

Threshold Rituals in Early Modern England: A Case Study in Robert Herrick

ABSTRACT

This essay explores the role of transitional rituals in the culture of early-modern English Protestantism, and focuses particularly on the threshold, its ritual uses, and its wider metaphorical meanings. The experience of liminality is important to our understanding of how personal and communal identities were constructed, but it also marks important differences within Protestantism. An introductory section discusses theoretical models for thinking about liminality, drawn from anthropology and language theory, and considers how these might apply to post-Reformation England. A second section maps out the range of different functions and meanings of thresholds, as sites of political transition, of penitence and judgement, and for asserting religious doctrine. It discusses the differences of opinion about porches and thresholds between puritans and Laudians. The final section sets out a case-study in the wedding poems of Robert Herrick. Herrick's epithalamia dramatize moments of threshold-crossing in order to imagine how marriage rites transform their subjects' identities. In particular, Herrick fashions the state of liminality as a heightened, ritual time, distinct from ordinary time—a quality which distinguishes him from Calvinist writers who experienced liminality as more pervasive and continuous.

I.

Life in early-modern England was structured by a series of life-cycle rituals which were deeply rooted in tradition and communal belief, but whose nature and meaning had been rendered newly uncertain by the Reformation. This issue has interested social historians and historians of religion, and it ought to greatly interest literary scholars too, because it hinges on

the public use of texts.¹ The Protestant Reformers had thrown unprecedented attention on the role of language in religious ceremony, putting more emphasis on the word of God, which was now translated into the vernacular. More importantly, they reinterpreted the crucial function of language in which its power lies—which today we might call ‘performativity’. The question was how binding the words of a ritual were: the traditional Catholic belief in the magical efficacy of certain utterances was now discarded as Popish superstition; the Reformers maintained that rituals were merely representations, metonyms, of transitions whose responsibility was God’s alone.² By eroding religious ceremonial, it has been argued, Protestants placed more emphasis on individual selfhood and its unmediated relationship with God. Radically new possibilities for fashioning that relationship had been opened up, this argument runs, by Calvin and Zwingli’s reinterpretation of the Eucharist—and Jesus’s puzzling remark, ‘this is my body’—as a metaphor.³ Yet the Eucharist can only take us so far: partly because of the strain involved in abstracting a theory of hermeneutic change from a single metaphor, and partly because average early-modern churchgoers did not actually take communion very often (rarely more than once a year, on Easter Sunday).⁴ This essay argues for the importance of a different species of ritual altogether: one more closely integrated into everyday life—with a propensity to slip from the sacred into all manner of secular domains—and one more instrumental in fashioning personal identity. Focusing only on Eucharistic metaphors seems to reduce the role of transformation in religious experience. But by studying rites of passage, we can see that transformation—and the state of liminality, in which transformation took place—was everywhere. We can observe how Protestants experienced liminality, how rituals shaped personal identity in regard to communal belief, but also how differences in these experiences could divide Protestant opinion.

I hope to show the literary-critical payoffs of this approach with a case-study, on the wedding poems of Robert Herrick (1591-1634). But first we need to map out the wider range of functions and meanings that transitional rituals carried in the period of Herrick’s early life and most intense literary activity, between his birth in 1591 and the publication of his

collected poems, *Hesperides*, in 1648. I am conscious that ‘liminality’ is a much used and often abused term: I will assert some control over the concept by returning to its narrowly etymological meaning, in the Latin word ‘*limen*’, or threshold. This is appropriate because, as we will see, liminal states very frequently coincide with the crossing of a literal threshold. Here is a highly productive conceptual metaphor which runs through the heart of English Protestant culture. Threshold rituals had technically been abolished by the Reformation—but this meant they survived as *adiaphora*, things indifferent, in memory, custom, and in metaphor. As a consequence, the threshold generated less polemical heat (and less historiographical interest), but more prolific symbolism, than that other core ritual space, the altar. Yet thresholds had a tendency for metaphorical expansion which meant that, despite my aim of asserting control (such promises rarely prosper), threshold symbolism refuses to stay obediently within religious spaces. We will see how wedding poems transfer the state of liminality to the domestic threshold, but also how some Protestants, having eroded the body of Catholic ritual, began to feel a sense of liminality seep more pervasively through their whole lives.

The term ‘rite of passage’ was originally coined in 1909 by the Franco-German anthropologist Arnold van Gennep, to supply a new taxonomic category in the anthropology of religion. Responding to a growing volume of anthropological studies which aspired to empiricism, van Gennep’s work was heavily invested in equipping the field with classificatory schemes and analytical frameworks. While this involved racist and unscientific distinctions between ‘civilized’ and ‘pre-civilized’ cultures, it produced a more helpful analysis—one which was descriptive rather than subjectively prescriptive—which broke transitional ritual down into three stages. These comprised of an initial phase of ‘alienation’, in which the subject of the ritual is separated from her community and her old identity; a ‘liminal’ phase in which her transformation takes place; and a final phase of ‘incorporation’, in which she is embraced back into the community in her new role.⁵ This is relevant to a literary study because of van Gennep’s further suggestion that these phases could be

discerned by changes in language. The liminal, transitional phase, he claimed, often demands a special language of its own; the encoding of such language as a fixed liturgy marks the point where liminality shifts into incorporation, as the subject's new identity is defined and publicly affirmed.⁶ Van Gennep's foray into language theory did not venture much further, but we can supplement his ideas by turning to the concept of performativity theorized by J. L. Austin in the 1950s. 'Performative utterances' were a category of speech which did not simply describe a state of affairs, but actually brought it into effect through being uttered. Austin's paradigmatic example was the phrase 'I do' in the marriage ceremony, the utterance which itself conjures the new state into being.⁷ As a legal and social formula, the vow represents the 'binding language' which constitutes a contract.⁸ But as a ritual text, it also pinpoints the moment where individuals' social and spiritual identities are transformed.

The idea of performativity allows us to see, without assuming the existence of supernatural powers, where the transformative power of ritual truly lies: in securing the understanding and assent of a linguistic community. Ritual language is performative in two critical ways: through order and repetition it convinces everyone a ritual is authentic; and through metaphor and symbolism it defines what the ritual means, and how it will change the future course of events. The Reformation, with its diminution of ceremony and elevation of the word, placed especially central focus on the latter. The following discussion will focus on intermediating texts which help congregations imagine the meanings of ritual: these include pamphlets, but the crucial genres are those designed for aural performance on ritual occasions—sermons, speeches, and songs. This wider function of performativity, of fashioning shared meanings, considerably expands the category as originally defined by Austin. Yet it has been consistently and powerfully advocated by more recent theorists like Judith Butler:

It is by being interpellated within the terms of language that a certain social existence of the body first becomes possible. To understand this, one must imagine an impossible scene, that of a body that has not yet been given

social definition, a body that is, strictly speaking, not accessible to us, that nevertheless becomes accessible on the occasion of an address, a call, an interpellation that does not ‘discover’ this body, but constitutes it fundamentally.⁹

Butler’s ‘interpellation’ has obvious affinities with van Gennep’s view of ritual language as instigating the shift out of liminality—an imaginary state without or between identities—into incorporation and closure. Butler literalizes the Latin etymology of ‘incorporation’ by arguing that performative language fashions the ‘social existence of the body’ (and in particular female bodies). But she also emphasizes that this is a ‘social’ existence: performative language effects ‘incorporation’ in the wider, metaphorical sense of the body of the people, by defining how individual experiences accord with conventional norms.

