

Fulke Greville's Figures of Repetition

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At the midpoint of his 'Treatie of Humane Learning', a long poem on the scope of human knowledge and the branches of the arts, Fulke Greville issues a self-scuppering precept:

For *Sciences* from *Nature* should be drawne,
As *Arts* from *practise*, neuer out of Bookes[.]¹

This appears shortly after a turn from a sceptical catalogue of the failures of human intellection in a fallen world, and the inadequacy and futility of art, to a more constructive vision of the possibilities of pragmatic action and limited knowledge. The epistemological pessimism of the first 61 stanzas is partially salved by a turn from theory to practice. But Greville's spurning of what can be learned from literature is of course a paradox. His overt rejection of theory appears within a didactic treatise. That rules should not be drawn from books is itself a rule in a book.

Such performative contradictions – what we might call, following *Caelica* 10, moments of 'self-disagreeing' – are characteristic of Greville's poetry. *Caelica* 66, for example, rejects 'dead Books or Arts' as 'second hand' and '[f]alse Antidotes for vitious ignorance':

What then need halfe-fast helps of erring wit,
Methods, or books of vaine humanity?
Which dazell truth, by representing it,
And so entayle clouds to posterity. (p. i. 114-15)

In 'Humane Learning', obviously a book 'of vaine humanity', the contradiction is particularly stark. Gavin Alexander has commented on Greville's 'distinctly bookish abjuration of books', suggesting that he 'is in danger of arguing himself out of a job'. Similarly, Warren Boutcher observes that 'if Greville had thought humane learning per se entirely vain, he would hardly have invested so much time and income' in pursuing it. The contradiction requires an explanation on the level of conflicted impulse between purpose and poetry:

Greville, says Alexander, ‘struggles with the need to be pragmatic and preceptive – in inevitable conflict with the temptation to be interesting’. And this, as Richard Waswo has noted, puts the critic in a predicament: ‘to argue for the merits of [Greville’s] poetry is to be put in the not unusual position of saying that he wrought better than he knew’.²

Trying to resolve the predicament prompts a self-disagreement in much of the criticism. Over the last sixty years, a series of articles have sought to define or defend Greville’s ‘poetic’ or ‘aesthetic’.³ Each claims that the previous exemplars have failed to attend properly to his style and that focus on his ideas has distracted from the poetry. Yet most turn to passages from his verse for explicit statements about what poetry can or cannot do, especially stanzas 107-115 of ‘Humane Learning’, and *Caelica* 66 and 80. The irony is obvious: attempting to approach Greville’s ‘poetic’ or ‘aesthetic’ through what he says about it falls into the error of learning from books rather than practice, criticized in ‘Humane Learning’ as ‘[c]irc[ling] round in selfe-imagination, | Begetting *Lines* upon an abstract wife’ (st. 122, p. i. 184).⁴

Brian Cummings has observed a similar circularity in criticism on *Caelica*, in which ‘Greville’s Calvinism is taken for granted, and then applied to his poems’, which poems are then ‘adduced as evidence of [Greville’s] doctrinal beliefs’. He shows instead how close-reading of *Caelica*’s religious poems could yield, in a suggestive phrase, ‘a theology with a living syntax rather than a fixed order of ideas’.⁵ Close-reading Greville’s treatise poems seems a less promising proposition. They have often seemed resistant to interpretation as poetry. Thom Gunn’s influential *Selected Poems of Fulke Greville* found no space for them, and he remarked in his introduction that they were ‘[f]or stretches [...] merely versified essays’ and of ‘greater historical than literary interest’. Another editor noted a ‘tendency to the flatly prosaic’.⁶ Even Greville himself discourages the reading of poetry for form. In ‘Humane Learning’, he denigrates rhetoric as ‘the painted skinne | Of many words’, whose ‘false forms’ mislead by appealing to the senses and distracting the mind from the search for ‘Truth’ (st. 107, p. i. 180). Poetry likewise is described as mere ‘pleasing sauce to dainty food’ (st. 111-13, pp. i. 181-2). Poetry acts as a metonym for feigning and falsity:

Then what is our high-prais’d *Philosophie*,
But bookes of Poesie, in Prose compil’d?
Farre more delightfull than they fruitfull be,
Witty apparance, Guile that is beguil’d;
Corrupting minds much rather than directing,

'The allay of Duty, and our Prides erecting. (st. 29, p. i. 161)

Greville denigrates poetry and philosophy as fruitless – within a philosophical poem: the content of what is being said is again misaligned with the mode of its utterance.

Despite such caveats, close attention to Greville's use of rhyme and rhetorical figures of repetition, especially in 'Humane Learning', supplies a different way of resolving the problem. The poems exhibit a deep engagement with the ways in which formal device, rather than ornamenting a philosophical, preceptual, or theological content, can enact and embody it. Greville's formal strategies reverse his characterization of philosophy: his treatise poetry is philosophy in verse compiled, in which the versification is itself a crucial level of meaning, and a realization of the philosophical and theological ambivalences which give rise to his performative contradictions. The association of the treatise poems with prose is thus both wrong and right. Wrong, if 'prosaic' means inattentive to the formal levels on which language can be ordered. Right, however, in that the riddling difficulty of Greville's style emerges from appeals to the intellect more typically associated with prose than with poetry.

Nonetheless, the opening of 'Humane Learning' gives some credence to the censures of Gunn and Bullough:

The Mind of Man is this worlds true dimension;
And *Knowledge* is the measure of the minde:
And as the minde, in her vaste comprehension,
Containes more worlds than all the world can finde:
So Knowledge doth it selfe farre more extend,
Than all the minds of Men can comprehend.

