

Rupkatha Journal

On Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities

ISSN 0975-2935

www.rupkatha.com

Volume VII, Number 3, 2015

General Issue

Indexing and abstracting

Rupkatha Journal is an international journal recognized by a number of organizations and institutions. It is archived permanently by www.archive-it.org and indexed by EBSCO, Elsevier, MLA International Directory, Ulrichs Web, DOAJ, Google Scholar and other organizations and included in many university libraries.

SNIP, IPP and SJR Factors

Nr.	Source ID	Title	SNIP 2012	IPP 2012	SJR 2012	SNIP 2013	IPP 2013	SJR 2013	SNIP 2014	IPP 2014	SJR 2014
1	21100201709	Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities	0.313	0.034	0.1	0.271	0.038	0.116	0.061	0.007	0.101

Additional services and information can be found at:

About Us: www.rupkatha.com/about.php

Editorial Board: www.rupkatha.com/editorialboard.php

Archive: www.rupkatha.com/archive.php

Submission Guidelines: www.rupkatha.com/submissionguidelines.php

Call for Papers: www.rupkatha.com/callforpapers.php

This Open Access article is distributed freely online under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>). This allows an individual user non-commercial re-use, distribution, sharing and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited with links. For commercial re-use, please contact editor@rupkatha.com.

© AesthetixMS: Aesthetics Media Services



On the Chaotic Metaphors in Crashaw's "Bulla"

Ali Taghizadeh & Mohammad-Javad Hajjari
Razi University, Iran

Abstract

Richard Crashaw is the greatest English Baroque poet, and his "Bulla", commonly translated as the "Bubble", is one of the greatest poems in the Baroque sense. It reveals Crashaw's literary adaptation of the New Science of the Renaissance and the early seventeenth century for his literary/artistic concerns. Highlighting the chaotic undertones of the Baroque, "Bulla" links Crashaw's sensibility to the new discoveries of the period. Crashaw emphasizes the kinesthetic nonlinearity of the natural phenomena, culminated in the shape and essence of the bubble as a microcosm of the universe. Accordingly, he adapts the behavior of non-human environments to human nature, and then changes it to poetic themes; his poem compares, through intricate metaphors and symbols, the illusory and transient state of the bubble to life and poetry. Through his scientific outlook and interdisciplinary endeavor, Crashaw notifies humanity of the essence of the bubble as it symbolically stands for the transience of worldly pleasures and for poetry, in a universe of dynamic change. Worldly pleasures are, like bubbles, not only alluring and wonderful, but also deceitful and transient. Poetry is also a bubble, for it is attractive and grasping only if it is read; yet it tends to escape interpretation. And all happen in a process of becoming. The very structure and theme of the poem highlight Crashaw's interest in such chaotic metaphors and symbols for his humanistic, literary, philosophical, and religious concerns, proving the fact that scientific thinking can convey the reality of life and stimulate spiritual thinking.

Keywords: Baroque, "Bulla", Chaos, Crashaw, New Science

Introduction

As a representative of the Baroque style, Crashaw's "Bulla" is a rich poem in bringing the Baroque soul to life. The Baroque art and literature was somehow a reflection of the new scientific discoveries and philosophic ideas of the age as well as the consequent view about mankind's new position on the earth and his worldly affairs. Crashaw's poem is a representative one in reflecting these issues through its intricate and chaotic metaphors. Crashaw gives us a graspable sample as part of the newly discovered chaos in the form of a bubble. And then he applies to it to his individual concerns regarding life on earth and the essence of its pleasures.

"New Science" was one of the most remarkable influences on the seventeenth-century metaphysical poets which helped them develop new outlooks toward the universe and its phenomena. Through their scientific perception of nature and their intellectuality, the metaphysical poets rejoiced in expressing "human emotions in terms of scientific terminology" (Sundararajan, 1970, p. 70). With the publication of Copernicus' *On the Revolution of Heavenly Bodies* (1543) the new worldview began. Copernicus, Giordano Bruno, Bacon, Galilei, Kepler, Descartes, Christiaan Huygens, and Newton challenged the former scientific views of the universe throughout the Renaissance and the seventeenth century. Galilei's "new science" of dynamics, Bacon's "the school of experience", Kepler's discoveries regarding the "celestial motion" and "mathematical speculation", Descartes' discovery of analytic geometry, his observation of "geometrical figures in the process of becoming rather than contemplating them as fixed Verities",

and his concern with the features of the curves together with Pascal's work on probability, all contributed to the New Science (Freidrich, 1965, pp. 108-111). Through Copernicus' theory, Bruno's investigations, and Galilei's expansions, the earth was no longer taken as the center of the universe, and man could no longer be considered the aim of creation. The universe, newly discovered to be center-less, was now taken as "infinite yet uniform, a co-operative and continuous system organized on a single principle" (Hauser, 1992, p. 166).

