conveys the complexities of the individual's relation to God, the nature of the Trinity, and the hypostatic union. Metaphor for Traherne is that which conceals spiritual truth. However, when he himself employs figurative or metaphorical language to convey a theological message, in his opinion, he is not being "metaphorical." In fact, he goes so far as to insist that certain metaphorical expressions be taken literally—God bottles up tears; humans tears are dissolved pearl; and humans wear spiritual armor. Ultimately, certain notions relating to God can only be discussed using figurative language.

Epilogue - A Commentary on *The Ceremonial Law*

Traherne scholarship is at a pivotal point with the recent discovery of two new Traherne manuscripts. In the Autumn of 1996 *The Ceremonial Law* was discovered in the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D. C.[1] In the Spring of 1997 the Lambeth Palace Manuscript was discovered in Lambeth Palace, London.[2] As the finding of the latter occurred during the final stages of this thesis and initial investigations into the work are still being conducted, it is not discussed at length here. I wish to devote this Epilogue to analyzing *The Ceremonial Law* and in so doing explicate further some key points which this thesis explores, particularly the employment of certain images such as the veil and human skin, the focus upon the hypostatic union, and Traherne's attempt to communicate his theology to an audience. *The Ceremonial Law* is a typological poem based on the Books of Genesis and Exodus and Julia Smith and Laetitia Yeandle have pointed out that "Traherne's typology is largely conventional."[3] It is approximately 1,800 lines long[4] and divided into twenty-four sections, each with a heading corresponding to a certain Biblical episode. The poem is not philosophically challenging as are the *Commentaries of Heaven* and *Christian Ethicks*. Rather, through the work we see Traherne as a story-teller, relating the New Covenant to events in the Books of Genesis and Exodus. He seems to be addressing a less sophisticated audience, perhaps his parishioners at Credenhill. He utilizes typological references and analogies to expound his theology. In the introduction he sets up a scheme whereby he and his reader will attempt to decipher the "Hieroglyphick Law," or read the "pleasant posies" of the Old Testament in order to understand the New

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[1] The discovery of the manuscript is announced in Julia Smith and Laetitia Yeandle, "Felicity Disguisd in Fiery Words, Genesis and Exodus in a Newly Discovered Poem by Thomas Traherne," *TLS* (7 November 1997): 17. All references from this manuscript will henceforth be cited in the body of this thesis.

[2] The discovery of the manuscript was announced by Jeremy Maule, "Five New Traherne Works: the Lambeth Manuscript," *Thomas Traherne Conference*, Brasenose College, Oxford, 30 July 1997.

[3] Smith and Yeandle, "Felicity Disguisd in fiery Words," 17.

[4] Smith and Yeandle, "Felicity Disguisd in fiery Words," 17.

Testament. The Old Testament events are the type fulfilled by Christ, the antitype. Traherne, or the "I" within the text, also fulfills the divine scheme as antitype:

> Two thousand yeers before my Savior came,
> In Hieroglyphick Laws I see His name.
> My GOD prepard, before my self was born,
> Great Joys wherwith I might my Life adorn.
> He first ordaind that I a Life should liv
> Of Sweet Delights; which His fair Hand did giv:
> From whence since I by Sin revolted am,
> He since ordaind His son to be a Man.
> Whom that I might more certainly descrie,
> With ancient Figures He did Beautifie:
> And made those Types the pleasant Posies be
> Of His great Lov, and Kindness unto me. (*CL*, p.1)

Highlighting the importance of scriptural texts, Traherne emphasizes the need to interpret the role of Biblical figures. He describes various episodes such as "Adam's Fall," Abel's Lamb," and "NOAHS RAINBOW." Often, rather than relaying the events of the Old Testament, he focuses upon their antitype. For instance, the events of Adam's Fall are conspicuously absent in the section by the same name. Instead attention is directed to Christ's sacrifice.

We have seen that the poet is fascinated by the hypostatic union and his preoccupation with this subject is evident in *The Ceremonial Law*. In a section entitled "Adams Fall" the sinfulness of Adam merges with the hypostasis of Christ: "GOD sees the nakedness that Man was in, / Covers his Shame, and clothes him with the Skin" (3). "[N]akedness" and "shame" refer to Adam; in covering Adam God simultaneously makes his Son human, by clothing him in "Skin." Throughout the poem Traherne emphasizes the physical nature of Christ with references to skin, blood, and eating. The lamb of Abel, a type of Christ, provides humans with food and clothing. The entry "Abel's Lamb" describes Christ as a sacrifice to be eaten:

> An Innocent, that from all Blemish free,
> Owning no Sin, might aptly Die for me.
> A usefull Creature that is fit for meat:
> To note that we our Sacrifice must Eat.
> A Creature meet to clothe us with its Wool,
> And Skin; How Apposite; How plain, how full! (*CL*, p.3)

Traherne's description is simple yet graphic. The significance of this lamb from the Book of Genesis is not only fulfilled in Christ, but also revived throughout human history in the myriad sacrifices, both noble and ignoble, made by humans. If noble the sacrifice recalls the offering of Abel and Christ; if ignoble the necessity of having a saviour.

Traherne relies upon pictorial representations in order to convey abstract theological tenets such as the nature of the hypostatic union. One of the most elaborate is found in "NOAHS RAINBOW." In contrast to the earthly sacrifice of the lamb/Lamb with all its physical properties (oozing blood and carnal meat), the Rainbow is a splendid image from heaven representing God's mercy:

> From Earth we offer up a Sacrifice,
> And GOD sends down Salvation from the Skies.
> Upon the Altar He appears in fire,
> The Rainbow Him in splendor doth Attire. (*CL*, pp.4–5).

