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Female Torture Poetry: Petrarchan Love and Carpe Diem

by

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Introduction

Women are represented in early modern British lyric poetry in a variety of subgenres through a re-occurring formula employed by numerous male poets. Typically, the woman addressed or described is depicted as the male poet's desired object, a source of pleasure and pain for the male speaker. This thesis examines early modern English poetry, particularly carpe diem lyrics and Petrarchan sonnets by a range of male writers, including Sir Philip Sidney, John Donne, Thomas Carew, and Andrew Marvell. As this thesis will argue, these male poets use lyric poetry to construct figurations of women in states of objectification, subordination, and even physical pain.

It is useful for readers to understand how Petrarchanism became a popular form used by several poets throughout the early modern period. This thesis will focus on Sir Philip Sidney and John Donne as representative examples. Sidney's and Donne's uses of Petrarchan sonnets demonstrate their attraction to the form while also their efforts to reject the form through parody or what critics have called anti-Petrarchanism. Various Petrarchan tropes and conventions are used to display a mistress experiencing pain for rejecting the male speaker of the poem. Similarly, configurations of tortured women are represented in the context of carpe diem poems, particularly those by Thomas Carew and Andrew Marvell. How do the male poets use persuasion in their invitations to love or sex as a means of dominating women? What ways do women become objectified in the genre, and how do men attempt to convince the female figure not to trust her own feelings of hesitation or resistance? More specific to carpe diem poetry is the function of time as a character in the genre and how the male poet uses time as a violent weapon against the female. Reading these subgenres as examples of female torture helps to interrogate the types of knowledge male poets wanted to circulate about women's bodies and sexuality

through their poetry. The trafficking of literary representations of women through these genres requires an analysis of how such poems circulated in homosocial coteries during the period in manuscript form, permitting male poets to bond with one another and share together in an enjoyment of women in pain.

Feminist scholarship of Renaissance drama has focused on gender difference and analyses of women's bodies in states of embarrassment and shame.[1] Important to this thesis is this pre-existing body of feminist studies of Renaissance literature, because the critical discourse on literary representations of women's bodies and minds offers insights into the cultural construction of patriarchy during the period. The representation of women in states of pain and agony are all too common in the narrative arcs of lyric poetry throughout the early modern period. Current gender readings of such lyric subgenres as Petrarchan sonnets and carpe diem poems problematize the representation of power dynamics between the poem's male speaker and his dominance over the lady or mistress of the poem.

My argument pushes these readings to argue that the subjugation of literary women may also be read as an embodiment of torture. The male speaker acts as a torturer by attempting to maintain the power dynamic of male dominance. Previous feminist scholarship has identified the ways that women have been represented to affirm male hierarchy and masculine power. However, there is virtually no criticism that analyzes the representation of women in these specific genres as victims of torture. The poems flaunt the poets' mastery over both women's bodies and minds through the conventions of the subgenres themselves. Narratively, male poets use the domination and torment of a specific female figure to strengthen their own sense of

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[1] See Gail Kern Paster's *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* that provides a comprehensive and detailed mapping of female dramatic characters and identities designed to serve as figures meant to be shamed and embarrassed. Her study of different early modern texts provides epistemologies of gender difference created around the subordination of women through such acts of shame and embarrassment.

masculine performativity. The male poet's authority raises interesting questions about the nature of the genres they use in displaying the pain of female mistresses. My focus on the problem of male authority via the torture of women problematizes the nature and purpose of genres such as Petrarchan love and carpe diem and encourages a re-examination of the history and processes of the two genres distinctly and separately.

Elaine Scarry's formative and foundational text *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* provides a critical lens for analyzing structures of torture. Scarry's study of torture and embodiments of pain throughout history offers an analog for how lyric poetry functions as an instrument of torture. Her theoretical framework of torture expands the insights of feminist criticism that focuses on how the woman's body serves as function, signifier, hierarchical lack, or difference. My thesis uses Scarry's writing about torture as a structure that "unmakes" the victim's world. Specifically, her writing about the room of torture supports my analysis of the representation of literary women being haunted or punished within their privileged and private spaces.

This project also considers the influential work of Arthur Marotti in detailing the manuscript circulation of early modern poetry through coterie writing and coterie audiences. Early modern poets shared or trafficked in different representations of women in anguish for rejecting or resisting the male speaker of the poem. Bonds between male poet and male reader arguably became dependent upon the possibility of sharing pleasure with each other through the public disfiguring of women in coterie poetry. The second section of this paper incorporates Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's foundational queer study of male homosocial relationships, particularly her work on Shakespeare's sonnets and Renaissance drama, in *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. The construction of women in pain can become a competition

amongst men: who can poetically create the most harm? Homosocial desire is a bond formed at the expense of female suffering in poetry. Specifically, this thesis looks into the poet's bond with his male audience and his desire to bond through the circulation of female punishment.

Throughout the course of my thesis, I analyze specific poems that fit within the categories of Petrarchan love and carpe diem. Sir Philip Sidney's songs within his sonnet sequence display a problematic male fantasy of the song's speaker hovering over the poem's vulnerable mistress. I offer readings of two songs, "The Second Song" and "The Fourth Song," in which I study his use of Petrarchan love conventions in order to seduce the title character Stella into having sex with her title counterpart, Astrophil. Critically, I apply Elaine Scarry's definition and theoretical idea of torture to the literary construction of Stella's torture. It is also necessary to analyze the way Sidney's use of Petrarchanism influences other poets including John Donne to use the convention against female mistresses in a similar fashion. I elaborate on the cultural context of Sidney's use of Petrarchanism as it emerges in the English poetic landscape. This analysis probes the rhetoric of Petrarchan love conventions as intentionally both manipulative and persuasive. How do the conventions represent aspects of pain and the removal of female agency from the poem? Comparatively, I study John Donne's inspired use of Petrarchanism in his seduction poems. Donne's "The Flea" is analyzed for his use of Petrarchanism in the hopes of persuading a female mistress to have sex with the male speaker. It is also important to see how Donne uses Petrarchanism in a much more violent fashion in his poem "The Apparition," in which a scorned lover wishes to haunt the female mistress in her bedroom.

The final section of this thesis is dedicated to the study of the carpe diem genre. I remind readers of what the expected conventions are and how they are used to strip women of their

power and agency. Because there is such a robust body of criticism of the carpe diem tradition, I analyze specific poems for the sake of understanding them as typical expressions of gender difference. My analysis lends itself to future similar studies of the carpe diem poems of Sir Ben Johnson, Robert Herrick, and Sir John Suckling. However, for the sake of space, I focus my attention on analyzing two specific poems by different poets. Carpe diem cannot be properly studied unless Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" is acknowledged as a foundation for the genre and for successor poets. Thomas Carew's "Song: Persuasion to Enjoy" also offers an interesting example, as Carew uses conventions of the genre to frighten and intimidate the female mistress into giving her virginity to the male speaker.