II.

In this section I will return to the threshold and map out its metaphorical space, its social functions and wider meanings, in England between 1591 and 1648. The most important place to begin is the threshold sheltered by the church porch, which remained the site for a host of unofficial ceremonies which were regarded as *adiaphora*, and which could be invoked as taste or custom dictated.¹⁰ Church porches provided secular meeting-places for the community, where contracts and rent payments could be witnessed. George Herbert’s poem ‘The Church Porch’ stands out from the intense spiritual introspection of *The Temple* by emphasizing a ‘communal space’, and the more communal sort of language used there, composed of ‘mutually recognized’ proverbs and ‘familiar adages’. Although it is less commonly read today, in the seventeenth century it was one of Herbert’s most popular poems.¹¹ The church porch provided sanctuary for foundlings and homeless people; it was a place where alms were distributed. It was a site of political authority, where decrees and legal

judgements could be read. Some of the larger porch structures built in the later middle ages boasted upper stories which served as courtrooms, muniment rooms, and schoolrooms.¹²

The most important threshold ritual involving the church porch was marriage. When witnesses were required to attest a pre-nuptial contract or dowry payment, it was customary to use the public space of the church porch (van Gennep interpreted the signing of such a contract as the starting-point of the phase of liminality).¹³ Historically, marriage was not a sacrament, but a civil institution which relied on the church for logistical support and spiritual ratification. Hence the medieval marriage ceremony took place at the church porch, in David Cressy's description, 'the point of entry where sacred and secular domain intersected'.¹⁴ The congregation would then cross the threshold to submit the new union for God's blessing in the nuptial mass. It is obligatory at this point to note that Chaucer's *Wife of Bath* had five husbands 'at churche dore', and that Charles I's proxy marriage to Henrietta-Maria was celebrated at the porch of Notre-Dame in 1625. Although the Reformation had moved the ceremony inside the church, historians have cited Robert Herrick's poetry as evidence that some Protestants retained a custom of porch blessings.¹⁵ As the example of Herrick shows, these threshold rites did not stop at the church. On returning home from the ceremony, the bride was lifted through the door, a relic of pre-Christian practice which sometimes survives in traditionalist weddings today.¹⁶ The shifting between these points of liminality—from the civic space of the church porch, to the sacred space of the church, and thence to the domestic threshold—corresponded with the spheres in which the couple's identities were being transformed: acquiring more senior social status, commencing a new spiritual union, and gaining new privileges and duties in the household.¹⁷ These porches were conventionally male-dominated spaces: female voices often maintain their silence on such public moments of threshold-crossing (women writers, it has been argued, carved out more private and metaphorical spaces in which to imagine liminality).¹⁸ The new domestic privilege acquired by brides which commanded most attention amongst male authors was licensed sexuality—

thus ritual texts were closely engaged in the activity described by Judith Butler as fashioning the ‘social existence of the body’.

In this way, weddings participated in a more global tendency to see thresholds as a place where power relations were confirmed or contested. Anthropologists working in the tradition of van Gennep have interpreted the state of liminality as a period of festive misrule, when ordinary social norms are suspended.¹⁹ Hence Thomas Nashe, in the Induction to *The Unfortunate Traveller*, commends his book to the ‘dapper monsieur pages’, ‘sitting in a porch (your parliament house)’—satirically contrasting the seat of law-making against the idle young men enjoying the ribald adventures of Jack Wilton.²⁰ We enjoy a comparable scene when the two Dromios (both manservants) trade insults across Antipholus of Ephesus’s threshold in *The Comedy of Errors*, or when the porter of the gate detains us with some knock-knock jokes in *Macbeth*.²¹ In both these cases, the festive comedy is compounded by anxieties created by the junction between jurisdictions, where rival claimants to authority confront one another.²² An essential early-modern political ritual was the ceremonial entry which welcomed a prince into a city or private house (this is a particularly serious issue in *Macbeth*). The ceremonies and speeches performed at gateways and thresholds on such occasions defined the balance of power between the visiting dignitary and the hosting jurisdiction.²³ This custom survived in court entertainments given at private houses, which often began with a speech given at the threshold or at a specially-erected ceremonial porch, often by the host or patron in the Romanesque guise of a household God supplicating to a higher power.²⁴ One such ceremonial porch still exists at Broughton Castle near Banbury in Oxfordshire, the home of William Fiennes, Viscount Saye and Sele, one of the leaders of the parliamentary opposition to Charles I. According to family tradition, the porch was erected to greet the Restoration of Charles II in 1660.²⁵ The porch carries a Latin motto, ‘*Quod olim fuit meminisse minime iuvat*’, ‘there is little pleasure in remembering the past’ (parodying a line in the *Aeneid* in which Aeneas suggests the converse).²⁶ Saye and Sele evidently nodded to the tradition of ceremonial porches in order to mark the national transition’s dependence on

discontinuity, on forsaking and forgetting an old identity and asserting a new one. Threshold-crossing involved confirming one's relationship with the prevailing social order, whether one was a virgin bride entering a state of male-approved sexuality, or a former parliamentarian entering the Restored Stuart regime.

This is how rites of passage fashion communal identity: as points of egress, a major metaphorical function of porches and thresholds is to govern the membership of a community. Most obviously, Baptism marked Christians' first entry into the Church (it is this symbolism that dictates the customary location of fonts, just inside the church door).²⁷ In a sermon preached in 1627, John Donne quoted St. Augustine describing Baptism as '*Limen Ecclesiae*, the threshold over which we step into the church'. For Donne, this suggested a comparison with the nativity of Christ, as '*Limen festorum*, the threshold over which we step into the festivall celebration of... Christs actions'.²⁸ This instance reveals a second major function of porches: the use of a spatial metaphor to fashion a moment in time. Threshold-crossing occurs at definitive moments in our lives (e.g. Baptism), in the calendar (e.g. the nativity), and in history (e.g. the Restoration). In this way, the threshold offers a vantage-point from which to link together moments across time. Each ritual moment is characterized, according to Butler, by 'a condensed historicity: it exceeds itself in past and future directions, an effect of prior and future invocations that constitute and escape the instance of utterance'.²⁹ Threshold rituals create meaning by relating particular, individual experience to conventional, cross-temporal patterns. And for Christians this perspective could look beyond time itself: to join the Church also meant to enter the eternal congregation of Christian souls in heaven. The Calvinist preacher Robert Bolton likened the sensation felt by churchgoers amongst their co-religionists to being 'as full of lightsomnes and life, as full of heart and Heauen, as if they had one foot in the Porch of Paradise already'.³⁰ We can see both functions of the porch metaphor here, reflecting on the membership of the community and enabling a perspective that looks across (and in this case outside of) time. Bolton was describing the feeling of being in church, but he understands this with a Protestant emphasis on the

congregation rather than the building itself—and this suggests how the metaphorical capacities of the threshold could begin to escape the ritual space itself, and create a more pervasive feeling of proximity between this world and the next.