With this new knowledge, mankind became "a tiny, insignificant factor" in such new world. The traditional "anthropocentric worldview" was replaced by a cosmic awareness of "an infinite continuity of interrelationships embracing man and containing the ultimate ground of his existence" (p. 167). Mankind thus began to develop changes along with the new discoveries. In Pascal's words, the human nature was "in movement" (qtd. in Battistini, 2006, p. 24). Humanity was upset by the "melancholic sensation" deriving from the depravity of the earth from its centrality and its wandering state in the infinite space, without any "secure points of reference" in a universe of motion (p. 22). Besides the philosophical, political, and religious events of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, new science influenced the rise and the development of the Baroque sensibility in Europe (Segel, 1974, *Passim*). Although the discoveries about the concept of movement in nature indicated scientific progress in the age, the evaporation of the ancient cosmology and the familiar world led to forms of "epochal melancholia" and deep anxieties regarding the vastness and chaotic form of the universe. That natural phenomena were in motion and the universe was ruled by chaos stimulated "the baroque obsession with the fragility of the human condition." These anxieties manifested themselves in the literature of the era through the frequent images of a world which was rotten by "death and decay", implying a "baroque melancholy" (Castillo, 2013, pp. 43-44). This worldview or "cult of nothingness" was tied to the discovery of infinity, the "indeterminacy of creation", and the concept of "cosmic vacuum". The latter concept was proposed by Bruno who held that "a sort of negative ontology" manifests itself in a set of new concepts in different fields of knowledge, all converging in a "praise of nothingness" (pp. 63-64). The Baroque was filled with a reflection of infinity and the interconnectedness of all beings. The object, in the sense of the Baroque, symbolized the universe "as a uniform organism alive in all its parts," each of which signifying an infinite flux and containing the law which ruled the whole (Hauser, 1992, p. 167).

Bruno's "cosmic vacuum" and his "cosmic (dis)order", also recorded by Galilei (Castillo, 2013, p. 45), generated contradictory views regarding the human condition, in all its spiritual, mystical, ascetic, and corporal dimensions. In a world of no more rest, with "a contradictory, unstable, dynamic consistency", the most intricate network of contradictions was established. And humankind was situated at the center of this chaotic world (Maravall, 1986, p. 157). Such world was thus made up of fragments and appearances. The potently deceptive essence of appearances was fundamental to the "aesthetics of disillusionment". This fact stimulated the Baroque religious discourse to highlight pain and death to remind people about their fragile and precarious condition and the necessity to focus on the next world (Castillo, 2013, p. 44). Also, the Counter-Reformation in Europe led to a "disbelief in the perfectability of man" which was the essential concern of the Renaissance (Cohen, 1963, p. 16). Factors such as "loss of life, depopulation, and devastation" as well as religious strife, which were the aftermath of religious wars and plagues, inclined people to deny life as merely "an unending succession of disasters" and to consider worldly pleasures as really short-lived (Segel, 1974, pp. 60-61).

As the primary principle of the world and human beings, movement radiated such notions as "change, modification, variety, decay, restoration, transformation, time, circumstance, and

occasion" (Maravall, 1986, p. 175). As such, movement was the most essential principle of the baroque worldview. However, such movement necessarily did not mean to convey "a systematic treatise" (p. 176), but happening, drama, becoming, and a transitory reality, as Wölfflin observes. A dynamic world is doubtlessly "a varied world", variety being "a condition of reality" insofar as reality continually changes (p. 182).