Poetry as Weapon: Elaine Scarry as Theoretical Foundation

Elaine Scarry's critical objective in her book *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*[2] is to explore three different subjects of pain's representability: "*first*, the difficulty of expressing physical pain; *second*, the political and perceptual complications that arise as a result of that difficulty; and *third*, the nature of both material and verbal expressibility, or, more simply, the nature of human creation" (Scarry 3). Scarry's project is invested in the relationship between pain and language. This thesis is also interested in the use of language to describe human pain. However, creation itself becomes problematic when these poets seek to represent women in pain or agony within their poetry. Scarry, in her own words, describes her book's purpose as follows:

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[2] Scarry's work has been referenced in criticism of early modern works that focus on the destruction of the victim's agency through torture. For example, Gail Kern Paster writes, "Torture and interrogation were functions of a judicial power that took these bodies, unlike Cleopatra's, beyond the reach of dramatic, if not discursive, representation. One irony of this painful chapter in women's history is that if, as Elaine Scarry has argued, the structure of torture works to display excessive agency of the torturer, to confirm the torturer in his self-experience *as* agent, then torture of the English witch seems determined to confer agency where one would least expect to find it in patriarchy – in old, impoverished village women" (246-247).

> This book is about the way other persons become visible to us, or cease to be visible to us. It is about the way we make ourselves (and the originally interior facts of sentience) available to one another through verbal and material artifacts, as it is also about the way the derealization of artifacts may assist in taking away another person's visibility. The title of the book, *The Body in Pain*, designates as the book's subject the most contracted spaces, the small circle of living matter; and the subtitle designates as its subject the most expansive territory, *The Making and Unmaking of the World*. But the two go together, for what is quite literally at stake in the body in pain is the making and unmaking of the world. (Scarry 22-23)

The way Scarry describes her project is a necessary analog to studying pain in the poetry featured in my thesis. Male poets use Petrarchanism and carpe diem to uncreate the world of the female victim. In doing so, they are also creating a world in which male authority becomes a deciding and violent force that uses female pain as a means to affirm masculine performance.

Elaine Scarry shares with Michel Foucault a critical interest in the history of torture and punishment. However, she does not make reference to his writings in *The Body in Pain*. Ten years prior to Scarry's contribution to academic studies of pain, critical readers would most likely have turned to Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* in order to interpret dynamics of power and the abuse of subjugated bodies in literature. Foucault writes, "One would be concerned with the 'body politic,' as a set of material elements and techniques that serve as weapons, relays, communication routes and supports for the power and knowledge relations that invest human bodies and subjugate them by turning them into objects of knowledge" (Foucault 28).[3] This

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[3] Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* is a grandfather text in studies of institutional power and considerations of the objectification of docile bodies in pursuit of institutional gain. I include this reference to Foucault to establish the existing conversation that has been published about torture and punishment before Scarry's book. However, Scarry does not make any reference or acknowledgement to Foucault's writing about torture.

thesis studies how specific poets have different relationships to the pain they create and the women they uncreate.

Scarry's *The Body in Pain* also interrogates systems of torture. Her definitional lens enlightens the literary goal of the poets studied here. Through my analysis of specific male poets' relations to women characters who reject them in their poems, it becomes clear that a woman's pain becomes the power and vision of a male poet. This thesis argues that the Petrarchan love and carpe diem subgenres become an analog for the female victim's inescapable room of torture. The correlation between the male-authored poems as rooms of torture can best be explained through Scarry's own analysis of torture as an all-encompassing system of pain in which the victim's private and public space transform into agents of pain. She writes, "torture is a process which not only converts but announces the conversion of every conceivable aspect of the event and the environment into an agent of pain" (Scarry 27-28). Scarry's methodology allows readers to apply her framework to texts that feature roles of tortured and the torturer. While this is not the intention Scarry had in mind, she writes, "This phenomenon in which the claims of pain are eclipsed by the very loss of world it has brought about is a crucial step in the overall process of perception that allows one person's physical pain to be understood as another person's power" (Scarry 37).

How does the dynamic of poet as torturer and female figure as tortured change the reader's relationship with the poem? I encourage readers to use the dynamic of torture and tortured as a narrative structure in the poetry analyzed in my thesis. The poems' structure or narrative arc typically follows a three-part process: the male poet is rejected and internalizes the emotional pain he suffers; the poet then transfers and inflicts pain on the female subject to reorient power to his own subjectivity; and finally, the result is an "uncreation" of female

subjectivity which thereby creates a new aesthetic of female torture. In Scarry's terminology, "The dissolution of the boundary between inside and outside gives rise to a fourth aspect of the felt experience of physical pain, an almost obscene conflation of private and public" (Scarry 53). The infliction of pain through poetry allows for the male poet to dissolve the female subject's world of inside and outside reality. If we consider the gender disparity in the access to literacy in the Renaissance, it becomes more clear that the enjoyment of female pain in this type of poetry benefits from the exclusion of women in the general audience of the poems' readership. My thesis problematizes how male poets relate to the mistress of their poems as torturers creating female suffering.

Homosocial Bonding via Female Torture: Eve Sedgwick's Theoretical Background on Homosociality

Torture as a theoretical framework transforms how we understand bonds between men. My thesis seeks not only to examine the embodiments of torture through the physical and metaphysical depictions of torment, but also seeks to identify ways that men's homosocial relationships can be used to bond over the tarnished images of women – as long as they are created and tarnished by men. The concept of homosociality was introduced to queer studies by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, published in 1985, focuses on Victorian Literature and includes a discussion of Shakespeare's sonnets.

Sedgwick's theory of homosociality permits new interpretations of the way male poets relate to the women characters who they torment in their poems. Sedgwick describes the critical objective of *Between Men* as follows:

> I will be arguing that concomitant changes in the structure of the continuum of male 'homosocial desire' were tightly, often casually bound up with the other more visible changes; that the emerging pattern of male friendship, mentorship, entitlement, rivalry, and hetero- and homosexuality was in an intimate and shifting relation to class; and that no element of that pattern can be understood outside of its relation to women and the gender system as a whole. (Sedgwick 1)

In light of the quotation above, male bondage becomes problematic, if it is dependent on sharing enjoyment over poetry that features women who have been tarnished and shamed by the poet-speaker. The circulation of poetry by male writers occurred amongst coterie audiences and was homosocial in nature. Women were excluded from popular coteries, because men were more likely to receive literary educations and went on publicly to pursue writing for the court of England in this period. The circulation of images of women punished by men allowed for male poets and male readers to share pleasure together. In addition to the pleasure men received in defaming the character of women, as Marotti has described, male poets from the Renaissance shared obscene poems and bawdy and lewd representations about women for the sake of male revelry and homosocial pleasure.[4] Sedgwick's theory of homosocial relations reinforces the argument that men bonded over the sharing and enjoyment of female torture in the lyric poetry.

Unrequited Love: Pain in Petrarchanism

Since the late Fifteenth Century, Petrarchan sonnets became one of the most popular forms of poetry produced and reproduced by male poets throughout the Renaissance. Early translators of Petrarch in England were Sir Thomas Wyatt and Sir Philip Sidney. The Petrarchan

[4] See Chapter two, "Sex, Politics, and the Manuscript System," in Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and The English Renaissance Lyric*.

sonnet's popularity in England lends itself to questions about male poets' attraction to the conventions and rhetoric of the form. More specifically, if there is such a vast number of Petrarchan sonnets written by early modern English poets, then how did poets make their use of the form stand out? My argument seeks to identify the characteristic ways that male poets used Petrarchan conceits and rhetoric to display female torture, particularly Sir Philip Sidney and John Donne. I offer readings of Sidney's "Second Song" from the sonnet sequence *Astrophil and Stella* and Donne's use of Petrarchan conventions in "The Apparition."