Although Bolton seems to have found the idea of a ‘porch of Paradise’ comforting, it could equally raise the troubling possibility one might (in the words of Lancelot Andrewes) ‘stumble at the threshold’.³¹ Protestantism had seriously curtailed the traditional ritual methods of securing one’s passage into heaven by rejecting the Catholic doctrines of justification by works and intercessory prayer. The penitential rituals, described in the Old Testament as taking place at the temple porch, now had to be reinterpreted—here by the Calvinist controversialist Thomas Morton:

Calvine speaketh of a *porch of Heauen*, by allusion vnto the people of the olde lawe (who stood in the Porch, whilst only the high Priest went into the Sanctuary to offer for the people) and saith that so *Christ our high Priest is onely entred into the Sanctuary of Heauen, that he may offer vp the vowes of the people, which stand in the Porch a farre off[.]*³²

In the relevant passage of the *Institutes*, Calvin had refuted the doctrine of intercessory prayer on the grounds that Jesus was the only mediator for fallen humans.³³ He had substantiated the point by presenting the Jewish rituals as an analogy, or in Morton’s view an ‘allusion’, rather than any more essential model for Protestant practice. We can see that process of adaptation via analogy in Morton’s use of a piece of vernacular architectural diction, cramming the gathered people into the ‘porch’, whereas modern translators have generally preferred to render Calvin’s ‘*in atrio*’ as the more realistic but less idiomatic ‘outer court’ (the real building in Jerusalem was more of an open portico). Morton was echoing contemporary English translations of Calvin, but also the conventional translation of the book of Joel: ‘Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between porch and altar’ (2.17).³⁴ ‘Between

porch and altar’ was a proverbial phrase, the standard citation on penitential rituals, which the Book of Common Prayer ordered to be read every year on Ash Wednesday.³⁵ The blunt instrument of a keyword search in *EEBO* finds over seventy uses of the phrase ‘between porch and altar’ in the first half of the seventeenth century. It was invoked particularly heavily during moments of national crisis—by eulogists for Prince Henry in 1613 and polemicists in the English Civil War.³⁶ Weeping between the porch and the altar was important because it designated the porch as the place for the reception of penitents: wrongdoers were sometimes sentenced to perform public acts of penance in the church porch; women who were ‘impure’ after childbirth were greeted at the porch for their ‘churching’ or ‘purification’.³⁷ The metaphorical function of the porch here reflects its role as the point of entry into a community: as the Calvinist theologian Joseph Hall declared, ‘in the porch we finde the regenerate soule entering into the blessed societie of the Church’.³⁸

Hall’s argument is one of many examples of authors pondering how the geography of the Jewish temple—with its large portico, known as the Porch of Solomon—might apply to the Reformed churches in England. The issue was clouded by the wide range of secular activities found in Solomon’s Porch (such as the moneylending which Jesus had objected to), but also by the fact there was another ‘Porch of Solomon’, the portico of the palace, where Solomon gave his legal judgements.³⁹ Puritans like Morton presented the relationship between temple and church porches as one of analogy, but Protestants who retained more reverence for the traditions and built fabric of the church—and who valued the connotations of legal and spiritual authority—tended to insist on a more direct historical continuity.⁴⁰ The puritan Andrew Willet resisted making distinctions between the porch and the higher sanctuaries as idolatrous—‘making one place of the Church holier then the rest’—and pointedly including Limentinus, the Roman god of the threshold, on his exhaustive list of Popish superstitions.⁴¹ Yet this was increasingly what the porch was taken to represent: a portal into a more intensely sacred space. Ceremonialist churchmen of the 1620s and 1630s began to argue that the holy presence was ‘not evenly spread’ throughout the church building,

but ‘most intense in the areas given over to the administration of sacraments’. This was piety which ‘centred on an intercessionary priesthood’—restoring the role of priests which the Calvinist interpretation of penitential rituals had sought to strip away.⁴² They began to canvas these beliefs—most outspokenly in the 1630s under Archbishop Laud—with a slogan borrowed from Richard Hooker, the ‘beauty of holiness’.⁴³ An early adopter of this language was the royal chaplain Sampson Price, who used the phrase as the title for a 1618 pamphlet in which he argued that Jesus’s attendance at the temple confirmed its special significance:

1 The lawfulness of Churches, their dedication or consecration [...]
 2 The honor of Christs presentation of himselfe especially in Temples then,
 in Churches now [...]
 In the 1. we haue Salomons temple beautified and re-edefied.
 In the 2. we haue a greater then Salomon in it, whereby it is exalted and
 honoured.⁴⁴

Price—unlike many of the men who were to take up such arguments—was an older-style Protestant who reconciled his Calvinism with church traditions.⁴⁵ To such men it seemed obvious that church buildings should somehow convey God’s grandeur to the fallen layperson:

Yea if beggars see but a faire porch before the doore of an house, they
 conceit that one which can spare them something there abideth. To our
 capacitie therefore the Lord [...] is pleased thus to set forth his greatnesse,
 glorie, and magnificence.⁴⁶

The begging metaphor looks back to the traditional role of the porch as the place for almsgiving, described in the Bible and frequently commended by poets like Herrick.⁴⁷ Linking the church to these customs of charity appealed to traditional social values while observing a strictly Calvinist analogy for grace, as God’s act of inconceivable charity. For

Laudian churchmen, dissatisfied with Calvinism, the literal connections between church architecture, charity, and the attainment of grace, could be pushed still further.

John Donne reflected the overall ambivalence on the significance of church porches in a sermon preached for the Feast of Dedication at Lincoln's Inn in 1623. He argued that Jesus's attendance at the temple 'might countenance and authorise the Ordinances and Institutions of the Church', but interpreted his specific decision to walk in the porch as indifferent (an *adiaphoron*), merely putting it down to the cold weather: 'because it was Winter, he walked in the *Porch* which was couered'.⁴⁸ Donne was more conscious than most that temple porches were at the forefront of Protestant disagreements about the nature of ritual space. As Dean of St. Paul's he had to contend with 'Paul's Walk', the custom of using the cathedral nave as a space for fashionable socializing, gossiping, and the hawking of wares. In 1634 Charles I had attempted to move the traffic outside, commissioning Inigo Jones to build an imposing portico on the cathedral's west front, featuring 56-foot-high Corinthian columns.⁴⁹ Edmund Waller commemorated this porch in 'Upon his Majesty's Repairing of Pauls', a poem which reflects on another of the threshold functions I mentioned earlier, of negotiating between a host jurisdiction and a higher power: 'At once it threatens and obliges Heaven'.⁵⁰ There is an almost blasphemous ambivalence here, with the thought that Charles's porch, in attempting to 'oblige' God in the sense of please him, might end up obligating him in a way that 'threatens' heaven's sovereignty. Porches which sought to elevate the grandeur of the divine presence within—and by extension, of the Stuart regime which sponsored such adornments—aroused strong hostility amongst puritans. The porch Archbishop Laud added to the University Church of St. Mary on the High Street in Oxford—influenced by Inigo Jones, and furnished with a statue of its patron saint in a niche over the door—provoked the intemperate fury of William Prynne, who saw this (not entirely unreasonably) as conclusive proof of Laud's revival of Roman superstitions.⁵¹ On entering the city in 1646, parliamentarian troops used musket fire to decapitate virgin and child.⁵² St Paul's church in Covent Garden, on the other hand, was conceived in 1631 by the puritan

Earl of Bedford, as a sort of humble antidote to Laudian excess, something ‘not much better than a barn’. Again, the commissioned architect was Inigo Jones, who promised to build ‘the handsomest barn in England’ (one wonders if Jones was really the right man for the job). Jones designed an austere, Etruscan portico for the church’s eastern end, which still fronts onto Covent Garden today. Crucially, by placing so much architectural emphasis on a door in the east wall, Bedford hoped to make it impossible to put an altar there. This porch, then, was a weapon in the controversy over altars—although one which the Laudian Bishop of London, William Juxon, managed to foil by the expedient of having the doorway bricked up.⁵³