A climbing Height it is without a head,
Depth without bottome, Way without an end,
A Circle with no line inuironed;
Not comprehended, all it comprehends;
Worth infinite, yet satisfies no minde,
Till it that infinite of the God-head finde. (st. 1-2, p. i. 154)

Several of these lines are, precisely, versified prose. 'A Circle with no line inuironed' quotes the hermetic definition of God as a circle whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere; 'Worth infinite, yet satisfies no minde' recalls Ecclesiastes 1.8 ('All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with

hearing'), which had recently been reinterpreted in the opening passages of Francis Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*. Most striking, however, is the sententious metrical rendering in the first line of a saying attributed to the ancient philosopher Protagoras: 'man is the measure of all things'.⁷ Taken on its own, the statement seems optimistic about the capacity of the human mind and its adequacy to the world. But fissures of irony open up on closer consideration. Protagoras was a Sophist, and the negative connotations of rhetorical chicanery and deceptive argument – 'Witty apparance, Guile that is beguil'd' – chime with Greville's denigration of philosophy as 'Poesie'. Aristotle quotes Protagoras's dictum in order to dismiss it as banal. In Plato's *Theaetetus*, Socrates accuses Protagoras of sophistic performance for financial gain, and pursues his notion to absurdity, pointing out the relativism of a view of truth which allows it to be dictated by each man's sensations and opinions. Countervailing praise for Protagoras can be found in Sextus Empiricus's *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, but by making a virtue of a sceptical and relativistic view of knowledge.⁸ Greville does not make clear which of these sources should predominate; by opening his treatise with Protagoras's line, Greville activates mutually contradictory sources in philosophical prose, which cast epistemological optimism in doubt and alert the reader to the possibility that being the measure of the world is not quite the same as being adequate to know it.

This suggests that one feature of a treatise poem is the creation an arena in which various discursive contexts come into ironic juxtaposition, both with each other and with the poem's own statements. It is doing more than merely casting ideas into rhyme and metre: the generic signal of verse both makes the explanatory expansiveness of prose more compact, showing up potential fracture-points, and allows interpretative complexity in a way not usually accorded discursive prose. But the versification is not just a signal to readers to expect ambiguity and ambivalence, nor a mechanism by which otherwise perspicuous thinking is made riddlingly involuted – making Greville's poems, in Charles Lamb's words, 'apocalyptical, cabalistical, a knot [...] to untie'.⁹ Rather, it adds its own level of significance.

Perhaps the most salient feature of these stanzas is repetition. Words recur ('minde' five times, 'comprehend' four, 'world' three, 'head', 'infinite', and 'knowledge' twice each). There are only four separate rhyme sounds in twelve lines, and all of them close on one of two consonants (with an additional 's' in line 10). What might seem stylistic gaucheness in fact strengthens the undertow that works against the lines' epistemological optimism. All but two lines close with the letters 'end' or 'ends', or an anagram of them. The syllable 'fin' is

repeated twice in the line '[t]ill it that infinite of the God-head finde'. Though 'finde' is not etymologically related to the *fines* or limits negated in 'infinite', the repetition nonetheless reinforces the stress on ends at the end of end-stopped lines. Despite the articulations of infinity in the first four lines of the second stanza, there is a repeated, even repetitious, emphasis on limits.

Greville's use of the contingent similarity between 'infinite' and 'finde' is a form of the rhetorical figure paronomasia, in which similar sounds in actually unrelated words are used either for wit or to insinuate a relationship. Its use is dense in the first stanza. Greville rings changes on groupings of 'm' and 'n' ('mind', 'man', 'dimension'), establishing an associative closeness between these terms, apt to the nested relationships of containment which are the stanza's subject. 'Measure' does not appear to belong to this group except by alliteration. Greville nonetheless suggests a subterranean connection, since the Latin for 'measure' is 'mensura', also the root of 'dimension' in the first line. 'Mensura', in turn, suggests *mens*, the Latin for mind. That *mens* is a feminine noun, and Greville refers to the mind as female in the third line – '*her* vaste comprehension' – reinforces the Latin that lurks behind Greville's English. The paronomasia insinuates what the first line states: that mind and measure, *mens* and *mensura*, are cognate. The connection had been made before: Nicholas of Cusa, in his dialogue *Idiota de mente* ("The Layman on the Mind"), had the Idiot say, glossing Protagoras's dictum, 'I for my part, have a conception, that the mind is the bond and measure of all things; and I conjecture it is called *Mens a mensurando*, the mind from measuring'.¹⁰ This, however, is an idiot's folk etymology: *mens* and *mensura* are in fact unrelated. 'Vaste comprehension' reveals itself as an ability to fancy similitudes where there are none. The emphatic sound-patterning of the first stanza thus both reinforces the asserted similitudes of the first lines, and casts such proportionality in doubt.

'Measure', of course, also has metapoetic resonance. In the English rendering of Protagoras's dictum, it renders the Greek 'μέτρον', in a calqued relationship which Greville later highlights in an etymological gloss: '*Geometrie* giues measure to the earth below' (st. 32, p. i. 162). Both measure and μέτρον carry the secondary meaning of poetic metre, as George Puttenham remarks: 'Meeter and measure is all one, for what the Greekes called μετρον [*sic*], the Latines call *Mensura*, and is but the quantitie of a verse, either long or short.'¹¹ To say the mind of man is the world's measure, then, implies not only that things

are judged according to the limited perspective of humanity, but also that man's mind is the world's metre: that the sense-making encounter of mind and world is analogous to scansion.

This launches a strain of formal self-consciousness which runs throughout the poem. 'A Circle with no line inuironed', in the light of the stress on measure, suggests that knowledge is too vast to be compassed by the lines of poetry. This raises a particularly involved version of the performative contradiction. An art, in the Aristotelian tradition, was defined as *de infinitis finita disciplina*: a finite discipline of the indeterminate. It establishes finite knowledge out of the incorrigibly plural stuff of the sensory world – what Greville calls 'Of heat, cold, colors such variety, | Of smels, and tastes, of tunes such diuers kindes' (*THL* st. 9, p. i. 156). Scepticism however countered that '*finitum de infinito non potest statuere*': it is not possible to make something finite of the infinite.¹² Greville himself supplies a paraphrase: 'Of infinite there can no Arts remaine' (st. 117, p. i. 183). To write a poem on knowledge is to attempt to apply finitude to the infinite; to try to compass the measureless in metre.