Traherne repeats his figurative use of clothes but now, instead of using skin, God cloaks Aaron with the colors of the Rainbow:

> The Glorious Lace of Peaces Coat contains
> Each Color that Mysteriously remains
> In Aarons Girdle, Purple White and Blew
> With shining Red we in the RainBow view.
> And Orient Gold! All these that Holy one
> Did wear, when for our Souls He did Atone. (*CL*, p.6)

Hence we see a meshing of different events and persons in the Bible: God's mercy after the Flood; Aaron, the companion of Moses the Law giver of the Old Testament; and Christ's sacrifice to atone for sins. The robe is ultimately worn by Christ and "These curious colors that amaze the Ey, / contain each one a glorious mystery" (6).

Traherne's interest in hypostasis and sacrifice gives him ample opportunity to ponder the nature of human physicality (skin) and consumption (eating the sacrificial meat). In the section called "Of Israels coming out of Egypt" he once again evokes these images when talking about the Passover:

> In Egypt first by night the Jews do kill

A Lamb: whose Blood by GODs command they Spill.
That Blood is sprinkled on their Doors,
. . . . . .
They rost it whole I think within the Skin:
Exposed naked to a burning fire,
And then to eat it all in one conspire.
Here Abels Lamb is now Exprest again,
Exposed naked unto Shame and pain,
To intimat the Maner how the Jews
Our Holy Savior on the Cross would use. (*CL*, p.11)

"The Paschal Lamb" is perhaps the most sensational section in *The Ceremonial Law*. He depicts the Israelites' panicked flight from Egypt led by the pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day. The episode reaches its climax with the parting of the Red Sea:

Then Moses lifting up the Holy Rod,
As he had been commanded by His GOD,
Divides the Sea. The Gaping waves disclose
To these A passage, Graves unto their Foes.
The Bottom's seen, the oceans melting womb
At once is made a Lane, and made a Tomb.
The floods lift up their Heads, not voice; A Wind
Out of the East doth all the waters bind
Like Ruby or like Chrystall Walls they stand
Congealed by the Cold on either Hand
They see the sands all red, the stones that pave
The sea, that Rubbish under evry Wave.
Where Whales and Dolphins hertofore did play,
They find an uncouth strange Amazing way
Yet evry step they fetch is life and Breath,
They seem to tread and Trample upon Death
Till being past, again the Waters close
And on a suddain swallow up their Foes. (*CL*, p.15)

As if realizing that his embellishments upon the Biblical episode have gone far enough, Traherne crosses out the subsequent line, "Whose Floating Bodies on the ocean rise" (*CL*, p.15).

One final consideration remains—Traherne's intended audience and how he utilizes the veil-imagery to reveal his theological message. He is aware of the various audiences he might address—Atheists, Christians, and Divines in the case of *Commentaries of Heaven* (*CH*, fol.2)—and modifies his technique if not his central message accordingly. He does not wish to diminish the significance of words for the benefit of vulgar minds, and yet ultimately, he adjusts his writing

style in a poem like *The Ceremonial Law* to appeal to a less educated audience. Indeed, he illustrates an author's self-consciousness about writing itself by focusing upon the art of reading and interpreting mysteries within the scripture.

The opening lines of the poem draw attention to the art of reading and interpreting with the words "In Hieroglyphick Laws I see His name." The speaker is able to see God's intention at the start but the word "Hieroglyphick" alerts his reader to the fact that at some point the speaker needed to decipher something in order to reveal the divine message. Traherne utilizes the image of the veil to depict the hidden side of the Law of Moses, the Ceremonial Law. Indeed, shadows, skreens, clouds, and veils abound throughout the poem to convey the mystery behind the written Word. This mystery is the New Covenant realized in the Gospels through the figure of Christ. This basic theme is repeated in the poem with varying permutations. Sometimes a veil obscures the vision of the Israelites and they cannot see God's purpose. Other times the Egyptians' vision is imperfect. The episodes surrounding Mt. Sinai where the Law is handed to Moses are repleat with references to the concealing and revealing of truth. In "Mount Sinai" Traherne reminisces about the prelapsarian condition:

> Long time the World had been without a Law,
> That purer Light which humane nature saw
> At first being lost and clouded in the Mind. . . . (*CL*, p.40)

In their prelapsarian condition humans could hear "the oracles within," as well as see perfectly. After the fall the role of the Christian is to remove layer upon layer of cloud which obstructs clear apprehension. The Law of Moses is the first step in revealing truth, but it itself is shaded by a cloud or veil. This is predominantly due to human inability to see that the strict Commandments are underlaid by love: "A fiery Law, just holy Wise and Good / The Law of Love, tho hidden in a Cloud" (*CL*, p.41). In one of the only places that he refers to Felicity in the poem, it is in reference to the hidden message within the Ten Commandments:

> The moral Law a Gospel did implie,
> Showing the favor of the Deitie,
> Exprest in Love and Care, to Sinners still,

. . . . . .
The Inside of it [the Law] must exceed all Thought.
What may we think it but a pledge of Love,
A Brief Epitome of all above;
Felicity disguised in fiery Words. (*CL*, pp.42–43)

The image of the veil contains multiple meanings. It represents clouded vision; types and/or shadows of the Old Testament; and, as seen previously in "Shadows in the Water," the skreen separating off the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Tabernacle.