Such concept of movement in the Baroque sense implies a nonlinear behavior on the part of the natural phenomena. As it is, nonlinear motion or nonlinear movement implies any movement which is not straight, a fact which is observable in the chaotic behavior of water, wind, fire, and other natural phenomena. Variety is part of their motion, since whatever moves is under variation, a fact which is concomitant with the Baroque worldview. Movement happens in time "where everything finds itself deposited" (Wölfflin, 1866, p. 186). In other words, with the passage of time things acquire presence and then pass away, the process including movement and change. Such was the mentality of the Baroque age, having to deal with "unexpected variation, accidental change". Fortune also became an image representing the mutability of the world, the cause of its change and movement, which simultaneously affected the human realm. The sentiment was that Fortune acts upon "pure chance", that it follows "a strange, changeable, and unattainable force" in rendering the events of the world (p. 189). It was believed that a world subject to change and modification is "a phenomenal world", a world of "appearances" (p. 192). For the Baroque practitioner, for whom "life was a flux", what was observable was no more than appearances, and in describing these appearances the poet, artist, or the thinker could merely point to ungraspable reality (Cohen, 1963, p. 16). Baroque individuals, then, considered themselves situated in a world of "all perspective," in Suarez de Figueroa's words (qtd. in Maravall, 1986, p. 195), where perspective was the way for reality to become present to the artist's eyes. Being subjected to such diversities, the human behavior developed changes. Humanity was thus to apply the apparent order in the face of the ungraspable chaos, "blurring the boundaries between natural and artificial and mobilizing passions in the service of objective knowledge." The New Science was therefore considered a Baroque phenomenon (Gal and Chen-Morris, 2013, p. 8).

The concomitance between New Science and "Baroque Science" influenced the metaphysical poets who wrote with a Baroque sensibility and with knowledge over the new discoveries. The very "stylistic dynamism" of the Baroque implied "the extreme instability of the various proposals" about its stylistic features (Peckham, 1965, p. 28). As such, an element of chaos surrounded the Baroque literature itself, both in stylistic features and in thematic ones, filled with "antithesis, paradox, and incongruity" (Segel, 1974, p. 63). According to de Mourgues, Baroque style was "mystical, morbid, macabre, cosmic, apocalyptic and absurd", and Baroque poets displayed "a myopic and disconnected vision" in their writings (p. 67). Moreover, as Warren holds, the mystery and turbulence of religious themes played an important aspect of the Baroque. The thematic realm of Baroque poetry included a range of subjects such "the inconstancy of fate" (p. 64), or the mutable and the brief state of man's earthly life. On parallel grounds with this was the ephemeral and transient state of all worldly pleasures, that is, the "illusory, dreamlike" state of mankind's "terrestrial existence" (p. 97), or the Baroque *trompel'oeil* (Ryan, 2001, p. 3). Life was then a "constant preoccupation with the passage of time" which led specifically to meditations over death and eternal life (Nelson, 1963, p. 26). The point is that the Baroque practitioner was never after the perfection of being, but becoming, the "unrest of change and the tension of transience" (Wölfflin, 1866, p. 14). It was reflected in the expression of a "unified sensibility", a difficult and temporary reconciliation of contradictions, relating to "the *concordia discors* of the conceit" (Nelson, 1963, pp. 14-15).

Such was the tendency of the Metaphysical poets in the age of the Baroque. Through their intricate and extended metaphors and conceits, Donne and his followers tried to bring into the literary world the newly discovered worldview. Many of them seem to have been familiar with the findings of the new science, both through their education and encounters with scientists. Part of the complexity of their poetry arises from their attempts at contributing to the Baroque sensibility, the Baroque science. Warnke distinguishes between two “recurrently perceptible” kinds of Baroque, as the literary era between Renaissance and New Classicism. The “Mannerist” Baroque typified the “spare, witty, intellectual, paradoxical trend” of the poetry of Donne, Herbert, and Marvell, and the “High Baroque” defined the “ornate, exclamatory, emotional, and extravagant trend” of Crashaw (p. 12). Among Crashaw’s poetry, his “Bulla” occupies a special position with regard to the chaotic atmosphere of the earthly life, newly discovered by scientists and reflected in the Baroque art.

Discussion

Richard Crashaw (1612-49) is “the most obviously baroque” of the English metaphysical poets (Praz, 1964, p. 177). Some critics even believe that he is a “true” even “the supreme representative” of the European baroque poetry (Williamson, 1928, p. 123; Warren, 1956, p. 202). His metaphors and imagery are in general his contributions to the chaotic nature of the Baroque and suggest his awareness of the scientific discoveries of his age. As “the most decoratively baroque” among the 17th-century English poets regarding the “extravagance of his subject-matter” and his metaphorical choices (Sanders, 1999, p. 206), Crashaw embellishes his work with “shimmering and colorful” metaphors from the outside. However, these metaphors are always in motion, hiding a dynamic force within. As such, motion, flux, and “restlessness” characterize his style. Crashaw’s poetic imagination continuously changes from one sensory image to another; force, change, and motion thus interact in his work to produce “surprise” (Williams, 1963, p. 10). On the other hand, Crashaw’s images and metaphors are “centrifugal”, escaping from any focus (Alvarez, 1962, p. 94); they are “chaotic, distorted, and too colourful” (Low, 2004, p. 243); they convey a “spiritual force” (Locke, 1958, p. 81); and they turn into each other stream-like, in a way that they escape any focus, hence his “phantasmagoria”. For Crashaw, these senses constitute a world of changing appearances. Trying to become one with its subject of inquiry, Crashaw therefore develops “a rhetoric of metamorphosis” (Warren, 1956, p. 190). It means that, in William Hazlitt’s words, Crashaw’s objects “strain” and “distort” the momentary feeling into some hardly imaginable “consequence or recondite analogy,” in which it is necessary to apply “the utmost stretch of misapplied ingenuity to trace the smallest connection with the original impression” (qtd. in Hammond, 1974, p. 62). Accordingly, he develops a “visual paradox”, a specific “artificial construction” out of a scene-based emotional idea, which has affinities with the nature of the Baroque art in translating one sort of impression into another (Alvarez, 1962, p. 102).