These stanzas suggest that the human mind is inadequate to two kinds of infinity: the simplicity of the Godhead, and the infinite variety of the teeming world. Joseph Hall recorded a 'deep, and serious question' which Greville had posed in response to a learned discussion of 'an incident matter': '*What is that to the infinite?*'.¹³ The same question underlies these stanzas. The *gradatio* of nested relationships – the mind encompasses the world, knowledge the mind, God knowledge – takes the lines beyond the dimension of the mind of man. And, as we might by now expect, this is also performed on the technical level. Feminine endings make several lines, including the first, hypermetrical; while the first stanza maintains a steady pulse of iambs, the second disrupts regular measure with a trochaic inversion in 'Depth without bottome'. It ends with 'Till it that infinite of the God-head finde': a line made both briefly dactylic, and, despite its masculine rhyme, hypermetrical, by the three syllables of 'infinite'. Measure stumbles on infinity, which itself exceeds the boundaries of metre.

If 'Humane Learning' is to be thought of as a 'versified essay', then, even the first two stanzas already suggest that versification adds its own performative level of signification, so confirming the judgement of Joan Rees, whose account of why *Caelica* has gone underappreciated are useful here: it is not plain style that is the problem, but the fact that the poem 'is so close-textured and so rich with interwoven strands of thought and experience that it does not yield much to impressionistic reading'.¹⁴ Greville's refusal of copiousness or

beguiling language is not a rejection of poetic technique, but the adoption of a particularly dense pattern of allusion and repetition, and the minor variation of closely related elements.

The phenomenon is especially evident in Greville's figures of repetition. John Gouws has observed Greville's 'fondness for polyptoton' – in which the same word is used in different grammatical cases or parts of speech – and attributed it to 'a felt need for decoration'.¹⁵ In the prose, Greville's recourse to the figure can indeed seem mannered: 'captived and captiving', 'blessed and blessing' (twice), 'councils and councillors', 'contented and contenting', 'successive and successful', 'calmed, and calming' (*Dedication/Letter* 106, 115, 118, 125, 126, 129, 170). As these examples suggest, Greville is particularly interested in reciprocal relationships of the passive and active forms of the verb, or the participial adjective. In his deployment of the trope in the treatise poems and *Caelica*, however, lies a concern that is more than merely ornamental.

In the first place, it offers Greville a neat encapsulation of human hubris, stressing the limits of learning and the deceit of the senses. In 'Humane Learning', poetry and philosophy rest on '[w]itty apparance, Guile that is beguil'd'. Later, the 'corrupt confusion' of vanity is witnessed by her own entanglement in the nets she lays: she is '[d]ecciue'd by that wherwith she would deceiue, | Paying, and paid with vaine imaginations' (st. 127, p. i. 185). The fallibility of the senses places man at a crux of activity and passivity: '*Sense, Mans first instructor*, while it showes | To free him from deceit, deceiues him most' (st. 6, p. i. 155; see also *Letter*, 152). The reciprocities of polyptoton render the predicament of fallen human nature, revealing its corruption precisely where it most strives to avoid it.

The figure is also apt to the estate of created being. In Aristotelian and Thomist terms, God was conceived as the first cause and prime mover: the original source of all motion and action. Chains of causation always lead ultimately to God; other apparent causes are mere links in that chain. In 'Fame and Honour', Greville finds an articulation of this in a nested relationship of polyptoton, describing Virtue: '*Moued*, shee moues man to adore her mouer' (st. 75, p. i. 210). Virtue can only be the agent of the verb having first been its passive object. The failure to recognize such chains is the mark of human hubris. Man, in his pride, seeks 'to binde, and never to be bound, | To governe God, and not bee governed' (st. 59, p. i. 168). In the third stanza of 'Humane Learning', the human desire to compass the infinite is made the cause of the Fall: 'This Knowledge is the same *forbidden tree*, | Which man lusts after to be made his Maker' (st. 3, p. i. 154). For Greville, the pride which led to the Fall is a

failure to understand the proper force and logic of polyptoton: the impossibility of converting the made into its own maker, creature into Creator, is at once grammatical and ontological.

The self-consciousness with which Greville both deploys and accuses grammar as implicated in these theological questions is clear in an example in which polyptoton plays across rhyme:

For as the World by time still more declines,
Both from the truth, and wisdom of Creation:
So at the truth she more and more repines,
As making hast to her last declination
Therefore if not to cure, yet to refine
Her stupidnesse, as well as ostentation,
Let vs set straight that *Industrie* againe,
Which else as foolish proves, as it is vaine. (*THL*, st. 63, p. i. 169)

The pivot in ‘Humane Learning’ from lament at the failure of human art and knowledge, to a modest assertion of the potential for regeneration, appears shortly before this passage. Here, this structure is enacted in small: Greville begins by suggesting the incorrigible and continuing corruption of the world, and ends with the necessity of striving against it. Rhyme and polyptoton perform and reinforce this movement. The first rhyme begins with ‘declines’, shifts to the carping ‘repines’, and ends with the more hopeful ‘refine’, heralding the possibility of rectification in the final couplet. The second rhyme set starts with ‘Creation’, which original purity is corrupted to ‘declination’. The polyptotic shift from ‘declines’ to ‘declination’ between lines 1 and 4 is also mimetic of the pessimistic view of the fallen, unregenerate world: the world declines, a process continuous in the present, towards a state of final declination.

‘Declination’ is one of Greville’s key words which lie on the boundary between theology and poetry. It is etymologically inclination downward, and thus touches on the Augustinian and Lutheran metaphor of fallen man as *homo incurvatus in se*: human nature is incurvation, deviation from rectitude. A contemporary commonplace demonstrated the simultaneously geometrical and ethical emphasis: ‘*Vna est recta linea, curvae infinitae*: there is but one straight and direct passage, but there are many infinite by-waies, and pathes: there is but one truth [...] but there are diuers and infinite falshoods[.]’¹⁶ In *Mustapha*, Greville applies the image to art: ‘amongst the feigned lines of Art, | One onely Right is, all else

Crooked found' (Chorus Quartus, ll. 93-4, p. ii. 95). 'Let vs set straight that *Industrie* againe' begs of the reader a righting of what has been bent. The curve of fallen declination must be rectified.

