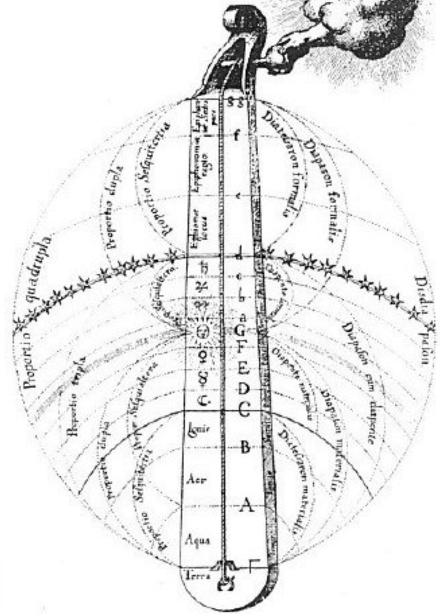
Let My Heart Be Tuned to Thee



The Puritan Attitude towards Music and Aesthetics in the 17th Century

BA Paper
English Language and Culture
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Introduction

Examining Puritan views about art and music starts with defining Puritanism itself. Numerous scholars, such as Patrick Collinson, Everett H. Emerson and Christopher Hill, have written about this subject and comparing them to one another leads to the following definition: Puritanism is a wide and biased term which can be applied to a heterogenous group of people with distinct ideas who, albeit they appeared to contemporary English Protestants as revolutionary activists who disobeyed and undermined the authority of the Church of England, were, by their own standards, obedient defenders of the "Church of Christ".[1] The Puritans were criticised by fellow Protestants and others from all layers of society for their "precise" stance on the superiority of the Bible above everything. Collinson, as well as Miller and Johnson,[2] have suggested that for this reason it was not so much their social and theological, but rather their ideological positions which gave them a different quality: these were "differences of degree, of theological temperature so to speak, rather than of fundamental principle" (*Elizabethan* 26-27). Spurr emphasises that this gave annoyance to

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[1] Cf. Rom. 16.16: "The churches of Christ salute you" and Eph. 5.23: "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body". In a more elaborate way, John Calvin writes in his *Institutes* that "Church" can have the following meaning:

> the Church as it really is before God – the Church into which none are admitted but those who by the gift of adoption are sons of God, and by the sanctification of the Spirit true members of Christ. In this case it not only comprehends the saints who dwell on the earth, but all the elect who have existed from the beginning of the world. (3: 14)

This latter description of the "Church of Christ" perfectly fits the opinion which many Puritans who regarded themselves as "children of God" had of themselves: they had the individual "conviction that they [had] been personally saved by God, elected to salvation by a merciful God for no merit of their own; an that, as a consequence of this election, they must lead a life of visible piety, must be a member of a church modelled on the pattern of the New Testament, and must work to make their community and nation a model Christian society" (Spurr 5).

[2] They assert that

> of course, the Puritans acquired their special quality and their essential individuality from their stand on the points actually at issue (…). Yet if first of all we wish to take Puritan culture as a whole, we shall find, let us say, that about ninety per cent of the intellectual life, scientific knowledge, morality, manners and customs, notions and prejudices, was that of all Englishmen. The other ten per cent, the relatively small number of ideas upon which there was a dispute, made all the [actual] difference that [the Puritan] pulled up stakes in England, which he loved, and migrated to a wilderness rather than submit them to apparent defeat. (Miller 7)

others because they condemned others "'for every trifle'", omitting themselves, who were not faultless, yet they regarded themselves "'as holy as angels'" (22). The Puritans, however, maintained that everything should contribute to *edification*, the "building of a [godly] community" of the elect (MacCulloch 85) and that "imperfect", "popish" elements in the church could not advance this. Instead, they took the Bible as the basis for everything, as Emerson and Hunt have also put it.[3] Hence, a typical Puritan would very exactly apply his or her knowledge of every Biblical truth to the practice of their lives, from predestination to sanctification. The latter, then, the "leading of an holy life" was not possible without being "God's child" and Collinson notes that "a great many puritans (...) struggled for years before they could finally convince themselves that they were saved" (Durston 11). This translated itself into a typical way of living, by seeking God in prayer and other holy activities, such as a strict keeping of the Sabbath. Even on a national level this had its influence, as most Elizabethan Puritans were Presbyterians[4] and wished a church form as the Bible prescribed it.

Although they all relied on the Bible for all their actions, Biblical interpretation could nevertheless differ amongst Puritans, although their pious lifestyle (which was different from that of their contemporaries) was often similar. R.T. Kendall has made a division between "experimental predestinarians" (the Puritans) and "credal predestinarians" (other Protestants) in Elizabethan England (79-80), the former being more eager to confirm their (personal) election. When Arminianism entered the English scene, this division was enlarged, even

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[3] Emerson writes in *Puritanism in America*, when dealing with Thomas Cartwright's view, that "[Cartwright's] emphasis on the Bible as the one sole reliable guide became a central Puritan conviction" (21). Hunt describes the Puritans as those who called themselves "professors" and he mentions that

> many professors had conscientious objections to what they regarded as vestiges of popery within the Anglican service (...) but they differed greatly in the degree of their hostility. The range of attitude ran from grudging toleration to hysterical revulsion. Opposition to popish survivals was not the essence of godliness. What gave professors their common religious identity was the emphasis they accorded to Bible reading and especially to the preaching of the word. (91-92)

[4] Dykstra Eusden indicates this: "in the reign of Elizabeth Presbyterianism had been nearly synonymous with Puritanism" and more specifically, Collinson mentions that "in Elizabeth's reign, the godly only rarely and in exceptional circumstances carried their implicit dissent to the point of open separation" (26).

amongst conformists, as Wallace indicates.[5] At the same time, it did not leave the "moderate Puritans", a group of less radical Puritans, as Lake and Spurr point out,[6] unaffected. Whereas the more radical Puritans separated from the Church, the more moderate kind gradually adapted themselves to the changing line in the Church and predestination became a less important theme.[7] Wallace mentions that on the Puritan side a movement appeared which he calls "Sectarian Arminianism", and which was clearly influenced by Arminianism: within this sect, "Francis Duke (...) argued that all persons may attain eternal life by Christ if they apply the truths Christ taught to their lives, John Horne (...) decried the notion that Christ died for only a few, Thomas Moore (...) declared that Christ died for all" (108).

Despite these differences, the Puritans had in common that they objected to the superficiality of the ceremonial and liturgical character of the Church of England and, in a more radical sense, Puritan criticism was not just a plea for further reformation of an imperfect church (which regarded itself as treading a perfect *via media*[8]) with a number of *adiaphora* which it took as its norm, but, most deeply, it was rather a struggle against what they regarded as the power of the Antichrist, since the retaining of Roman Catholic elements in the liturgy was an impediment to Christian liberty, instead of an elaboration of it. Brown illustrates that for the Puritans, all things which the Bible has left indifferent should not be

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[5] Wallace states that

> the rise of Arminianism in the Church of England (…) had long-range consequences of the greatest importance: creating a totally new religious outlook in the Reformed Church of England, it utterly alienated Puritans from the established church and deeply divided conformists themselves. (104)

[6] Spurr defines "moderate Puritans" as follows: "such puritans felt a dual allegiance, to the godly cause of further reformation and right government according to God's word and to the national church, which had valid sacraments and doctrine" (67). Lake, in his study about this subject, places its roots in the Elizabethan period with Edward Dering as one of its pioneers, who on the one hand wanted further reformation within the established Church, but on the other hand stressed "the spiritual reality of sin, not its external forms" (19) and consequently, he "allowed an area of adiaphora in externals and spoke as though the issues raised by the continuing use of the prayer book could usefully be discussed under that heading" and he accepted a limited part of the liturgy (20).

[7] As Spurr notes, "from the mid-seventeenth century theological speculation began to chip away at the unanimity of puritan predestinarianism" (168).

[8] Peter White explains this, quoting G. Nuttall and O. Chadwick in *The Early Stuart Church*: "'Elizabethan England was unique, in trying to find room within the borders of a single state, for the conservative (provided he were not too conservative) and the radical (provided he were not too radical)'" (Fincham 212) and he adds that "the result was a Church that stood in an unmistakeably intermediate position between the more precise Churches of the continent and the Church of Rome" (Fincham 213).

regarded as normative,[9] whereas others viewed these *adiaphora* as something that could be left to the Church authority (22), as Chambon also suggests.[10] The Puritans objected to many of these liturgical forms and ceremonies that were not supported by Scripture. Most of them were instituted at the Elizabethan Religious Settlement (1559), when the Church was to follow the prescriptions of the Book of Common Prayer. Fincham and Tyacke give numerous examples of liturgical forms to which the Puritans objected: e.g. wearing of surplices and copes by ministers (the "vestments controversy") and using the cross sign in baptism (42) and Davies, for instance, mentions kneeling at Communion (61). Particularly the vestments controversy reveals the tenor of their criticism: according to Davies, these vestments were for the Puritans "an infringement of their Christian liberty"[11] (59) and moreover, they were regarded as "'badges of Anti-Christ'", "they were symbols of pomp and grandeur, ill-befitting the humility with which all men should approach God" and it was an Old-Testamentic use (60). In other words, they viewed all these human institutions in the Church as contrary to God's authority (as revealed in the Bible), and consequently, as institutions of the Anti-Christ, as Doran confirms.[12]

Although Hill points out that most Protestants regarded papacy as a symbol of the Anti-Christ,[13] the Puritans were unique in applying this to Roman Catholic customs that were

[9] He writes that the Puritans "maintained that in discipline as well as in doctrine nothing should be imposed as necessary which could not be proved from Scripture. They held that what Christ has left indifferent man should not insist upon, for we are bidden to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free" (Brown 24).

[10] Archbishop Parker wished to keep Roman Catholic customs in the church and "Theologisch würde man es ausdrücken: es bleiben bestehen alle alten Gebraüche, sofern sie nicht deutlich wider das Evangelium sind; was darin nicht verboten ist, bleibt nicht nur erlaubt, sondern wird abermals vorgeschrieben" (Chambon 95).

[11] Because "the Church which had been freed by Christ from te bondage of the Law was now attempting to infringe the crown rights of the Redeemer by introducing new burdens on the consciences of believers" (Davies 59).

[12] Doran mentions that it was Cartwright's opinion view "that the Church should follow the scriptures in the smallest detail and not introduce any unscriptural forms of worship, since all human inventions were liable to error, superstition and the influence of Anti-Christ" (27). This opinion was shared by other Puritans, even the more moderate ones: "even though moderate Puritans did not accept Cartwright's Presbyterianism, they did share his approach to adiaphora, predestinarianism and edification" (Doran 27).

[13] He mentions that "Antichrist, the Beast, was not merely the Pope as a person, however, but the papacy as an institution which subsumed within itself all the evil, coercive, repressive aspects of the secular Empire" (5) and this view was not limited to the Puritans, as follows: "All the leading bishops of the reformed Church of England

left in the Church of England. To illustrate, Fincham and Tyacke write that the Puritans, for instance, viewed the Roman Catholic vestments as devices which "'the enemies of Christ's gospel have chosen to be the special array of their priesthood'" (42). After all, all these "popish" institutions were to them not so "indifferent" as they seemed: apart from threatening Christian liberty, they also encouraged committing sin. Doran and Durston point out that "Puritans found a number of the liturgical features of the established church (...) highly offensive. They preferred sparse and unadorned church interiors, and objected to pictures and statues on the grounds that they encouraged the worship of images" (*Princes* 85). In *English Puritanism*, Emerson mentions the Puritan Gilby who called "'the cross and candlesticks upon the Queen's altar'" superstitious and remarked that ministers who followed the conformist fashion were "selfish knaves, unworthy of the ministry" (95).

If all these elements caused sin and superstition, they obviously distracted church-goers from the essential truth. Packer indicates that for the Puritans true worship had to be "a matter of 'heart-work'" and on the other hand "a response to the revealed reality of God's will and work, applied to the heart by the Holy Spirit" and for that reason "they insisted that worship must be simple and scriptural" (Lloyd-Jones 3: 9). That also explains their critical attitude towards the Church as a whole, as Bronkema indicates.[14] Young points out that in a Puritan conviction *adiaphora* did have a place, but only "the circumstances (...) such as are 'common to human actions and societies' – and only some such" could be counted as *adiaphora* (Lloyd-Jones 1: 144-145). If, instead, they were used for worship, it diverted true worship to a superficial "look-alike", which missed the essential basis for true worship: a devotion from the heart as a response to a divine revelation in the heart. This type of worship then, which had been brought about by God, should also follow God's own will. Young cites

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accepted the doctrine, starting with Archbishop Cranmer and including Bale, Coverdale (...), Ponet, and the three martyrs Latimer, Ridley, and Hooper" (*Antichrist* 10).

[14] He states that "they objected to the arbitrary power of the bishops in the spiritual courts, to the want of a godly discipline, and to the promiscuous access of all persons to the Lord's table" (Bronkema 47).

the Puritan Ames, who expressed that "all the means ordained by God for His worship, both general and special, should be observed by us: for God must be worshipped with His own worship, totally and solely, and nothing must be added, taken away, or changed" and all 'will-worship' invented by men, and its sin may be called under the general name of superstition" (Lloyd-Jones 1: 145). For that reason, all non-Scriptural forms of worship were an impediment to true devotional worship, and in an underlying sense, a device of Satan[15] and of the Anti-Christ,[16] who hampered a biblical freedom in worship and who tried to replace true worship by a superstitious and idolatrous form – that of serving an "anti-Christian" institution instead of God's holy commands.

In this light, the Puritans also looked upon the role of music in the churches: if music and its different forms were means to worship God during the church service, it had to be prescribed by God because only then could one serve God truly in a Scriptural church service and otherwise it was nothing but serving a human institution. McColley indicates that mainly Jewish musical practice that was recorded in Scripture and in three New Testament passages[17] were referred to in the church music debate (80). She explains that

> for Calvinist reformers, these passages were not authorizations for church music; those from the 'Old' Testament were part of the ceremonial law, abrogated by the Gospel, and those from the New concerned only private worship or congregational psalm-singing before and after a church service devoted to clear and sober reading and preaching of the Word. (McColley 80)

Since elaborate music was not explicitly prescribed for public worship in the New Testament service by Scripture, all these forms of musical worship were regarded as "'popish, superstitious, idolatrous, and anti-Christian'", as Long indicates (203). In other words, all

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[15] Peter Martyr, who is quoted by Bronkema, remarked that "the attitude of some in the Church who thought that as few changes from Romanism as possible should be made he called 'a device of Satan, to render the regress to Popery more easy'" (34).

[16] Who, as has been pointed out in footnote 12, had his influence on "unscriptural" forms of worship.