A veil covers the overpowering radiance of Moses' face after his communion with God on Mount Sinai.[5] Where does the "Light" come from, the human soul or God? The mirror is once again employed to convey the complex and ambiguous relationship between the human and divine. The answer is found in its reflective properties:

We cannot long be conversant with Light
That is Divine Eternal, Infinite,
And ever Blessed; but we shall become glorious
Like Myrrors formd into the glorious Sun! (*CL*, p.48)

The brightness comes from God's presence in the soul as well as Moses' physical body:

Gods Brightness shind in Moses Face, and was
The Glory Life and Beauty of that Glass.
Beneath the vail it in him shind, a day
Incorporated in his Soul did ray.
Which was united so divinely in
His members, and so mingled with his Skin
A vail might cover both, but could not part
Him and the Light by any force or Art. (*CL*, p.51)

A reference to "Art" is a reference to the poetic process itself. Indeed the remainder of the poem is primarily concerned with reading and interpreting hidden messages in "Art." In Chapter IV we saw that metaphors for Traherne amounted to clouded or tainted vision. But the above passage seems to say that "Art" is not dangerous.

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[5] See passage in Appendix VI.

Here the cloud (or metaphor) is acknowledged as a poetic device, one which captivates an audience:

> The Cloud will feed the soul and entertain,
> us, and the Ceremonial Law explain.
> As Hieroglyphicks on a pyramid,
> The Secret Thoughts of the Egyptians hid,
> Whose fancies and conceits embodied were
> In Beasts and Birds and Trees engraven there,
> Those Mystick Letters of the Sages
> Being conservd as Oracles for Ages;
> Wherin the Pictures were fair Types of Things
> . . . . . .
> So is it here, Diviner Mysteries
> Being vailed in the Creatures Properties
> Blood, Incense Oyl, fire, Water, Cedar, Wood
> With Hysop, Scarlet, Ashes understood
> With Gold, silver, Lights and Sacrifices, all
> Both Things and Actions either great or small
> In that vast Pattern of the World revealing
> All Sacred Secrets, and yet all concealing. (*CL*, pp.51–52)

Just as Traherne vacillates with regards to Aristotle and Plato's respective philosophies, and the implications they have upon revealing and concealing truth, so too does he vacillate in his attitude toward figurative language and indeed, the ability to illuminate divine mysteries. In this case his reasons are perhaps obvious; the "Art" or figurative language of the Bible, is not dangerously "metaphorical" for it undisputably reveals the divine truth. Traherne insists that the Word, or Hieroglyph, encapsulates the message. Whether or not one can interpret it varies depending on the individual who attempts to decipher it. Several times in his writings Traherne refers to vulgar apprehension. In the *Ceremonial Law* he speaks of the "ruder Croud" (*CL,* p.46; p.52). This crowd needs an intercessor to interpret the text and interpose himself between it and God:

> When God had spoken to the ruder Croud,
> His 10. Commandements or Words aloud,
> The people trembled at what they admired,
> And not being able to endure desired
> Moses, for fear of Death, to interpose,
> And for themselvs a safer Distance chose.
> Frail flesh and Bloods not able to endure
> His neer approach, he is so great and pure.
> Men promise to themselvs som great Delight,
> Could they but once enjoy the Glorious sight
> Of God on Earth. (*CL*, p.52)

Traherne maintains that God is immanent and visible through his creation. Humans have the ability to apprehend the wonders of the creation and to realize that it was made expressly for human enjoyment, only their clouded vision prevents them from realizing its true nature. With his understanding of Felicity, Traherne sees himself as Moses, the prophet and intercessor, capable of comprehending this central message and conveying it through his written text. Appropriately the above passage is entitled "The Inside." Traherne views himself as an individual capable of understanding the inside of the mystery. His enterprise in *Commentaries of Heaven*, revealing the mysteries of all things, attests to the fact that he believes himself to be both author conveying, and scientist revealing the doctrine of Felicity.

Conclusion

Traherne is strongly motivated by imaginative ideals and incorporates various beliefs which suit his theology into his work. He displays an "eclectic intellect,"[1] borrowing from and making modifications to various philological positions. Each chapter of this thesis has delineated instances when he vacillates on linguistic issues, at times highlighting one side of an argument, at other times advocating its opposing position. Chapter I described the enterprise in *Commentaries of Heaven*, a project which aims to reveal the mysteries of Felicity through word definitions. Some may argue that Traherne has no direct relationship to language planners such as Wilkins and Dalgarno, and that his project is very different from theirs. True, he is not trying to create a new philosophical character, nor does his work have the same taxonomical framework as the language planners' projects (though within his alphabetical encyclopedia he shows an understanding of Aristotelian categorization). Nevertheless I believe it is important to see the *Commentaries of Heaven* within this context for like other linguistic enterprises it attempts to survey and reveal the essence of all things. Like the planners he seeks a linguistic solution to the problem of veiled truth and thus participates in their enterprising spirit. While receiving inspiration from linguistic and scientific endeavors to reform language—echoing the language planners' stated goal of achieving a condition where words mirror reality—Traherne nevertheless infuses his spiritual message into his definitions. In this respect he deviates from the aspirations of the language planners for his vision of a perfect language is one which eliminates the boundaries of strict and precise word definitions. He always expands a given word's significance to include a spiritual dimension. Instead of creating a new philosophical character, he attempts to reform English by endorsing a change in mental perception.

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[1] Marks, "Thomas Traherne and Cambridge Platonism," 521.

Chapter II explores two aspects of the cultural backdrop of language reform: Adam's prelapsarian linguistic condition and the Tower of Babel. Like numerous commentators of hexameral texts, Traherne addresses the naming episode in Genesis. His rendition of the event focuses upon the ability to "prize," or assign value to, the creation. He audaciously declares that humans are spectators who recreate the cosmos through their apprehension, elevating everything they perceive to a higher level than God's original creation. Though endorsing the rational enquiries of the Latitudinarians, Traherne's subjective "prizing" counters their stated goals of understanding an objective reality. By celebrating the multiple languages resulting from the Tower of Babel he exhibits his preference for infinite variety. The entry also provides a perfect example of Traherne's habitual transmutation of events into part of his Felicitous vision; Babel is a blessing, not a curse. Similarly in *Commentaries of Heaven* his definitions for "Abhorrence" and "Abuse" reveal Felicity rather than nefarious forces as the source of these words.