Church porches created anxiety because they projected connotations about the relationship between the secular space outside, and the religious doctrines preached within. In the book of Ezekiel, the threshold becomes a metaphor for doctrinal purity itself: ‘in setting of their threshold by my thresholds, and their post by my posts, and the wall between me and them, they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed’ (43.8). Here God is condemning blasphemers who have profaned the temple by building their houses too close: on the face of it this might seem to provide clear evidence for the need to revere church buildings. But puritans reinterpreted the verse to instead criticize the corruption of true doctrine with carnal superstition: ‘I speake of our aduersaries, who adding to that which is written, so many vnwritten fabulous vanities... doe set the threshold of tradition, by the threshold of the Word written, making the Lords siluer drosse’.⁵⁴ The threshold’s function as the point of entry to a community is closely relevant here, in a sermon on ‘the Christians Admission into the Houshold of God’, as doctrine defines the extent and identity of the religious community, the difference between ‘us’ and ‘our aduersaries’. A similar example appears in John Milton’s discussion of Baptism, the ritual of entry into the Church, in *The Reason of Church Government*: ‘Ye have bin bold, not to set your threshold by his threshold... but your Sacrament... by his Sacrament, baptizing the Christian infant with a solemne sprinkle, and unbaptizing for your own part with a profane and impious forefinger’.⁵⁵ This association between thresholds and doctrine was confirmed by another

image a few chapters later in Ezekiel, when the prophet is led to the door of the temple, ‘and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward’, eventually spreading across the whole land (47.1). The Calvinist theologian William Perkins interpreted this influentially as a metaphor for ‘the preaching of the Gospell of Christ... flowing through all the parts of this Ile’.⁵⁶ But the metaphor did not just appeal to puritans: the proto-Arminian Lancelot Andrewes invoked it to describe his rather more redemptive theology of ‘the fulnes of [God’s] compassion’: ‘it is full Sea. All the Banckes are filled. It is now as Ezekiels Waters that he sawe flowe, from vnder the threshold of the Temple’.⁵⁷ There are important distinctions here. Andrewes evokes the capaciousness of God’s mercy whilst also preserving an essential role for ritual space, emphasizing the fact the waters emanate from their source at the temple. For Perkins, on the other hand, the waters more narrowly symbolize the Gospel—without the capacious expectations of grace which follow in Andrewes—but at the same time they spread more widely, ‘through all the parts of this Ile’, flaunting their ability to escape ritual sites and pervade throughout secular space.

The connotations of moral judgement and doctrinal rigour made the threshold a place for intense moral warnings. A representative example from puritan polemics of the 1640s proclaimed: ‘if Security be within the door, Judgement is at the threshold’.⁵⁸ There is a polarity here which configures the indoors as complacent and the threshold as a place for vigilance and humility. ‘I choose to haunt the thresholde in the house of my God’, declared a colourful paraphrase of psalm 84, ‘then to dwell in the pauillion of iniquitie’ (84.10).⁵⁹ In more conventional translations of this psalm (including the Geneva and King James versions), David describes himself as a ‘doorkeeper’, connoting a sense of watchfulness. Another psalm, 141, applied this sense of moral surveillance to anxieties about the flesh: ‘set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips’ (141.3). This metaphor fashions the body as a ‘spirituall temple’ whose ‘porch’ is the mouth, which has to be carefully guarded:

Here the Feare of God is the Porter; who is both ready to let in his friends,
and resolute to keepe out his enemies. Let him specially watch for two sorts
of foes, the one, a traitor that goes out, euill speaking: the other, a thiefe that
steales in, too much drinking.⁶⁰

Now we arrive at the liminal places in the body, it is worth recalling Judith Butler's argument that performative language works to fashion the body's 'social existence'. Insofar as absence of evidence can be a reliable indicator of such matters, we can detect a widespread reluctance to use threshold metaphors as sexual innuendoes. In John Marston's tragedy *The Insatiate Countess*, the courtier Mendosa reveals his moral corruption when he responds to the Countess's vow of chastity by asking 'Wilt thou ram vp thy porch-hold?'—misappropriating the metaphor's proper connotations of vigilance and penitence to carnal cynicism.⁶¹ In literary texts one more often finds thresholds intervening to protect virginity, as in Shakespeare's *Lucrece* when the anthropomorphized threshold of Lucrece's bedchamber 'grates the door' in an effort to alert her to Tarquin's approach.⁶² This suggests one reason why it is so important that brides, on arrival at the threshold, must be lifted across.

The threshold, then, is a place of moral evaluation—and where the ethical norms which govern this process are contested or confirmed. Porches were places where sovereignty and religious doctrines were affirmed, and where individuals were admitted into the community of Christians: at the beginning of life, in baptism; in rehabilitation, through penitence; and at the porch of heaven, after death. This is how thresholds fashion communal identity, but also, by offering a perspective which looks across and evaluates the transitional moments in an individual life, how they shape personal identity too. We have seen how Protestants could experience this liminality differently. Those who revered church tradition and ceremony tended to emphasize porches as the crossing-point into a more sacred space, infused with the 'beauty of holiness', and where priests would intercede for the congregation by weeping 'between porch and altar'. Those who wished to erode ritual further, on the other hand, tended to carry the metaphorical connotations of the threshold into their wider life, their

moral anxieties, and their bodies. Peter Lake argues that ‘puritans allowed the sacred or the holy to spill out of the church and into the world, beyond clerical control’.⁶³ Even for a churchman like Donne, the whole of life could feel invested with a destabilizing liminality: ‘In that life one is ever in the porch or posterne, going in or out, never within his house, himself: [...] A life built of past & future, not proposing any constant present’.⁶⁴ Donne is characteristically fascinated by the paradox of a never-quite-settled identity (‘never within his house, himself’), but also of liminality as a heightened time which has no ‘constant present’, but which is rather defined by looking across time into ‘past & future’.

III.

The pivotal transitional ritual in most early-modern lives was marriage. This marked a decisive boundary between youth and age—in David Cressy’s account of Robert Herrick’s marriage poetry, the young maidens weep to see the ‘youngling bride’ grow into a ‘thrifty housewife’. Marriage ‘assigned new privileges, advantages, and obligations [and] redefined social and sexual roles’, but also brought expectations of ‘a higher standard of probity and propriety’, as young people passed from dependency to being householders, from flirtation to the serious business of procreation.⁶⁵ Texts written to be read out at weddings necessarily work to define these transitions to the community—as I argued at the outset, it is herein that their performativity lies, particularly, as Butler argued, in fashioning the ‘social existence of the body’. Marriage poets were required to manage a careful balancing act between tact and titillation—upholding standards of honour and anxieties about carnal lust, on the one hand, and celebrating the moral duty to procreate and indulging a festive sensuality, on the other. Wedding celebrations commonly featured a boisterous custom in which the newlywed couple were escorted to the marriage bed. This was the section of the

festivities which wedding songs participated in—or, for more socially elite families, replaced with a more dignified (though not necessarily more euphemistic) form of entertainment.⁶⁶