[17] Those were

> the account of the Last Supper (and first communion service) in Matthew 26.30 and Mark 14.26, where Jesus and the disciples go forth to the Mount of Olives 'when they had sung an hymn' (or, in the Geneva Bible, 'when they had sung a psalme'); 1 Corinthians 14.15, 'I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with understanding also'; and Ephesians 5.18-19, '... be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. (McColley 80)

worship inside the church had to be supported by the Bible and if not, it was human and therefore fallible. Long mentions that some radical Puritans took this notion so seriously, that they destroyed all “human” devices that God had not explicity commanded: they hacked organs to pieces, destroyed music libraries and part books and disbanded choirs (206). An important incitement for their zeal to destroy all this music and the English musical tradition so vigorously must have been that they regarded their struggle as a fight against the anti-Christ, as has been mentioned above. Prynne, quoted by Scholes, remarked in many abusive terms that in traditional polyphonic music the beauty and elaborateness made

> a foule evill favoured noyse (...) but as for the wordes and sentences and the very matter it selfe (...) nothing [was] understanded at all; but the authority and power of judgment is taken away both from the minde and from the eares utterly. (218)

These objections were, however, mostly against church music and many Puritans had broader views about music in general. True, there were, as Walker remarks, among the Puritans “some extremists [who] condemned music of every kind indiscriminately, and doubted the propriety even of unison psalm-singing in public worship”. Yet, what “the vast body of Puritans” objected to was “profane music on the Sabbath, organs and choirs in churches, and stage plays”, but they “never for a moment questioned the lawfulness of the ordinary practice of the art” (Walker 153-154). It was not a matter of music as such, but rather the consequences it entailed. For that reason, Scholes notices in a chapter about the Puritans and the organ:

> I do not believe that any normal Puritan objected to the *presence* of an organ in a church; it was the implication that it was going to be used in worship that horrified him. The Puritan looked upon the organ as a secular instrument, but he did not look upon the building as sacred; he had no special reverence for any ‘meeting-house’ as such, and would not object to musical recreation being taken in it. (238)

Clearly, the majority of Puritans objected to every form of musical elaborateness and accompaniment during the public service, but had no problems with it when used privately. Scholes quotes a part from a tract dealing mainly with the New Testamentic abrogation of

instrumental music in churches by John Cotton that was published in London which was, according to Scholes, a generally accepted opinion amongst Puritans. In short, it says:

> Singing with instruments was typicall [i.e. foreshadowing the coming of Christ], and so a ceremoniall worship and therefore is ceased. But singing with heart and voyce is a morall worship, such as is written in the heart of all men by nature. (...) Or supposing singing with instruments were not typically, but onely an externall solemnitie of worship, fitted to the solace of the outward sences of children under age (such as the *Israelites* were under the Old Testament) (...) yet now in the growne age of the heires of the New Testament, such externall pompous solemnities are ceased and no externall worship reserved, but such as holdeth forth simplicitie, and gravitie; nor is any voyce now to be heard in the Church of Christ, but such as is significant and edifying by signification (...) which the voyce of instruments is not. (246-247)

In other words, (church) music should not have any instrumental accompaniment, had to be founded on Scripture and should edify the believer in order to be appropriate for its use in churches. The solution was a rendition of the Hebrew psalms into English metre with very sober melodies without accompaniment, and so people could "'sing with understanding and with grace in the heart, making melody unto the Lord'" (Davies 165).

If, in contrast, private musical entertainment with at least some instruments was perfectly fine with most Puritans, it is useful to examine to which extent they valued music as an art as such to do more justice to the image of Puritans as opponents of music. Bunyan, for instance, fashioned a fiddle and later a flute from the rail of his stool in prison and played in secret to entertain himself during his imprisonment (Brittain 252). Cromwell's daughters had music lessons and Cromwell himself had an organ and sometimes dropped in at music meetings (Scholes 142). It is, however, so far not yet clear to what extent and from what perspective these Puritans valued music and what their general views about art were like. The question that immediately follows this is whether many Puritans were familiar with 17th Century art views at all, or whether they had formed a very distinct "Puritan" approach towards art.

The problem, however, is that the Puritans have hardly left any musical compositions of their own by which their limits in creativity and artistic concerns can be judged and must

therefore be judged from other remaining art material. It would be too bold to conclude from the absence of Puritan music that they simply had nothing to do with it, and the evidence that they indeed practised music at amateur level also indicates that they took at least some interest in it. Although musical material is practically absent, they do have left a great amount of poetry. If their poetry shows distinct Puritan views on art and reveals something about the general conceptions and philosophies about music in the 17th Century, this knowledge might cast light on their approaches towards music. Secondly, if the references they have made in their poetry to music are also evaluated, this can, combined with the knowledge of their ideas about writing poetry, give a fairly precise image about their stance on musical artistry and their motivations for practising music.

This paper will be built up as follows. The first chapter will analyse the general ideas about art and music in the 17th Century and their general reflection in the poetry of the period, to know, at a later stage, precisely what possible concern the Puritans had with these views about art. In the second chapter, the Puritan ideas about artistic limits and their concern with the art of writing poetry and the musical philosophies of their time will be defined by comparing Puritan poetry to other poetry that was concerned with innovative artistry in style, structure and content. Then, in the third chapter, I will, with these considerations in mind, explore in more detail what relationship possibly exists between Puritan conceptions of aesthetics (in combination with their religious views) and notions of (musical) recreation in the descriptions and musical imagery that they used in their poetry (and some of their prose). Finally, the fourth chapter will give a conclusion about the Puritan valuation of art, and more specifically, of music, with respect to its aesthetic value and its function, in accordance with their religious convictions.

1

Joining the Music of Heaven

Innovation and *expression* are the keywords that reveal the 17th Century attitude with respect to the arts. These two are very different from the words *harmony* and *imitation* to indicate the attitude of the centuries before, but the basic belief was the same: music and poetry were thought to be part of a universal, cosmological harmony and to reflect somehow the proportions between the courses of the "heavenly spheres", which was called the "music of the spheres". In the 17th Century, this idea was becoming less prominent and in terms of poetic style, more emphasis was given to means of *expression* that stressed the congruency between the reader's mind and feelings with the text and the relation between the arts and the cosmos became gradually more expressed in terms of agreement, rather than that poetry reflected a precise imitation of the "heavenly harmony" in its form. The poetic genre that featured this shift in emphasis most was later referred to as the "Metaphysical" genre, much more than the more politically and ideologically specified styles in the poetry of the Cavaliers and the Puritans. This type of poetry in the 17th Century, then, can be said to possess still the same essence as before, but to have a new concern and design that has, in relation to the poetry that preceded it, changed to an innovative way of making music together with the heavenly spheres.

Conceptions about music and poetry in 17th Century England and before were radically different from the general present-day views about music and art in that they were cosmological and part of a greater whole, or, in McColley's words, "seventeenth-century minds and ears perceived music as the formative soul of the cosmos made audible" (7). This idea went back to ancient Greek philosophies by Pythagoras and Plato. Pythagoras was the

first[1] to relate music and science and his ideas are all based on the concept of dualism, which signified that everything within the phenomenal world could be subdivided in two opposite classes. The basic duality within this system was, as James indicates, the opposition between limited and unlimited and "all the others [such as one vs. many, light vs. dark, good vs. bad, etc.] may be seen as different aspects of this fundamental dichotomy" (28). The very innovativeness that ensued was that everything stood in a logical relation to each other, hence everything was mathematical, because basic concepts were expressed by different numbers, all with their symbolic meanings.[2] In this sense, "music *was* number, and the cosmos *was* music" (James 31). Putting this theory into practice, Pythagoras discovered in an experiment that the length of gut-strings determined their pitch and in this way he discovered "the arithmetical relationships between the harmonic intervals" (James 32). In the Renaissance, this idea was picked up and "number, hence rhythm and harmonic proportion, hence music" was regarded as "everlasting" (McColley 7).

This theory had, under the influence of Kepler's recent discoveries, struck root in England and other parts of Europe. Kepler, himself inspired by the ancient Greek teachings, conceived of the universe as one great harmony (*harmonia mundi*), in line with Pythagoras' distinction between the three sorts of music (denoted in later terms): *musica mundana* (the music of the cosmos), *musica humana* (continuous, unheard music of the human organism, by the resonance between the soul and the body) and *musica instrumentalis* (instrumental music)

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[1] As far as the records show, of course.

[2] James mentions that Pythagoras devised two central symbols. The first was the *tetractys*, which had a pyramid form of four lines of crosses (X). At the top line one cross was placed (X), below a row of two (XX), below that a row of three (XXX) and at the base a row of four (XXXX). One stood for "'Unity, Identity, Equality, the purpose of friendship, sympathy, and conservation of the Universe, which results from persistence in Sameness.'" Two signified "one plus one, but it was also the dyad, the principle of dichotomy, the mutability of everything that is." The number "three was emblematic of things that have a beginning, a middle, and an end" and "four was the number of points required to construct a pyramid, the simplest of the perfect solids." These four numbers together were ten, which was "the perfect number that is the basis of Pythagoras's (...) mathematics" (James 29). The second figure was the *gnomon*, in which showed that all numbers, odd and even, could be derived from one and two by drawing crosses (X) above and to the right of the basis of either one cross (X) or two (XX). "The odd *gnomon*, generated from one, is square, while that of the even numbers is oblong, just as one would expect from the table of opposites (James 30).

(James 31). Pythagoras' discoveries of the numerological proportions in the cosmos, the "music of the spheres", mainly encompassed the level of *musica mundana* and had its application to *musica instrumentalis*. Plato, on the other hand, elaborated his musical ideas in relation to science on the level of *musica humana*,[3] another very important concept of 17th Century (religious) music (and poetry). In brief, Plato asserted that before all physical things the Creator had first created the soul (James 44), which he called the "World Soul". This soul, he thought, was "'a blend of Sameness, Difference, and Existence'" and because of the numerological proportions of these three elements, the soul was entirely musical (James 45-46), for which reason he devised a system of musical intervals in the soul. As on a cosmological level, Plato also applied this idea to the individual level: "the music of soul is the set of proportions in which, Plato believed, a human being is composed" (McColley 8). This human soul stood in close relation to the individual body as well as to the universal set of musical proportions, the "World Soul", or in Hollander's words: "the actual effects of musical sounds upon a listener were also elaborated by Greek theory" (31). For Greek theoreticians, who had developed a number of scales, such as the Dorian, Phrygian, etc., "it was felt that, to use a modern analogue, the 'sad' and 'joyful' characteristics [i.e. the *ethos*] of major and minor keys resided, somehow, in the tonal configurations themselves" (Hollander 32). Therefore Plato regarded music as "a model discipline for study, as well as a useful and necessary one" (Hollander 37).

Translated to an early modern context, Plato's theories on the level of *musica humana* (and of *musica mundana)* played as important a role as Pythagoras' on the levels of *musica mundana* and *musica instrumentalis*, though adapted to a modern and Christian context. Many living in the 17th Century had the conception that

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[3] That he indeed left out *musica instrumentalis* from his theories, can be supported by a remark by James: "It ought to be emphasized that there is no element of *musica instrumentalis* in Plato's exposition. It would never have occurred to Plato or any of his students to play a few bars of the World Soul on the lyre: it was a purely theoretical system" (48).

> the human body [was] a delicately constructed musical instrument, having pipes, strings, bellows, resonating chambers, and a mouthpiece that can shape music into words and so join the beauty of number with the beauty of thought, which move the heart and mind in concordant ways. (McColley 9)

As Hollander remarks, this type of harmony is a typical modern (i.e. from the Renaissance onwards) interpretation of what the Greek called *harmonia*: for the Greek "*harmonia* is to be thought of as referring to *melody* rather than to vertical tonal aggregates" whereas in the Renaissance up to nowadays, music is much more thought of as being vertical, or polyphonic, "*the ordering of simultaneously sounding musical tones*, taken together as a 'package' or *gestalt*" (26-27). The idea in the 16th Century was that if the soul and the mind were in right proportions, they represented the cosmos and they were in tune with the heavenly harmony, which was not possible with the Greek concept of harmony. Now it was possible to tune this world to the world of heaven and so produce a "'Harmony, which intellectually sounds in the eares of God.'" Under Kepler's influence, the concept was elaborated in the 17th Century, as music became a revelation, instead of an imitation, of the cosmos,[4] and these new insights became the stimulus for the emergence of music as expression.[5]

As with music, poetry of this period, though somewhat earlier, underwent a change in relation to the cosmos as well. In the 16th Century, Elizabethan poetry had ascended in verse form "from the Middle Ages to the topmost height of the Renaissance in dramatic aim and achievement" (MacKinnon Robertson 11) and during the 17th Century, this changed again into "a simpler, a more colloquial, a less dignified diction" (MacKinnon Robertson 10). The new style that appeared, later referred to as "Metaphysical", was not any longer concerned

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[4] Cf. Bianconi: "for Kepler [and for others, obviously] (...) modern polyphonic music [did] not merely imitate, but actually ['revealed'], the archetypal structure of the heavens" (54).

[5] Cf. Hollander:

> The primary difference between sixteenth- and seventeenth-century theories of musical treatment of the emotions, then, might once again be referred to a difference between *representation* or '*imitation*' and *expression*, between the notion of a musical setting as an appropriate and sympathetic background for a text, and the idea of music as a vehicle for a piercing of the hearer with that which will agitate the passions within him and cause *him* to 'imitate' or 'represent' within himself the desired feeling. The end of the process that led from the literary use and treatment of one view to that of the other seems almost to lie in the identification of music with that feeling itself (201-202).

with "charm and splendour" (MacKinnon Robertson 10-11), but with persuasion, intellectual invention and rhetoric. More importantly, the idea of concordance of earthly things with the celestial harmony was, as in the case of music, not neglected, but at this time one new aspect was singled out: the tuning of the soul to the content of a poem, followed by a tuning to the "heavenly harmony". To illustrate, Herbert, in his "A true Hymne", devised a stylistic mode, in itself rational, "to express a desire to sing praise from the heart and the need and difficulty of doing so in perfect lines" with the goal to have the soul of the reader in tune with the "soul" (the message) of the text and with the lines, or "verse-music", in its turn denoting the three voices of the "I", "God" and "the heart" of the reader (singer) respectively (McColley 50-51).

In music, something similar happened: in Hollander's words (in his study about the relation between music and poetry), "*musica speculativa*[6] gradually ceased being a model of universal order, and was replaced by a notion of music as a model of rhetoric, whose importance lay in its ability to move the passions, rather than its older role of the microcosmic copy of universal harmony" (159). What happened, was that the form, in relation with the feelings and content that had to be expressed, became increasingly more expressive (but not necessarily more emotional) instead of precise and mathematically correct.