Such a chaotic realm characterizes Crashaw’s poetry in general, and in particular “Bulla”, in which change and flux are inevitable. The Baroque concern with infinity is also noticeable in this poetry “through the new-found excitement of the circle” (Sundararajan, 1970, p. 71). As a product of the New Science, with symbolic undertones of “the vastness of the macrocosm and its correspondence to the microcosm,” the circle was a recurring image in Crashaw’s poetry (p. 73). Hence his “Bulla” begins with

What art thou? What new device,
Globe, chance-fashion’d in a trice,
Into brief existence bounding,

Perfectly thy circle rounding? (Crashaw, 1873, p. 252: 5-8)

"Bulla" is a "typical example" of the Baroque literature (Guy-Bray, 2009, p. 148). The rich symbolism of the poem is so magnanimous that it cannot be concretized in a short paper. However, the poem follows a pattern in which every symbol makes a unity with the others to make a chaotic beauty, just like its *trompe l'oeil*, the wonderful bubble. The juxtaposition of contradictory elements in an ongoing process of metamorphosis, not only highlights the Baroque zeitgeist of Crashaw's era, but also his adoption of chaos and his contribution to the link between literature and the New Science of the Renaissance and the early seventeenth century.

But why does Crashaw choose a bubble, a soap bubble, as his subject matter? What is the soap bubble in nature that helps Crashaw render his philosophical, religious, and artistic concerns? A bubble *is*, simultaneously as it *is not*. Simply as it is formed as a natural phenomenon, it is a gas entrapped within a liquid film, mostly shaping the solid figure of a globe, when formed out of water. When the film is formed, having a fixed amount of gas inside, the frequently global form remains constant in shape as a semi-solid figure. Yet, mostly colorful streams of liquid circle around the globe turning continuously into different disorderly shapes, simultaneously as they reflect the scenery and colors around. They can even easily merge into each other. And when such globe is affected by the counteraction of external and internal pressures, it bursts and evaporates into gas again. Inherent in all this process is metamorphosis, which is the essence of the Baroque. Bubbles are somehow unique in such kind of constant and observable metamorphosis. Such rapid metamorphosis recalls such mythological creatures like Proteus and Circe, with their power to transform themselves into other creatures, who may stand as two prototypes of the Baroque mentality. Accordingly, choosing the bubble as the subject of inquiry into the nature of world and human condition, in the Baroque sense, is not insignificant. Crashaw's concerns thus reveal themselves in the form of a bubble, simultaneously a curious investigation into the nature of chaos. His literary adaptation of the New Science is thus concerned with the nonlinear movements of the natural phenomena, a fact which is part of the consciousness over chaos. Part of the Baroque secular poetry included poems concerned with different aspects of nature, anticipating the later "Romantic affinity for a dynamic nature of turbulence, change, and mystery" (Segel, 1974, p. 101). Crashaw's "Bulla" belongs to this group of Baroque poems, portraying the mystical existence of the bubble. The physical application of nonlinear dynamics to the movement of the bubbles thus signifies that they are "nonlinear phenomena" (Scott, 2007, p. 161). Thus, the poem reads,

And the GLOBES undisciplin'd
As though driven by the wind,
Borne along the fleeting plains
Light as air; nor order reigns—
But the heaven-possess'd array
Moving each in its own way,
Hither now and thither flying,
Glancing, wavering, and dying,
Losing still their path and finding,
In a random interwinding. (Crashaw, 1983, p. 253: 44-53)

The bubble is a circle, wandering without gravity and order. Each bubble follows its own path and no order rules their movement. And bearing the image of the heavens on their surface while they are "driven by the wind", they seem to be moving by the motion of the heavens and the earth. Yet

their movement is not orderly in the literal sense. Such visual image is then applied to humanistic concerns in the rest of the poem.