In order to situate commonly used conventions of Petrarchanism, I draw attention to the object of desire in Petrarch's work, the iconic female figure known as Laura. According to Peter Hainsworth's introduction to *The Essential Petrarch*, "The great majority of the poems are concerned with his love for Laura, the obsession fascination that remains fundamentally unchanged for more than thirty years. It is unaffected by the fact that Laura refuses to give herself to him physically and at times may seem not to respond to him at all" (Hainsworth xxi). "Obsession" (xxi) and "fascination" (xxi) are words Hainsworth uses to classify Petrarch's gaze over the central female figure of his poetry, Laura. The nature of Petrarchan poetry is to typify the objectification of women. The objectified woman of Petrarchan poetry is depicted hyperbolically and ideally. She is supremely beautiful and virtuous which serves to excuse the poet-speaker's incapability of stopping himself from staring or gazing. Both Sidney and Donne employ this Petrarchan conceit of desiring an unobtainable woman. Hainsworth describes the type of woman Laura represents: "At different times she is cast as a courtly lady, a goddess, a nymph, a shepherdess, a force for Petrarch's ultimate good, a friendly presence, an image of the divine, or phantasm of his own creation that is distracting him from thinking about the salvation of his soul" (Hainsworth xxi). Sidney and Donne imitate the formula of the Madonna-esque

female only to divert from praising her and instead to focus on torturing her. Donald Guss writes in his analysis, "Donne says that his lady's knowledge of his thoughts proves that she is divine. This bit of amorous theology is an extension of the Petrarchan lady-goddess figure" (Guss 315).

Thomas Wyatt is given credit for being the first English poet to translate the majority of Petrarch's poetry from Italian into English; however, Wyatt's poetry will not be studied in this project. Reed Way Dasenbrock's study of Petrarchanism in England draws a connection between Wyatt's translation with later imitators such as Sir Philip Sidney. He writes, "Most importantly, his translations and imitations of Petrarch created a tradition of (and a form and language for) writing love sonnets in English that later culminated in the great sonnet sequences of Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare. Wyatt's interest in and work with Petrarch's poetry, in short, was one of the seeds of the English Renaissance" (Dasenbrock 122). Dasenbrock's article "Wyatt's Transformation of Petrarch" initiates a critical conversation about how Petrarchanism as a form passed on from male poet to future generations. His essay focuses primarily on Wyatt's personal adaptations of the form and translation of Petrarch's poetry. For the purposes of this project, I will be focusing on Sidney and Donne's uses of Petrarchan conventions.

Sidney's Petrarchanism and Anti-Petrarchanism

The female body is rendered as tortured and in pain through the conflation of genres and poetic voices in Sir Philip Sidney's sonnet sequence *Astrophil and Stella.* My analysis focuses specifically on two of Sidney's songs within the sonnet sequence: "The Second Song" and "The Fourth Song." I place Sidney's "Song" and Donne's "The Apparition" in conversation with each other, because they lead to insightful readings or interpretations of the male speaker's dominance as a weapon of torture; in addition these two poems echo similar uses of Petrarchan conventions

in their display of the mistress in torment. Most uncannily, both poems use the woman's bedroom as the site of their horror and punishment for having rejected the poems' speakers. Additionally, I draw thematic connections between Sidney's three sonnets (Sonnets 1, 15, and 63) with the two of Sidney's songs that I analyze. In order to save space for my analysis of "Songs 2 and 4," I offer close readings of Sonnets 1, 15, and 63 to highlight the problematic way that Sidney's Astrophil relates to Stella.

Sidney's imitation of Petrarchan love conventions is flaunted in his depiction of Stella in pain. As previously mentioned, one of Petrarch's conceits is to offer praise of the virtue and hyperbolized beauty of the woman. Studies of Sidney's imitation of Petrarch often identify a connection between Sidney's use of the convention and how the imitation relates to Sidney's sense of self as an author. Paul Allen Miller writes that, "Sidney appropriates the conventions of a recognized tradition which has already been canonized as possessing transhistorical value, and…he uses these conventions to construct a collection and a lyric subjectivity uniquely his own" (Miller 509). My interest is in the ways that Sidney deviates from Petrarchan norms in his sonnets.

"Sonnet 1" of *Astrophil and Stella* begins the sonnet sequence with the poet's difficulty in distinguishing pain and pleasure. The poet-speaker is aware that his poem can only be created from the turmoil of being rejected by his mistress. He is also aware that the lyrics and their pleasure can only come from the transmission of his pain onto Stella herself. His interest in learning from predecessors of the sonnet form is to engage his purported reader (Stella) in the promise of poetic pleasure and force her to engage with the text in order to recognize the pain he has suffered which has produced the poem itself. The opening lines read:

> Loving in truth, and fair in verse my love to show,
> That she (dear she) might take some pleasure of my pain:

> Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,
> Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain (1.1-4)

The first quatrain of the sonnet features Sidney's use of the rhetorical device *gradatio*. According to B.J. Sokol's analysis of "Sonnet 1," Sidney's use of *gradatio* functions like an ascension up a flight of stairs.[5] The caesuras in lines 3 and 4 mark Sidney's use of *gradatio*, which forces the reader to think about the preceding word before moving forward in one's reading. Sokol makes note of its tyrannical step-pattern:

> Its pattern is clearly obtained from the very 'step-dame Studie' that the sonnet goes on to compare with a bullying tyrant. It thus ascends by perfect doubled-up footsteps through the sequence 'love – pleasure – reading – knowledge – pity' to reach the climactic term 'grace,' its clear progression by graduated 'staiers' to a 'toppe' plainly emphasized by diction, phrasing, rhythm, and a line structure. (Sokol 136)

Sokol describes the use of *gradatio* as a "bullying tyrant" because of its pattern in the first quatrain. Other critics such as Gordon Braden read "Sonnet 1" as Sidney's attempt at breaking away from the Petrarchan tradition. Braden writes, "As an artistic manifesto, Sidney's famous poem seems to announce England's new poetic beginning as a dramatic break with the past. What in Petrarch was ostensibly between him and his lady is here transposed into a literary *agon*, an explicit instance of the anxiety of influence – indeed, it would appear, specifically the influence of Petrarch" (Braden 259). There is an important parallel made clear by the poet-speaker in the first sonnet. The speaker is trying desperately to break away from Petrarchan conventions as he admits that he has sought Petrarchan conventions to woo and entice his beloved:

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[5] See B.J. Sokol's "Figures of Repetition in Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* and in the Scenic Form of *Measure for Measure*," for an insightful analysis of Sidney's use of the rhetorical device *gradatio*.

> I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe,
> Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertain;
> Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow
> Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburnt brain. (I.5-8)

The poet-speaker begins the sonnet in a state of dejection. He wrestles with Petrarchanism and cannot find himself within that battle. Similar to the rejection he suffers throughout the sonnet sequence, the first sonnet of the sequence begins with the rejection he faces as an imitator. The image of his "sunburnt brain" (8) represents Sidney's parody of Petrarchan images. Petrarchan imagery often compares beauty with sunlight. Sidney depicts the speaker of "Sonnet 1" as having been damaged by looking into the conventional beauty of Petrarchan poetry. Not only does the speaker of the poem become damaged by Petrarchan poetry, but also the speaker is pained by the rejection he experiences by Stella.