In poetry, this idea was picked up and stylistic and structural properties became interwoven with the argument of a poem. In other terms, all possible techniques were applied to affect the reader's soul (which in reaction could cause emotions, but not *per se*) and persuade him of the only possible "truth", which was in harmony with the universal truth that was set in heaven. Donne, for instance, illustrates this in his "Air and Angels", where he tries

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[6] Music in the 16th Century was divided in "speculative music" ("*musica speculativa*") and "practical music". Hollander quotes Thomas Morley, who wrote in the last decade of the 16th Century that

> 'music is either speculative or practical. Speculative is that kind of music which, by mathematical helps, seeketh the causes, properties and natures of sounds, by themselves and compared with others, proceeding no further, but content with the only contemplation of the art. Practical is that which teacheth all that may be known in songs, either for the understanding of other men's, or making of one's own....' (20).

to convince the reader of the "fact" that the difference in "women's love and men's" is like the disparity "'twixt air and angels' purity":

> Then as an angel, face, and wings
> Of air, not pure as it, yet pure doth wear,
> So thy love may be my love's sphere;
> Just such disparity
> As is 'twixt air and angels' purity,
> 'Twixt women's love and men's will ever be. (Cain 27)

Here Donne makes use of irregular lines and tries to persuade the reader with a very clever comparison: he compares purity of love to a sphere, because, as there exists disparity between the air and the angels' purity in the cosmos, so there is a disparity between women's and men's love. This difference "will ever be", and hence, it is nothing to care about. In this way, Donne tries to convince his girlfriend (presumably) in a very cunning way, so that she has the impression that there are no obstacles to love him and the irregularity of the lines is clearly also intended to display their disparity in love.

This changed form of poetry in the 17th Century was most evidently featured by the Metaphysical genre, which was most concerned with the artistic importance of writing poetry, instead of reflecting one's ideologies in verse, as the Cavaliers and the Puritans did in their poetry. Curiously enough, Metaphysical poetry did not belong to one specific group of people with a clear identity and ideology and had moderate Puritan (Marvell), "Anglican" (Herbert) and Catholic (Crashaw) poets as its exponents. As a matter of fact, Metaphysical verse was enjoyed by both Cavaliers and Puritans and somehow filled up the gap that existed between the two,[7] whose ideologies were opposed and who both used very different poetic styles. In

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[7] As Saunders points out, nearly all poets, in the period 1600-1660 "earn[ed] their major living in courtly service", and not only the Cavalier poets, but Metaphysical poets as well, who were in favour of the court (Bradbury 251). Simultaneously, Metaphysical poetry was read by some Puritans - Sharrock describes in *The Miscellaneous Work of John Bunyan* that the Puritan Baxter lists a number of poets he admires at the beginning of *Poetical Fragments*: "Abraham Cowley, Katherine Philips, Wither, Quarles, Sylvester, Fulke Greville, Davies, George Sandys, and, above all, George Herbert" (Bunyan xxix), of which Gardner includes several in her anthology *The Metaphysical Poets*; Flavel agrees in his *Husbandry Spiritualized* "experimentally" with Herbert that "A Verse may find him that a Sermon flies, / And turn Delight into a Sacrifice" (The Epistle Dedicatory) and so does Bunyan praise Herbert at the beginning of *Scriptural Poems* with his name under it, though Sharrock doubts his authorship (Bunyan xx):

> If what the learned *Herbert* says, holds true,

poetry, the Cavaliers were “writers of witty and polished lyrics of courtship and gallantry” and included Lovelace, Suckling, Carew and those who followed Jonson’s style (“Sons of Ben”), such as Herrick (Abrams 222). In general, for most Cavaliers poetry should not be too intense, too emotional and religion as a subject was avoided (Skelton 9-10).[8] In contrast, the Puritan poets mostly wrote religious verse that was, in its own way, more intense, and their style tended to be unpolished and plain. In a different way, the third group of Metaphysical poets took a kind of middle position between the two other groups and they imitated Donne, whose “poetry concerns itself not with a crowded social panorama, but with a dyad - with the relationship between the speaker and one single other being, a woman or God”, in other words, “intensity” (Greenblatt 1248). In brief, the Metaphysicals were more concerned with innovation in style than with openly adapting their style to that of either the Puritans or the Cavaliers.

The new Metaphysical (a word that was later invented for poets who shared “a common poetic style, use of figurative language, and way of organizing the meditative process or the poetic argument” (Abrams 166)) writing style was “referred to by contemporaries as ‘strong lines’” (Gardner xix). Donne, with many who followed him to a greater or lesser degree, “wrote in a diction and meter modeled on the rough give-and-take of actual speech, and often organized his poems as an urgent or heated argument” (Abrams 166). Besides these new inventions in form, Metapysical poetry was also characterised by its “difficulty in thought” (Gardner xxi) or “wit” and the basic idea was, as Martz points out in

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> A Verse may find him, whom a sermon flies,
> And turn Delight into a Sacrifice;
> Thus I conclude, and wish it as delighting
> To thee in Reading as to me in Writing.

[8] In more detail, it is best to follow Skelton’s description:

> The common factor that binds the cavaliers together is their use of direct and colloquial language expressive of a highly individual personality, and their enjoyment of the casual, the amateur, the affectionate poem written by the way. They are 'cavalier' in the sense, not only of being Royalists (though Waller changed sides twice), but in the sense that they distrust the over-earnest, the too intense. (...) They avoid the subject of religion, apart from making one or two graceful speeches. (...) For them life is far too enjoyable for much of it to be spent sweating over verses in a study. (...) Poetry need not be a matter of earnest emotion or public concern. (9-10)

Metaphysical Poetry, that in the soul "the images received through the senses could be transformed by means of an inner light, the light of human 'wit', that is, the intellect, the understanding, the power of reason" (Bradbury 102). All these new elements gave more expression to their poetry, and, in its turn, this caused a radical change in the perspective of the relation between poetry and the "heavenly harmony" (see above). The precepts of poetry had now moved into a new direction and the form of a poem (as well as its imagery) was set up in a way to engage and – as a possible effect of this – to move the reader and in this way to achieve a kind of harmony.

Thus, the awareness of the musical part of poetry in the "heavenly harmony" was still present in the 17th Century. In style, however, poetry featured a change that entailed that its form was not always strict and exact (as the regular motions of the spheres), but more often free and less regular, adding more expression, ingenuity and persuasive elements to it, to bring the soul in concord with its message and in tune with the "heavenly harmony". The new style that marked this changed perspective towards poetry was later called "Metaphysical". This type of poetry in the 17th Century, then, can be said to be still completely in tune with the "music of the spheres", but to have changed its voice from a regular and strict basso continuo to a more improvisational, varied and inspired soprano voice.

2

The Poet with the Trembling Hand

> I write – But ‘tis, alas, with trembling hand:
> For who those *boundless Depths* can understand?
> Those *Mysteries* unvail, which Angels do
> With dread Amaze desire to look into?
> (Benjamin Keach, introducing his spiritual poem *The Glorious Lover*)

These lines express the general attitude of Puritan poets from the 17th Century towards writing poetry in connection with the philosophies and views about art of their days. Differently from the Metaphysicals, they were more reserved in their expression, in their ideas and descriptions as well as in their writing style. In short, the Puritan poets (with the exception of moderate Puritans like Marvell and Milton,[1] who will for that reason not be discussed) tended to create a plain, simple style, with unsophisticated imagery and a singular, logical and practical argument that was used in a Biblical context, with its limitations and prescriptions. The Metaphysical style, on the other hand, is more concentrated, abundant in intricate conceits, rhetorically convincing and less practical and straightforward,[2] all corresponding to a changed poetic idea that emphasised that style could powerfully engage the reader with the argument. It must, for that reason, in analysing Puritan poetry, be considered whether their views on poetry have much in common with those of the innovative group of Metaphysical poets, whose style is most directly connected to the poetic (and art) conventions of the period, or

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[1] Although both had more or less chosen the side of the Puritans (for instance, both praised Cromwell, Milton calling him “our chief of men” (Frye 368) and Marvell comparing Cromwell to an angel (97), their ideas were not similar to many “fellow” Puritans. Milton reinterpreted “the process of election after the Arminian fashion” and “the influence of the forces (...) drove him to oppose the Puritan right” because “in its crude form, the doctrine of predestination necessarily involved what seemed to Milton to be an altogether unjust and unmerciful condemnation of the reprobate” (Barker 308). Marvell, also siding with the Puritans, is called “more a man of the century than a Puritan” in an article in the *Times Literary Supplement* (“Andrew Marvell”) and Parfitt calls him a “crypto-royalist” because of “his moderate line and independence of mind” (227).

[2] The first three characteristics are also listed in Gardner’s anthology *The Metaphysical Poets*: concentration and a sinewy strength of style (xxii), a fondness for (extended) conceits (xxiii) and argument and persuasion (xxvi).

whether Puritan poetry functions as a reaction against this and is a completely different genre with its own distinct views about art and in that way, it can be determined how much the Puritans were involved with the art theories of their days and to what extent they valued poetic style and philosophy of art and whether it was given a very distinct interpretation and a position that was inferior to their Puritan ideal.

"Plainness" of style is the keyword that marks out the common character of Puritan poetry and gives it a specific identity when set off against the compact and short style of Metaphysical poetry, which Gardner describes as "concentrated, "closely woven" or "something to be 'chewed and digested'" combined with brevity (xxii), demanding "that we pay attention and read on" (xxii). Puritan poets wanted to create an unelaborated and simple style of which the underlying motive was religious: "The Puritan aesthetic restricted the Puritan poet. He could not surrender himself to sensual delights, and the code of the plain style would apply to his rhythms as well as to his prose" (Miller 265). For the average Puritan, too much emphasis on compactness, with lines that had to be "chewed and digested", so, that were intellectually challenging, did attract too much attention to the form instead of to the content of the poem. Bunyan warned his readers for this danger and wrote above a pamphlet with a poem about the seductiveness of sin and the way to cope with it: "Reader, in reading be thou rul'd by me, / With Rhimes nor Lines, but Truths, affected be" (*A Caution*). The essence of Puritan poetry is often, like most other Protestant poetry,[3] a distrust of its sensuous nature and of the poet's own tending to aggrandise himself rather than God. The difference with others is that Puritan poets were often more rigorous in this and seemed to adhere quite strictly to the principle, which will also be shown by the examples that will follow.

Notwithstanding, this does not imply that Puritan poets completely abandoned a short style in its aesthetic use; on the contrary, aesthetic brevity is a major characteristic of the

[3] Cf. Herbert's "Jordan (1)" and Marvell's "The Coronet", which both indicate this distrust.

Puritan plain style. They eagerly exercised their skills at the epigram, which they had in common with Metaphysical poets.[4] The same Bunyan, for instance, interlarded his narrative of *The Pilgrim's Progress* with many deliberately terse poems that disclose "sound and honest Gospel-strains" (xii); they immediately strike the heart of the matter and are "pointed and witty" (Abrams 84) in that they cleverly see through people's pretences. A clear example of this is Christian's song after By-ends has gone over to Demas:

> By-ends *and* Silver Demas *both agree;*
> *One calls, the other runs, that he may be*
> *A Sharer in his Lucre, so these two*
> *Take up in this World, and no further go*. (*Pilgrim's Progress* 122)

In this respect, Metaphysical poetry often features a similar "pointed and witty" style, which is straightforward, although in its conceits it greatly differs from Puritan poetry (see below). For instance, Richard Crashaw's poem "Luke 11: 'Blessed be the paps which Thou hast sucked'" is in this sense similar to Bunyan's poem:

> Suppose He had been tabled at thy teats,
> Thy hunger feels not what He eats.
> He'll have His teat ere long (a bloody one);
> The mother then must suck the Son. (Cain 155)

In other words, the basic use of an epigrammatic style is essential for both the Puritan plain style and the Metaphysical compact style.

In its function and application, however, the Puritan short style diverges from that in Metaphysical verse. The distinguishing mark is the role which "wit" plays and the goal it intends. Wit, the "kind of verbal expression which is brief, deft, and intentionally contrived to produce a shock of comic surprise" (Abrams 339), is hardly a feature of Puritan poetry. Instead, wit is adapted to something clever and thoroughgoing, advancing the truth as in the provided example from Bunyan above. The Puritan precept for the use of this kind of clever, short and "pointy" observations (some Puritan variant of "wit") is therefore that they should convince the reader of the truth and never draw the attention to their own ingenuity; instead,

[4] Gardner asserts that "there is some truth in saying that a metaphysical poem is an expanded epigram" (xxii).

they should direct the reader far away from intellectual reasoning and persuade him in his heart instead of in his head. Bunyan, again, illustrates this very plainly:

> ‘Tis not the Method, but the Truth alone
> Should please a Saint, and mollifie his heart:
> Truth in or out of Meeter is but one;
> And this thou knowst, if thou a Christian art.
>
> You also that content your selves to see
> Man’s Wit in verses, and no further look:
> You will not by them edified be;
> You see only the back-side of the Book.
>
> Man’s heart is apt in Meeter to delight,
> Also in that to bear away the more:
> This is the cause I here in Verses write,
> Therefore affect this Book, and read it o’re. (*Profitable Meditations* 4)

Wither echoes a similar conviction in the description of his own labours on the frontispiece of his *Furor Poeticus*:

> This *Author*’s well, and *sober*, yet,
> Although he fell into this Fit;
> But, if more *Wit* than *Grace* he had,
> *Oppressions* would have made him *mad*.

In summary, plainness, shortness and clever observations in Puritan verse are modified in their application by their function, which is to edify and to teach something new and not to hinder comprehension at a first reading.[5]

In connection to this, Puritan poets (though they were not unique in this!) regularly stated their own human limits in their poems and expressed that they were dependent on God for writing “good” poetry – that is, poetry with an edifying function. The American poet Wigglesworth, for instance, asks for guidance of the “Holy Sp’rite” to “teach the sons of men” in his poem *The Day of Doom*:

> Oh, guide me by the Sacred Sp’rite
> So to indite, and so to write,

[5] That indeed Puritan poetry is never (entirely) written for pleasure or to dazzle the mind can also be supported by the fact that most poets had a leading, examplary function. Bunyan, Flavel and Keach, for instance, were ministers, Skippon and Wither had high posts in the army and Prynne was an important politician and pamphleteer. Of course, it is not argued here that Metaphysical poetry is never educational and instructive (Donne and Herbert were ministers as well, and have both written functional poetry), but that for Puritan poets it was more or less a rule of thumb.