The word “*bullā*” itself simultaneously conveys two meanings. The most obvious meaning is a development of the Latin phrase *homo bulla*, soap bubble, a symbol of the transiency of human life (Gioseffi, 2010; Guy-Bray, 2009). Humanity is thus presented as imprisoned within a mortal body of short life, the bubble. Its other meaning reveals itself in the preamble four lines of the poem, culminating in “a weightier toga awaits our shoulders; behold, this is my *bullā*, behold my lares in your right hand” (Crashaw, 1873, p. 252: 3-4). As Guy-Bray (2009) argues, drawing from Daniel Heinsius’ introduction to the poem (1664), a “*bullā*” was something originally worn by noble Roman boys (and then by all the freeborn) in their childhood. By the time a boy was to wear the “*toga virilis*” in teenage years, the *bullā* was to be taken off. The childhood infatuation with the *bullā* and the coming time to leave it forever signified for Crashaw a kind of poetical “immaturity”, or “someone whose poetry prevents him from attaining his adult status”. This is also reflected in the word “*vana*” (vain) of the first line of poem (Guy-Bray, 2009, p. 150). The *bullā* is to be taken off at the end of childhood; it ends up in vain.

At the same time, it seems that the poem makes “parallels between the nature of life and the character of art” (Whittall, 2007, p. 253), for the bubble signifies art and its illusory existence as well. In Mazzeo’s words, the conceit of poetry is “what the illusory perspective is to art,” a fact which best describes Crashaw’s poetic style (p. 91). As Peckham (1965) says,

Art is not reality, [...] It is nothing but a construct, [...] but signs, [...] art is not even a reliable prescriptive construct, for its semantic character is subordinate to its disorientative function. Art offers man an entry into a fraudulent and deceiving world, but it is necessary. [...] It is a biological adaptation which serves to keep man alive, aware, capable of perceiving that he is neither adequate nor inadequate but a perilous mixture of the two [...]. Because it is fraudulent, deceiving, and enticing, it is a Circe; it can turn into beasts. (pp. 314-315)

Crashaw’s poem is made of the same thing; it is a simulation of what has no constancy, lasting only for seconds (Gioseffi, 2010), so long as the eye can read the “treacherous simulation” on the surface of the bubble (Crashaw, 1873, p. 253: 35). Consider Crashaw when he juxtaposes contrasting images of vividness, lifelessness, and extinction in the following lines, where the ephemeral nature of reality is artistically portrayed:

Interchangeably imbu'd
With rosy-red and the snow's whiteness,
Air and water and fire's brightness:
Painted, gemm'd, of golden dye,
NOTHING—after all—am I! (Crashaw, 1873, p. 258: 189-193)

Such a portrait has a scientific basis. Soap bubbles are colorful yet with no color, as iridescent as the rainbow and as colorless as water. Later, Robert Hooke and Newton scientifically studied light and its refraction and proved that “colors are not a reality, but illusion and appearance” (Gioseffi, 2010), a fact which was reflected by the Crashavian “Bubble”,

Since all colours you discern,
No one colour may you learn:
All tints melted into one
In a sweet confusion,
You cannot tell 'tis that or this,

So shifting is the loveliness. (Crashaw, 1873, pp. 254-255: 81-86)

The poem's contemporary audience would feel a tension between taking "bulla" as a bubble or a sign of childhood. This interpretation, as it emphasizes the "transient and ephemeral nature" (Guy-Bray, 2009, 157), as well as the transient state of man and the worldly pleasure, emphasizes "the illusion while it lasts" (Poulet, 1966, p. 21). Guy-Bray (2009) believes that the poem focuses on the "depressing implications of transience than with the beauty of something that is transient." The bubble might also stand for a wine bubble or the inebriating effect of wine, which is transitory. Even such an interpretation highlights the temporary pleasure of wine while it lasts (p. 157). It can best be manifested when the bubble holds that it is the "price of Hope that no more is" (Crashaw, 1873, p. 258: 175), and that it is "the light Spirit of Vanity" (p. 258: 179). Meanwhile, the poem, as a praise of chaos, moves in parallel lines with the Baroque sensibility towards the newly discovered universe and mankind's position in it. Mankind cannot understand the chaos; his attempt is in vain. But at least he can see the appearance of that beautiful chaos and praise its sublimity.