Still more relevant, however, is an obsolete sense of 'declination' as grammatical declension. The *OED* finds examples of this sense from 1440 to 1751, one of which comes from Florio's Montaigne: '[w]e did tosse our declinations, and conjugations to and fro'.¹⁷ Greville uses the word in this sense when he complains about the pedantic attention of grammarians to language, neglecting ethical and practical matters:

Yet not asham'd these Verbalists still are,
From youth, till age, or study dimme their eyes,
To engage the *Grammar* rules in ciuill warre,
For some small sentence which they patronize;
As if our end liu'd not in reformation,
But Verbes, or Nounes true sense, or declination. (st. 31, p. i. 161)

The verbalists' myopic attention to grammar, to the juggling of conjugation and declension, is a mark of human vanity. The rhyme of reformation and declination has both poetic and theological resonances. This is clearer in a later echo:

Againe, if all mans fleshly Organs rest
Vnder that *curse*, as out of doubt they doe;
If Skie, Sea, Earth, lye vnder it opprest,
As tainted with that tast of errors too;
In this Mortalitie, this strange priuation,
What knowledge stands but sense of declination? (st. 48, p. i. 166)

Sense or declination, sense of declination: the focus of 'Verbalists' on declination as grammatical accident is for Greville a decadent sign of declination as corruption. In mortal privation, knowledge measures the gap between how we were and how we are. This gap, Greville implies, is gauged by the detail of grammatical distinctions.

Greville's equation of these two senses of 'declination' operates as a pun, which like 'measure' and 'line', associates the technical repertoire of poetry with the philosophical level of the poem's topic. There are still more literal connections. Polyptoton employs declension as its means of varying grammatical cases. The root of 'case', Latin *casus*, means fall. Greville used a similar pun elsewhere, in 'Fame and Honour', where he wrote that, just as serpents

‘put off their skinne’, in the reformed heart of man ‘goodnesse doth vncase the sinne’ (st. 81, p. i. 212). ‘Vncase’ here means both ‘unsheath’, and, punningly, ‘un-fall’. Since Greville describes rhetoric ‘[c]aptiuing reason, with the painted skinne | Of many words’ (*THL* st. 107, p. i. 180), to ‘vncase the sinne’ is also to divest language of rhetoric and grammar, of ‘sense of declination’. A similar pun lurks in the etymology of polyptoton itself, which is derived from Greek πολυ-, ‘much’ or ‘many’, and –πτωτος: ‘falling’. Greville’s taste for polyptoton, the figure of many falls, actualizes the fallen state of language.

Polyptoton is a subset of a broader figure, *traductio*, which varies a root morpheme not just through endings, but through all kinds of conjugations, prefixes, and parts of speech. Puttenham called *traductio* the ‘Tranlacer’, ‘which is when ye turne and tranlace a word into many sundry shapes as the Tailor doth his garment’ (203–4). Greville frequently uses prefixes to modify the sense of roots in ways significant for his theological and ethical preoccupations. ‘Tranlaced’ versions of ‘form’ are particularly frequent. In *Mustapha*, ‘fraile Mankind’ is ‘Formed, transformèd, and made instruments | In many shapes, to serue Powers many bents’ (Chorus Primus 11-14): the corrupt art of human politics bends – incurvates – man. Similarly, in ‘Humane Learning’, Greville refers to the ‘corrupted moulds of Art, | Which while they doe conforme, reforme vs not’ (st. 125, p. i. 185). In *Caelica*, Greville writes of ‘that transcendent Goodnesse which subsists, | By forming and reforming what it lists’ (CII, p. i. 147). In these examples, Greville’s pressure on the prefix pulls sense away from metre: the reading voice is tempted to stress the prefixes against the promptings of rhythmic regularity, creating a tension between the line conceived as poetry or prose.

The connection of ‘form’ with creation and poetic craft makes *traductio* another way of focusing on the language arts, and their estate of corruption. The closing lines of ‘Fame and Honour’ are particularly dense with Greville’s concerns:

Who worship *Fame*, commit Idolatry,
 Make Men their God, *Fortune* and *Time* their worth,
 Forme, but reforme not; meer hypocrisie,
 By shadowes, onely shadowes bringing forth,
 Which must, as blossomes, fade ere true fruit springs,
 Like voice, and *eccho* ioyn’d, yet diuers things. (st. 86, p. i. 213)

The stanza describes the idolatrous misdirection of attention of those who pursue fame and sublunary success in the first two lines, providing appropriately repetitive formulations for

the sterility of such pursuit in lines 3 and 4, and then similes for that sterility in the closing couplet. The final line, however, is working on various levels; it does not just describe the inadequacy of this world to the divine, but also the operation of tropes deployed earlier in the stanza. The phrases ‘Forme, but reforme not’, and ‘by shadowes, onely shadowes’ assert at once similitude and difference: voice and echo. ‘Forme, but reforme’ is *traductio*. ‘By shadowes, onely shadowes’ sounds like pure repetition, but ‘shadowes’ occupies a different grammatical role at each iteration, first an adverbial phrase, then the object of the verb. In an inflected language, this would be polyptoton; in English, the phonetic similarity conceals grammatical difference, an internal *rime riche*. The phrase ‘like voice, and *eccho* ioyn’d, yet diuers things’ thus stands as a simile for figures of repetition, where the coincidence of sound runs counter to the intellectual apprehension of difference.

It is a favoured trope for Greville: in *Mustapha*, the chorus of ‘Mahometan Priests’ recalls an ideal time of union of church and state in which ‘The Word, and Sword endeuoured not alone, | But were, like mutuall Voice, and *Eccho* tied’ (Chorus Secundus, ll. 39-40, p. ii. 94). The tantalizing similarity of ‘Word’ and ‘Sword’, visually present but acoustically off, enacts at once the relationship of voice and echo and its failure in the present, and suggests an ideal but unachieved performative language in which legislation and execution would be united, and sound and sense would fully coincide. In *Mustapha*, such concinnity is retrojected into an ideal past; in ‘Fame and Honour’, similarity-with-a-difference is equated with shadows, or blossoms which must die to allow the emergence of fruit. The imagery marks such tropes as belonging to the world of corruption. *Traductio*, discriminating form from reform, voice from echo, is thus, like polyptoton, a token of the fallenness of language and human reason.