Heather Dubrow analyzes Sidney's sonnet sequence as an example of his own political and aesthetic problems being projected onto his conflicts with mistresses and sexuality in general. She writes,

> [I]f Stella is part of the solution to the faults of Petrarchanism, she is also, of course, part of the challenge to those faults; if she is constructed as the decisive rejoinder to those who condemn that discourse, she repeatedly condemns it herself. Just as Sidney's internal conflicts about a range of aesthetic and social issues are deflected onto dramatic encounters between Astrophil and courts wits or Astrophil and other poets, so they are projected onto the interplay between Stella and Astrophil. (114)

Ironically, women have been the object of torture since the original pursuit of knowledge in Genesis in the story of Eve and the apple. However, knowledge is an experience that the speaker

wants Stella to receive, only if it gives her knowledge of his pain. Sidney is playing with the Petrarchan conceit of the male-speaker's fantasy of possibly changing the mistress's mind. Simultaneously, Stella receives a reading lesson in both Astrophil's pain and how to interpret Petrarchan poetry. She is not even afforded her own sense of pleasure in understanding the Petrarchan conceit with which she is presented. Instead, she learns to read the Petrarchan conceit as knowledge of Astrophil's pain. Stella's pleasure in these lines is meant to remind her of the pain she has caused Astrophil.

The mixture of pain and pleasure is also accompanied by the mixture of sadism and masochism between the male poet and his source of pain and inspiration – Stella. The poet-speaker may also be in a turbulence of pain and pleasure that results from writing within a lyric tradition that precedes the speaker. The speaker's want for inspiration and a new creation is trapped within the sonnet's highly regular verse form of iambic pentameter. Sidney's choice to begin the sequence with a sonnet of alexandrines demonstrates his interest in adding more to the form instead of being constricted by it. Catherine Bates writes, "The opening sonnet of *Astrophil and Stella* – sets the pace for the whole of the sequence that follows. Written in alexandrines, it departs from the ten-syllable line that, by Sidney's time, was the accepted norm for the sonnet" (Bates 13). The speaker of the poem is wrestling with Petrarchanism as a form that he cannot make his own. Sidney's attempt at innovating the form with alexandrine verses may be read as an attempt to go beyond Petrarchan expectations. However, even after increasing the meters and the syllables, he is still not able to find meaning in the words and conventions he uses.

"Sonnet 1" and two Songs from the sequence display the speaker's masochistic tendencies which transform into sadism. The speaker's sadism is evident in the way that he focuses on the vulnerability of Stella's body as it is represented as open to his invasion or

conquest. The poet-speaker's relationship to his own pain has meaning that has not yet been put into words. The sonnet ends with a cluster of images that breaks away from the poem's previous regularity: "Thus great with child to speak, and helpless in my throes, / Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite, / 'Fool,' said my muse to me; 'look in thy heart, and write' (I.12-14). The poet-speaker tries to imagine literal embodiments of pain: self-inflicted pain and images of childbirth.[6] He realizes there is nothing left for him but agon as his inspiration to create poetry. What kind of pleasure is being experienced by the poet's misappropriation of the birthing experience? Sidney's lyrics present an image that is disturbing to the reader's imagination. The speaker depicts himself in a state of pain that will result in the creation of something new. This scene deviates from Petrarchan conventions dramatically. In fact, Sidney re-locates his muse from an outward female presence and instead places his muse within himself. His creation becomes self-reliant, rather than reliant on a woman who has rejected him.

Sidney and Coterie Audiences

Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* must be contextualized within the political and socioeconomic reality of early modern England. Arthur Marotti carefully maps the way Sidney was conscious of the coterie audience amongst whom he was circulating the sonnet sequence. Additionally, Marotti argues that Sidney's relationship to coterie audiences connects to certain aesthetic decisions Sidney made in his poetry. Sidney mills different genres and traditions mostly through his imitations of Petrarchan sonnets and often his experimentation with Petrarchan conceits. Marotti offers insight into the sonnet sequence as a form and suggests that sonnet

[6] There is a large body of criticism that addresses Sidney's choice to invoke imagery of pregnancy and childbirth. B.J. Sokol reads the birth imagery as contrasting with the poem's earlier use of *gradatio*: "The extravagant energy of this imagery conveys a sense of urgency that belies the rationale of the poetic project given in the initial measured *gradatio,* merely to obtain love by means of an orderly, step-by-step process. The sonnet's last images especially evince the uncontrollable force and great strain involved in a true poem's, or true loves, bringing forth" (Sokol 136).

sequences must be studied as poetry that is intertextual with its historical circumstance and with other poets and productions of writing. He writes,

> In the case of English sonnet sequences, it is not sufficient to consider their formal properties or their places either in the canon of particular authors or in the literary history of sonnet collections from Dante and Petrarch through the High Renaissance. One must also deal with the social, economic, and political realities of late Elizabethan England with those cultural codes implicit in both the life and literature of the time. (Marotti 397)

Sidney's relationship to the coterie audience is imbedded throughout the sequence of the poem itself. Marotti uses the terms "metapoem" and "metacommunicative" to describe the unique way Sidney relates to his coterie audience. Marotti explains that the metapoem and metacommunication are evident in the constant transformations of sonnet forms in his essay, "Love is Not Love: Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences and the Social Order." Marotti writes, "Sidney stressed the coterie character of his sonnet sequence by emphasizing its metapoetic and metacommunicative features, extending in a new way the literary self-consciousness of his circle. He explicitly treated within the verse itself the proper style, content, and originality, and method of interpreting love sonnets; he called attention to the fact that he was presenting, parodying, and commenting upon traditional forms" (Marotti 406). Marotti then goes on to list the forms and genres of love sonnets with which Sidney plays throughout the sequence to highlight the popular forms of poetry with which the coterie audience would have been familiar. Reading Sidney's sonnets and songs as metapoetic helps readers understand that his pleasure comes from sharing knowledge and poetry exclusively with male readers.

My research on Sidney's relationship with his coterie audience finds support in Marotti's historical analysis and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's lens on male homosociality. Sedgwick establishes a new means of interpreting gender relations and politics between men and women through the examination of men's relationships with each other. Sedgwick argues that "the emerging pattern of male friendship, mentorship, entitlement, rivalry, and hetero- and homosexuality was an intimate and shifting relation to class; and that no element of that pattern can be understood outside of its relation to women and the gender system as a whole" (Sedgwick 1).

The coterie represents a privileged communication between male poets and male readers circulating and boasting about ways to represent women in poetry and often women in pain or torment. Sedgwick's definition of homosocial desire usefully expands what the coterie poet and audience were receiving from each other – pleasure at the expense of women in pain in the male imagination. However, Sidney's private communication with coterie audiences circulates the pleasure he takes in the pain the speaker receives. Hence, Sidney may be one of the only male poets to use the coterie reader's experience as a means of fulfilling a masochistic pleasure through the knowledge that Astrophil's pain cannot be matched by any other male poet's description of pain.