Making a comparison between the short-lived intoxicating effects of wine and poetry, the poem itself can be taken as a bubble too, since it is only alive when being read. Not only Crashaw's poem, but also poetry in general can be taken as a bubble. Poetry intoxicates its readers in its world of contradictions and leaves them wondering by the time it is read, as if it is no more. In Schiff's words (1998), the bubble serves not only as the symbol of "ephemerality" but also as "an emblem of art" and "a transient mirror of human existence" (p. 317). Concomitant with this view is another interpretation that takes "bulla" as "an important document" (Guy-Bray, 2009, p. 151). In this sense, the poem becomes a "meta-commentary" about "scholarly writing" (p. 149). However, as highlighted in the following lines from the poem, Crashaw here seems to be in doubt whether the readers of his poetry ever respect its essence and do not take it as blabbering, just as a bubble moves in a disorderly way:

If on it frowning, 'Words, words, words!' thou say,
 No more I'll chatter, but at once obey.
 So, turn thine eye, my Friend, no more give heed;
 My BUBBLE lives but if thou choose to read.
 Cease thou to read, and I resign my breath;
 Cease thou to read, and that will be my death. (Crashaw, 1873, p. 259: 196-201)

As a product of reading, the poem is thus reborn in the reader's mind. So it is only a psychological entity which intoxicates and leaves the reader in ecstasy, a chaotic realm.

The overall structure and imagery of the poem, which make it a "confusion beauteous" (p. 254: 57), introduce the bubble as a synecdoche for the universe, reflecting the macrocosm of the universe in the microcosm of a bubble. The bubble is thus "Springing up with graceful bound / And describing dainty round" (p. 251: 12-13). Crashaw tries to encompass and entangle the universe "into the small circle of man's comprehension" (Smith, 1934, p. 262). And the poem partly becomes a praise of chaos, at least in appearance.

The chaotic shapes and colors on the surface of the bubble act as symbols for the operations of Fortune in human affairs as well. The act of fate in human affairs is bubble-like, always subject to change.

I am Fortune's looking-glass,
 The countersign which she doth pass
 To her troop of warriors:

I'm the oath by which she swears,
 And wherewith she doth induce
 Men to trust a fragile truce. (Crashaw, 1873, p. 258: 180-185)

Fortune is nonlinear too; she acts upon (disorderly) chaos. And mankind is always under her seduction.

One of the outstanding aspects of the Baroque has been defined by Fritz Strich as the “pictorial presentation” against the architechral presentation of the Rennaissance poetry. Strich believes that,

The pictorial presentation shows us the temporal world in its fleeting, changeable and transitory aspect. Time as creator and destroyer, passing and overthrowing, is the primary religious experience of the Baroque. One might equally call it the experience of the *vanitas*, of the vanity and the transitory of the world. What is man? not, as the Rennaissance believed, a sovereign, self-governing, harmonious, cosmic entity, [...] but a shadow, [...] a passing wave, [...] a fantasy of time. (qtd. in Cohen, 1963, p. 15)

Accordingly, the bubble can stand for the Baroque itself too. The chaotic beauty observable on the surface of the bubble and its nonlinear movement signify strong Baroque themes of inconstancy and change. And that is perhaps why the poem is regarded as a true representative of the Baroque sensibility towards the new view about the universe. In a Deleuzean sense (1993), the bubble is an “event”, its duration being for some seconds. An event does not merely signify that “man has been run over” but also implies “a passage of Nature” (p. 76). This passage brings about constant change, a process of ever-varying courses:

Our BUBBLE, all its colours weaving,
 Follows ever-varying courses,
 Or in air itself disperses:
 Here now, there now, coming, going,
 Wand'ring as if ebbing, flowing. (Crashaw, 1873, p. 252: 37-41)

Looking at the human behavior through an analogy with the science about the essence of the bubble, Crashaw thus draws from the natural phenomena to make human behavior more concrete. Even though the ultimate analysis of human behavior before earthly pleasures escapes comprehension, there can still be some order over human behavior. The human being is within the universal dominion of variety throughout his life. Human beings are iterated in that they are “renewed, undergoing alteration as much in body [...] as in the soul, changing from one instant to the next customs, habits, opinions and appetites” (Maravall, 1986, p. 184). The “dynamic character of human behavior” points to the human potential for change (Peckham, 1965, p. 308), as it is the concern of the Baroque sensibility. Crashaw’s poem underlines this fact when he says,

Lo, one BUBBLE follows t’other,
 Differing still from its frail brother,
 Striking still from change to change
 With a quick and vivid range. (Crashaw, 1873, p. 255: 96-99)

Bubbles follow each other similarly yet differently in the course they individually choose to flow in the air. This signifies that human beings are iterations of each other simultaneously as their behaviors change constantly. Such dynamicity constitutes human life as it is, a becoming.