Chapter III analyzes Traherne's preference for speech instead of silence, though he celebrates the benefits of silence at certain times. He advocates both a life of action and a life of retirement for each has its allotted place and time. The two are in fact linked for retirement ultimately prepares one for activity. Silence and humility are part of the retired life and Traherne advocates them, but his characteristic exuberance (and insistence that you can maintain two things at once even if they are in opposition) infiltrates his description of silence. The result is an "auditory" quality infused into the silent moment of his poetry or prose. Moreover, instead of retiring into humble submission to the divine will, Traherne projects his sense of self-hood outward and his personal voice pervades his writings. In practice he does not wish to challenge the divine will nor does he propose religious individualism and enthusiasm above the organized national Church. However, his imaginative voice can give this impression. Numerous critics and readers of Traherne have felt the poet's ecstasy when he uses the first person in his work. He goes so far as to justify feelings of self-love though the concept taken on its own

was anathema to many religious thinkers of the time. He shows sensitivity to the political situation and aligns himself with Restoration conformity but nevertheless communicates theological views which were at odds with the establishment. But rather than being a political statement, this propensity towards individualism is part of his imaginative expression and celebration of Felicity.

Chapter IV investigates the poet's views of metaphor. Traherne adopts conformist rhetoric against metaphor but his aim is not to attack nonconformists. His true interest lies in conveying his theological message of unity—personal, civil, ecclesiastical, and spiritual—and in revealing the nature of Felicity. In his word definitions and writings there are two levels of understanding: the physical (or literal) and the spiritual (or figurative). Even if he employs metaphor to relay the spiritual he insists that he is not using it at all but instead revealing truth. For him "Metaphor" is anything that clouds the human understanding of divine truth. He uses metaphors and other images to appeal to human senses (particularly that of sight) in his poetry, prose, and word definitions in the *Commentaries of Heaven.* Several critics would disagree, believing Traherne's language is "curiously flat, with little development or exploitation of figures."[2] Or that his poetry is not vibrant from the point of view of images.[3] In comparison to earlier metaphysical poets who used elaborate conceits this may be true. Also it is true that he does not always develop his images during the course of a given poem. However, I would argue that they are not flat or lacking in vibrancy for he utilizes mirror and veil images, often intricately, to explore theological paradoxes and in so doing helps his reader visualize his message. For instance, with the mirror he manipulates space to show a great expanse in a tiny area, convey the notion of a multitude inside a single soul and vice versa, and depict the commingling or "symbiotic link" between the human and divine.[4] As was seen in Chapter I of this thesis, even in the most technical

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[2] Lewalski, 353.
[3] David Goldknopf, "The Disintegration of Symbol in a Meditative Poet," *College English* 30 (1968): 52.
[4] Robert Uphaus, "Thomas Traherne: Perception as Process," *The University of Windsor Review* 3.2 (1968): 20

sections of his encyclopedia—his definitions, significations, and etymologies—he evokes visual images for his audience.

Both Chapter I and Chapter IV compared Traherne and the Latitude-men. Latitudinarians, such as John Wilkins, Simon Patrick, and Joseph Glanvill advocate a reasonable approach to religion. While adopting their optimism over the human intellect and the role of reason in religious practice, Traherne still allows for certain inexplicable mysteries at the heart of Christianity. For him certain notions relating to God require the use of metaphor although he insists that he is not being "metaphorical." The Latitude-men believed in the Christian mysteries as well but they did not focus upon them. For them religion was reasonable and self-evident, thus their plain-style discursive methods sufficed in revealing religious truth. Unlike the Latitudinarians Traherne welcomes speculations upon certain theological conundrums, in particular the nature of the Trinity, the mystery of the hypostatic union, and the impact these relationships have upon individual experience. Indeed, he analyzes these mysteries in order to understand their connection with individuals and uses the metaphor of the mirror to superimpose the complex relationship of the three parts of the Trinity onto the individual's relationship with the divine.

This thesis positions Traherne within the philological milieu of the mid-seventeenth century. Clearly he conveys an inconsistent philosophy regarding language reform. Exploring these inconsistencies proves fruitful, for he can be seen as a figure in whom the multifarious views of the period intersect. In him the scientific movement which advocated reason encounters the mystic who sees the influence of the divine spirit upon the creation. The Aristotelian who wants to reveal nature by stripping away the "veil" of mystery which covers her contends with the Platonist who will not seek truth in the phenomenal world but rather searches for understanding in the transcendent realm. The Restoration conformist who endorses moral guidelines meets an individual whose need for personal expression results in exuberant verbal outpourings. He enthusiastically endorses Anglican liturgical practice, paying tribute to the Book of Common Prayer with his

own *Church's Year Book*. However, following a moral tradition is not enough for Traherne for his theology promotes individualism and he continually meditates upon divine mysteries in a self-reflexive manner. Traherne's propensity to utilize varying and often contradictory elements is not surprising however, for as we have seen, his theological vision embraces contrarieties for they are part of a Felicitous design.