Ben Jonson's nuptial masque *Hymenaei*—written for the Earl of Essex's wedding in 1606—invokes precisely these concerns at the moment of threshold-crossing. In the printed text, the injunction to 'lift your golden feete | Above the Threshold, high' is accompanied by an extensive marginal gloss on the Roman origins of this ritual custom:

This was also another Rite; that she might not touch the Threshold as she entred, but was lifted over it. Servius saith, because it was sacred to Vesta. Plut[arch] remembers divers causes. But that, which I take to come nearest the truth, was only the avoyding of Sorcerous Drugs, vs'd by Witches to be burie'd vnder that Place, to the destroying of Mariage-Amitie, or the Power of Generation.⁶⁷

Jonson draws attention to sources which best fulfil the imperatives described above: celebrating fertility (or 'the Power of Generation') whilst still respecting the bride's innocent state (by propitiating Vesta, the household goddess venerated by virgins). He nods to marriage's procreative purposes, whilst maintaining the necessary level of decorum and civility—projected, not least, by his overt classicism. Herrick, one of Jonson's most devoted admirers, echoes the same Roman superstitions in the 'Porch Verse' he wrote for the marriage of Henry Northly and Lettice Yard in 1639: 'Profane no Porch young man and maid, for fear | Ye wrong the Threshold-god, that keeps peace here' (3-4). Herrick's modern editors, Tom Cain and Ruth Connolly, gloss these lines by citing Jonson's marginal note verbatim.⁶⁸

But at the same time, Herrick—writing for a less eminent and less puritanical family—looks forward much more keenly to the procreative climax in which his marriage rites will culminate:

Do all things sweetly, and in comely wise;

Put on your Garlands first, then Sacrifice:
That done; when both of you have seemly fed,
We'll call on Night, to bring ye both to Bed: (7-10)

Herrick emphasizes the language of ritual observance, moving past the decency and order mandated in 1 Corinthians 14.40, towards the more sensual qualities of sweetness and comeliness advocated by contemporary Laudians, and beyond, into imaginary invocations of allegorical figures and pseudo-Roman rites. The wedding in question took place in Herrick's parish, at Dean Prior: Cain and Connolly presume he conducted the service in church before leading the party to the bride's house to perform this 'Porch Verse'.⁶⁹ If Arnold van Gennep had been there, he might have interpreted the poem's movement from the church porch to the domestic threshold, and thence to the door of the bedchamber, as extending and repeating the phase of liminality, and suspending the moment of incorporation until the couple literally unite as 'one flesh' (as the Latin etymology of consummation, in the sense of 'summing together', implies). Herrick's ritual imagery escapes from ritual space, in the church, and instead fashions the spiritually transformative potency of the secular act of consummation. And the ritual language is performative in that it brings the union into being, by investing it with meaning and imagining how it will transform the couple's identities:

Where being laid, all Faire signs looking on,
Fish-like, encrease then to a million:
And millions of spring-times may ye have,
Which spent, one death, bring to ye both one Grave. (11-14)

With the consummation as one body the poem pivots into images of incorporation, transfiguring the couple into a teeming shoal of fish, a symbol of fertile abundance with echoes of Genesis (48.16) and the miracles of Jesus.⁷⁰ The multitude of fish then becomes the 'millions of spring-times', continuing the theme of fertility while using the threshold as a vantage-point for looking across and shaping time—we recall Butler's description of the ritual moment as one of 'condensed historicity'. These 'millions of spring-times' collapse into the 'one death' of the poem's monosyllabic final line: the verb of worldly possession, 'have', becomes 'spent', and ends in its rhyme with the final 'grave'. Although Herrick

confines himself to earthly things in this poem, the couple's continued unity in death implicitly looks to the spiritual union that will survive this ritual moment, and endure beyond secular time.

A fascination with ritual has long been axiomatic for our understanding of Herrick's poetry.⁷¹ We should not underestimate the importance of his vocation as a priest—a role Jonson only ever attained in metaphor. Even if he sometimes treated this role with self-deprecating irony, he took it seriously at least as a concept in his poems, where he imagines himself as an orchestrator of rites and ceremonies.⁷² In 'To his Worthy Friend, M. Tho. Falconbirge', Herrick enjoys reminiscing about another occasion on which he seems to have performed a 'porch verse':

Remember what thy *Herrick* Thee foretold,
When at the holy Threshold of thine house,
He Boded good-luck to thy Selfe and Spouse. (10-12)

Even at weddings where he had not personally acted as celebrant, Herrick loved to imagine himself as the officer who presided over the 'holy Threshold' and 'foretold' the couple's future happiness. In his most celebrated poem, 'Corinna's going a Maying', Herrick encourages Corinna to join the fertility rites by breathlessly transforming domestic thresholds into sites of 'Devotion': 'Each Porch, each doore, ere this, | An Arke a Tabernacle is' (33-4). The young maiden's domestic landscape is suddenly shot through with spiritual liminality. Whereas earlier we saw how Calvinists could feel liminality seeping through their secular lives, Herrick retains an intense investment in ritual times and places: the 'tabernacle' can mean both the dwelling-place of God, and a temporary or portable place of worship.⁷³

I want to explore how Herrick fashions threshold rituals in two more wedding songs—among the greatest examples of the genre in English—'An Epithalamie for Sir Thomas Southwell and his Ladie', written in 1618, and 'A Nuptiall Song, or Epithalamie, on Sir Clipseby Crew and his Ladie', written in 1625. At neither of these weddings was Herrick the celebrant, but both poems project him into the role of quasi-priest, directing and defining

the ritual of threshold-crossing. We need a clearer understanding of what it was about ritual that was so attractive to Herrick—particularly in these festive poems, which seem much less invested in religious didacticism than in sociability and titillation. Herrick’s ritualism has sometimes been cast too reductively as a sort of crypto-Catholic nostalgia or, even less helpfully, as polemical support for ‘Laudianism’.⁷⁴ As we saw in his ‘Porch Verse’, Herrick was clearly willing to espouse Laudian buzzwords like ‘comely’ by the end of 1630s. But both the Crew and Southwell epithalamia were written and performed before Laud had acquired any major influence, and when scepticism of Calvin and advocacy of ceremony were only beginning to crystallize as a distinctive position. The Southwell epithalamium, for instance, was written in the same year as Sampson Price’s pamphlet *The Beauty of Holiness*, quoted earlier. While it has been argued that both poems may have taken on a more political poignancy when they re-appeared in Herrick’s printed collection, *Hesperides*, in 1648, they had both been circulating in manuscript since their first performance.⁷⁵ Peter Lake has traced the roots of ‘Laudianism’ to the veneration for the authority of church tradition, the desire to enforce a hierarchical social order, and the projection of an elevated communal identity.⁷⁶ These qualities seem peculiarly inappropriate to Herrick’s wedding songs, which are promiscuously disorderly in their sensuality, their mixture of Christian and pagan, and their scattering of ritual space through the secular and domestic spheres.⁷⁷ He joins in with the spirits of misrule, boisterously escorting the bride and groom to their bedchamber. These qualities are most accentuated in the versions of the poems that circulated in manuscript, rather than the printed text of 1648; nevertheless, readers who brought a political consciousness to the poems in 1648 would have felt at least as nostalgic for these values of sociability and sexuality as they were for anything we might associate with Laud.