> That I thine Holy Name may praise,
> And teach the sons of men thy ways. ("A Prayer Unto Christ")

Even secular poetry, which is scarcely found among Puritan verse, is, with all its brilliancy, placed in a position that is dependent on Scriptural faith. As an illustration, in Bradstreet's poem about the four ages of man she ends with a hope of resurrection at the Day of Judgment in which she will triumph with Christ (*Tenth Muse* 55) and at the end of *The Third Monarchy* in *The Four Monarchies* she writes that "What e're is found amisse, take in best part, / As faults proceeding from my head, not heart" (*Tenth Muse* 174). In short, Puritan poets were aware of their limits and tended to create a plain style that avoided compactness and sophistication, but advanced purity, regularity and simplicity of style to increase the understanding. To end with an illustration: the Puritan Benjamin Keach[6] defends the Biblical approval of poetry and he describes the function of poetry, and the limited position of a poet (subordinated to God) in the prologue to his *War With the Devil*, in a very plain style, even without using real metaphors:[7]

> Verse hath expres'd, as sacred things as Prose.
> (...)
> For 'tis no Humane knowledge gain'd by Art,
> But rather 'tis inspir'd, into the Heart,
> By Divine means, for true Divinity,
> Hath with his Science, great Affinity:
> Though some, through Ignorance, do it oppose,
> Many do it esteem, far more than Prose:
> And find also that unto them it brings,
> Content, and hath been the delight of Kings.
> *David*, although a King, yet was a Poet,
> And *Solomon* also, the Scriptures show it.
> Then what if for all this some should abuse it,
> I'me apt to think the Angels do embrace it. (4)

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[6] One might suspect Keach of having more moderate views, because he encouraged the singing of hymns in church (whereas many Puritans only wanted to sing psalms in church). That his other convictions were very Puritan becomes evident in his preface to *The Display of Glorious Grace*, where he writes:

> I am not for Airy and *Florid Orations* in the Ministration of the Word of God, but for that plain Way of Preaching used by the Holy Apostles, and our Worthy *Modern Divines*. Besides, could I so Preach or Write, as is the Flesh-pleasing, Ear-tickling *A-la-mode* of the Times, of such who study Words more than Matter, it would be utterly dislik'd by all such *Pious Christians*, for whose sake, and at whose Importunity these Sermons are published (Keach).

Besides, he identifies himself in the same introduction with Manton, definitely a Puritan with stricter views (*Display*), and he for instance stresses that God has made a covenant between Christ and the elect (*Display* 26).

[7] In the poem that follows the prologue he, however, uses a lot of imagery, although most of them are similes. See below for the discussion of imagery in Puritan poetry.

In great contrast with the Puritan plain style, the short style that is found in Metaphysical poetry has a very different function and application and is often used to heighten the dramatic effect. Donne, with many who followed him, combined their dense style with a type of wit that can be described as "ingenuity in literary invention and (...) the ability to develop brilliant, surprising, and paradoxical figures of speech" (Abrams 339), obviously to impress the reader. This is evident in their use of conceits and metaphors as well, but they will be discussed separately from style below. The first stanza of (Richard) Crashaw's "The Weeper" illustrates clearly the Metaphysical way of combining a compact, short style with a remarkable display of wit that is "intentionally contrived to produce a shock of comic surprise" (Abrams 339):

> Haile, Sister Springs,
> Parents of Silver-footed rills!
> Ever bubling things!
> Thawing Crystall! Snowy hills!
> Still spending, never spent; I meane
> Thy faire eyes, sweet *Magdalen*. (Gardner 172-173)

Here the compact descriptions of Magdalen's eyes precede the surprise of the last line and then they give the feeling that these descriptions are very clever and original.

Of course, not all Metaphysicals wrote in as witty a way as e.g. Donne had done, but even Herbert, whose approach was perhaps most "graceful" of all Metaphysical poets, and who did not use "the learned and witty style of the work of his friend John Donne" sought effects to astonish the reader and his style was "deceptively simple and graceful", because "it is (...) marked by self-irony, a remarkable intellectual and emotional range, and a highly conscious artistry that is evident in the poems' tight construction, exact diction, perfect control of tone, and enormously varied stanzaic forms and rhythmic patters" (Greenblatt 1605). Moreover, his style is very personal because his "poems reflect Herbert's struggle to define his relationship to God" (Greenblatt 1605). The first stanza from his "Easter-wings"

illustrates his short and "graceful", yet tightly constructed, inventive and intellectually surprising style:

> Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,
> Though foolishly he lost the same,
> Decaying more and more,
> Till he became
> Most poore:
> With thee
> O let me rise
> As larks, harmoniously,
> And sing this day thy victories:
> Then shall the fall further the flight in me. (Gardner 92)

In this example, Herbert needs few and simple words to describe what he means, but the whole construction of the poem (in the form of two wings) and the correspondence between the length, together with the position of the lines, and the meaning of the words make this poem very witty and original, which clearly displays Herbert's artistry.

Both examples reveal that in Metaphysical poetry a short style is not "plain", but often combined with wit and literary invention, which gives it an expressive dimension, whereas Puritan poetry is often "plain" in style, and less expressive and more sober in character with respect to literary invention and the use of wit. Besides, the Metaphysical dramatic way of forming short lines to achieve great expression[8] is almost absent from Puritan poetry. From a Puritan perspective, displaying dramatic struggles in a short, but sophisticated way in verse attracts too much attention to forms of display instead of to the lessons that the lines have to teach (see the discussion above). The Puritan attitude towards dramatic expression and thereby too great an intensity in style or emotion is of a more detached character and reflected in a more sober style. A typical Puritan poet would argue in the way Flavel has put it in *Navigation Spiritualized*:

> My Soul, art thou besieged
> with troubles round about?
> If thou be wise, take this Advice,
> to keep these troubles out. (8)

[8] Cf. the provided examples or poems such as Herbert's "The Collar" and Vaughan's "Quickness".

Thus, the Puritan short and plain writing style is "cool-headed" and not one of display and obscurity, but one of simplicity and purpose, always aware of its own limits and its function to teach its reader.

If there is one defining characteristic of Puritan verse it is the abundant use of plain (Biblical) imagery, which has, in its use, usually no resemblance with the Metaphysical (extended) conceit. In both Puritan and Metaphysical poetry imagery functions as part of an argument, but they differ fundamentally as to their purpose. Puritan imagery, again, must be viewed in the light of *edification* and *education* and is therefore often easy too grasp and singular in nature (with one image denoting one thing), to increase visualisation and comprehension. For that reason, the type of imagery that occurs most frequently in Puritan verse is the simile, followed – less often, and in terms of complexity – by the metaphor and only seldom the (unextended) conceit, although most of the time metaphors are the limit. Perhaps the most complex metaphors in Puritan poetry can be found in Prynne's second poem from his *Comfortable Cordials*, which he first wrote in Latin and then translated into English during his imprisonment. It is about the difficult Biblical paradox of bondage and freedom in Christ and this he illustrates by numerous paradoxical metaphors in the typical Baroque style that can, for instance, be found in Crashaw's or Southwell's poems:

> Brands, unto Christians are bright Starres; Blood spent,
> A Royall Purple; Maym'd Limbes, Ornament;
> Bonds, Chaines of Pearle; Reproaches, Praise (no Staine)
> Wounds, Martyrdome; Death, Life; Oppressions, Gaine.
> To godly men the saddest fates only
> All best things bring, and their joyes multiply;
> The Crosse alone to Saints is the high way,
> Gate, summe of safety, Meanes of endlesse Joy. (*Comfortable Cordials* 2)

All these different images, such as brands, blood, maimed limbes, etc., in themselves are clear-cut and serve to give the reader a livelier imagination; but their comparison to stars, royal purple and ornament respectively, makes them harder to comprehend and they reveal that the subject matter is less straightforward and more profound. The reason why Prynne has

chosen for these less easily accessible metaphors is supported by the fact that they are based on a similar paradox in the Bible, as is described in the first eleven verses from chapter one of Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians, which the title page of *Comfortable Cordials* indicates. The metaphors themselves are not stated in the epistle (or elsewhere), but their complex nature is certainly found in this Biblical passage and by no means Prynne's own invention.

In general, however, Puritan poets restricted themselves to the use of similes or simple metaphors only and in this, in contrast with its sober use of style, Puritan verse is often superfluous. In Sparke's lyrical poem "The Brevitie of Mans Life" at the end of his *Crumms of Comfort*, one simile follows the other in sequence, as in the first stanza (and repeatedly throughout):

> Like as the Damaske Rose you see,
> Or like the blossome on the Tree,
> Or like the dainty flowre of May,
> Or like the morning to the day,
> Or like the Sunne, or like the shade,
> Or like the Gourd which *Ionas* had:
> Even such is Man; whose thread is spun,
> Drawne out, and cut, and so is done.
> The Rose withers, the Blossom blasteth,
> The Flower fades, the Morning hasteth:
> The Sun sets, the shadow flyes;
> The Gourd consumes, and Man he dyes.

It is striking to see that all imagery in this example is, though abundant, very plain in structure: the images are all similes with one tenor ("Man") and single vehicles to depict man's vanity ("the Damaske Rose", "the blossome on the tree", "the dainty flowre of May", etc.). In metaphors, the comparison is likewise clear and it mostly describes a one-on-one relation between two things, and the mixed metaphor is therefore scarce.

Besides, a metaphor in Puritan poetry is often Biblical and therefore supposed to be known by the reader, as in this passage from a poem by Keach:

> And Ravening Wolves also will grow more bold,
> And scare some silly Lambs out of the fold;

If God proceed to call the Shepherds home,
O what will of so many flocks become. ("An Elegy")

Here, the meanings of "Wolves" (the enemies of Christians), "Lambs" (Christians) and "Shepherds" (ministers) are not explained, because the context of the poem makes them clear and because they can be found in the Bible (as in John 10.11-12). With this in mind, and because of the singular nature of these metaphors, a reader from Keach's time must immediately have understood what is depicted by wolves, lambs and shepherds.

The reason why Puritan verse is often unelaborated and careful in avoiding an abundant style, yet is copious in (plain) imagery, is that imagery is often intended to attract the reader's attention easily. Flavel wrote in his *Husbandry Spiritualized* that he has concluded every chapter with a poem, which is "an innocent Bait to catch the Readers Soul" and which is "better (...) than to stuff their Memories with obscene Ballads, and filthy songs, which corrupt their Souls" (The Epistle Dedicatory), a motivation which more or less can also be found with Bunyan and Keach.[9] Without doubt, this remark refers most of all to imagery, which is easiest to remember.

Because of this motivation, its function to teach and its relatively simple use of imagery, Puritan verse does not feature any kind of extended conceits as in Metaphysical poetry. For a Puritan poet, as has been shown, such were simply too complicated, distracting and ostentatious. Only more moderate Puritans like Baxter, [10] did use extended conceits,[11] but

[9] See introduction to Buyan, John. *A Book For Boys and Girls: or, Country Rhimes For Children*. London, 1686 and the introduction to Keach, Benjamin. *The Glorious Lover. A Divine Poem, Upon the Adorable Mystery of Sinners Redemption*. London, 1679.

[10] Baxter deviated from the more orthodox Puritan (Calvinistic) view that Christ died for the elect by asserting that Christ died for all who repent and believe. Keach, whose view was the orthodox one, believing that Christ died for the elect only (Display 207), stated in his preface to *The Display of Glorious Grace*: "By the Baxterian Party I expect to be called an Antinomian, for that hath been their Artifice of late, to expose the True Ancient Protestant Doctrine about Justification, etc. but others who are found in the Faith, will (I am sure) acquit me of that Charge" (v). That Baxter's notions about arts were wider than most of the "mainstream" Puritans can for instance be found in his "To the Reader" to *Poetical Fragments*:

> For my self, I confess that Harmony and Melody are the Pleasure and Elevation of my Soul, and have made a Psalm of Praise in the Holy Assembly the chief delightful Exercise of my Religion and my Life (...). Let those that favour no Melody, leave others to their different appetites, and be content to be so far Strangers to their delights. (...) Sure there is somewhat of Heaven in holy Poetry. It charmeth Souls into Loving Harmony and Concord.

the stricter sort, such as Bunyan, Flavel and Keach, did not use any conceit of this type in their poetry. Occasionally, there are found some conceits in Puritan verse, but they are never extended and always concentrate on the relation between two things, dealing with only one aspect. An example of this is Hutchinson's "Elegy 3: Another on the Sunshine", in which she writes about the imperfect sun, "which all the world surveys" and which is reproached by the narrator because it warms and cheers "Th'oppressive race of men", to the perfect Light (Christ, obviously), which only shines on the righteous:

> Since, then, thou wilt thrust into this dark room,
> By thine own light read thy most certain doom:
> Darkness shall shortly quench thy impure light
> And thou shalt set in everlasting night.
> Those whom thou flattered'st shall see thee expire
> And have no light but their own funeral fire.
> (...)
> Thy sister, the pale empress of the night,
> Shall nevermore reflect thy borrowed light.
> Into black blood shall her dark body turn
> While your polluted spheres about you burn,
> And the elemental heaven like melting lead
> Drops down upon the impious rebels' head.
> Then shall our king his shining host display,
> At whose approach our mists shall fly away,
> And we, illuminated by his sight,
> No more shall need thy ever-quenchèd light. (260)

Another example is Wither's poem "For a Musician", which is related to the "music of the spheres", but this will be discussed below. More generally, however, the limit is set at the (unmixed)[12] metaphor in Puritan poetry.

Especially the last sentence is certainly different from e.g. Bunyan's view on poetry, as has been discussed above.

[11] For instance, in his poem "The Return" from his *Poetical Fragments*, Baxter compares the soul to a house. The narrator has left it behind, with the doors locked and a fire burning but at his return he finds the house in darkness and the fire has gone out; the Gospel Book that was left open with promises is now left with the Law and other things have turned to the negative. The thief has been sin that has spoiled and robbed his heart, and being deprived of everything, he cannot pay his rent to the Landlord (Christ), whose grace he has abused. Then he is reported that all his Debts are paid for and that he has to repent. He has found a Father and sweeps his house clean and now stays within his house to wait for Christ, all by grace from the Lord (96-102). The soul and a house, sin and a robber, etc. are very dissimilar images but in this poem they are cleverly brought together, as in a Metaphysical, extended conceit.

[12] Cf. Abrams's description of the mixed metaphor: it "conjoins two or more obviously diverse metaphoric vehicles". In Puritan verse, however, only singular ("normal") metaphors occur, as has been discussed above.

Metaphysical verse, in contrast, is very much characterised by its use of the extended conceit. In practice, the Metaphysicals differed from the Puritan poets because they fused "the experiences of the intellect and of the emotions into imaginatively powerful combinations" (Phelps 54), whereas the Puritan poets did not want to elevate intellect and emotions above the matter of the poem (see above). Metaphysical poetry often exhibits *extended* conceits, which combine several connotations of the vehicle that is described: "the metaphysical poets exploited all knowledge – commonplace or esoteric, practical, theological, or philosophical, true or fabulous – for the vehicles of these figures" (Abrams 43). A very common characteristic of the extended conceit is, as Gardner points out, that "the poet forces fresh points of likeness upon us. Here the conceit is a kind of 'hammering out' by which a difficult join is made" (xxiv). For that reason, the Metaphysical (extended) conceit is also used "to persuade, or it is used to define, or to prove a point" (Gardner xxv).

To illustrate, Donne's "A Valediction: of Weeping" provides a very ingenious parallel between the two tears of two lovers. The basic conceit here is that the face of the narrator's girlfriend or wife is mirrored in his tears, so that there is some resemblance between the two. Then, the conceit is extended and it is realised that, when a tear falls, the narrator's beloved also "falls", because it contains her image, and then the two are separated. Donne then introduces a new image of a round ball which a "workeman" can turn from nothing (or zero, which the round ball resembles) into a globe with the help of "copies" that he has. In that way the lover's tears, containing the "copies" of his beloved, grow "a globe, yea world by that impression", until her tears, mixed with the narrator's tears "overflow / This world, by waters sent from thee, my [the narrator's] heaven dissolved so" (Gardner 38-39). Following Gardner's description, Donne considers many different aspects and connotations of the conceit to prove the point that he (or the narrator, at least) is grieved and needs the comfort of his beloved.