Appendix I

Entries from the *Commentaries of Heaven*

1. Abhorrence
2. Abilitie in Creatures
3. Human Abilitie
4. Abridgement
5. Spiritual Absence
6. Abstinence
7. Abundance
8. Abuse
9. Acceptance
10. Of Acceptance in GOD
11. Accesse
12. Accident
13. Account
14. Accurateness
15. Accusation
16. Acknowledgement
17. Acquaintance
18. Act
19. Action
20. Activity
21. Acuteness
22. Adam
23. The Second Adam
24. Admiration
25. Adoration
26. Adultery
27. Advocate
28. Affairs
29. Affection
30. Affinity
31. Affliction
32. Ages
33. Air
34. Alacritie
35. Allurement
36. Almes
37. Almighty
38. All Things
39. Alone
40. Al-sufficient
41. All in All
42. Ambassadors
43. Ambition
44. Amendment
45. Amisse
46. Ancestor
47. Angel
48. Anger
49. Annointed
50. Ant
51. Antichrist
52. Antiquitie
53. Apostle
54. Apostasie
55. Apparel
56. Appearance
57. Appetite
58. Application
59. Apprehension
60. Approbation
61. Aristotle
62. Aristotle's Philsophie
63. Arithmetick
64. Armour
65. Art
66. Article
67. Ascension
68. Aspect
69. Aspiration
70. Assimilation
71. Assistance
72. Assumption
73. Assurance
74. Astrologie
75. Astronomie
76. Atheist
77. Atom
78. Atonement
79. Attainment
80. Attendance
81. Attention
82. Attribute
83. Avarice
84. Author
85. Authoritie
86. Awake
87. Babe
88. Babel
89. Backsliding
90. Balme
91. Baptism
92. Barrenness
93. Baseness
94. Bastard

Appendix II

Entries with "Scripture" sections

Entry	Section Heading
Abundance	Scriptures (fol. 11v.2)
Acceptance	Remember these Scriptures (fol. 15v.1)
Accesse	Scriptures (fol. 19r.2)
Account	Scriptures (fol. 23v.1)
Accusation	Scriptures (fol. 27r.1)
Action	Scriptures (fol. 34v.2)
Adulterie	Scriptures (fol. 44v.2)
Advocate	Their Kinds (fol. 47r.1)
Affection	Scriptures (fol. 53v.1)
Affliction	Scriptures (fol. 55v.2)
Ages	Scriptures (fol. 65v.2)
Allurement	Scriptures (fol. 69r.2)
Almes	Its Encouragements (fol. 70r.2)
All Things	Scriptures (fol. 78r.1)
Ambassadors	Scriptures (fol. 86v.2)

Appendix III

The entry "Abridgement" from the *Commentaries of Heaven*

Concerning Abridgement I shall speak but little: Observing in it only the Glory of the Soul, that can frame an Abridgement; and instructing men how to use it. That the Soul can extend the Rays of its understanding to all Objects in Heaven and Earth is as Specious a Wonder, as infinit. But that it can draw all these into a little Abstract, and lodg them in fit and convenient Repositories, even in a Centre, containing in it self Rooms Enough wherin to Dispose them, in Clear Light, in fair Treasuries, in Distinct Accessible Orders, so that it can Approach and make a familiar use of them. intimats to us a far more glorious Art then his was, that Enclosed Homers Illiads in a nut-shell: And opens the Meaning of that Philosopher, who said, All my Riches I carry with me. for the Heavens and the Heaven of Heavens, the Earth and the Sea with all that is therin, a Wise man without Burden carries as it were in a little Cabinet, along with him, whither so ever he goeth. yea it is so far from loading him, that it maketh him Angelical, and to go lighter.

Words are many times made uselesssby being applied to vile or insignificant Objects. But if you will Draw an Abstract of all Beings Possible or Imagninable, and see the Confines of all Existence, penetrat the centre and survey the Excellencies of Things; Discern your Interest and the Beauty of them; you shall find Abridgement a Glorious Essence, and sing Praises Eternally for so Divine a Being. It being as it were the Reflexe Image and Representativ of all Enjoyments.

All Beings Actual or Possible are either visible or Invisible: for nothing can Exist but will be one of those. Beings Invisible are either Creable or Increable. Increable are Eternall: and all these are in the nature of the Dietie. His Essence, the Trinity of Persons, His Attributs and Counsels being Increable. Things Invisible that are Created are Angels and Souls, with all their Relations, Uses, Services, Properties and Ends: the Interior Beauties and Excellencies also of Material Things:

The ways of Providence, Laws, vertues, Powers, Promises, Affections, Joys, Thanksgivings, Praises &c. Visible Things are Corporeal Beings, with their External Affections, Magnitudes Colors and figures. such as are the (fol. 7v.1) four Elements, Minerals, vegetables Animals, Men Human Workmanships Crowns Scepters Cities Temples Streets Lanes Houses villages. Apparitions, Meteors Clouds Dew Hail Rain and Snow, the material Heavens, the Sun and Moon and Stars. Now of all these you are to Draw a Celestial Abstract in such a manner, that being familiarly acquainted with their Excellencies and your Interest in them you may daily prais GOD for them, Enjoy them, meet his Goodness in them receiv his Bounty by them, see His Love through them, liv in communion with Him among them, and Admire your Riches and Exaltation becaus of them.

All these are Objects of thy Felicity, the Maner of thine Enjoyment is likewise Infinit. It is infinit in Excellency Strength and Highness. Of which likewise thou mayst make an Abridgement, by recording the Particulars And when thou hast them, thou mayest Daily and frequently look upon them, till thou conversest no more with Titles, but Realitites: feeling the Influence of the Things themselves. The names of Things are like the Titles only upon Apothecaries Boxes. Their first Ideas are but little more. There is as much difference between a familiar and perfect Apprehension of things, and their names, as there is between a Childs Ey in seeing the Inscription, and a Physicians Soul in Knowing the Drugs. The one seeth only a Box and Painted Letters, the other is acquainted with the Color Consistence Properties and virtues of the Thing within. Thy Abridgement shall at last be like so many Titles before thine Eys, by and through which thou shalt enjoy a Prospect of all their Excellencies.