In a literal sense, only some figures of repetition are echoic: those whose repeated sounds appear at the end of words. The joining of voice and echo, and the complexity of its significance for Greville, is appropriately most obvious in his idiosyncratic use of rhyme. Greville’s rhymes rest remarkably frequently not just on a similarity of sound, but on the repetition of grammatical and morphological endings. Brian Cummings has observed Greville’s tendency towards feminine endings; in the treatise poems, this is most egregious in the endings of abstract nouns. Particularly common are rhymes on ‘-tion’, which appear in nine of the first nineteen stanzas of ‘Humane Learning’.

This again suggests the severe parsimony of Greville's means of verbal variation, and raises the question of the prosaic quality of his poetry. W.K. Wimsatt influentially argued that, if rhyme is a 'binder in verse structure', it must also rest on 'some difference or separation between the things to be bound. If they are already close together, it is supererogatory to emphasize this by the maneuver of rhyme.' The pleasurable 'surprise' of rhyme, Wimsatt suggests, 'must depend on some incongruity or unlikelihood inherent in the coupling'. John Creaser has recently made a plea for the value of 'latent' rhyme as well as the 'manifest' rhymes of Wimsatt's incongruity. But Greville's rhymes cannot be saved by this gambit, since they rest not on subtle and musical assertions of rightness, as in Creaser's examples from Pope, but on egregious similarities which, in their lack of surprise, Wimsatt would deem 'mere prosy homoeoteleuton'.

Homoeoteleuton is another kind of *traductio*, which uses words with the same ending, like 'reformation' and 'declination', or 'dimension' and 'comprehension'. For Wimsatt, and Puttenham, homoeoteleuton belongs to prose. Wimsatt asserts – as 'an exaggeration, not a distortion, of principle' – that 'the difference between prose and verse is the difference between homoeoteleuton and rhyme'.¹⁸ Puttenham defines rhyme using a contrast between the ancient world and the modern:

[We] do giue the name of ryme onely to our concordes, or tunable consentes in the latter end of our verses, and which concordes the Greekes nor Latines neuer vsed [...] [Y]et the Greekes and Latines both vsed a maner of speech, by clauses of like termination, which they called ὁμοτελητον [*si*], and was the nearest that they approached to our ryme: but is not our right concord[.] (77-8)

Later, homoeoteleuton is again associated with ancient prose and contrasted with rhyme:

The Greekes vsed a manner of speech or writing in their proses, that went by clauses, finishing in words of like tune, and might be by vsing like cases, tenses, and other points of consonance, which they called *Omoiooteleton*, and is that wherin they nearest approached to our vulgar ryme[.] [This] is no perfit rime in deede, but clauses finishing in the self same tune: for a rime of good simphonie should not conclude his concord with one & the same terminant sillable, as *less, less, less*, but with diuers and like terminants, as *les, pres, mes* [...]. (173-4)

For Puttenham and Wimsatt, then, neither Greville's rhymes nor his verses deserve the name. Their tendency towards 'mere prosy homoeoteleuton' bars them from 'good

simphonie' or 'tunable consent', and confirms Gunn and Bullough in identifying a prosaic quality in Greville. But repetitive and homoeoteleutic rhyme in Greville is purposeful, rather than a failure of invention: it appeals to logic and a parsing mentality, not euphony. The near similarities of homoeoteleuton force a sharper appreciation of minute but crucial difference. The fourth stanza of 'Humane Learning' provides some clear examples:

No maruell then, if proud desires reflexion,
By gazing on this Sunne, doe make vs blinde,
Nor if our Lust, Our *Centaure*-like Affection,
Instead of Nature, fadome clouds, and winde,
So adding to originall defection,
As no man knowes his owne vnknowing minde[.] (4, i.155)

'Reflexion' is, etymologically, a bending back; it is thus a relative of 'declination' and 'incurvation'. In its transitive sense, it heralds the shift between 'Affection' and 'defection', whose prefixes express contrary motions, towards and away. Gazing on the sun – a figure for seeking forbidden knowledge – blinds man; proud desire and affection lead to 'originall defection', the fall. In this blindness, misapplied desire continues, in its apparent *affection*, to exacerbate *defection*, in a reflexive motion. This turbulence gives rise to the riddling line 'no man knowes his owne vnknowing minde', in which the rebounding of sound and echo, of similarity without actual fit, enact the impossibility of true 'reflection', in any of its senses, for those bound in the trammels of affection and defection. Since echo is 'the *Reflexion* of *Sounds*', in Francis Bacon's words, the stanza gains a typically metapoetic charge.¹⁹ Rhyming 'reflection', 'affection', and 'defection' may not make for what Puttenham calls 'good simphonie', but it does enact, in minor differences, the predicament of constant oscillation which Greville seeks to express, in which the human will to know and make increases ignorance and disorder.

Greville's insistent use of polyptoton, traductio, and homoeoteleuton foregrounds the lapse between perfection and imperfection, deformity and reformation, true sense and declination. As well as these figures of repetition with a difference, Greville also deploys repetition with no difference: antanaclasis, in which the same word is repeated in different senses. Greville is particularly fond of a set of ambiguous words which accrete significance from their use in different contexts, especially words that belong at once to the technical resources of poetry and philosophy, like 'form', 'measure', 'declination', and 'line'. A

particularly powerful example, which has already attracted some attention, is ‘mould’. It occurs 18 times in ‘Humane Learning’, and is also frequent in Greville’s other works. Matthew Woodcock shows that early stanzas of ‘Humane Learning’ use ‘mould’ ‘as a way of talking about the indelible stain of sin that mankind bears as a consequence of the fall, and the shaping of that mass of sin within the world’. Yet it is later the means of ‘moral regeneration’.²⁰ Thus Greville writes both of ‘*False moulds*’ (THL st. 54, p. i. 167) and a ‘constant mould’ (THL st. 78, p. i. 173); moulding as God’s creative act, and as man’s hubristic imitation of it. As such, the mould is both active and passive, which corresponds to an equivocation between a masculine sense of the action of shaping and a feminine sense of a cast or receptacle.²¹ Here, however, what is important is how the word works with Greville’s strategies of repetition to amplify his use of poetic trope and figure as enactments of his ethical and philosophical commitments.