A straightforward example is the customary reluctance Herrick’s brides show as they cross the marital threshold. They first have to be separated forcefully from their families—in the epithalamium for Thomas Southwell: ‘You, you that be of her nearest kin, | Now o’re the threshold force her in.’ (81-2). On van Gennep’s model the subject’s separation from her old

community and social role represents the initial phase of ‘alienation’. In his self-appointed role as priest of the threshold, Herrick is now responsible for spurring her impatiently onwards:

Is it (sweet maid) your fault these holy
Bridall-Rites goe on so slowly? (11-12)

These Precious-Pearly-Purling teares,
But spring from ceremonious feares. (21-2)

There are echoes here of Catullus’s elegy 61, the ‘Epithalamium on Vinia and Manlius’, in which the bride weeps at the prospect of losing her innocence (*flet quod ire necesse est*).⁷⁸ Yet we might also detect an allusion to the rites of penitence described in the Book of Joel, its urgent summons—‘let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet’—as well as the penitent weeping between the porch of the house and the altar of the marriage bed (2.16-17). These echoes pull the poem in different directions—registering how the impending rite of consummation will alter both the bride’s sexual role and her moral status. But Herrick also suggests the bride’s ‘feares’ are merely ‘ceremonious’, invoking the latter term in its negative sense of over-fastidiousness—a common usage, but one which Laudians strived to avoid. In other words, how seriously should we take his allusions to competing traditions? The delicate wordplay of ‘Precious-Pearly-Purling’ hovers between connotations of sincere emotion and surface artifice: ‘precious’ can suggest true value or affected delicacy; ‘pearly’, both innocence and a gemstone; ‘purling’, fine embroidery but also ‘swirling’ and ‘murmuring’.⁷⁹ The bride’s tears, then, seem half-sincere, half for show. In fairness to the bride, as we saw above, the threshold was conventionally the place for moral judgement and vigilance over the body. Yet early-modern commentators on marriage ritual implied an ironic consciousness that the bride was not always so innocently reluctant as she wished to seem: discussing the Roman practice of lifting her across the threshold, the antiquary Thomas Goodwin argued she was carried by a ‘seeming force’ because ‘in modesty shee would seeme not to goe without violence into that place where she should loose her

maiden head'.⁸⁰ Herrick made precisely the same inference in his epithalamium on Clipseby

Crew:

And beautious Bride we do confess y'are wise,
 In dealing forth these bashfull jealousies:
 In Lov's name do so; and a price
 Set on your selfe, by being nice:
 [...] On then, and though you slow-
 ly go, yet, howsoever, go. (51-60)

Again, Herrick is markedly irreverent about the custom of innocent reluctance, reducing it to a value calculation ('price') and a sense of over-fastidiousness ('nice'). He abandons this playful irony only to insist on a temporal urgency, imploring the bride onwards. Confusingly, his injunctions both try to speed things up, insisting there is no time to lose, whilst simultaneously slowing them down—manufacturing a rhyme with 'go' by suspending the word 'slow-|ly' across a line-ending. This move gives us an indication of what is distinctive in Herrick's fascination with rituals: treating their doctrinal or customary observance with levity, but focusing intensely on the curious, paradoxical effect they have on time.

The conventional symbolism of marriage was drawn from the Song of Songs, where the groom—figured as Christ—stands at the threshold, waiting for the bride—figured as the Church—to let him in ('it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love'; 5.2). In this way passionate sexual union became a metaphor for religious fidelity. Yet in Herrick's hands the imagery from Canticles also simultaneously becomes an allusion to Catullus—for instance, in the Southwell epithalamium: 'See, see the Bride-grooms Torch | Halfe wasted in the porch' (53-4).⁸¹ The feeling of mounting urgency, of time running out, recalls the spiritual intensity of the Canticles, but turns back to one of sexual desire, by allusion to Catullus, for whom the 'Torch' is a fertility symbol.⁸² The echo of Catullus is made explicit in the variant manuscript version, where the torch is described as 'pinie' ('*pineam quate taedam*')—offering a more Priapic sense of woodiness and perhaps also of pining with desire.⁸³ This may tell us something about the difference between the printed and

then faire maides now aduenter
 Since Time and Love bids enter: (MS 19-20)

...bidd them venter
 for Love, Time, Place bids enter: (MS 109-10)

Then undoe your selves and venter
 for the dimpling bedd bids enter: (MS 129-30)

Again, there is a paradoxical effect as the repetition seems to suspend and extend the moment of entry, but time is simultaneously urgent and pressing, as it repeatedly ‘bids’ the bride forward. In the second and third example, we also see how this special, heightened time is contingent on a particular ‘Place’: the passage over the threshold and into the ‘dimpling bedd’. As the repeated rhyme with ‘venter’ suggests, this passage is fraught with risk: the couple must ‘undoe’ themselves. This obviously implies the unfastening of clothes, with another echo of Catullus (*‘virgins | zonula solvent’*).⁸⁵ But if we shift the emphasis onto the ‘selves’, it also implies how the state of liminality unfastens the couple’s identities, to be re-shaped. Of course, the couple ‘undoe’ themselves in a third, moral sense, by committing an act with irrevocable consequences in the eyes of God.

How did Herrick imagine this mysterious process which ‘undid’ and transformed the lovers’ identities? The Crew epithalamium also features the instruction to ‘undoe her’ (100; 170 in MS), and, in the variant manuscript text, combines this with a vivid depiction of what it means to ‘lose your soules’ in consummation:

swell, mix, and lose your soules, implye
 like streames which flowe
 encur’ld together and no difference showe
 in theyre molt silver run, run
 into your selves like wooll together spunn
 or blende, as that the sighte
 of two, makes one Hermaphrodite. (MS 74-80, not in *Hesperides*)

Herrick’s meaning itself becomes liminal here, holding in tension two incompatible injunctions, to ‘lose your soules’ but also ‘run | into your selves’. He dramatizes this state of liminality through his copiously mixed metaphors: the ‘streames which flowe’ become

‘encur’ld together’ like threads; they turn back into ‘molt silver’, running ‘like wooll together spunn’. The somewhat overstretched ‘like’ of this simile binds together the two core functions of marriage: melting liquids implying sexual passion; the spun thread, a companionate knot or bond. The nature of this fusion remains mysterious—Herrick climbs down from the breathless ‘and’ to the vaguer ‘or’ as he blends into the final, provocative, Spenserian simile of the ‘Hermaphrodite’. This passage was omitted from *Hesperides* in 1648, but, as with the Southwell epithalamium, it circulated in manuscript following Crew’s wedding. The surviving manuscript version can seem unstable, but in fact it follows the pattern we have already observed, of narrating the climactic moment paradoxically before the bride has even crossed the threshold:

Wellcom at laste unto the thresholde; Tyme
Thron’d in a saffron eveninge, seems to chyme
all in: kisse and soe enter, if
a prayer must bee sayde bee breife... (MS 101-4; not in *Hesperides*)

Again, Herrick is standing at the threshold, imagining the rites that lie ahead. And on this occasion he actually invokes the allegorized deity of ‘Tyme’ to mark this temporal paradox, suspending and accentuating the threshold-rites (the ‘prayers’) whilst at the same time urging haste.