What Man is there, that will not hav a Terrier of His Estate, an Inventory of His Riches, a Catologue of his Goods? Thy Abridgement is no more and that will best serv Thee, which is fitted for thy self having which, thou mayest also be enabled to help others; that are Weak and Ignorant. What man is there Especialy that would be Gratefull, that would be without an Inventory; at least in his memory?

The Things that He enjoyeth lie far and near, perhaps also in many Regions: but by that Abridgement they are Collected together. And all at once presented to His Ey. And as often as he thinketh on them he praiseth the Donor. What Man is there, especialy that by recounting his Treasures acquires and Enjoys them, that would be without an Inventory? GODs Treasures are of such a Kind, by reason of the freedom of His Lov, that by thinking of them we Enjoy them, as by learning them we gain them. And wilt thou for bear to hav an Abridgement who by it mightst Enter into infinit and Eternal Possessions! What Man is there that would not take the Pains, to sum up his Treasures, especialy that by making an Inventory of the present, should be in the ready way to innumerable more in reversion? The Donor having made it his Duty to Survey and Consider them.

The Perfections and Excellencies of our Formall Happiness are Objects themselvs: if not the Supreme, and Soveraign of all. That we Shall Enjoy in the Similitude of GOD is the most Desirable Thing Eternity could reveal. That we shall Enjoy in GOD, in Angels, in Men, in our Selvs: That we shall Enjoy with GOD and all His Hosts. That we shall Enjoy before them all, perfectly and Eternaly, so as to be the Treasure and Joy of all; is exceeding Delightfull, and most truly glorious. As it is also that all mens Eys shall Enlighten ours, all mens Hearts enlarge ours, all mens Tongues Concent with ours, all Mens Affections Strengthen ours. All mens Hands help ours, all the Praises of men and Angels, and all their Lov unite with ours. these are Excellenct Comunicative Joys (fol. 7v.2).

Above all things be throughly Acquainted with their Excellencies, and with the Relations of Things in their Services towards you. Which is the very Soul of an Abridgement. for without that they will be flat and insipid. A Child may look into an Apothecaries Box and see the Drugs themselves, yet be ignorant of their virtues. So may a man behold the Heavens and the Earth and the seas and all the Things in them; and be Acquainted with their Consistence, Figure, and Color; being ignorant in the mean time, of their Sweetness, Interior value, Glory.

I would have you gather an Abridgement also of your Duties, and make them up into a fragrant Posie. They will Smell most Odoriferously. What immediate Duties you owe to GOD Inwardly and Outwardly. What Remoter Duties you ow unto him, in your Conversation towards Men and Angels: and what Duties also you ought to pay unto all the Creatures. The most Inferior will be found Sublime, the Remotest near: and all Immediat: Becaus GOD is in evry Thing immediatly concerned. The most useless will be found Delightfull Glorious and Profitable.

What more can pleas so great a Donor, then that we take notice of, and Prize His Gifts: Lov them, Enjoy them, Delight in Him, and Prais His Bounty! These are inward and Soveraign Duties. Outward Duties equaly Great, are to be faithfull to such a Benefactor upon all Occasions, Zealous of His Glory among the Sons of Men Couragious to vindicat and Promote His honor, Diligent in His Service. Duties there are also toward our selvs: all shut up in this, of Keeping our Dignity and persons pure. For they to whom so much is given can not chuse but be Dear in His Eys, Who is their infinit Lover.

His Nature is my sole and whole Delight,
I in His Attributes am infinite.
His Laws my Joys, His Works are all my Pleasures,
Invisible, and visible my Treasures.
His Ancient Ways in Ages my Delights;
My Soul, my Body, and my Appetities.
All these are mine my Soul; as if I were
Like GOD, their Glorious and Eternal Sphere.
(fol. 8r.1)

Appendix IVa

List of word entries from the *Commentaries of Heaven* containing definitions, significations, and etymologies

Entry	Section Heading
Abuse	The Signification of the Word (fol. 12r.2)
Accident	Its Definition (fol. 19v.2)
Account	Its Signification (fol. 22r.2)
Accurateness	Its Signification (fol. 24r.1) Its Definition (fol. 24r.1)
Acknowledgement	Its Signification (fol. 27r.2)
Acuteness	Its Signification (fol. 36r.2)
Admiration	Its Definition (fol. 41r.2)
Adoration	Its Definition (fol. 43r.1)
Affinity	Its Ætym. (fol. 54r.2)
Allurement	Its Ætymologie (fol. 68v.2)
Amisse	Its Etymologie (fol. 91v.2) Its nature and Signification (fol. 91v.2)
Anger	Its Etymologie (fol. 97v.2)
Antichrist	The Etymologie of the Word (fol. 101r.2)
Apostle	Its Etymologie (fol. 108r.1)
Apostasie	Its Etymoligie (fol. 109r.1)
Appetite	The Signification of the Word (fol. 111v.1)
Apprehension	The Signification of the Word (fol. 120r.1)
Aspect	Its Etymologie (fol. 142r.1)
Assistance	Its Etymologie, and Signification (fol. 146v.1)
Assumption	Its Signification (fol. 149r.1)
Atom	Its Etymologie (fol. 164v.1)
Atonement	The Etymologie of the Word (fol. 173r.1) Its Signification (fol. 173r.1)

Attention	The Signification of the Word (fol. 180v.2)
Avarice	Its Definition (fol. 183.v.1)
Author	His Definition (fol. 185r.2)
Authoritie	The Derivation of the Word (fol. 186r.1) Its General Definition (fol. 186r.1)
Awake	Its Signification (fol. 189v.2)
Backsliding	Its Signification (fol. 192r.2)
Balm	Its Signification (fol. 193r.1)
Baseness	Its Signification (fol. 195v.2)