Sometimes the Metaphysical poets used the idea of the “music of the spheares” in their conceits, again in an extended and argumentative way, but most of the time, they wanted to invent new and more original conceits. That they indeed less frequently wrote verse about this “heavenly harmony” than the poets before them, and often used it metaphorically, does, however, not mean that they did not literally believe the idea any more, as Hollander seems to suggest.[13] When Donne, for instance, asks in a rheorical question: “Could I behold those hands which span the Poles, / And tune all spheares at once, peirc’d with those holes?” (Gardner 57) he seems to assume that these tuned “spheares” really exist. Other examples of conceits about this subject are for instance found in Cowley’s *Davideis* (Book I, ll. 469-480) and Donne’s “The Second Anniversary”. The latter, especially, features again a “condensed [and extended] conceit, which operates through puns and avoids mentioning an actual instrument; but the instrument is implicitly present”. In this conceit, the comparison is between broken breathing, broken musical figures and “the division of body from soul, which will allow the latter to compose itself most harmoniously in Heaven” in which the Metaphysical argumentative aspect is that “the reader is urged to contemplate our state in our death-bed”:

> Thinke thy selfe labouring now with broken breath
> And thinke those broken and soft Notes to bee
> Division, and thy happyest Harmonie. (ll. 90-92) (Hollander 282-283)

In Puritan verse, the “music of the spheres” is even a less frequent theme, and approached in a different way. The problem occurs that, as has been observed, it usually avoids conceits and when they are used, they are never extensive. In effect, where Metaphysical poetry features imagery of heavenly harmony and the tuning of the world soul to form a clever comparison to something very dissimilar, Puritan poetry keeps almost silent, or only a few elements of it, or some allusions to it, are mentioned. For example, in “For a

[13] He remarks that “the purely *literary* quality of the use of these notions can be measured by the fact that for very few, if any, writers did there remain a conceptual scheme of the universe sufficient to give such notions at least a metaphorical significance. Their use was utterly empty of any belief” (238).

Soft Heart" from his *Spiritual Songs*, Mason[14] very subtly refers to the heart as a musical instrument that needs to be tuned by God in order to be able to praise God, omitting any reference to the "universal harmony":

> Ah, Lord, dost Thou not see my heart?
> Alas, how little love!
> I pray Thee, do not lose Thy part;
> Drop softness from above.
> Oh, keep it tender, keep it soft,
> That I may know to raise,
> And quickly fit the lowest string,
> Unto a tune of praise. (Bradley 251)

Any more elaborated conceits hardly occur in Puritan poetry, and probably Wither's hymn "For a Musician" is the most comprehensive example, although the conceit that is used in this poem is still not extended in the Metaphysical way. Wither places the idea of the tuning of the soul to God here in a very Puritan context, if it is, for instance, compared to the above-mentioned notions of Bunyan, Wigglesworth, Keach, etc. about the functionality of a poem:

> *Many* Musicians *are more out of order than their Instruments: such as are so, may by singing this Ode, become reprovers of their own untuneable affections. They who are better tempered are hereby remembred what Musick is most acceptable to* GOD*, and most profitable to themselves.*

1. What helps it those,
   Whose skill in *Song* hath found;
   Well to compose
   (Of disagreeing notes)
   By artfull choice
   A sweetly pleasing sound;
   To fit their Voice
   And their melodious throats?
   What helps it them,
   That they this cunning know;
   If most condemn
   The way in which they go?

2. What will he gain
   By touching well his *Lute*,
   Who shall disdain
   A grave advise to hear?
   What from the sounds,
   Of Organ, Fife or Lute,
   To him redounds,
   Who doth no sin forbear?
   A mean respect,
   By tuning strings, he hath,
   Who doth neglect
   A *rectified-path*.

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[14] Although Mason was a minister in a parish church, his beliefs were very Puritan. For instance, in his poem *The Midnight Cry* he stressed, as many other Puritans did, the importance of a personal faith of the heart:

> Oh! We are of the Church, and for the Church; *but thou art dead*; they hear, but they are dead; pray, but are dead; receive Sacraments, but are dead: Dreadful! But true; (…) *They are dead in Worship, decayed in Doctrine, defective in Manners*. There was Life; but what a formal People we are become? Here has been found Doctrine, but how has Arminianism overspread the Land? And for Corruptions in Manners; *O that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes Fountains of Tears*, to bewail the Debauchery of the Land! (20)

3. Therefore, oh LORD,
   So tuned let me be
 Unto thy word,
   And thy *ten-stringed-law*,
 That in each part,
   I may thereto agree;
 And feel my heart
   Inspir'd with loving awe:
 He sings and plaies,
   The Songs which best thou lovest,
 Who does and sayes,
   The things which thou approvest.

4. Teach me the *skill*,
   Of him. whose Harp asswag'd [sic]
 Those passions ill,
   Which oft afflicted Saul.
 Teach me the strain
   Which calmeth mindes enrag'd;
 And which from vain
   Affections doth recall.
 So, to the Quire,
   Where *Angels* musicke make,
 I may aspire,
   When I this life forsake. (273-274)

Here Wither draws a conceit between two simple images: the heart as an instrument and the ten commandments as another "ten-stringed" instrument. In the fourth stanza, he asks to be taught the right musical skill that can produce music that is tuned to this "ten-stringed-law". The imagery that refers to the "heavenly harmony" is, more than in the examples given from Metaphysical poetry, taken as a metaphorical device and adapted to a Biblical context. (The Harp, Saul and Angels are all Biblical images.) True, the image of the "ten-stringed-law" is Wither's own, but nevertheless it fits well among the Biblical imagery. The fact that here the "music of the spheres" is interpreted in Biblical and metaphorical terms does, however, not indicate that Wither did not believe in the idea, but he was certainly less interested in it outside of a strict Biblical context, which is also the case with other Puritan poets.[15] This makes it, together with the singular nature of the conceit, very different from a Metaphysical equivalent.

As to the use of rhetorical effects, Puritan poetry is "plain" and reserved in its application and paradoxically enough, Puritan rhetoric appeals to Reason[16] to persuade the heart by its logic, while Metaphysical poetry tries to affect the senses to stir the passions by its

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[15] Hollander mentions another example of Puritan poetry that comes close to the "music of the spheres": in Bunyan's poem "Upon a Ring of Bells" from his *A Book for Boys and Girls* "there is a queer blend of orthodox Christian psychology (...) with Bunyan's own kind of specifically moral allegory (the use of 'Promises' as intermediate entities, rather than the 'senses' of seventeenth-century psychology" (277) and "Bunyan's allegorized bells (...) really serve to mark out the limits of one side of the conventional meditative instrument figure; they are too crudely, schematically emblematic, in one sense, and the imagery and diction are not in any way 'Metaphysical.'" (278), thereby, as to Bunyan's case, confirming what has been stated about Wither's hymn.

[16] Of course not to keep to reasoning, since, as has been stated before, the intention was to direct "the reader far away from intellectual reasoning".

emotional appeal. To put it differently, Puritan poets did not adopt the new Metaphysical device of "strong lines" to affect the emotions, and neither did they regard their poetic style, in the first place, as a voice in the "heavenly polyphony", but in most cases as a tool to display the riches from the Scripture. However, this rational approach does not imply that Puritan verse is never emotional, but it rather indicates a preference for an open and serious writing attitude, because, as has been mentioned, Puritan poetry tends to be functional and educational. For example, in his poem *Sion in Distress*, Keach describes the "groans of the Protestant church" (1) in a dialogue between Sion (the Puritan[17] Protestants), her friend, Sion's children and some others, and in the foreword he states:

> In a Subject of Grief, a quaint and ornamental Method is not to be expected: for an abrupt and sobbing Delivery is more natural in the Delineations of Sorrow then a studied well poiz'd and artificial Harrangue. The Subject is Divine, and too lofty for so weak a *Muse*; which I hope will oblige the Generous Reader to a candid and mild Construction. I have writ according to the measure of Light received, and have contributed my Mite (in a well-meaning Spirit) to reduce us to our Selves. (To the Reader)

In other words, Keach here considers a passionate and abrupt delivery to be "natural in the Delineations of Sorrow", so he sees no problem in becoming emotional when it fits the situation. Yet, this does not mean that he is an opponent of the Puritan plain and reserved style; on the contrary, Keach has been described above as one of the poets that adopted this style in their poetry. What Keach wants to explain is that a rational writing style should never become too detached: when the descriptions are sorrowful, it is unnatural to neglect this aspect and use "a studied well poiz'd and artificial Harrangue". He does, however, not advocate an over-emotional description of grievous events, but "a candid and mild

[17] That the meaning of Protestants here is indeed restricted to the Puritans can be derived from Keach's remark in the introduction to *Sion in Distress*, where he, dealing with the "*Villanies of Popery*" states that "the *Spirit of the Nation* is so much (and justly) incensed against it. And that our *Parliament* is so Thorow and Resolved to crush that *Interest*, whose *Principles* teach them to be (to all *Hereticks*, for so they call *Protestants*) Trayterous *Subjects*, ill *Neighbours*, and worse *Soveraigns* (To the Reader). In the time that this was published, in 1681, Charles II reigned England and, although he was "strongly drawn to Roman Catholicism" (Morgan 333) he nevertheless "sought to restore the Church of England, but with reforms that would make it acceptable to the majority of moderate Puritans" (Morgan 330). When Keach describes that the Parliament during this reign, being of a Protestant ("Anglican") inclination, was "Resolved to crush that *Interest*" in the "*Villanies of Popery*" and called these more vehement Protestants "*Hereticks*", it is clear that he does not regard the Protestants in the Parliament as being Protestants and hence restricts the meaning to those with whom Keach identifies himself, the Puritans.

Construction" (thus, never too abundant), with a clear goal in mind: "to reduce us to our Selves".

If the style of Keach's poem is judged by the known rhetorical devices in early 17th Century England,[18] the time when most Metaphysical poetry was written, it can be concluded that these rhetorical images are indeed only used in a "plain" way: not too often and, when these are used, they display a (moderate) "natural" emotion (as Keach described) and they always serve to prove the logic of an argument. In his article "Music and Rhetoric in Early Seventeenth-Century English Sources", Butler has listed the rhetorical figures that were closely linked to music (and clearly to poetry) at the time, and therefore important to evaluate here,[19] of which the most important are: repetition (*symploce*, *epizeuxis*, *traductio* (55), *anaphora* (59)); separation (*articulus* (56)); inversion (*antistrophe*) (58); personification (*prosopopoeia* (59)).[20] In Keach's poem, the metre is indeed regular and the overall style is plain, whereas it is full of (direct) metaphors; it has no stanzas, for it is a continuous, narrative story, like prose, that only alternates with different *personae* speaking: Sion, her friend, Sion's children and others. Only very mildly, Keach sometimes applies the *anaphora*, which gives an emotional effect, but its more important function is to persuade the reader by plain reasoning and mentioning factual or logical evidence, by presenting one fact after another. This is illustrated in the complaint of France that her church is prosecuted:

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[18] Despite that this poem appeared in the second half of the 17th Century, it can very well be assessed by the same standards as by which Metaphysical poetry (from the first half of the century) is judged, since Puritan verse from both the first half and the second half of the 17th Century show, more or less, the same characteristics.

[19] It has been proved above that notions of music in the early 17th Century had gradually shifted from regarding music as *musica speculativa* to music as a model of rhetoric and that this caused the emergence of "strong-lined" poetry.

[20] For convenience, here follows an explanation of these terms, in Butler's descriptions: *symploce*: "the repetition of the first and last word of a given phrase in the same position in a number of subsequent phrases" (55); *epizeuxis*: "the vehement repetition of a word a number of times immediately, without any other intervening word" (55); *traductio*: "the successive repetition of a stem word with a variation in case at each reiteration" (55); *anaphora*: "the repetition of a word or words at the beginning of a series of successive phrases or sentences" (59); *articulus*: "a procedure in which single words are separated by commas or pauses and delivered slowly and deliberately, without any coupling or running together of words, for the sake of emphasis and vehemence" (56); *antistrophe*: "the inversion of word order in a sentence to produce a contrary" (58); *prosopopoeia*: "a type of vivid personification in which the inner thoughts and feelings of a fictitious or absent person are presented in such a convincing fashion that the audience is made to believe that that person is present in the person of the orator" (59-60).

> Prodigious Numbers of my *Natives* have,
> By this *Whores* means, found an untimely *Grave*.
> (...)
> But with unheard of *crueltys* she must
> Their Bodys *mangle*, to asswage her Lust;
> Some hang'd in *water*, yield their strangl'd *breath*,
> Some brain'd on *Anvils*, some were starv'd to *death*,
> Some hall'd with *Pullies*, till the *Top* they meet
> With heavy Weights and Loads upon their feet. (*Sion* 93)

Some is three times repeated here to explain the diversity of "unheard of *crueltys*" and the shocking effect does not – primarily – lie in this *anaphora*, but clearly in the images that are given for evidence. Perhaps the most emotional appeal by means of rhetorical effects can be found in a passage further on, where "Truth" proves with many facts the "filthy lewdness, and Adulteries" (*Sion* 106) of "Babylon" (the Roman Catholic church) in a similar way, constantly repeating that "'tis she".

> She sets the Pope above the Holy One,
> The great *Jehovah* and his blessed Son,
> 'Tis she declares him Universal Head,
> 'Tis she forbids the *Bible* to be read;
> 'Tis she that first did from the Faith depart,
> 'Tis she that wounded *Sion* to the heart.
> 'Tis she hath been the occasion of all Evil,
> 'Tis she advanc'd the Doctrine of the Devil.
> 'Tis she that taught her Sons to swear and he,
> To vouch great Falshoods, and plain truths deny.
> 'Tis she that did forbid the Marriage Bed,
> Whilst her vile Clergy such ill Lives have led. (*Sion* 110)

The repetition of "'Tis she" of course has an emotional appeal in this example, but the greatest emphasis lies in the descriptions of numerous "crimes" of the Church of Rome that illustrate why it is guilty[21] and not so much in the effect itself.

Another Puritan poet, Skippon, who was captain-general of the Gentlemen of the Artillery Garden and major-general of foot in Cromwell's New Model Army, wrote his book *A Pearle of Price* for his fellow soldiers (and his wife and children) to display God's promises. In the preface he writes:

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[21] In the context of the poem, these facts are given as evidence by "Truth", who wants to plead the Roman Church guilty.