Yet the earthly life is a dream. Being aware of visual deceptions and trying to unveil them, Baroque practitioners generally tended to make use of resources reinforcing “deception” or

entrapment and tried to guide others accordingly (Maravall, 1986, p. 198). With its deceptive but transient glory, Crashaw's bubble serves this purpose. And it stands for the "dream of life" (p. 201), which is extremely pleasing but illusory. The image is striking when at the end of the poem the bubble speaks for itself, admonishing its addressees:

I'm a myth, an idle theme,
 The brief substance of a dream:
 Grace and grief of trifles, I
 Charm—a well-skill'd vanity;
 Begotten of the treacherous breeze,
 Parent of absurdities. (Crashaw, 1873, p. 258: 167-172)

The Baroque thinker, the poet, or the mystic took life as a flux. No more than appearances were observable, and describing these appearances could best be done by pointing to the ungraspable reality. Thus, what lay behind such reality could only be described in metaphors or symbols, "which might not be entirely clear even to the poet himself" (Cohen, 1963, p. 16). This further highlights the individual's "wonder at the complexity of life and the universe" in the Baroque sense (Smith, 1934, p. 265). Crashaw perfectly refers to this issue in reemphasizing the microcosmic structure of the bubble in reflecting the cosmos:

O, what store of wonders here
 In this short-liv'd slender SPHERE!
 For all wonders I have told
 Are within its GLOBE enroll'd. (Crashaw, 1873, p. 256: 153-156)

The "generally observed" phenomena, such as in water and in air, may be considered as "letters of a script" which are necessary to be learned to be used like "the alphabet of nature". Those beholders who are satisfied to keep on with "pure phenomenology" suffocate the potency to decode such natural hieroglyphs. Looking beyond pure phenomenology is however difficult and requires the reader to delve deeply into the intricate details of nature for a final comprehensive outlook. By "watching water and air with unprejudiced eye," our ways of thinking change towards a better perception of "what is alive" (Schwenk, 1965, p. 11). In Rudolf Steiner's view, such "scientific thinking, if carried through logically, can lead to the reality of life" (qtd. in Schwenk, 1965, p. 11). And that is the worldview Crashaw presents us with in his "Bulla" in combining the science of his time with his humanistic and poetic concerns.

Conclusion

Crashaw's "Bulla" is one of the most outstanding poems of the Baroque age. As a combination of paradoxes, the poem makes use of contradictory images and metaphors as they serve a true picture of bubbles. The very language Crashaw uses in this work to describe a natural phenomenon, added to the rules of chaos and nonlinear dynamics which he employs, dramatizes the chaos and Crashaw's mentality regarding the themes of his poem. Accordingly, the rich symbolism of the poem highlights mankind's inability in the face of the chaotic universe for which the bubble stands. The fragility of the earthly life and its pleasures as well as the harshness of Fortune that denies fulfillment on the face of deceiving illusions are all expressed in terms of a natural phenomenon. Crashaw's contribution to the Baroque sensibility towards the universe thus accords with the application of the new scientific discoveries and consciousness over man's new position in the universe. The image of death, manifested in the bursting of the bubble, further signifies the transitory state of the world beside all its pleasures, including poetry.

Crashaw's semi-panegyric for the bubble also emphasizes the "praise of nothingness" for its own sake. Its dynamic nature bestows it with an entity and a non-entity interfused; it is a reality on the verge of evaporation, or a non-reality which always wants to come into existence. The poem in which such interfusions happen becomes the subject of analysis as well, with the mere exception that a bubble is to be seen and then is no more when it is blown, while a poem is to be read and then is no more when it is forgotten. Poetry is therefore a realm of contradictions, although it follows some poetical orders. And it is just like our bubble-world in which many contradictions happen in a disorderly order.