Both Woodcock and Block read ‘mould’ as metaphor, rather than as antanaclasis. However, it is in the simultaneity of different senses that we can see its fullest ramifications. *Caelica* 96 is a useful example:

Flesh, with her many moulds of Change and Will,
 So his affections carries on, and casts
 In declination to the errour still. (C 96, p. i. 142)

Each line contains one of Greville’s key terms: mould, affection, declination. But what does ‘mould’ mean here? That Flesh ‘casts’ suggests the field of metallurgy, *OED*’s sense IX: ‘To cast (molten) metal; to found’. Like the ‘*Arts, moulds, workes*’ of ‘Humane Learning’, which ‘can but expresse the sin’ attendant on the Fall (st. 47, p. i. 165), flesh ‘casts | In declination’. ‘Casts’ is however used intransitively and thus opens up other meanings, apt to incurvation – to warp (sense X); to veer or turn, as a ship (sense XI). Released from metallurgy, ‘mould’ too takes on other significances. Flesh’s many moulds suggest the unsavoury sense of rot, and, most significantly, one of the first senses of ‘mould’ offered by the *OED*: ‘rotting earth considered as the material of the human body’.

This was a dominant sense in Greville’s time. Contemporary examples show a similar ambiguity, invoking ‘mould’ both as the shaping form in which, and as the matter from which, man is made. Particularly resonant is a line from *Paradise Lost*, in which Satan

describes Adam as ‘of courage haughty, and of limb | Heroic built, though of terrestrial mould’.²² Adam was either made in earthly fashion, or fashioned of earth. It is either Satan’s hubristic mistake (Adam was made by God, and thus not by a this-worldly act of moulding) or his tautology (Adam was made of earthy earth). The image is Biblical. The *OED* cites Coverdale’s English translation of Tobit 8.6, from 1535: ‘Thou maydest Adam of the moule of the earth’. Similarly, Coverdale renders Genesis 2.7 ‘And the LORDE God shope man eue of the moule of the earth’. In the Geneva Version, the passage reads ‘And the LORD God formed man [of] the dust of the ground’ – with a typically hortatory marginal note that this ‘shows what man’s body was created from, to the intent that man should not glory in the excellency of his own nature’. In the Hebrew Bible, the word for ‘dust of the ground’ or ‘moule of the earth’ is אֲדָמָה (‘adamah’); the word for man אָדָם (‘adam’).

As the clergyman John Preston remarked in a funeral sermon in 1619, the etymology derives ‘*Adam* from *Adamah*, which is moist earth, fit to receiue formes and impressions’: mould which can be moulded. The pun found a Latin equivalent which was often used in works of basic logic to exemplify arguments based on etymology: ‘homo, ab humo’, man derives from earth, or *humus*.²³

This sense of ‘mould’, and the pun it conceals, are frequently on Greville’s mind. In an echo of Sidney’s phrase in the *Defence*, ‘our clayey lodgings’, Greville describes the body as ‘this house of clay’ (*THL* st. 97, p. i. 178). Greville explains dissolutions of government through this metaphor, allowing ‘mould’ its polysemy while highlighting the sense of earth, or dust: ‘For *States are made of Men, and Men of dust, | The moulds are fraile, disease consume them must*’ (*W* 47, p. i. 225). Sinfulness itself is the result of earthiness: ‘For earth, and earthynesse it is alone, | Which enuies, strives, hates, or is malecontent’ (*THL* st. 132, p. i. 187). ‘Remember’, Greville tells the recipient of his *Letter*, ‘the mettall you are made of is earth, your habitacion a world; both mortall; and so no perfection at all to be expected in them’ (*Letter* 150).

In *Caelica* 61 Greville describes the fall of autumn leaves:

The Leaues fall off, when Sap goes to the root,
The warmth doth clothe the bough againe;
But to the dead tree what doth boot

'The silly mans manuring pain? (C LXI, p. i. 111)

Fallen leaves used as fertilizer are called 'leaf-mould'. This is not however what is primarily at stake here. In a close parallel for the insinuated relationship between *mens* and *mensura* in the first stanza of 'Humane Learning', 'mans manuring' looks like polyptoton, or an argument from etymology, but is, in fact, paronomasia. 'Man' and 'manure' are not related. The pun however sends us back to Genesis. The dead tree is the opposite of the Tree of Life. That man suffers 'pain' in his manuring points us towards God's punishment of Adam in Genesis 3.17-19:

cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;
[...] In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the earth: for out of it wast thou taken: because thou art dust, and to dust shalt thou return. (Geneva)

Pain in agricultural labour is the curse for man's disobedience. 'Mans manuring pain' is thus a mark of Adam's lapse. The ideas are associated again in the *Dedication*, where Greville describes 'the court itself becoming a farm manured by drawing up not the sweat, but even the brows, of humble subjects' (117). The sweat and brows explicitly recall the 'sweat of thy face' in God's imposition of pain in labour. Moreover, in Hebrew the curse repeats the pun which attended Adam's creation: the word used here for 'ground' is again **אדמה**, *adamah*.

'Mould' matters to Greville for multiple reasons. God's 'formation' or 'shaping' of man out of the earth is itself a primary act of moulding. Human art hubristically imitates this act of making. But 'mould' is also the stuff of which man is made, the earth or clay from which God formed him. It is the creative act of forming, the passive receptacle which supplies shape, and the matter which is subject to the forming process. *Caelica* VII presents us with an especially compacted example of Greville's consciousness of these interimplications, in the line 'Man made of earth, and for whom earth is made'. So dense is the nexus of significances which Greville has established around the word 'mould' that each noun and verb could be replaced with it. It is an extreme example of the punning potential Greville finds in a word which signifies at once the matter, form, and act of creation, and the corruption man brought upon himself at the fall.