> I aime neither at thanks, commendations, nor benefit, I sleight envy, scorn and censure: I shall avoid needlesse circumstances and apply my selfe to brevity, truth and plainnesse: I desire to honour God, not to humour men; if our poor souls get any good thereby, I have enough. (To All Souldiers)

In the poem in the preface (and repeated at the end) no repetition, separation, inversion or personification is found to convince the reader of the truth of these promises, but here the reader witnesses Skippon's own experience, which is more credible because of its factual information instead of its stylistic effects, and for that reason, Skippon ends in a rhetorical question that assumes agreement:

> Can he be poore whose portion is
> Gods free and faithfull Promises?
> Much I have lost, and still[22] may lose,
> Farewell to all; These, these I choose.
> Beyond sea service me undid,
> Because to shark[23] conscience forbid.
> I am not like (as 't is) to gaine[24]
> Except my labour for my paine.
> I then did trust, and still will make,
> Gods promises my surest stake;
> His promis'd help I then did find:
> More of the same is still behind.
> Can I be poore whose portion is
> Gods free and faithful[l] promises? (*A Pearle of Price*)

The persuasive effect in this last question lies in what has been related before, the "hard" facts, that the narrator has indeed become poor, but only with respect to his earthly labour, and has found his joy in God's "promis'd help", which is why he chooses "These, these" promises (with a slight kind of *epizeuxis* to stress their specific interest) and though he will not gain anything on earth, more of God's promises are "still behind", which indeed makes him rich instead of poor.

The Metaphysical approach towards using rhetorical effects, by contrast, is quite different. Frequently used devices to convince the reader are "abrupt, personal openings in which a man speaks to his mistress, or addresses his God, or sets a scene, or calls us to mark

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[22] In the same poem at the end of the book it says "more" (*A Pearle of Price* 426).
[23] I.e. an archaic word for "to trick" or "to fool".
[24] This line is different from the same line in the poem at the end: "Wont if I never more shall gaine" (*A Pearle of Price* 426).

this or see that" and most Metaphysical poems "postulate an occasion" and imagine "a moment of experience or (..) a situation out of which the need to argue, or persuade, or define arises", rather than that they are very generalising (Gardner xxvi-xxvii). In his poem "Vertue", Herbert describes the vanity of all earthly things and that only "a sweet and vertuous soul" is everlasting:

> Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
> The bridall of the earth and skie:
> The dew shall weep thy fall to night;
> For thou must die.
>
> Sweet rose, whose hue angrie and brave
> Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye:
> Thy root is ever in its grave,
> And thou must die.
>
> Sweet spring, full of sweet dayes and roses,
> A box where sweets compacted lie;
> My musick shows ye have your closes,
> And all must die.
>
> Onely a sweet and vertuous soul,
> Like season'd timber, never gives;
> But though the whole world turn to coal,
> Then chiefly lives. (Gardner 99)

In the first stanza, Herbert first emphasises the sweetness of a day by means of an *anaphora*, to evoke a happy feeling ("Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright") and continues his description in the second line. Now, emotion having reached its summit, he introduces a *personification* of another image of weeping dew to mark out the twist and then this negative change culminates in the articulated shorter phrase "For thou must die". The two following stanzas follow a similar pattern and, as in each stanza the first three lines prepare for the last kernel phrase, so these three first stanzas prepare for a definite change in the last stanza, where the first line is commenced by the contrastive "Onely" instead of a direct "Sweet" and this stanza ends in the short, but powerful phrase "Then chiefly lives". The fact that this sounds convincing is not because of its logical arguments (since a "sweet day", a "sweet rose" and a "sweet spring" that must all die are not at all logically related to a "sweet and vertuous

soul" that lives when "the whole world turn to coal"), but it is brought about by means of its built up emotion that is directed to a corroboration of the last, definitive image. It is true that such a kind of paradox as here is also found in Puritan poetry (cf. Prynne's poem that is cited on page 25), but the difference is that in Prynne's poem the reader is convinced by the imagery and its Biblical explanation, while in this example from Herbert the reader is much more led towards the last stanza by means of its effects and the rhetorical pattern of the first three stanzas is suddenly broken by the contrastive beginning of the fourth.

Another example of the Metaphysical way of handling rhetoric is found in Crashaw's "From 'the Flaming Heart' to Saint Teresa":

> O THOU undaunted daughter of desires!
> By all thy dower of lights and fires;
> By all the eagle in thee, all the dove;
> By all thy lives and deaths of love;
> By thy large draughts of intellectual day,
> And by thy thirsts of love more large than they;
> By all thy brim-fill'd bowls of fierce desire,
> By thy last morning's draught of liquid fire;
> By the full kingdom of that final kiss
> That seized thy parting soul, and seal'd thee His;
> By all the heavens thou hast in Him,
> Fair sister of the Seraphim!
> By all of Him we have in thee;
> Leave nothing of myself in me.
> Let me so read thy life, that I
> Unto all life of mine may die. (Beaumont 201)

Again, the argument of this poem is mainly built up by an accumulation of rhetorical effects. The plea addressed to saint Teresa to "Leave nothing of myself in me. / Let me so read thy life, that I / Unto all life of mine may die" is supported by a great number of *anaphoras* that praise the "undaunted daughter of desires" and affect the feelings that she has enough powers to answer the plea, but has, from a logical perspective, no real arguments for this request, which places it again in a different light than Puritan verse.

In addition, it should be noted that the argument in Puritan poetry usually avoids being speculative and to be concerned with philosophy and other unbiblical reasonings and is therefore more concerned with the Biblical measures and guidelines and with the *aim* than

with the artistic importance of poetry, whereas Metaphysical verse often has a wider perspective and is marked out by its inventive way of reasoning. Hutchinson is aware of her natural "darkened understanding" and "blindness of heart"[25] and in her revelation of "what dark Eternity hath kept concealed" in *Order and Disorder*, a venturesome epic poem about the book of Genesis that can be equalled to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, she expresses this manifestly:

> What dark Eternity hath kept concealed
> From mortals' apprehensions, what hath been
> Before the race of time did first begin,
> It were presumptuous folly to inquire.
> Let not my thoughts beyond their bounds aspire:
> Time limits mortals, and Time had its birth,
> In whose *Beginning God made Heaven and Earth*. (7)

True, such passages as this one, privileging spiritual truth over new-fangled cosmological theories, are by no means something exclusively Puritan and can, for instance, also be found in Donne's "The First Anniversarie":

> And new Philosophy cals all in doubt,
> The Element of fire is quite put out;
> The Sunne is lost, and th'earth, and no mans wit
> Can well direct him where to looke for it. (20)

Yet, although as to adopting new and groundbreaking philosophies in their argument both Puritan and Metaphysical poets were often quite reserved, leaving these ideas to a small contingent of progressive philosophers, the Puritans, instead, rather took an interest in anything that was based on the Bible or set within a Biblical perspective, in which they often (but certainly not always) differed from the Metaphysicals.[26] The latter, instead, did often not

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[25] Cf. Eph. 4.18 in which the Gentiles are described: "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" and Rom. 1.21-22: "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."

[26] The claim that is made here is not that the Metaphysical poets did not write religious poetry, which most of them did. The point that is made, is that in general, they interpreted their limited part in the universe and their "fallen" state since the Fall in Paradise as something that had no direct influence on their capabilities to make clever comparisons and one major characteristic of their poetry is that it is often full of wit and invention. The Puritan poets, in contrast, often believed in a more radical sense that they had a "darkened understanding" (cf. Eph. 4.18), which is why they, more generally, looked for their creativity and inspiration in the Bible, which was

avoid clever, original and innovative contemplations, sometimes adapting the more or less accepted theory of the existence of the spheres (and a musical relationship between them) to a totally new approach. The first lines of Donne's "Good Friday, 1613. Riding Westward" illustrates this very well:

> Let mans Soule be a Spheare, and, then in this,
> The intelligence that moves, devotion is,
> And as the other Spheares, by being growne
> Subject to forraigne motions, lose their owne,
> And being by others hurried every day,
> Scarce in a yeare their naturall forme obey. (Gardner 56)

In these lines the spheres in the cosmos are used as imagery to give a more vivid picture to the argument and the imagery is adapted to the level of a human being, whose soul is compared to a sphere and devotion to the intelligence that moves the spheres, which can be referred to as an "innovative contemplation" of the human being indeed, although this has nothing to do with a new cosmological theory that goes beyond the earthly boundaries.

Puritan verse, in contrast, is, in its argument, nearly always concerned with that which is revealed in the Scripture, and is therefore marked by its more limited scope. Consequently, artistic invention and contemplation are also restrained by Biblical guidelines. Thus, unlike a Metaphysical poet like Donne, who took the existing idea about the spheres to draw his own creative analogy (with a human body (see above)), Puritan poets, more often and more generally than Metaphysical poets, looked for an analogy in the Bible. For instance, the Puritan Flavel, who was also a poet, did use the common image of an instrument that needs to be tuned solely in a Biblical context (and the Puritan conception of this) of grace that rectifies (or justifies) the soul, as opposed to sin that discomposes the soul, just like a musical instrument being in and out of tune:

> For though grace has, in a great measure, rectified the soul and given it a habitual and heavenly temper, yet sin often actually discomposes it again. Thus even a gracious heart is like a musical instrument which, though it is never so exactly tuned, a small matter brings

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God's Word and hence contained the highest form of "invention" (in the "clever" sense of the word) and creativity.

> out of tune again. Yes, hang it aside but a little and it will need tuning again before you can play another lesson on it. Even so stands the case with gracious hearts. (Bradley 246)

The importance which the Puritan poets gave to Biblical interpretation over invention and "mere" (from a Puritan perspective) worldly contemplation of things they did generally also, quite uniquely, apply to the practical and personal experience of religion, which was, after all, their aim. Namely, as has been discussed, they most often wrote their verse with the goal to edify and to educate. Hence, Puritan poets tended to be practical and considered the effect, the "heart work", of their verse to be more important than theory and observations. In her *Meditations*, Bradstreet writes that "many can speak well, but few can do well. We are better scholars in the theory than the practical part, but he is a true Christian that is a proficient in both" (Miller 276). In a more elaborated way, Bunyan describes in *The Pilgrim's Progress* the character of Talkative, who proves "a discovery of a Work of Grace in the heart" by "Great Knowledge of *Gospel-Mysteries*" to which the character Faithful replies that "to *know*, is a thing that pleaseth Talkers and Boasters; but to *do*, is that which pleaseth God" and distinguishes two kind of knowledge: "knowledge that resteth in the bare speculation of things, and knowledge that is accompanied with the grace of Faith and Love" (90-91). Bunyan's concluding poem repeats it:

> How *Talkative* at first lifts up his plumes!
> How bravely doth he speak! How he presumes
> To drive down all before him! But so soon
> As *Faithful* talks of Heart-work, like the Moon
> That's past the Full, into the Wane he goes;
> And so will all, but he that *Heart-work* knows (94-95).

The argument here conveys the central Puritan idea: theological reasoning without "heart-work" is condemned, whereas "heart work" itself can help to determine the boundaries of reasoning and it does not let one go "into the Wane". An engagement in music philosophies must clearly also be viewed in that light, when the boundary is set by man's small part in the heavenly harmony.

In conclusion, Puritan poetry can be said to have neither a deep concern with music as a reflection of the "music of the spheres", nor is it similar to the Metaphysical idea of "tuning" style and structure with the content or the "heart" of a poem and consequently that of the reader, but it is a distinct genre in itself that is strictly measured against Biblical rules, instead of art philosophies or creative invention. A Puritan poem is functional, edifying and practical, written to convey a clear message, which is achieved by its plain, unadorned, and regular style, without elaborated mental exercises, whereas Metaphysical poetry is brief with the purpose to add more expression and "Wit" to it. Notwithstanding, Puritan verse often abounds in imagery, which has to do with its sense of functionality and sometimes makes use of images of "heavenly harmony", which the Metaphysicals have sometimes applied to their abundant use of conceits. Although both often have an argumentative structure, Puritan poetry aims at logic and comprehension, thereby sometimes making use of mild rhetorical effects, while Metaphysical poetry more frequently applies these effects in order to have a more appealing and stunning argument. As to musical and theological ideas, Puritan poets, mostly like the Metaphysicals, never tried to pry into the secrets of the motions and proportional relation between the heavenly spheres and their significance for art, but the difference with the Metaphysical poets is that the former, in all their artistic labours, were more concerned with Biblical measures and themes, whereas the Metaphysicals generally less explicitly did this and, more often, sought their creativity in their artistic capabilities. Puritan poetry, then, is neither traditional, nor innovative in the Metaphysical way, but in its own, and, in a more generalised sense, the Puritans were not much concerned with poetic art conventions as such, but with the function of poetry (and arts, more generally), carefully observing Biblical instructions, never daring to surpass the Scripture in feelings and rationalisations, and thereby essentially careful and "Puritan" in character.

3

The Musician with a Broken Voice

> Suppose a Viol, Cittern, Lute, or Harp,
> Committed unto him that wanteth Skill;
> Can he by Strokes, suppose them flat or sharp,
> The Ear of him that hears with Musick fill? (Bunyan in *A Book for Boys and Girls*, 49)

For most Puritans, music was something primarily dedicated to God. When they wrote about music in their poetry, it was mostly associated with the Bible. Most other descriptions and imagery that deal with musical entertainment and pleasure in general always place it in a more reserved and Biblical light. Recreative music is therefore avoided as a subject and the importance of the involvement of one's heart with all his or her deeds is stressed. Built upon this notion, the Puritans viewed music as something that had to be sober and moderate, fully in line with their other religious conceptions. Hence, in order to give a representative image of the Puritans and musical entertainment, these notions should be taken into account to define their limits as to music, judging from the descriptions and images in their poetry.

In Puritan poetry, recreative music is not a frequently recurring theme and when music generally is referred to, it is mostly used in a religious context. Often these references occur in a simile, metaphor, or allegory, so should not always be taken too literally, but at the same time, it is true that the Puritans insisted on the veracity of the Bible, which was God's Word, and believed "every jot and tittle" of it. This quite literal and serious approach is also seen in their non-Biblical (or less directly Biblical) use of imagery. When Bunyan describes some merry moments of a pilgrim who is making a pilgrimage towards heaven, and who sings, plays instruments and dances, it cannot be his personal conviction that this is totally wrong. To illustrate that more clearly, Bunyan somewhere else describes the fair in the town of

Vanity, where all kinds of sinful and "vain" things are sold and shown, which distract the pilgrim from his way to the Celestial City: things such as "lusts, pleasures; and delights of all sorts, as harlots, wives, husbands, children, masters, servants, lives, blood, bodies, souls, silver, gold, pearls, precious stones", and "there is at all times to be seen jugglings, cheats, games, plays", etc. (*Pilgrim's Progress* 98). Now, the fair in the village itself, of course, does not have to be taken literally, and it does not automatically follow from this that Bunyan disapproves of fairs, but he uses it as an image that fits well in the allegory of the whole book, as a point which the traveller passes. The things that are sold, however, are more real and Bunyan uses them in the image of a fair where these are sold, to imagine them in a more lively way, but this does by no means mean that they are figurative in themselves as well. In this way, music, playing and dancing can also be interpreted more literally, because, though it is true that they are mentioned within an allegory, there is no reason to take them always in a figurative sense, and there is even less reason to assume this when the tenor is unclear. On the other hand, the opposite is also true and one must be careful to interpret references to music in Puritan verse literally when they are meant to be read figuratively.