References

- Alvarez, A. (1962). *The school of Donne*. London: Chatto & Windus.
- Battistini, Andrea. (2006). The Telescope in the Baroque Imagination. In David Castillo and Massimo Lollini (Eds.), *Reason and Its Others: Italy, Spain, and the New World* (3-38). Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.
- Castillo, David R. (2013). *Baroque horror: roots of the fantastic in the age of curiosities*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Cohen, J. M. (1963). *The baroque lyric*. London: Hutchinson University Library.
- Crashaw, Richard. (1873). *Complete Works of Richard Crashaw* (2nd Vol.). Alexander Balloch Grosart (Ed.). London: Robson and Sons.
- De Mourgues, Odette. (1953). *Metaphysical baroque & précieux poetry*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles. (1993). *The fold: Leibniz and the baroque*. (Tom Conley, Trans.). London: The Athlone Press.
- Freidrich, Carl J. (1965). *The age of the baroque: 1610-1660*. New York: Harper Torchbooks.
- Gal, Ofer, & Chen-Morris, Raz. (Eds.) (2013). *Science in the age of baroque*. London: Springer.
- Gioseffi, Massimo. (2010). [Review of *La dernière muse latine: douze lectures poétiques, de claudien à la génération baroque*, by Pierre Laurens]. *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 01.41, Online.
- Guy-Bray, Stephen. (2009, Spring/Summer). "Pulchrum spargitur hic chaos": Crashaw's meta-commentary. *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 9.1, 147-159.
- Hammond, Gerald. (Ed.). (1974). *The metaphysical poets: A case book*. London: The Macmillan Press LTD.
- Hauser, Arnold. (1992). *The social history of art: renaissance, mannerism and baroque* (2nd vol). II. London: Routledge.
- Locke, Julius Duane. (1958). Images and image symbolism in metaphysical poetry with special reference to otherworldliness (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <https://archive.org/details/imagesimagesymb00lockrich>. University of Florida, Gainesville.
- Low, Anthony. (2004). Richard Crashaw. In Thomas N. Corns (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to English poetry: Donne to Marvell* (242-255). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Maravall, Jose Antonio. (1986). *Culture of the baroque: analysis of a historical structure*. (Terry Cochran, Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Mazzeo, Joseph Anthony. (1952, November). A critique of some modern theories of metaphysical poetry. *Modern Philology*, 50. 2, 88-96.
- Nelson Jr., Lowry. (1963). *Baroque lyric poetry*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Peckham, Morse. (1965). *Man's rage for chaos: biology, behavior, and the arts*. New York: Chilton Books.
- Poulet, George. (1966). *The metamorphosis of the circle*. (Carley Dawson and Elliott Coleman, Trans.). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Praz, Mario. (1964, February). Baroque in England. *Modern Philology*, 61.3, 169-179.

- Ryan, Marie-Laure. (2001). *Narrative as virtual reality: immersion and interactivity in literature and electronic media*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Sanders, Andrew. (1999). *The short Oxford history of English literature* (2nd ed.). London: Oxford University Press.
- Schwenk, Theodor. (1965). *Sensitive chaos: the creation of flowing forms in water and air*. (Olive Whicher and Johanna Wrigley, Trans.). London: Rudolf Steiner Press.
- Scott, Alwyn C. (2007). *The nonlinear universe: chaos, emergence, life*. Berlin: Springer.
- Segel, Harold B. (1974). *The baroque poem: a comparative survey*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.
- Schiff, David. (1998). *The music of Elliot Carter*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Smith, W. Bradford. (1934, July - September). What is metaphysical poetry? *The Sewanee Review*, 42.3, 261-272.
- Sundararajan, P. K. (1970). A Reading of Richard Crashaw (Master of Arts Dissertation). Retrieved from <http://summit.sfu.ca/system/files/iritems1/2853/b10483251>. Simon Fraser University, Burnaby.
- Warnke, Frank J. (1975). *Versions of baroque; European literature in the seventeenth century*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Warren, Austin. (1956). *Richard Crashaw: a study in baroque sensibility*. London: Faber and Faber LTD.
- Williams, G. W. (1963). *Image and symbol in the sacred poetry of Richard Crashaw*. Columbia: University of South California Press.
- Williamson, George. (1928). *The Donne tradition: a study in English poetry from Donne to the death of Cowley*. Stanford: Leland Stanford Junior University.
- Whittall, Arnold. (2007). Messiaen and twentieth-Century music. In Robert Scholl (Ed.), *Messiaen studies: Cambridge composer studies* (232-253). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wölfflin, Heinrich. (1866). *Renaissance and baroque*. (Kathrin Simon, Trans. & Peter Murray Intro.). New York: Ithaca.

Ali Taghizadeh is Lecturer, English Department, Razi University, Kermanshah, Iran.

Mohammad-Javad Hajjari is Instructor of English and PhD Candidate in English, Razi University, Iran.