Sophie Read, writing of Lancelot Andrewes, suggested that puns were ‘a natural form of discourse for a man of such sacrament-centred piety’; he ‘accepts the pun as a mark of grace’.²⁴ Greville’s ‘Treatie of Humane Learning’ suggests that puns are also a natural form of discourse for a man of Calvin-centred piety, finding ways of stressing declination in patterns of phonetic similarity and semantic difference, of grammatical variety and verbal polysemy. Greville’s taste for puns is an aspect of what Brian Cummings has called ‘the ambiguity of Calvinism’.²⁵ In the *Dedication*, Greville claimed that his aim in his poetry was to write not for those ‘on whose feet the black ox had not already trod’ (those who had not yet known sorrow), but ‘to those only that are weather-beaten in the sea of this world, such as, having lost the sight of their gardens and groves, study to sail on a right course among rocks and quicksands’ (134): in other words, those conscious of their expulsion from paradise. Similarly, *Caelica* 74 is written from ‘the window of a Graunge’ which looks out not ‘Ouer groues, and flowers growing’, but ‘on graues where shepheards lye’ (*C* 74, p. i. 120). Sidney’s famous claim in the *Defence* that poetry creates an ideal golden world opposed to the brazen world of life is reversed. Greville’s language is of the fallen world.

This predicament is clear in *Caelica* 10. ‘Loue’ has left the speaker’s mind seeking glory in the union with Platonic love and beauty. But Love has somehow failed to achieve that aspiration, and returned to the mind, enacting affection and defection. The speaker asks ‘[w]hat Angells pride, or what selfe-disagreeing’ has caused love to retire back into his ‘benighted [...] darkened minde’. In the second stanza, Greville provides a portrait of that dark mind as a site of chaotic self-inconsistency:

Within which minde since you from thence ascended,
 Truth clouds it selfe, Wit serues but to resemble,
 Enuie is King, at others good offended,
 Memorie doth worlds of wretchednesse assemble,
 Passion to ruin passion is intended,
 My reason is but power to dissemble[.] (*C* 10, p. i. 78)

All of these rhymes are examples of homoeoteleuton, and again, the weight of significance falls on the differences between prefixes. The three faculties of the mind serve contradictory – self-disagreeing – purposes. Memory assembles images; wit (here equivalent to

imagination) 'serues but to resemble', finding points of comparison and commonality; reason, however, pulls in the opposite direction, operating as 'power to dissemble'. There is a lurking dissimilarity within the word 'dissemble' itself. On the one hand, it suggests falsehood and dishonesty. But it is also etymologically the power to recognize difference, to discern and distinguish.

Puns and figures of repetition rely precisely on the interaction between resemblance and dissemblance. The resembling poetic wit places mind and measure, man and manure, declination and declension, mould and mould together; the dissembling reason recognizes their semantic and etymological differences, and the contingency of their similarities. Wimsatt's discussion of the logical and the alogical in rhyme supplies a useful parallel: 'The words of a rhyme, with their curious harmony of sound and distinction of sense, are an amalgam of the sensory and the logical, or an arrest and precipitation of the logical in sensory form; they are the ikon in which the idea is caught.'²⁶ This holds true for all the figures of repetition. George Puttenham, repeating an ancient distinction, classified figures of speech as '*Auricular*', which 'serue th'eare onely'; '*sensable*', which serve 'the conceit [*sc.* intellect]' alone; and '*sententious*' (133), which serve both. Figures of repetition all belong to this last category, engaging mind and ear at once. But if such figures in Lancelot Andrewes suggest a fundamental connectedness of word and thing realized in the possibilities of puns, or an 'idea of language as somehow magical, sacramental',²⁷ Greville sees the contingent similarity of words in rhetorical figures as a mark of the Fall: 'Like voice, and *eccho* ioyn'd, yet diuers things'.

But this is not the whole story. In stanza 111 of *Humane Learning*, Greville refers to poetry and music as 'Arts of Recreation'. This is a further pun, turning on the difference between recreation as leisure, and recreation as a renewal of creation, a reversal of 'Adams discreation' (*Letter* 161). Sidney had raised a similar issue in the *Defence*, where the end of learning and art was 'to lead and draw us to as high a perfection, as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clayey lodgings, can be capable of'. Puns speak simultaneously in the language of what Sidney called the 'erected wit' and the 'infected will'. Geoffrey Hill once wrote of the 'fundamental dilemma' of Christian poetry: 'that it is simultaneously an imitation of the divine fiat and an act of enormous human self-will'.²⁸ 'Humane Learning' begins with Greville equating the fall with the desire of man 'to be made his Maker', to imitate the divine fiat, a hubris that is intrinsically poetic: 'Maker', as Sidney's *Defence* and

Greville's etymological attentiveness remind us, is the original sense of 'poet'. But deployed with a proper sense of the force of polyptoton, of the contrary pulls of resemblance and dissemblance, poetic and rhetorical figure can be an apt measure of the gap between maker and made thing, rather than a hubristic attempt to leap it.

'Humane Learning' ends with a pun which encapsulates this ambivalence. The penultimate stanza states that true human art is '[a] *Spirituell worke*, raising Gods Image, rased | By our transgression'. 'Raising' and 'rased' read like Greville's habitual polyptoton on the passive and active declension of the verb. In fact, since – like *mens* and *mensura*, mans and manuring – 'raise' and 'raze' are not etymologically related, the line is a perfect example of antanaclassis. The contrary motions implied recall an earlier, and neatly chiasmic, use of polyptoton, in which Greville described the products of human arts. Even when 'they are most sublime', they are '[l]ike fleshly visions, neuer permanent': 'Rising to fall, falling to rise againe' (st. 56, p. i. 168). Like Sidney, Greville suggests, there is a reciprocity between a prideful and vertical urge – the erection of the wit – and a countervailing pull of 'infection' or 'transgression'. The diametrically opposed senses of 'raise' and 'raze' encapsulate the notion that human art, and the deployment of poetic technique and rhetorical figure especially, are simultaneously measures of the depth of the fall, and a way of closing that gap: the painted skin of language and the means of uncasing it. The semantically contrary but acoustically identical motions of raising and razing are an extreme example both of the intertwining of sameness and difference in Greville's figures of repetition, and of the oscillation between affection and defection, rising and falling, forming and reforming, that is for Greville the predicament of human art. The twin measures of the fallen mind, resembling wit and dissembling reason, are made palpable to the reader in figures of repetition.