When music occurs in Puritan texts, these passages are often descriptions of events and other stories or records from the Bible that refer to music. Yet, as many of these are only about singing, most descriptions about music in Puritan verse that depict a Biblical passage do not refer to instruments or dancing or any other sign of music as a form of recreation. Mostly they are of the same nature as these lines by Oliver Heywood:

> When shall my heaven-born soul mount up and sing
> Among those naked souls the angels' ditties,
> Whose heart delighting tune make heaven's ring
> With hallelujahs in the imperial city. (Bradley 342)

This description can more or less be traced to Rev. 19.1 and 19.5-6, where it is mentioned that the angels sing "alleluias" to God in heaven and all that fear God with them and that this is indeed a song, can, for instance, be found in Rev. 5.9 ("And they sung a new song").

However, nothing besides plain singing is hinted at in these texts, nor in Heywood's poem. Several other Puritan poets similarly only refer to singing when their poems are supposed to render or hint at a Biblical passage in verse: in Hymn 182 from his *The Banquetting House*, Keach mentions that "The Cherubims with one accord / Do sing continually; / O holy, holy, holy Lord" (347) and in the preface to his *Vox Pacifica*, Wither states that most poets and priests were no "Priests of *Lust*, and *Drunkennesse*" a long time ago:

> But, men inspir'd divinely, to expresse
> The will of GOD; and, by their holy *Songs*,
> To rouze up that Affection in the heart,
> Which to the love of *Pietie* belongs.

Possibly he is alluding here to Biblical poets like David and Asaph, who composed the majority of songs in the *Book of Psalms*.

Less frequently, but nevertheless still regularly, musical instruments are mentioned besides singing in a Biblical context, when they are also recorded in Scripture. It is, however, unclear if these passages can be taken in a literal sense, because they mostly describe Biblical texts from the Old Testament. Many Puritans would regard this Old Testamentic use of instruments as "typical" and something that had been abrogated by Christ.[1] Anyway, it is the question whether they applied this to music in the churches only or to private musical entertainment as well. Nevertheless, when Puritan poets referred to (instrumental) music in the Old Testament, they wrote about worship to God most of the time, so they possibly had musical worship during the church service in mind. One example of this Old Testamentic way of expressing praise to God is found at the end of the first stanza of Taylor's "Meditation 1. 32. 1 Cor. 3. 22. Whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas". Here it says: "Were I an Angell bright, and borrow could / King Davids Harp, I would them [his praises] play on gold" and at the end he writes: "Lord speake it home to me, say these [blessings] are mine. My bells shall then thy

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[1] Cf. the passage by John Cotton that is cited in the Introduction (p. 8), where it says that "Singing with instruments was typicall [i.e. foreshadowing the coming of Christ], and so a ceremoniall worship and therefore is ceased", about which Scholes remarks that this was a generally accepted opinion amongst Puritans.

Praises bravely chime" (Meserole 126-127). The first description of David's harp refers to 1 Sam. 16.23, where it is mentioned that David played the harp and assuaged Saul's "evil spirit" with it and the chiming bell possibly comes from Zech. 14.20: "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD" and Ps. 150.5: "Praise him [God] upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals".

Although these references to music can indeed all be traced back to the Scripture in some way, they (fortunately) do not make up the whole collection of descriptions about music in Puritan verse; on the contrary, there are quite some other occurrences of more general descriptions about music, sometimes in connection with poetry, and judgments about its more recreative use, in relation to religion. In his *A Poem Dedicated to the Memory of the Reverend and Excellent Mr. Urian Oakes*, the American Puritan Cotton Mather places musical beauty on the same line with poetry:

> (...) And let a *Verse* too *find* the Men
> Who *fly'd a Sermon*! Oh! Remember when
> Sirs! Your *Ezekiel* was like unto
> A *lovely Song of* (Been't *deaf Adders* you)
> *One with a pleasant Voice*! *And that could play*
> *Well on an Instrument*! (14)

Here the deceased minister is compared to Ezekiel, whose preaching abilities were like the singing of a lovely song and playing well on an intrument, which is taken in a positive sense, in the same way in which verse can persuade a reader by its more accessible form.[2] This, at least, sounds like an approval of making beautiful music with instruments to attract those "who *fly'd a Sermon*" to God's Word, in the same way as, for instance, Bunyan and Keach

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[2] For instance, Bunyan wrote about the function of his poetry in a passage that has already been cited in chapter 2:

> Man's heart is apt in Meeter to delight,
> Also in that to bear away the more:
> This is the cause I here in Verses write,
> Therefore affect this Book, and read it o're. (*Profitable Meditations* 4)

Of course, this observation is not, *per se*, specifically Puritan, but it is definitely something important to consider, in order to determine the limits of Puritan poetry – and in this case, the limits of the music they entertained.

wrote their poetry to entertain young people with Biblical material.[3] Further, Bunyan writes in the second part of his prose work *The Pilgrim's Progress* ("Christiana's Journey") that

> *Christiana*, if need was, could play upon the *viol*, and her daughter *Mercy* upon the *lute:* So since they were so merry disposed, she played them a lesson, and *Ready-to-halt* would dance. So he took *Despondency's* daughter *Much-afraid* by the hand, and to dancing they went in the road. True, he could not dance without one crutch in his hand; but I promise you, he footed it well; also the girl was to be commended, for she answered the musick handsomely. (341)

It is even mentioned that, when Christiana crosses over to the Celestial City, "Mr. *Great-heart* and Mr. *Valiant* play'd upon the well-tuned cymbal and harp for Joy" (372). Bunyan, then, clearly to some extent approves of making music for (spiritual) joy, since these two characters celebrate Christiana's departure to heaven and this is described in too great detail to be enirely figurative. Even the beauty of music and dancing are proposed as legitimate on the pilgrim's way to the Celestial City and in the first cited passage, Christiana is said to teach a lesson in dancing and *Much-afraid* is said to answer "the musick handsomely".

On the other hand, other Puritan writers (of poetry) are more reserved and show their concern with the dangers of music for pure entertainment. Although the passages by Bunyan that are cited above are both set in a religious context (of pilgrims going to heaven), his rather elaborate descriptions about the beauty of music and the joy it brings could, for other Puritans, be easily interpreted wrongly. Bunyan's contemporary Hutchinson regarded "music's charming sound" as one of the "subtle arts / The Devil taught" mankind, that of false, seductive beauty "To soften hearts (...) / In all grace of motion to abound". She lists this among other typical (strict) Puritan objections to outward beauty, such as her disapproval of disclosing "Part of th'alluring members" through one's way of dressing and her critical opinion about using make-up, which she describes as "false complexions, eyebrows, teeth and hair" that are used to repair "Nature's defects, and time's wastes" (103). She, too, relates music to religion, but, unlike Bunyan, explains that this type of seductive music, along with

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[3] See 1.) the preface to Bunyan's *A Book for Boys and Girls*. London, 1686. 2.) Keach's *War With the Devil* (London, 1676), p. 2.

the other "subtle arts", originally came from "Cain's lovely daughters", who, "exercising these / Too fatally, the Sons of God did please" and so caused that the age became "lewd" and a place "Where sincere worship was no more allowed" (Hutchinson 104).

Another Puritan poet, Norden, though he is more optimistic than Hutchinson and calls music "the medicine of heauy hearts" (*Labyrinth* 6), is critical about music because of its dangers. In *The Labyrinth of Mans Life*, he draws an analogue between the imperfect nature of music and the divided heart:

> *Musicke*, the medicine of heauy hearts,
> Makes concord, only of discording partes,
> As high and low, as longs and shortes agree,
> So harsh, or sweet, is musicke found to be.
> No contraries appeare in perfect kind,
> But seene together, or by art combind,
> Vnlike to these are inward qualities,
> The hart indureth not her contraries:
> But as to good or ill it stands affected,
> It harbors one, the other is reiected.
> *Vertue*, and *vice*, are meerely contraries,
> And each is foe, to others qualities.
> And neither *Art*, nor *Nature*, can bring those,
> At one; they are, and will be, mortall foes.
> (...)
> Of inward heart, and not of outward weede,
> Doe all effects of good, and ill, proceede. (6-7)

In other words, though Norden is not against music and calls it "the medicine of heauy hearts", which can be "sweet", he stresses that it has a divided nature and that the disposition of the heart, after all, is more important than the music itself. This thought is also found somewhere further on in the same poem, where he describes (general) pleasure in a similar fashion as Hutchinson does, when musical beauty and entertainment are counted as "pleasure": "As pleasures come, they fawne, as harlots doe: / But past, the minde left stunge, they come into [the heart]" (*Labyrinth* 62). Somewhere else he writes that "Pleasures are like a whorish painted face, / Onely in show, voyd yet of inward grace" (*Labyrinth* 68). In contrast to this, Norden also observes what the "right" approach towards pleasure should be like:

"*Affection*, guided by *Reason* Divine, (...) Auoids earths pleasures, treacherous and short, / Seekes pleasures, which eternitie import" (61) and he advises and remarks:

> And in thy recreatiue disports take heede,
> Thou loose not that thy inward grace may feede.
> Thy constancie and magnanimitie,
> By wantonnesse, and effeminacie:
> No recreation b[r]eedes more infamie,
> Then to bestowe deare time in gamestrie. (62)

Although these words do not mention (recreative) music, it is certainly included in them, because in the whole poem it is emphasised that the disposition of the heart should be in order and in the citation that is given above, music is actually mentioned in a similar context. From both that passage and this example, it can be conluded that Norden does not totally disapprove of recreative music, but in his view, one's attention should go to his or her own heart and one should be aware of the misleading beauty of "recreatiue disports" and determine whether they edify someone or whether they let one "loose (…) that [their] inward grace may feede".

In addition to these descriptions and observations, musical imagery can help to determine more precisely how many Puritans viewed (recreative) music. Again, in the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Bunyan refers to music. He incites the reader to follow and learn from the good characters from his book and tell this to others, and then he remarks:

> When thou hast told the World of all these things,
> Then turn about, my Book, and touch these strings;
> Which, if but touched, will such musick make,
> They'll make a Cripple dance, a Giant quake.
> Those Riddles that lie couch'd within thy breast,
> Freely propound, expound: And for the rest
> Of thy mysterious lines, let them remain
> For those whose nimble Fancies shall them gain. (*Pilgrim's Progress* 199-200)

Here the comparison is between the strings of the heart (the "music" that is produced) and the Book (the "musician"), which can touch them. Music is said to be the ultimate achievement: if the riddles within one's breast are solved by the book, these strings will be touched and "will such musick make, / They'll make a Cripple dance, a Giant quake". Music and dance, then, are taken in a positive sense and he seems to view "hearty" entertainment, that is, agreement

of the heart to the education it has received, as the ultimate goal that his book can effect. For Bunyan, in this image, at least, musical entertainment functions as an image of the response of the heart to what it has learnt and in that, Bunyan's view is quite similar to that of Norden, who has been mentioned above. Besides, like Bunyan, Mason compares the heart to an instrument which is only able to produce beautiful music (to God) when it is tuned, and he prays to the Lord: "Skrew up my Heart strings all, to make / Sweet Melody to thy Name" (*Songs* 18). Although this does, in the first place, relate to spiritual music, its emphasis on the fact that one can only produce good and beautiful music when the heart is set in order is similar to what is found in examples that are mentioned by Norden and Bunyan.

The necessity of the involvement of the heart with music is also what Flavel (who was also a poet) suggests in some of the images of birds that he provides in his *Occasional Meditations* at the end of *Husbandry Spiritualized*. In the seventh meditation "upon the Singing of a blind Finch by Night", Flavel draws a lesson from the careless singing of this bird:

> This bird in my Opinion, is the lively Emblem of such careless and unconcerned persons, as the Prophet describes, *Amos* 6. 4, 5, 6. Who chant to the Viol, when a dismal night of trouble and affliction hath overshadowed the Church. You would have thought it strange to have heard this Bird sing in the Night, when all others are in a deep silence; except the Owl, an unclean Bird, and the Nightingale which before we made the Emblem of the Hypocrite. And as strange it is, that any except the Prophane and Hypocritical, should so unseasonably express their Mirth and Jollity; that any of *Sion*'s Children should live in Pleasure, whilst she her self lies in Tears. (...) However, let them know, that God will turn their unseasonable Mirth into a sadder Note; and those that now sit sad and silent, shall shortly sing for Joy of Heart, when the Winter is past, the Rain over and gone, the Flowers appear again upon the Earth, and the time of the singing of Birds is come. (*Husbandry* 296-297)

Here Flavel does not only disapprove of hypocritical and prophane singing (as the Owl does), but he also refers to Amos 6.4-6, where it says that some enjoy themselves and "chant to the sound of the viol, *and* invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David (...) but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph (5-6). From this he makes an application to the current condition of the Church, which "her self lies in tears". The true "People of God" should, according to Flavel, have other "postures of Sorrow" in this sad condition of the Church and

should behave “like Birds, with their Head under their Wings, during the night of their captivity” (*Husbandry* 296). For Flavel, music and merry-making in such a situation are inappropriate and he remarks that

> God will turn [the prophane’s and the hypocritical’s] unseasonable Mirth into a sadder Note; and those that now sit sad and silent, shall shortly sing for Joy of Heart, when the Winter is past, the Rain over and gone, the Flowers appear again upon the Earth, and the time of the singing of Birds is come. (*Husbandry* 297)

This does not imply that Flavel completely abhorred music-making, but he favoured a moderate and different approach. True, somewhere else he writes that “The Plowman sings and whistles though he sweat, / Shall Christians droop because their work is great?” (*Husbandry* 39) and he remarks to this: “I have been often delighted with this Countrey Musick, whereby they sweeten their hard labours with an innocent pleasure”. Yet, he immediately adds that it is the Christian’s duty to “*Rejoice in the Lord*” above all, and that that will give a true “chearfulness of Spirit” (*Husbandry* 39-40). Therefore, it is the complaint of the unregenerate, with a “carnal Heart”:

> Like the Nightingale I can sing sweetly, when I observe others to listen to me, and be affected with my Musick. O, false deceitful Heart, such delight as will end in howling! Were my Spirit right, it would as much delight in Retirements for the injoyment of God, as it doth in those Duties that are most exposed to the observation of Man. (*Husbandry* 42-43).