Sidney's "Sonnet 15" presents a literal confrontation between the speaker of the poem and the Petrarchan sonnet itself:

> You that do search for every purling spring
> Which from the ribs of old Parassus flows,
> And every flower, not sweet perhaps, which grows
> Near thereabouts, into your poesy wring (XV.1-4)

Sidney's communication between the poet and poetry itself allows for the male audience to share in his knowledge of the form and also to begin to participate in a criticism of the Petrarchan form:

> You that poor Petrarch's long deceased woes
> With newborn sighs and denizened wit do sing:
> You take wrong ways; those far-fet helps be such
> As do bewray a want of inward touch, (7-10)

Sidney's speaker criticizes the Petrarchan sonnet as an artificial form – he cannot find himself through the act of imitating another poet. Instead, the speaker is relocating knowledge to be in the center of man. Heather Dubrow has worked to identify passages of *Astrophil and Stella* that function as anti-Petrarchan. She writes that, "Anti-Petrarchanism permits a related solution to Sidney's concerns about dependence. Attributing to sonneteers an unseemly reliance on the work of others, he implies that they, like Cupid, are submissive children, displacing his own putative loss of autonomy onto them. In so doing he has it both ways, implicitly assuming multiple roles" (Dubrow 113). Sidney's use of Anti-Petrarchanism suggests his resistance to the form and his resistance to representing Stella free of Astrophil's torment. There is arguably social merit in Sidney's public refutation of the Petrarchan convention to demonstrate his strength as a male poet who is able to dismiss conventions and craft love poetry that has its own unique voice. Dubrow also uses the term "contamination" (112) to describe what Sidney is trying to avoid when using Petrarchanism: "Criticizing Petrarchanism and selected other stylistic modes allows him to localize the dangers he apprehends, to contain the contagion, thus implying that other forms of language, whether they be the honest speech of native poets or the way he now writes in contrast to the way he once did, are uncontaminated by those dangers" (Dubrow 112). Sidney attempts to exterminate Stella as a means of exterminating the contagion that is the Petrarchan

convention. His poetry demonstrates an anxiety of being dominated by something, whether a literary genre, or precursor, or a woman more powerful than the poet himself.

This analysis is only a slight degree away from presenting the relationship between Sidney and his audience as a homo-eroticized transaction. The interior space is turned into pain for Stella while male interiority is sanctified by the poetry shared and read between men. Men sharing pleasure together helps the male poet recover from the pain of being rejected by a woman. As Marotti observes "He thus invited his sophisticated readers to exercise their critical faculties to such a degree that the whole work must have begun to take the shape of a metapoem, that is a literary work whose metacommunicative character made the relationship of poet and audience more important than either the ostensible amorous subject-matter or its sociopolitical coordinates" (Marotti 406).

The Room as Tortured Female Interiority: The Topoi of Torture in Sidney and Donne

Sidney's "Second Song" and Donne's "The Apparition" are two poems that feature the mistress's bedroom as the space in which she is tortured. The bedroom can also be read as a metaphor for the mistress's private interior spaces. My comparison of the two poems highlights a pattern of the mistress's bedroom functioning as a scene or location of torture within this subgenre of Petrarchan style poetry. My reading argues that the typifying elements of the mistress's bedroom become dominated by the male poet-speaker. Elaine Scarry's theory of torture's totalization of pain guides my reading of the mistress's bedroom as another agent of pain for the poem's mistress. Scarry writes, "The torture room is not just the setting in which the torture occurs; it is not just the space that happens to house the various instruments used for

beating and burning and producing electric shock. It is itself literally converted into another weapon, into an agent of pain" (Scarry 40). The poet-speakers arguably treat the mistress's room as a weapon that turns her whole surroundings into an agent of pain. Scarry's theoretical framework encourages readers to challenge the body of knowledge created by the objectification of women's pain in these poems. The following passage of Scarry's book is the most explicit in its description of the room in which torture takes place: "The room, both in its structure and its content, is converted into a weapon, de-converted, undone, made to demonstrate that everything is a weapon, the objects themselves, and with them the fact of civilization, are annihilated; there is no wall, no window, no door, no bathtub, no refrigerator, no chair, no bed" (Scarry 41).

Scarry emphasizes throughout her book that the aim of the torturer is to turn everything in the victim's world into a stimulant of pain, "[s]o the torturers, like pain itself, continually multiply their resources and means of access until the room and everything in it becomes a giant externalized map of the prisoner's feelings" (Scarry 55). Close reading "The Second Song" and "The Apparition" through the lens of Scarry makes it clear that the male-speaker's objective is to totalize the woman's world into one of agony. Scarry's theory of torture also gives readers of this poetry a framework for the ways that we can interpret the two poems in conversation: torture totalizes the dissolution of the victim's reality. As Scarry writes, "the torturer dramatizes the disintegration of the world, the obliteration of consciousness that is happening within the prisoner himself" (Scarry 38). Sidney and Donne similarly treat the female body in pain at the expense of an inner and outer world colliding with one another:

> This dissolution of the boundary between inside and outside gives rise to a fourth aspect of the felt experience of physical pain, an almost obscene conflation of private and public. It brings with it all the solitude of absolute privacy with none

of its safety, all the self-exposure of the utterly public with none of its possibility for camaraderie or shared experience. (Scarry 53)

The poet-speaker's objective is to turn the woman's freedom and choices against her. The mistress's choice in rejecting the poet-speaker or her choice to love another suitor becomes the reason for her pain. The mistress of both poems is stripped of her agency and freedom.

Sidney's "Second Song" arguably represents the consequence of the speaker's failed conquest. The speaker of the poem is literally hovering over Stella's sleeping body. The plot rewires the conventional kiss poem as one of psychological torture. Here the poem depicts Sidney's Astrophil as accessing Stella's body without her willing consent. The poem represents Stella's non-consent through the use of a blazon of her sleeping body:

Since sweet sleep her eyes hath charmed
The two only darts of Love,
Now will I with that boy prove
Some play while he is disarmed. (5-8)

There are questions about the epistemological nature of female dismemberment that may be addressed in the context of an analysis of the Petrarchan convention. The blazon is a poetic mode using figurative language to describe the physical parts of the beloved's body, compartmentalizing female body parts within the poem. As critics have argued, the blazon is a violent and possibly pornographic process.[7] Jonathan Sawday writes:

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as we have seen in the poetry of Donne and his contemporaries, a strange fantasy of anatomical surrender seems to have, briefly, flourished….The blazon as a poetic form – usually understood as a richly ornate and mannered evocation of idealized female beauty rendered into its

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[7] Jonathan Sawday's *The Body Emblazoned* offers a history of public anatomizations of women in drama and in medical discourse. This analysis of the literary function of blazons arguably may be enhanced by understanding them as acts or expressions of female torture.

> constituent parts – may seem worlds apart from the corporeal reality of an anatomy theater….[However,] the blazon formed a significant part of the culture of dissection which produced the partitioned body. But the importance of the blazon lay in its partitioning not of any indiscriminate body, but of a specifically female corpse. (191)

In “Second Song,” Stella’s body is left vulnerable to the actions of both Cupid and Astrophil with the result of Astrophil playing with Stella’s sleeping body. Lines 9-12 read:

> Her tongue, waking, still refuseth,
> Giving frankly niggard no;
> Now will I attempt to know
> What no her tongue, sleeping, useth. (9-12)

The “Second Song” uses both the blazon and what will shortly become the kiss poem problematically. It is acknowledged by Astrophil that Stella’s sleeping body and tongue figuratively and literally represent a refusal of his advance. However, Sidney refigures Stella’s sleeping body into a conquest. Structurally, Sidney transforms the song into another weapon of pain: “Sleeping, grants a free resort. / Now will I invade the fort” (14-15). Sidney literalizes the conquest of invading Stella through the artifice of good form, using a pleasant rhyme scheme and a setting that distract from the meaning and content of the poem itself. Sidney’s use of the blazon is only meant to highlight the relationship of power that exists between the poet-speaker and Stella’s body. Theodora Janowski describes the function of the blazon as she writes, “Thus the descriptions of the woman’s body or face in love poetry usually focus on how the woman is ‘beautiful’ and, in doing so, acknowledge the male lover’s luck or skill in securing a prize that has a culturally-determined aesthetic ‘value’ (Janowski 83). The objectification of the mistress’s body reflects the skill of the poet-speaker as a poet and as a possessor of the mistress’s beauty.