Temporal elasticity is central to the climactic acts in both poems. Both the print and manuscript texts of the Crew poem work to telescope ordinary time, as the couple’s time seems to pass more rapidly:

To bed, to bed, kind Turtles, now, and write
This the short’st day, and this the longest night;
But yet too short for you: ’tis we,
Who count this night as long as three,
Lying alone,
Telling the Clock strike Ten, Eleven, Twelve, One. (71-6)

Herrick’s present tense straddles both the ‘now’ in which he sends the lovers to bed and offers to hand writing duties over to them, and the long night he spends in the paradoxically short and melancholy line, ‘Lying alone’. The effect is to highlight a careful and confident

distinction between his ordinary time and the lovers' heightened, ritual time. Likewise, at the sexual climax of the Southwell epithalamium, 'both Love and Time | To their full height doe clime' (123-24). Here, he shifts into the future tense to anticipate the approaching moment of consummation:

Fit Organs for encrease,
To keep, and to release
That, which may the honour'd Stem
Circle with a Diadem. (127-30)

Looking forward from his vantage-point at the threshold, Herrick anticipates how the marriage-rites will transform the couple's sexual roles, and indeed, their bodies, 'Organs for encrease'. 'Encrease' offers a specifically phallic sense, in conjunction with the 'Stem', but also a more general, Biblical sense of prosperous fertility. The 'Stem', meanwhile, is encircled with a 'Diadem', hovering outrageously between connotations of sexual penetration and of the spiritual crown that awaited in heaven. Once again, we see him telescoping time: 'On your minutes, hours, dayes, months, years, | Drop the fat blessing of the spears' (151-52), in a striking example of Butler's notion of 'condensed historicity'. In its final couplet, the poem pivots from procreative fertility to a Biblical image of harvest (introducing a punning sense of the verb 'born'):

Be ye to the Barn then born,
Two, like two ripe shocks of corn. (169-70)

Quoting the Book of Job (5.26), Herrick looks from this moment of threshold-crossing towards the couple's eventual passage through the porch of heaven.

This essay has aimed to show the powerful effects thresholds had on the early-modern Protestant imagination, but also how early-modern Protestants could experience liminality differently. Although, as we have seen, thresholds were sites of doctrinal tension, the act of threshold-crossing reminds us how religious differences were experiential too,

implicated in spiritual transformation and communal identity. Herrick's language is ritualistic in that it identifies an intense time of transformation in which the cross-temporal patterns that shape individual identity become visible. It is performative in that it fashions this imaginative process and affirms it to the community. This does not make Herrick conventional in the sense of predictable: the wild inventiveness of his threshold rituals can puzzle and dazzle the reader too. While the Roman allusions appeal to the elite social identity of the educated friends who heard his poems, or read them in manuscript, they challenge any clear sense of communal religious identity. By insisting they count as 'holy Bridall-Rites', quoting the Bible, imaginatively expanding his purview as priest to the domestic threshold and the marriage-bed, Herrick subverts the church's increasing emphasis on order, dignity, and seamliness. The Laudians invested significance in the fabric of the church porch as the portal into a sacred space—where penitents were received, and souls admitted into the community of Christians. Herrick can paradoxically sound more like the orthodox Calvinists who dispersed spiritual liminality throughout the secular world, and particularly in a histrionic vigilance over the body and its sexual activity. But of course for Herrick this is a celebratory rather than anxious experience, transfiguring domestic thresholds into altars and 'tabernacles', and indulging the sensual delights of consummation while remaining alert to their spiritually transformative significance. The moral evaluation which takes place at his thresholds is warmly affirmatory, festive, and sociable. Where he takes ritual seriously is in his careful demarcation of a special, heightened time which gives shape to his subjects' procreative lives and binds this moment to their eventual passage over the threshold of heaven. Whereas Herrick's liminality seeps through secular life with an un-Laudian pervasiveness, he imagines ritual spaces and times with outrageous confidence—unlike Calvinists, for whom life teetering on the threshold felt intensely precarious. Herrick's poems are controversial not in the somewhat simplified way in which critics once claimed they were polemical, but in his idiosyncratic take on the experience of liminality—vividly and recklessly imagining how threshold-crossing transforms our relationships with one another, and with God.

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1 The central works are: David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, 1997), and Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 2005).

2 Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 157-81.

3 See Timothy Rosendale, *Liturgy and Literature in the Making of Protestant England* (Cambridge, 2007), and Sophie Read, *Eucharist and the Poetic Imagination in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2013).

4 Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 170.

5 Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, tr. Monika Vizedom and Gabrielle Caffee (Chicago, 1960), 11.

6 *Ibid.*, 117, 132, 169.

7 J. L. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words: the William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1975), 5-11 and *passim*; see also James Loxley and Mark Robson, *Shakespeare, Jonson, and the Claims of the Performative* (New York, 2013), 1-16 and *passim*.

8 See John Kerrigan, *Shakespeare’s Binding Language* (Oxford, 2016), 35.

9 Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of Performativity* (New York, 1997), 2.

10 See for instance Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death*, 205-6.

11 Anne Myers, *Literature and Architecture in Early Modern England* (Baltimore, MD, 2013), 107-17.

12 Wall, *Porches and Fonts*, 15-49.

13 *Ibid.*, 14; van Gennep, *Rites of Passage*, 116-17.

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- 14 Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death*, 336.
- 15 Francis Bond, *An Introduction to English Church Architecture from the Eleventh to the Sixteenth Century*, vol. 2 (London, 1913), 733-2; Wall, *Porches and Fonts*, 14-15.
- 16 Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 38.
- 17 Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death*, 287-8.
- 18 See Erica Longfellow on Anna Trapnel in *Women and Religious Writing in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2004), 164-8.
- 19 Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (London, 1969), cited in Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 22.
- 20 Thomas Nashe, 'The Induction to the dapper Monsieur Pages of the Court', in *The Unfortunate Traveller* (London, 1594), sig. A4r.
- 21 William Shakespeare, *The Comedy of Errors*, ed. Charles Whitworth (Oxford, 2002), 3.1.31-85; *Macbeth*, ed. Pamela Clark and Sandra Mason (London, 2015), 2.3.1-20.
- 22 In *The Comedy of Errors* there is an additional generic tension as the Latin comedy does not depict interior spaces.
- 23 Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 262-71.
- 24 See Ben Jonson, 'A Private Entertainment of the King and Queen, on May Day in the Morning' (1604), ed. James Knowles, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, 2012); and Thomas Carew, 'To the King at his entrance into Saxham' (1620), ed. Rhodes Dunlap, in *The Poems of Thomas Carew* (Oxford, 1949).
- 25 I am grateful to Martin Fiennes for discussing this point with me.
- 26 Virgil, *Aeneid*, tr. by H. Rushton Fairclough, ed. G. P. Goold, rev. edn. (Cambridge, MA, 1999), I.203: '*Forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit*', 'some day you may joy to remember the past'.
- 27 Wall, *Porches and Fonts*, 53.
- 28 John Donne, Sermon 47, preached at St Paul's, 27th January 1627, in *LXXX Sermons* (London, 1640), 468.
- 29 Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 2.

30 Robert Bolton, *Some Generall Directions for a Comfortable Walking with God* (London, 1626), 88.

31 See for example, Lancelot Andrewes, 'A Sermon Preached before the King's Maiestie at Windsore', 12th May 1611, in *XCVI Sermons* (London, 1629), 635.

32 Thomas Morton, *The Encounter Against M. Parsons* (London, 1610), 100.

33 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, tr. Ford Lewis Battles, ed. John T. McNeill, vol. 2 (London, 1961), 877-8 (III.xx.20).

34 *Ibid.*; Thomas Norton, trans., *The Institution of Christian religion, vvrytten in Latine by Maister Ihon Caluin, and translated into Englysh according to the authors last edition* (London, 1561), fol. 223v.