In conclusion, the summarising poem at the end repeats Flavel’s view on music very clearly:

> O what a dull, despondent heart is mine?
> That takes no more delight in things Divine.
> When all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth,
> Enjoy their pleasures, and are big with mirth.
> (...)
> Yea Birds, and Beasts as well as Men, enjoy
> Their innocent delights. These chirp and play;
> The chearful Birds among the Branches sing,
> And make the neighbouring Groves with Musick ring,
> With various warbling notes they all invite,
> Our ravisht Ears, with pleasure and delight.
> (...)
> Have Instruments their sweet melodious Airs?
> All Creatures their deligths, and Saints not theirs?
> Yea, theirs transcend these sensual ones as far,
> As noon-day *Phebus* doth a twinkling Star.
> Why droop I then, may any Creature have
> A Life like mine for pleasure? Who ere gave

The like incouragement that Christ hath given,
To do his will on earth as 'tis in heaven? (*Husbandry* 44-45)

These last four lines indeed reveal the tenor of references (in both description and imagery) to music and pleasure in Puritan verse and a typical Puritan would think: "music can give pleasure, but what does it help me, if I miss pleasure in God?". This does not mean that musical pleasure was sinful per definition, but that it was of a lesser order than spiritual delights. Consequently, the subject of music in its pure recreative use is more or less simply avoided, and, when they are mentioned, music and pleasure are often set in a negative light to indicate their dangers or to show their function in a religious context, although in reality a Puritan could sometimes entertain himself with singing and instruments and enjoy himself with other earthly things. For instance, Taylor stresses that especially the religious deeds and worship of the saints on earth bring "sweet Melody" to heaven:

In all their Acts, publick, and private, nay,
And secret too, they praise impart.
But in their Acts Divine, and Worship, they
With Hymns do offer up their Heart.
Thus in Christ Coach they sweetly sing,
As they to Glory ride therein. (Meserole 140)

Wigglesworth, also an American, approaches beauty and pleasure negatively and is concerned with its dangers: he compares beauty to "a fading flower", and describes pleasure as "the Devils bait" (Meserole 114). Bunyan, about whom it is known that he entertained himself with the flute and the violin (see Introduction), always refers to music in relation to God and religion, as he describes himself in the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, where Mercy remarks: "Wonderful! Musick in the house, musick in the Heart, and musick also in Heaven, for Joy that we are here" (262).

However, in the few instances in which pure musical entertainment is described, it is never mentioned without at least a consideration or application. The American Puritan Steere, for example, wrote about the beauty of music in great detail and at first sight, his description looks very "unpuritan":

> Likewise to please, and charm the List'ning *Ears*,
> Sweet Musicks pleasant and harmonious Sounds;
> The chirping notes of winged *Choresters*,
> And Purling Murmurs of the Gliding *brooks*,
> Modulate Accents of a *well Tun'd voice*,
> Joyn'd with the Sweet *Allurements* of the *Lute*,
> The Gallant noise of Manly Musick, *Bells*
> Belonas voice of *Trumpets*, *Fifes* and *Drums*,
> Pleasing discourses, *Histories* and *Novals*,
> Am'rous Concerse, when Innocent and clean,
> All give a Charming Sweetness to the Muse. (Meserole 253-254)

Yet, although here Steere writes about the pure sweetness of music, further on he shows that he is in fact rather reserved and, as a matter of fact, he treats pleasure in a the same way as other Puritans (and others as well),[4] such as Bunyan and Flavel did:

> Let virtue guide us then in Earth Enjoyments,
> Let *Temp'rance* teach us how to measure all,
> Consult to use a mean, without abuse,
> Both in the manner, measure, and the time,
> While Justice leads us in the paths we tread,
> *Temp'rance* (is like a Razour) Takes away
> Those vicious Superfluities, that grow
> Up to abuses, were they not Correct
> By the Incision of its pruning virtues.
> In all things we Enjoy, remember still
> To send our thanks, to, whence the blessing came,
> And let the Earths felicities Excite,
> To move with Chearfulness in worthy Acts,
> Raising our Thankful minds up to the fountain,
> And with Divine and hearty Love Rejoyce,
> That lo by Looking up to heav'n above,
> From whence these Lower joys to us descend,
> We may a Heav'nly Paradice possess,
> Of sweet and Comforting delights on Earth. (Meserole 256-257)

What Steere suggests here, sounds much like what other Puritans have remarked, that one should not focus on music and pleasure themselves, but on the Giver of them and that only then can the earthly pleasures be enjoyed. True, he is more tolerant than, for instance, Hutchinson in this, but still, he does not separate (musical) entertainment from God and religion and mentions this besides the passage in which he defends earthly pleasures. In this way, also Bunyan's "Upon a Skilful Player on an Instrument" from his *A Book for Boys and*

[4] In fact, the idea of temperance and "the golden mean" goes back to Classical times and occurs often in Artistotle's works and not something exclusively Puritan. However, that does not alter the fact that *temperance* is inherent in Puritanism and Calvinism and one of the characteristics by which Puritanism can be defined.

Girls should be evaluated, which describes the beauty of music when the player plays well on the instrument:

> He that can play well on an Instrument,
> Will take the Ear, and captivate the Mind,
> With Mirth, or Sadness: For that *it* is bent
> Thereto as Musick, in it, place doth find.
> But if one heart that hath therein no skill,
> (As often Musick lights of such a chance)
> Of its brave Notes, they soon be weary will;
> And there are some can neither sing nor dance. (65-66)

Considering this passage in itself, it looks like a recommendation to make instrumental music of quality, because that "will take the Ear, and captivate the Mind, / With Mirth, or Sadness". Although he clearly sees no problems in this, Bunyan describes it to make a comparison to a minister of the Gospel and not, in the first place, to incite the reader to spend his or her time with musical entertainment. The point that he makes, is that a skillful player on an instrument is like a minister who preaches the Gospel:

> This man, whether of Wrath or Grace he preach,
> So skilfully doth handle ev'ry Word;
> And by his Saying, doth the heart so reach,
> That it doth joy or sigh before the Lord. (*A Book* 66)

For both Bunyan and Steere, then, music is something entertaining, but not to be entirely focussed on and is always something that should be regarded within a wider context.

On the whole, it can be concluded that the Puritans did not favour the pure aesthetic aspect of music and in their poetry and they mostly describe music in a Biblical context, when it is also mentioned in the Bible. If this is not the case, many Puritans show their concern with the dangers of recreative music and choose to open up a religious alternative for the reader and they emphasise that one should care about the disposition of his or her heart. As follows from both the musical imagery and the descriptions in their writings, for most Puritan poets music should never be too exuberant, in accordance with the moderate views they had on leading a life according to God's will. For the Puritan poets, then, music is always related to

religion, either directly in its content, or indirectly in its design or context, and, as the Puritan poet was one that wrote with a trembling hand, so music was sung with a broken voice.

Conclusion

In order to reach a satisfying conclusion about the Puritan position with respect to music and aesthetics, it is good to start with a detail from John Geree's 1646 tract "The Character of an Old English Puritan or Nonconformist", which has become classic: "[The Puritan's] chief music was singing of psalms wherein though he neglected not the melody of the voice, yet he chiefly looked after that of the heart" (41). This seeking after the "melody" of the heart is in fact one of the most typifying features of the English Puritan in the 17th Century and revealed itself in all his words and deeds. As has been mentioned, the typical Puritan placed the Bible, which was God's Word, above everything: the decrees of the monarch and the state, the ordinances of the Church of England and their personal actions and activities, both religious and general. Everything had to advance the Biblical truth and hence, everything had to further edification and so a strict Puritan grew in his Biblical knowledge, in his beliefs, in his "holiness" and in his spiritual relation to God and fellow Christians day by day. To put it simply, he strove to involve his heart with all his words, thoughts and deeds in order to learn how to make, in figurative words, a sweet "melody" to his God.

Issuing from this attitude to life (or rather, to God), aesthetics and art philosophy were also subjected to a Biblical test. It has been argued that the Puritans, though less than the Metaphysicals, were acquainted with and believed in the ancient Greek theories about musical harmony and proportions between the spheres of heaven, which were picked up and reinterpreted in the Renaissance. At this time, under the influence of Kepler's new discoveries of numerological relations between the courses of the planets, which resembled musical intervals, music was now, differently from what the ancient Greeks taught, conceived of as a vertical, universal triad, which was called the *harmonia mundi*, consisting of three

components: *musica mundana* (music of the cosmos), *musica humana* (silent music between the soul and the body) and *musica instrumentalis* (instrumental music). If these three were perfectly consonant, they were in perfect harmony with heaven and would please God. Of course, the Puritans did not agree to this latter notion, because, again, nothing on earth could please God as long as the heart was not involved. When the art climate in the 17th Century changed from imitation of this harmony to more emphasis on expression, their vision was only strengthened and as a reaction to the expressive, "strong-lined" poetry of their time, they developed a plain style of their own which required a devoted heart from the reader (as well as from the poet) that was in harmony with the subject of their poetry; not, in the first place, to please God with that, but to acknowledge one's fallible position on earth and to learn how this can be "repaired" and "tuned" to God again.

It has been investigated what were the aesthetic limits for the Puritan poets when contrasted to the most expressive and inventive poetic genre of their time, "Metaphysical" poetry. This style is often compact and ingeniously created, aimed at persuading the reader by displaying wit and using difficult and elaborate imagery (the extended conceit) and it is more concerned with literary qualities and originality to impress and thereby persuade the reader, than with the "heart-work" which the Puritan poets stressed. Puritan verse, in contrast, is quite different: it is plain, simple and straightforward, in order to advance the reader's knowledge and teach the reader a clear message. Its imagery, though abundant, is unsophisticated, of a singular nature, and used for the same effect, to provide the reader a clear image of the matters that are discussed, with the function to educate and increase the reader's insight. In its argument, it is plain, "logical" and never evasive, and this is intended to persuade its readers by "real" facts and not to convince them by playing upon their emotions, which accords with the educational purpose of Puritan verse. In its scope, it is never too inquisitive, but rather moderate, aware of human limits and practical, and it is often emphasised that one's heart

should be involved with the (religious) content. Thus, Puritan poets could, if they wished to adhere to this strict and plain poetical system, never really escape religion and the Bible, and that was indeed something they never wanted, because all their works, including their poetry, should have an edifying or educational function, as has been noted. True Puritan verse is, for that reason, never primarily concerned with aesthetics, or expressing things beautifully, but it is rather aimed at persuading the reader's heart to become aware of his minor part in the great Cosmos and in this way let him (or her) turn to his Creator and read God's Word, the Bible.

That this was indeed the aesthetic framework for the "mainstream" Puritans, has been confirmed and extended by an evaluation of Puritan ideas about music and entertainment that is found in their verse and prose. When they refer to music, these references often correspond to a Biblical passage that describes singing, but sometimes musical instruments as well. In other, less frequent cases, the Puritans wrote about music and instruments without a direct Biblical passage in mind. In these descriptions, music, instruments and entertainment in general are sometimes mentioned in terms of beauty, and "sweetness", but more often, they are rather critical passages that warn against the dangerous and alluring nature of music and pleasure. However, both the positive and the more negative and reserved passages in which reference is made to music and entertainment, are directly or indirectly linked to the Bible. Thus, in its wider context, musical entertainment is, for instance, described as part of one's pilgrimage to heaven or it is listed among the "subtle arts" that Satan has devised to ensnare mankind in his traps. This works similarly for musical imagery and in both the more literal observations and the images, it is emphasised that music and pleasure are not appropriate in every situation and that, to understand really what the limits of music and entertainment are, one's heart must find its primary enjoyment in God and religion. For most Puritans, leading a religious life according to the Bible was the primary goal of every Christian and music should be subordinate to this ideal. For that reason, all references to music, aesthetics and pleasure

that have been found are never mentioned without a warning, a meditation or another functional application that is related to religion, which encompassed the whole lives of many Puritans.

From these results, the following conclusion can be drawn about their attitude towards music and aesthetics in general. To summarise, the Puritans were never concerned with aesthetics as such, but always connected them to the Bible, and their picture of a good work of art (and consequently, a good piece of music) was that it was always moderate and plain, functional, not attracting too much attention to itself, open, and could at all times be checked by Biblical standards. Many Puritans were often concerned with the alluring nature of music, art and pleasure and stressed that enjoying or creating any work of art was not possible when the heart was not inclined to God. Consequently, the order in which a Puritan thought was: 1. God's will in the Scripture – 2. The disposition of the heart in relation to this will – 3. One's words and deeds, including musical entertainment. If a Puritan simply had a wrong or unclear vision of God or detected that his or her heart found no "enjoyment in God", music-making could never be without sin. When, on the other hand, he (or she) was converted and led by God's Spirit, and "his first care was to serve God... making the word of God the rule of his worship" and therefore "was sober in the use of things of this life, rather than beating down the body, than pampering it" and when he, nevertheless, did not deny "the use of God's blessing, lest he should be unthankful, but avoid excess lest he should be forgetful of the Donor" (Geree 41), then only, a Puritan would know his limits as to music and recreation, because God's Word and the Holy Spirit guided him in this.

In practice, when a Puritan was "regenerated", and so his heart was changed, this would entail a rigorous change of lifestyle and in choices. He would now view all earthly things as his Creator's property and the most simple things of life were looked at with

religious eyes. A typical example is the following passage from the *Journal* by the American Puritan John Winthrop, as reproduced in Miller's *The American Puritans*:

> [April 13, 1641.] A godly woman of the church of Boston, dwelling sometimes in London, brought with her a parcel of very linen of great value, which she set her heart too much upon, and had been at charge to have it all newly washed, and curiously folded and pressed, and so left it in press in her parlor overnight. She had a Negro maid went into the room very late, and let fall some snuff of the candle upon the linen, so as by the morning all the linen was burned to tinder (...) and never perceived by any in the house, though some lodged in the chamber overhead, and no ceiling between. But it pleased God that the loss of this linen did her much good, both in taking off her heart from wordly comforts, and in preparing her for a far greater affliction by the untimely death of her husband, who was slain not long after at Isle of Providence. (41)

This woman admired the beauty and the value of this linen too much and therefore, Winthrop, and probably she herself as well, regarded its loss as a warning from her Creator, because she "should set her heart" upon God.

Such a pious and "regenerated" life would also greatly change the way in which musical entertainment was valued. True, many Puritans were not against singing, musical instruments and aesthetics, but their heart should always be inclined to God so that, in a figurative sense, a Puritan stood with one leg in heaven and with another leg on earth. Imaginably, a Puritan would take his violin or flute to clear his mind (and so fight against sloth) to be able to continue his Biblical studies, as Bunyan did in prison. Yet rather than that, a Puritan father would sing psalms with his wife and children to spend his time in holiness and thankfulness to God.

Puritans, then, favoured moderacy, functionality and religious concern when they enjoyed music. Every detail in their music should answer to the Bible. Probably, they would have disapproved of music for virtuosos, because it was too "showy" and attracted too much attention to "miracles" and the technique of the performer, instead of God. A rich musical setting of a Roman Catholic mass, which did not contain any text to which they objected, would have filled their eyes (and ears!) with suspicion as well, because the text was sung in Latin and all those instruments and beautiful sounds, in relation to the text, were too

exuberant and diverted the listener's attention from the text to the music and the ingenuity of the composer only. In brief, a Puritan would keep at a distance and stay reserved at all times, also when he listened to or produced music. Geree summarises this attitude very well: "[A Puritan] was immovable in all times, so that they who in the midst of many opinions have lost the view of true religion, may return to him and find it" (41). Hence, a Puritan's life was one of continuous worship and prayer, by which he sought God's grace. Enjoying music, then, was not very different from, for instance, reading a book, because for both activities it was the Puritan's prayer: "Let my heart be tuned to Thee".

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