Sidney's "Second Song" also features a problematic relationship between the speaker and Stella's sleeping body. The speaker secretly watches over and describes Stella's sleeping body. He contemplates his plan to kiss her:

> Since sweet sleep her eyes hath charmed,
> The only two darts of love:
> Now will I that boy prove
> Some play, while he is disarmed. (5-8)

Using the metaphor that her eyes are "The only two darts of love," he intends to prove to Cupid "Some play, while he is disarmed." The speaker's desire to "play" with Stella's sleeping body represents a violation of her privacy and autonomy. He depicts himself as proud and skillful in avoiding "the only two darts of love." He thereby not only has invaded Stella's privacy, but also is celebrating the conquest of being present without her knowing. Catherine Bates reads Astrophil as a man who attempts both to dominate Stella's body and to master his text. Bates writes, "The courtly lover might be slave to his mistress, but the poet is master of the text. The lady before whom the love prostrates himself is but the creature of the poet's pen and the enslavement that is the poems' theme is but testimony to the writer's mastery of their form" (Bates 2). My argument aligns with Bates's identification of the poet-speaker as "master of the text" as he describes Stella in a vulnerable position that shows he is in control.[8]

"Second Song" offers a second distinct problem: the uncertainty of whether Astrophil actually succeeds in "stealing a kiss" (line 22). Regardless of Astrophil's success in kissing Stella, I read his efforts as an attempt to dominate Stella's body. My analysis sharply differs from critics who do not read "Song 2" as an invasion of Stella's privacy and safety. For example,

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[8] I also agree with those critics who interpret Astrophil's efforts to steal a kiss as a possible example of a rape fantasy. See Melissa Sanchez's "In My Selfe The Smart I Try: Female Promiscuity in *Astrophil and Stella*," as she distinguishes her reading of Stella as an agent of her own sexuality and ability to feel pleasure. Sanchez acknowledges the large body of criticism that reads the "Second Song" as a rape fantasy. She writes, "Stella neither expresses nor responds to desire, so Astrophil's sexual excitement becomes part of the 'rape scenario' that critics have agreed structures the sequence as a whole" (Sanchez 15).

Melissa E. Sanchez reads the bedroom scene of "Song 2" as representative of Stella's choice or invitation for Astrophil to be there. Sanchez makes a convincing argument that there is a trend amongst critics to figure Stella as a woman who is silenced:

> It is usual to see Stella as the unresponsive object of these lustful appeals, and the second song, where Astrophil steals a kiss while she sleeps, has been central to such a reading. Unconscious, Stella literalizes the passive and impervious role to which scholars, treating her as an Elizabethan replica of Petrarch's always already dead Laura, have assigned her, Asleep. Stella neither expresses nor responds to desire, so Astrophil's sexual excitement becomes part of the 'rape scenario' that critics have agreed structures the sequence as a whole. But however much Astrophil may fantasize in the second song that he will 'invade the fort' (AS, 11.15), his fear of Stella's 'just and high disdaine' stops him (AS, ii.18). Certainly he could overcome Stella physically if he wished. (Sanchez 15)

Critically, I find the framework Sanchez uses interesting when looking into Stella's sexual agency in the songs and sonnet sequence. Sanchez writes, "The critical disavowal of Stella's sexuality…emerges from the unexamined conviction that carnal impulses must be contained and redeemed by romance and commitment" (Sanchez 4). However, Sanchez's study of the poem's affirmation of Stella's sexuality becomes problematized if we read through the theoretical lens of torture I implement in my analysis. Readers cannot easily argue that the "Second Song" represents a consensual sexual transaction between Astrophil and Stella's sleeping body. Indeed, the speaker comments on Stella's tongue making the motion of the word 'no' (line 10) which demonstrates that, even while asleep, she is not inviting Astrophil to have access to her body.

Further, it is difficult for interpretations of Sidney's songs and the sonnet sequence to get around the depiction of Astrophil as trespassing upon Stella's private space. Arguably, the bedroom becomes converted into another conquest: a space that Astrophil has successfully invaded. Not only Stella's body, but also her room become objectified through the poet-speaker's trespassing and male-gaze. My analysis of the bedroom scene in the "Second Song" is supported by Scarry's critical writing on the conversion of the torture victim's space or room into another weapon. Stella's room changes into something that is possessed by Astrophil. She writes:

> The room, both in its structure and its content, is converted into a weapon, deconverted, undone. Made to participate in the annihilation of the prisoners, made to demonstrate that everything is a weapon, the objects themselves, and with them the fact of civilization, are annihilated: there is no wall, no window, no door, no bathtub, no refrigerator, no chair, no bed. (Scarry 41)

Scarry's description of the prisoner's room helps readers see how the invasion of Stella's room is another experience of pain for her: "Now will I invade the fort; / Cowards love with loss rewardeth" (lines 16-17). Astrophil does not indicate that Stella is in a state of pain as he gazes over her sleeping body. However, if readers see Stella as a torture victim through Scarry's writing on torture, then it becomes clear that as Stella's tongue involuntarily speaks the word "no" it stands for her refusal to be used by Astrophil. Astrophil's desire to kiss or take something from Stella is evident as he observes that those who do no act on their love will receive nothing. His sexual desire is clear and problematic as he stands over Stella's sleeping body, having already entered into her privileged and personal space. I interpret the unclear ending of "Second Song" as representing that Astrophil has already crossed the boundary of intruding upon Stella's

privacy: “O sweet kiss – but ah, she is waking, / Louring beauty chastens me” (lines 25-26). The disruption between “kiss” and “but ah” indicates that Stella is waking. He does not want to be caught in the act of kissing or watching her, which indicates that his violation of her space is not welcome and is shameful. The invasion of Stella’s bedroom arguably functions metaphorically as the loss of Stella’s agency and control in the song.

I read Sidney’s “Second Song” as in conversation with Donne’s “The Apparition,” thereby shedding light on how Donne’s vision of the mistress’s bedroom arguably influenced Sidney’s song. Close reading the two poems together allows the reader to see how these two poems use the mistress’s bedroom as the site of her punishment and torture. My comparison also underscores how Sidney and Donne both use Petrarchan conventions to create similar scenarios in which the poet-speakers haunt the women while asleep in their beds.

“The Apparition” is told through the male gaze much like Sidney’s “Second Song” is told from Astrophil’s perspective. In Donne’s “The Apparition,” the speaker forces the reader to imagine him as a spirit haunting the female body in bed and while asleep. The speaker’s status as rejected lover is the cause of his “death,” thereby leading him to terrorize the woman who is responsible for his pain. Marotti comments on the Petrarchan conventions of the poem: “In this literalization of poetic conventions, sexual refusal is equated with the Petrarchan mistress’s scorn that murders the vulnerable lover” (Marotti 92). Sidney scholars note, too, the narrative arc of the scorned lover who seeks to pay back the pain the mistress has caused him. Nona Fienberg’s description of Sidney’s poet-speaker may be applied to my analysis of Donne’s speaker in “The Apparition.” Fienberg writes, “The poet responds pre-emptively to the threat women pose by dismembering his beloved in order to create his poetic corpus” (Fienberg 9).