Appendix IVb

Translation of Stephen Skinner's entry for the word "Anger"
(*Etymologicon Linguæ Anglicanæ,* 1671)

Anger, ire, indignation, maybe from AS. Anze. vexed, German **Angst**, Angor, Dan. **Angrer**, it displeases, and indeed ire, especially were vehement, always accompanied by a certain anxiety and sadness through an evil that we detest, and apprehension of a revenge that we plan. Minsevus derives it from a Greek word in Suidas, Ἄγχε's, grief, by far more justifiably I could change it from a Latin word of a later period Angariare, which also occurs in *Florius*, as also its German sister Angarier Cotgravium: *Angariare*, however, is read quite frequently in Latin-Barbarian writers, who lived partly just before, partly after the fall of the Empire; but you will not find it that often in the vulgar Latin version of the Bible, Matthew chapter 5. but also in LL *Baioar.* tit.13. Sect.9. the same in the letter of King *Cnuto* or *Canutus* in Malmesb. "On the deeds of the Kings" book 2 in the charter of *William* the Conqueror of Abb. Rames. in Briton Armoricus Philippid book 12 and in other places. But it is known that most words of the more recent languages, especially the Franco-Gaulic ones, Italian and Spanish take their origins from these pronunciations, which have crept in those later centuries and the meaning is obviously the same: for in all places, that we nodded at, Angariere means the same as to vex. If you want more go to *Voss.* de Vit Serm. and *Spelmannus* in Gloss.

Appendix V

The entry "Babel" from the *Commentaries of Heaven*

Many Difficulties are introduced into the World to the Great Disorder and Trouble of Infants, which nature in it self never intended. When we enter first upon the yeers of Discretion, we find ourselves Babes still to the Forrein Nations and Kingdoms on Earth: for by reason of the variety of Languages we are dumb (as it were) to all men but those of our own Country, and unable to understand them: their Speech being so forrein and obscure to our own, that there is a necessity of Labor at schole, in Learning Latine Greek and Hebrew, before we can be men of Eminent Knowledg. For either we our selvs, or some other for us must be able to interpret Languages, before we can know the Wisdom and the Beauty of other nations: yet this at last turneth into a vaste Advantage.

Children are by nature Subject to the Errors and miscarriages of their parents; as they are by nature also capable of their Advantages. Their condition is such, that their Interest is interwoven: They are joynt Partakers of the same Benefits, and of the same miseries. What Influence the Deeds of Parents have upon their children, Babel alone sufficiently unfoldeth: for had it not been for that second Rebellion after the Deluge there had been but one Language throughout the World.

Whether Babel be an object of Bliss, or miserie, may much to be disputed, especially by men not well acquainted with the nature of Bliss: but by men of a discerning Spirit may easily be decided. For they that Know, that all Things are objects of Miserie to the Wicked, and of Bliss to the virtuous, can easily divide to evry man his Share in Babel also, which is a woe to the one, and a Joy to the other.

To see Men so Mad as to fight with Heaven, so foolish as to found their Securitie there, where a litle before they were all Destroyed, so arrogant and disorderly, so Rebellious and presumptious, so prone to their own Inventions, so Sottish and incorrigible, so Wise in their own Conceits, and so obstinatly pervers in all their Ways; is miserable: As it is also to feel the Direfull Effects of the Divine

Displeasure, and to groan under the Burdens which are laid upon us by our Forefathers.

But to surmount all these Great Disadvantages, to turn the necessities of our Life into virtues, to see GOD appear and reveal himself so gloriously in the World as he did in the Deluge before in Sodom and Gomorrah a litle after, and here at Babel in Dividing their Tongues, to know him, and to be confirmed in our Faith by these Transcendent Miracles: to see the unsearchable Depths of his Knowledg and Power, and the true Original of all those Confusions that are now in the world; (fol. 191v.1) this is a Divine and Heavenly Thing: as it is also to fear and admire and adore him.

Babel is a Fountain of Great Alterations, and has occasioned many changes in the World. The Eternal Continuance of which changes flowing from a few in the Beginning of the World, and Spreading abroad in such a maner, show us two Things of considerable Importance. first that the Hearts and Actions of men are the great Stars that overrule the world: for no Conjunction of the Planets begot the Confusion of Languages, no more then it did the Fall of Man, or the Deluge itself, or the Destruction of Paradise. Secondly the Diffusive nature of evry object, and how great in Cause a litle Action may be of the Worlds confusion. For as all Ages are touched in that Accident at Babel, so may all Kingdoms be concerned in evry Action of GOD and man: and at the Day of Judgement the Maner How shall be clearly manifested.

The Holy Bible is a Divine and incomparable Book, because it gives us an Account of the Creation of the World, the Glory of Eden, the Fall of man, the Corruption of nature, the Deluge, the Genealogie of nations, and the Confusion of Languages which else we should never have understood. And perhaps it is silent of the Cause and Introduction of Negroes, or Black-moors, to convince us of the Impossibilitie of our finding these other occasions, had they not been Discovered by the Word and Care of the Governour of the World. For former Ages have been (where left to themselves) so careless in their Tradition, that till the Scriptures came,

none of these things were known by following generations, no more then the original of Blacks is among us at this Day.

As Mount Sion answereth Mount Sinai which is in Arabia, and the crucifixion {sic} of Christ, the Giving of the Law: so doth the Coming down of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, the Confusion of Babel. For, for evry man to speak all Languages, or all men but one, is the same in Effect; except it be more glorious to be acquainted with all. (fol. 191v.2)

The variety of Languages is a marvellous ornament and Beauty to the World: which maketh Babel the more fit to be enjoyed.