35 Brian Cummings, ed., *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662* (Oxford, 2011), 294.

36 See, for instance, Daniel Price, *Spirituell Odours to the Memory of Prince Henry* (London, 1613), 19-20 and *passim*, and Matthew Griffith, *A Sermon Preached in the Citie of London* (London, 1643), 12.

37 Bond, *Introduction to English Church Architecture*, vol. 2, 733; Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death*, 206.

38 Joseph Hall, *Contemplations, the Sixth Volume* (London, 1622), 232.

39 See Wall, *Porches and Fonts*, 1-10.

40 Compare attempts by the Laudian Walter Balcanquhall, *The Honour of Christian Churches* (London, 1633), 8, and the Presbyterian William Prynne, *Truth Triumphant Over Falsehood* (London, 1645), 132-33.

41 Andrew Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (London, 1592), 338, 364.

42 Peter Lake, 'The Laudian Style: Order, Uniformity, and the Pursuit of Holiness in the 1630s', in Kenneth Fincham (ed.), *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642* (Basingstoke, 1993), 170-73.

43 *Ibid.*, 165.

44 Sampson Price, *The Beauty of Holiness* (London, 1618), 7-8.

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- 45 Recent editors suggest we could see Robert Herrick's early career in a similar light: Tom Cain and Ruth Connolly, 'Introduction', in (eds) *The Complete Poetry of Robert Herrick*, vol. 1, (Oxford, 2013), xxiii.
- 46 William Gouge, *A Guide to Goe to God* (London, 1626), 22.
- 47 See Herrick, 'A Panegyrick to Sir Lewis Pemberton', lines 15-16, and Cain and Connolly's note in (eds) *Complete Poetry*, vol. 2, 633-4n, where they compare Ben Jonson's *New Inn*, 5.5.12.
- 48 John Donne, *Encaenia: the Feast of Dedication* (London, 1623), 4-5.
- 49 Graham Parry, *The Arts of the Anglican Counter-Reformation: Glory, Laud, and Honour* (Woodbridge, 2006), 48-9; the portico can be seen in an engraving by Wenceslaus Hollar in William Dugdale's *History of St Paul's* (London, 1658).
- 50 *The Poems of Edmund Waller*, ed. George Thorn-Drury (London, 1893), line 54.
- 51 William Prynne, *Canterburies Doome, or, the First Part of the Commitment, Charge, Tryall, Condemnation, Execution of William Laud, late Archbishop of Canterbury* (London, 1646), 71-72; on statues see Wall, *Porches and Fonts*, 56.
- 52 Parry, *Arts of the Anglican Counter-Reformation*, 75-6.
- 53 *Ibid.*, 36.
- 54 Richard Eedes, 'The Christians Admission into the Houshold of God', in *Three Sermons* (London, 1627), 23.
- 55 John Milton, *The Reason of Church Government* (London, 1641), 45.
- 56 William Perkins, *An Exposition of the Symbole or Creed of the Apostles according to the Tenour of the Scriptures* (London, 1595), 269.
- 57 Lancelot Andrewes, *Two Sermons Preached at Whitehall* (London, 1610), 34.
- 58 Obadiah Sedgwick, *An Arke Against a Deluge: or, Safety in Dangerous Times* (London, 1644), 12.
- 59 Robert Rollock, *An Exposition upon some Select Psalms of David* (London, 1600), 404-5.
- 60 Thomas Adams, *Five Sermons* (London, 1626), 57.
- 61 John Marston, *The Insatiate Countess a Tragedie* (London, 1613), 5.

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- 62 William Shakespeare, *Lucrece*, in *Complete Sonnets and Poems*, ed. Colin Burrow (Oxford, 2002), line 304.
- 63 Lake, 'The Laudian Style', 179.
- 64 John Donne, 'To Sir H[enry] G[oodere]', in *Poems* (London, 1633), 364.
- 65 Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death*, 287-90.
- 66 *Ibid.*, 374.
- 67 Jonson, *Hymenaei*, ed. David Lindley in *Works*, vol. 2, lines 428-9 and marginal note.
- 68 *Complete Poetry*, ed. Cain and Connolly, vol. 2, 615n.
- 69 *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 614n.
- 70 See Cain and Connolly's note to Herrick's epithalamium for Clipseby Crew, *Complete Poetry*, vol. 2, 605n.
- 71 The essential work on this subject remains Achsah Guibbory, *Ceremony and Community from Herbert to Milton: Literature, Religion, and Cultural Conflict in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1998), and see further 'Hesperides, the Hebrew Bible, and Herrick's Christian Identity' in Linda Anderson and Janice Lull (eds), 'A Certain Text': *Close Readings and Textual Studies in Shakespeare and Others* (Newark, 2002) 122-49. Important previous studies include Robert Deming, *Ceremony and Art: Robert Herrick's Poetry* (Mouton, 1974) and A. Leigh Deneef, 'This Poetick Liturgie': *Robert Herrick's Ceremonial Mode* (Durham, NC, 1974). On the epithalamia in particular see Heather Dubrow, *A Happier Eden: The Politics of Marriage in the Stuart Epithalamium* (New York, 1990) and Marjorie Swann, 'Marriage, Celibacy, and Ritual in Robert Herrick's *Hesperides*', *Philological Quarterly*, 76 (Winter 1997) 19-45.
- 72 On Herrick's vocation see Cain and Connolly, 'Introduction', in *Complete Poetry*, vol. 1, xxxviii-xxxix.
- 73 Compare *OED* 'tabernacle', senses 1a, 2a, and 3a.
- 74 This debate has recently played out in Tom Cain and Ruth Connolly (eds), *Lords of Wine and Oile: Community and Conviviality in the Poetry of Robert Herrick* (Oxford, 2011), especially John Creaser, 'Jocund his Muse Was: Celebration and Virtuosity in Herrick', 39-

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- 63, Graham Parry, 'His Noble Numbers', 276-99, and Achsah Guibbory, 'Afterword: Herrick's Community, the Babylonian Captivity, and the Uses of Historicism', 300-16.
- 75 Achsah Guibbory, *Ceremony and Community*, 81-3.
- 76 Peter Lake, 'The Laudians and the Argument from Authority', in Bonnelyn Young Kunze and Dwight B. Brautigam (eds), *Court, Country, and Culture: Essays on Early Modern British History in Honour of Perez Zagorin* (Rochester, NY, 1992), 150-53.
- 77 See Creaser on Herrick's playfulness: 'Jocund his Muse was', 61-3.
- 78 Catullus, 61.82, 'she cries because she must go'; trans. by Francis Warre Cornish, rev. by G. P. Goold (rev. ed.; Harvard, MA, 1988).
- 79 Compare *OED* 'purling', senses n1 and n2.
- 80 Thomas Goodwin, *Romane Historiae Anthologia: An English Exposition of the Romane Antiquities* (1614), 88. This point, and the important countervailing passages quoted in what follows, gets overlooked in Dubrow, *A Happier Eden*, 240-44.
- 81 On the interplay between these sources in Herrick's *carpe diem* verse, see A. B. Chambers, 'Herrick, Corinna, Canticles, and Catullus', *Studies in Philology*, 74 (1977), 216-27.
- 82 *Complete Poetry*, ed. by Cain and Connolly, vol. 2, 556n.
- 83 Catullus, 61.15.
- 84 *OED*, 'disparkle'.
- 85 Catullus 61.52-3 ('virgins unfasten their belts').