Donne’s speaker announces:

> And that thou think'st thee free
> From all solicitation from me,
> Then shall my ghost come to thy bed,
> And thee, feigned vestal, in worse arms shall see (2-5)

The two poems transform the mistress's domestic space and the privacy of her body into instruments of pain and interiorized torture. Interestingly, the speaker in "The Apparition" hopes to turn the female body into his own ghostly image: "Bathed in a cold quicksilver sweat wilt lie / A verier ghost than I" (12-13). There is a development in the transparency of the torture from Sidney's poem to Donne's depiction of a man haunting a female body. Both poems feature mistresses not able to escape the torment of the men who haunt them. Donne makes literal the speaker's desire to punish and spiritually torment the mistress of the poem. The speaker ends the poem saying, "I had rather thou shouldst painfully repent, / Than by my threatenins rest still innocent" (16-17).

There are many elements of Donne's "The Apparition" that represent the poem's preoccupation with the poet-speaker's desire for revenge on the unfaithful mistress. One of the major differences between Sidney's "Second Song" and Donne's "The Apparition" is Donne's speaker is hungry for revenge. Stella has not betrayed the poet-speaker in the "Second Song." Donne's speaker experiences pleasure in his intention to haunt his former mistress as a means of punishing her for her infidelity. He also shames the mistress in the lyrics of the poem. The poet-speaker hyperbolizes his feelings of anger at being betrayed through the plot of haunting the unfaithful mistress. The imagery of "The Apparition" is more graphic and horrifying, arguably representing how the speaker wishes to dominate the mistress for eternity. Shame functions as a rhetorical tool of torture in "The Apparition." The speaker says, "And then, poor aspen wretch, neglected thou" (11). The speaker then goes on to depict the effect that shame has on the mistress's body through visual terms of her sweating body leaking with guilt and fear as she

mirrors the likeness of a ghost. The mistress of "The Apparition" fully experiences the shame and torment of her infidelity. She is awake and is forced to suffer what the speaker wants her to feel. Gail Paster contextualizes shame in early modern England as having been pathologized for its physical effects on the body:

> The point to be made here is that when the early modern subject became aware of her or his body (however we wish to problematize that process) and when that boy came more and more formally under the auspices of specific cultural regimes, the body in question was always a humoral entity. (Paster 10)

"The Apparition" features what would be considered medical knowledge in the time of the English Renaissance. The mistress's excretion of sweat and shivering represents the consequential loss of control she has over her body.

The speaker's revenge fantasy plays out in the poem's use of its sonnet structure as a weapon that terrorizes the mistress of the poem. The rhyme scheme of the poem reveals the speaker's desire in the mistress knowing that she cannot escape the speaker's revenge fantasy. In fact, the speaker's desire for revenge is explained by the speaker as if the mistress has killed him:

> When by thy scorn, O murderess, I am dead,
> And that thou think'st thee free
> From all solicitation from me,
> Then shall my ghost come to thy bed,
> And thee, feigned vestal, in worse arms shall see (1-5)

Framing the mistress as a "murderess" is meant to parody the conceit of the Petrarchan lady's virginal goodness and innocence. Unlike in Sidney's poem, the mistress of "The Apparition" is depicted as a force that has threatened and harmed the poet-speaker. "Dead" and "bed" rhyme to add violent context to the setting of the bedroom as the place where the mistress will be haunted to death. The speaker uses ghost imagery to haunt the mistress physically and psychologically.

He has been rejected by the mistress, and revenge is the only way he may regain his subjectivity as a man and as an author. Donne ends the poem by saying, "I had rather thou shouldst painfully repent, / Than by my threatenings rest still innocent" (16-17). The speaker desires a painful repenting while also making the threat of his poem explicit. He fantasizes about making his rejected mistress politically powerless as the consequence of her infidelity. Donald L. Guss observes:

> These lyrics treat the lover's death for unfulfilled love as though it were a prosaic murder, warning the lady for example, that she will have trouble disposing of her lover's corpse. By thus establishing the lady's guilt, they fit the theme of amorous death to the theory that hard-hearted ladies are punished after death, saying, for example, that when the poet has died for love, should he go to hell he will have the consolation of seeing his lady suffer there. (Guss, 317)

Guss notes the retaliatory nature of Donne's poem as he focuses on the poem's depiction of the mistress "punished after death" (317) and the image of her suffering in hell. The poem makes a correlation between the mistress's torture and the speaker's revenge. The speaker's pleasure is problematized in this poem, because he seeks revenge on the woman who took sexual pleasure away from him. Guss writes, "Donne, more than any of his predecessors, visualizes the scene of the haunting and comprehends the feelings of the lady as, unprepared and unsupported, she suffers a horrible visitation. And, more clearly than the Petrarchans, he develops the emotional turmoil, the exacerbation and the jealous anguish, of a lover who hopes to avenge himself on his beloved after death" (319). Arguably, the poet speaker is transforming the mistress's bedroom into a simulation of hell. The speaker does not want to wait to see the mistress in hell for he is impatient and wishes to turn her into "A verier ghost than I" (13).

Sidney's Falsification of Language

"Song Four" of Sidney's sonnet sequence features an invitation for Stella to have sex with the speaker-poet. My analysis of the song focuses on the poet-speaker's attempt to "uncreate" Stella's world through the falsification of logic and language in the poem. In the final four verses of "Sonnet 63," Astrophil falsifies logic and language through the use of double negatives. Nona Fienberg writes in her study of "Sonnet 63" that Astrophil willfully misinterprets the rules of grammar and uses the double negative to play a trick on Stella (Fienberg 13). Astrophil comments on language saying:

> But grammar's force with sweet success confirm,
> For grammar says, - oh this, dear Stella, weigh, -
> For grammar says, - to grammar who says nay? –
> That in one speech two negatives affirm! (63.11-14)

The ending of "Sonnet 63" represents an "unmaking' of the world for Stella. The term "unmaking" comes from Scarry's study of torture as a structure that is used to remove the victim's agency from every aspect of their experience. Scarry writes:

> We will see that this same mime of uncreating reappears consistently throughout all the random details of torture – not only in relation to verbal constructs (e.g., sentences, names) but also in relation to material artifacts (e.g., a chair, a cup) and mental objects (i.e. the objects of consciousness). Thus it eventually becomes clear that this is not simply a repeated element within the large framing event but is the framing event itself. (Scarry 20)

Stella's experience is framed by Astrophil's falsification of language. The drama plays out as Stella refuses Astrophil's invitation to have sex with him through repetition. The narrative arc of the song is Astrophil trying to persuade Stella through euphonious language, vivid imagery, and

repetition. Astrophil's and Stella's refrain ends each stanza: "Take me to thee, and thee to me. / No, no, no, my dear, let be" (5-6). Nona Fienberg finds that the repetition of Stella's refusal highlights her ability to be vocal and maintain her subjectivity in the poem. She writes, "By the end of the song, she no longer gently refuses his love, but instead uses the same words to enter a different plea….Stella's personality finds the space to grow" (Fienberg 14). The song ends with Stella speaking her refusal. The objectification of Stella's sexuality constantly loops throughout the song. Stella's world is arguably unmade in this song as her voice does not stop Astrophil's pursuit. Her voice may be read as the sound of the song rather than as an example of her agency. The repetition of Stella's refusal arguably represents the unmaking of her voice and her agency. Scarry writes:

> The sense of external agency is objectified in the systematic assimilation of shelter and civilization into the torturer's collection of weapons. But inside and outside and the two forms of agency ultimately give way to and merge with one another: confession and exercises are a form of external as well as internal agency since one's own body and voice now no longer belong to oneself; and the conversion of the physical and cultural setting into torture instruments is internal as well as external since it acts as an image of the impact of pain on human consciousness. (Scarry 53)

Stella's voice, body, and language arguably do not belong to her in "Song 4." Instead, she is the victim of both internal and external torture because of Astrophil's manipulative use of language.