A Spiritual Stroak upon the Tongue,
Is now the Object of my Dubious Song,
A way unknown, to punish there, where Pain
Cant be inflicted! All their Work's made vain!
They feel no Hurt, and yet they all complain.
There's nothing seen in all the troubled Throng,
But Hurrying and Confusion: Crowding here,
And scattering there! A Blasted Facultie
Is the Sole cause of all their miserie.
A voice is capable of Blows! They hear,
Yet do not understand: Their Wits they fear
Are failing into Madness! How they run,
Work, toyl, carry, labor, yet there's nothing done!
The work goes backward while They all command,
Exhort and answer, yet are at a stand.
They cross and frustrate one another still,
They have a Tongue, and yet they want the Skill
Of using it aright: they call, and cry,
And meet, and justle one another by,
Ten thousand several ways to rectify
Their rude mistakes they trie in vain: till chance
And unexpected fortune End the Trance.
At last some one or two meet; that conceiv
What either speaks; then all the rest they leav
No care is had of Fathers, Brothers, Friends,
A strange Mysterious Fate Acquaintance rends
From one another! Nothing now is weighd,
But who conceivs what is by other said.
This sad Distress made nothing else so Sweet,
As the Convenience of a Soul to meet,
That with our own could hold Intelligence.
Those that could do so, soon departed thence;
And planted altogether in unknown,
Far distant Regions, calling them their own.
And so the Kingdoms that do overspread
The Face of all the Earth, have a strange Head,
Were peopled all by this Confusion! We,
For ought we Know, to this Calamitie
Our Beings owe: It changd the Course of Times,

And marriages; we sprang up from their Crimes:
And had it not for this Confusion been,
The Beauty of the World had never seen.
For other men by taking these mens Wives
To other children had imparted Lives,
And not to us. There had no English been,
No French, no Spaniards, no contest between
The Dutch and France: Hebrew had been the Tongue
Of all the World, nor had I made this Song.
Well then may Babel be a Joy to me
Tho tis to some perhaps a miserie.
A miserie to those that live in Sin,
But my Good Fortune did in it begin.
I all the World, and Heaven, for ought I know,
My self, yea and my GOD to Babel owe! (192r.1)
Or if that seem too deep: I plainly see,
I owe it worlds of Sweet varietie. (fol. 192r.2)

Appendix VI

Entries from *The Ceremonial Law*

The Vail

This vail of Moses that conceald the Light
He had received, from Israels dimmed Sight
Seems put upon his face, but yet tis said
The vail upon the peoples hearts was laid
The Brightness of the Gospel was the Grace
Of Heaven and God that Beautified his Face.
The moral Law enlightned with Divine
And saving promises was made to shine
By the Reflexion of our Saviors Love
An Angel on the mount a God above.
But Types and Shadows like a vail orespread
Concealed that glorious Brightness from the Dead
And carnal Jews, that Ceremonial Law
In which the patriarchs and the prophets saw
As in a Glass our gospel mysteries
Being open only to the just and Wise.
The cloudy pillar and the firey Light
Therin did meet and make a Day and night.
A night to them, a day to us, for they
Saw nothing, where a World of virtue lay.
And that we may not such Egyptians be,
But purer Israelites apt to see
We must exert our selvs with Diligence
And fill our Souls with vigor Life and sence.
For otherwise the very gospel will
Be but a letter, that being dead doth kill.
The vail is don away in Chirst, the Skreen (50)
Removd, the cloud disperst, when he is seen.
He is the Brightness of his Fathers Glory,
The chiefest ornament of all our Story;
Who like a Sun, by Dwelling in us, is
The Spring of all our Beauty Strength and Bliss.
Gods Brightness shind in Moses Face, and was
The Glory Life and Beauty of that Glass,
Beneath the vail it in him shind, a day
Incorporated in his soul did ray.
Which was united so divinely in
His members, and so mingled with his Skin
A vail might cover both, but could not part
Him and the Light by any force or Art.
So Christ in us the Hope of Glory seen
No vail, nor Skreen, nor cloud can com between
He and our Souls beneath the vail are one
Both may be coverd, but the face and Throne
The Light the Mercy Glory Wisdom Love
Of God and man, in Jesus, seen above

The Cloud, will feed the soul and entertain,
us, and the Ceremonial Law explain.
As Hieroglyphicks on a pyramid,
The Secret Thoughts of the Egyptians hid,
Whose fancies and conceits embodied were
In Beasts and Birds and Trees engraven there,
Those Mystick Letters of the Sages
Being conservd as Oracles for Ages;
Wherin the Pictures were fair Types of Things
Hawks Fishes Horses Eys Tongues hands and Wings
Imparting Speed Abhorrence strenght and sight
Knowledg and prais Affections in their flight.
The Hands Good Works, the Heart pure charity
The feet our progress or Stabilitie
The Sun adn moon Eternity; The yeer
A serpent, mouth and Tail joynd in a Sphere (51)
So is it here, Diviner Mysteries
Being vailed in the Creatures Properties
Blood Incense oyl, fire, water, cedar wood
With Hyop, scarlet, Ashes understood
Gold, silver, Lights and sacrigices, all
Both Things and Actions either great or small
In that vast Pattern of the World revealing
All Sacred Secrets, and yet all concealing.

The Inside

When God had spoken to the ruder Crowd,
His 10 Commandments or Words aloud,
The people trembled at what they admired,
And not being able to endure desired
Moses, for fear of Death, to interpose,
And for themselvs a safer Distance chose.
Frail flesh and Bloods not able to endure
His neer approach, he is so great and pure.
Men promise to themselvs som great Delight,
Could they but once enjoy the Glorious sight
Of God on Earth. (52)

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