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NOTES

¹ Fulke Greville, 'A Treatie of Humane Learning', in *Poems and Dramas of Fulke Greville, First Lord Brooke*, 2 vols, (Edinburgh and London, 1939), i.172, stanza 75. All references to *Calica* (C), *Treatie of Humane Learning* (THL), *An Inquisition upon Fame and Honour* (IFH), and *Mustapha* (M) will be to Bullough's edition, and cited hereafter in the text by volume and page number, with poem numbers for C; stanza numbers for THL, IFH; and act, scene, and line numbers for M.

² Gavin Alexander, *Writing after Sidney: The Literary Response to Sir Philip Sidney, 1586-1640* (Oxford, 2006), 241; Warren Boucher, "Rationall Knowledges" and "Knowledges [...] Drenched in Flesh and Blood": Fulke Greville, Francis Bacon, and Institutions of Humane Learning in Tudor and Stuart England', *Sidney Journal* 19/1-2 (2001), 11-40, here 14; Gavin Alexander, 'Fulke Greville and the Afterlife', *Huntington Library Quarterly*

62/3-4 (1999), 203-31, here 211; Richard Waswo, *The Fatal Mirror: Themes and Techniques in the Poetry of Fulke Greville* (Charlottesville, VA, 1972), 41.

³ Hugh N. Maclean, 'Greville's "Poetic"', *Studies in Philology* 61/2 (1964), 170-91; Norman Farmer Jr., 'Fulke Greville and the Poetic of the Plain Style', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 11/1 (1969), 657-70; David A. Roberts, 'Fulke Greville's Aesthetic Reconsidered', *Studies in Philology* 74/4 (1977), 388-405; June Dwyer, 'Fulke Greville's Aesthetic: Another Perspective', *Studies in Philology* 78/3 (1981), 255-74; Maria R. Rohr Philmus, 'Greville's Poetic Revisited', *Neophilologus* 83/1 (1999), 145-67.

⁴ An honourable exception is Matthew Woodcock, "'The World Is Made for Use": Theme and Form in Fulke Greville's Verse Treatises', *Sidney Journal* 19/1-2 (2001), 143-59.

⁵ Brian Cummings, *Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford, 2007), 301.

⁶ Thom Gunn, 'Introduction', in Fulke Greville, *Selected Poems*, ed. Gunn (London, 1968), 11; Geoffrey Bullough, 'Introduction', in *Poems and Dramas*, ii.39; see also i.19.

⁷ Kenneth J.E. Graham remarks the reference to Protagoras in *The Performance of Conviction: Plainness and Rhetoric in the Early English Renaissance* (Ithaca, NY, 1994), 101 n.15. See generally Charles Trinkaus, 'Protagoras in the Renaissance: An Exploration', in Edward Patrick Mahoney (ed.), *Philosophy and Humanism: Renaissance Essays in Honour of Paul Oskar Kristeller* (Leiden, 1976), 190-213; on 'man is the measure of all things', see esp. 194ff.

⁸ See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1053^a36; Plato, *Theaetetus*, esp. 151e-152c, 161b-163a, 165e-168c, 169d-172b, 177c-179d; Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, I.216-219.

⁹ Lamb's remark is reported in William Hazlitt, 'Of Persons one would wish to have seen', in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P.P. Howe, 21 vols (London, 1933), xvii. 122-34, here 124.

¹⁰ Nicholas of Cusa, *The Idiot in Four Books* (London, 1650), 59.

¹¹ George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, eds Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge, 1936), 67. References hereafter in the text.

¹² The phrase appears in Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Thomas C. Faulkner, Nicolas K. Kiessling, Rhonda L. Blair, intro. and notes J.B. Bamforth with Martin Dodsworth, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1989-2000) i. 174.

¹³ See Richard McCabe, 'Fulke Greville and Joseph Hall', *Notes and Queries* 226 (1981), 45-6, here 45.

¹⁴ Joan Rees, *Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, 1554-1628: A Critical Biography* (London, 1971), 118.

¹⁵ John Gouws, 'General Introduction', in Fulke Greville, *The Prose Works of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke*, ed. Gouws (Oxford, 1986), xxxiv. References to *A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney* (hereafter *Dedication*) and 'A Letter to an Honorable Lady' (hereafter *Letter*), will be to this edition, and given in the text.

¹⁶ Godfrey Goodwin, *The Fall of Man, or, the Corruption of Nature* (London, 1616), 14.

¹⁷ OED s.v. declination, *n.*, sense 10; see Michel de Montaigne, *Essays*, trans. John Florio, 2nd ed. (London, 1613), 85.

¹⁸ W.K. Wimsatt, 'One Relation of Rhyme to Reason. Alexander Pope', *Modern Language Quarterly* 5/3 (1944), 323-38, here 335, 327, 324; John Creaser, 'Rhymes, Rhyme, and Rhyming', *Essays in Criticism* 62/4 (2012), 438-60.

¹⁹ Francis Bacon, *Sylva Sylvarum* (London, 1626), G2^v.

²⁰ Woodcock, 'The World is Made for Use', 155.

²¹ See Alexandra Mills Block, 'Reading Greville's "Hard Characters": Metaphor and Ambivalence in *A Treatise of Humane Learning*', in *On Interpretation: Studies in Culture, Law, and the Sacred*, eds Andrew D. Weiner, Leonard V. Kaplan, and Sonja Hansard-Weiner/ *Graven Images* 5 (2002), 127-40.

²² John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alistair Fowler, rev. 2nd ed (Harlow, 2007), ix. 484-5, p. 498.

²³ John Preston, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of Mr. Arthur Upton Esquire in Denon* (London, 1619), 7. See e.g. Petrus Ramus, *Dialecticae libri duo* (London, 1584), 50-1; Abraham Fraunce, *The Lawiers Logike* (London, 1588), 8^v.

²⁴ Sophie Read, 'Puns: Serious Wordplay' in *Renaissance Figures of Speech*, ed. Sylvia Adamson, Gavin Alexander, and Katrin Ettenhuber (Cambridge, 2007), 81-96, here 90.

²⁵ Cummings, *Literary Culture*, 300.

²⁶ Wimsatt, 'One Relation of Rhyme to Reason', 337.

²⁷ Read, 'Puns', 94.

²⁸ Geoffrey Hill, *Collected Critical Writings* (Oxford, 2008), 563.