"Song Four" also uses carpe diem arguments and imagery as Astrophil tries to persuade Stella to have sex with him. Stella's agency and reservations are being used against her. Astrophil sings to Stella:

> Niggard Time threats, if we miss
> This large offer of our bliss:
> Long stay ere he grant the same:
> Sweet then, while each thing doth frame (29-32)

Astrophil presents his own logic as to why Stella should submit to his sexual advances. Stella is reminded that her refusal comes at a price. She cannot enjoy “bliss” (30) and her own temporary sweetness, if she does not act now. Sidney is not the only poet to personify Time as a character that takes away the youth and attractiveness of the mistress of the poem. Time is characteristically represented as a violent force frequently represented in carpe diem poems: “Time threats” (29).

Carpe Diem’s Conversion of Time into Pain

The lyric subgenre of carpe diem poetry has been used by early modern English poets to objectify women’s bodies and sexuality. Its narrative arc is a male suitor in pursuit of a mistress with whom he wishes to have sex. However, the subgenre requires the lady to embody such typical gender roles as coyness, virtue, and youthful innocence. Nigel Smith describes the carpe diem subgenre as follows:

> It has been argued that this ‘parodic deconstruction of a cluster of inherited literary forms – the lover’s complaint, the blazon, the *carpe diem* exercise’ – transcends the limitations of these forms and their clichés to produce a radically new, outspoken, and vigorous evocation of sexual intimacy. Elsewhere this effect has been described as ‘literally, an expansion’, pushing time, space and the abilities of praise poetry beyond its customary limits. The poem thus refers to a tradition of coyness, in the sense of an exceeding of Protestant teaching on the

> marital sexual 'mean,' the reconciliation of the two extremes in Herrick, and the case for a feminine exception in Phillips. (Smith 104)

Are these types of gender performance natural for the female figures in carpe diem poetry, or are they actually defensive roles meant to resist the violent pursuit of the male poet? In order to pose possible answers to this question, I make gestures to different examples of carpe diem poetry that feature poet-speakers using violent language and the recurring imagery of time and death to manipulate the lady into having sex with him. I examine two specific poems that embody carpe diem conventions that represent female torture. Thomas Carew's "Song: Persuasion to Enjoy" is a carpe diem poem that uses horrific language to terrorize the lady into enjoying her sexuality before age and time devour her body. My analysis also studies Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress," a carpe diem poem that crystallizes the use of torture as the consequence for refusing the poet-speaker's sexual advance. This is by no means a total view of the range and diversity of carpe diem poems written in the early modern period. These three specific poems offer strong examples of female pain and punishment for refusing to have sex with the poems' poet-speakers. Cavalier poets such as Robert Herrick, Ben Johnson, and Sir John Suckling can also be studied for their representation of torture in their carpe diem poems.[9]

Early modern carpe diem poems represent the poet-speaker's desire to unmake the mistress's world. Conventions of carpe diem poetry, including their use of natural imagery, hyperbolic depictions of the female's beauty, and persuasive rhetoric, become tools for the male speaker to weaponize the mistress's world against herself. Thomas Carew's carpe diem poems force the mistress to choose to have sex or to suffer from old age and neglect because of her lost beauty and youth. Carew establishes his own topoi of female torture in his carpe diem poetry. In

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[9] See for example, the following carpe diem poems for their use of female torture: Sir Ben Johnson's "Song: To Celia," Robert Herrick's "Corinna's Going A-Maying," "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time," and "To the Rose. Song," and Sir John Suckling's "That none beguiled be by time's quick flowing."

“Song: Persuasions to Enjoy,” Carew converts the tradition of carpe diem into a setting of psychological torture in which the pursued female is encaged by either time or by the poet himself. The poem’s plot is whether or not Celia will “enjoy” her body, before it is too late:

> If the quick spirits in your eye
> Now languish, and anon must die;
> If every sweet, and every grace
> Must fly from that forsaken face;
> Then, Celia, let us reap our joys
> Ere Time such goodly fruit destroys.
>
> Or if that golden fleece must grow
> Forever, free from aged snow;
> If those bright suns must know no shade,
> Nor your fresh beauties ever fade;
> Then fear not, Celia, to best
> What, still being gathered, still must grow.
> Thus, either Time his sickle brings
> In vain, or else in vain his wings. (1-14)

Carew’s language remains euphonious throughout the poem. The AABB rhyme scheme is meant to mask the poet-speaker’s intention of using Celia’s body. Carew uses the pastoral mode to depict Celia’s body as “goodly fruit” (6). The poem’s conceit is that Celia can access paradise, only if she has sex with the poet-speaker. She becomes an object in the pastoral mode that can be reaped by time: “Time his sickle brings” (13). Reading this poem through Elaine Scarry’s theoretical lens of torture allows readers to interpret the poem’s representation of Celia’s loss of agency as painful. The poet-speaker anticipates Celia’s hesitation and prepares to dismember her through the trope that Time will waste her youth, if she does not have sex with the speaker. The poem is much less an invitation than a warning of the consequences that Celia is destined to face if she does not give herself to the poet. Celia’s mind and body become the origin and destination of her torture. If she refuses to give herself to the poet for “enjoyment,” then “Ere Time such goodly fruit destroys” (1). Scarry’s framework focuses on the victim’s sense of self as the reason

or origin of her pain. The poet-speaker's goal is to force Celia to betray her sense of self and not hesitate to give her body to the speaker. Readers may see this as a moment of "self-betrayal"; in Scarry's words: "This unseen sense of self-betrayal in pain, objectified in forced confession, is also objectified in forced exercises that make the prisoner's body an *active* agent, an actual cause of his pain" (Scarry 47). Scarry goes on to detail what the victim experiences, "Regardless of the cause of his suffering (disease, burns, torture, or malfunctioning of the pain network itself), the person in great pain experiences his own body as the agent of his agony" (Scarry 47). The poet-speaker's desperation is evident in his hyperbolizing of time's effect on Celia's body. Carew depicts Time as a grim reaper who is holding a scythe above Celia waiting to carve her if she does not have sex with the speaker: "Thus, either Time his sickle brings / In vain, or else in vain his wings" (13-14). Time is personified as a patient attacker waiting to assault Celia. Celia is susceptible to violence from two different masculine sources: the poet and Time. Time's sickle is phallocentric and is meant to be a consequence for Celia that will be more terrifying than if she allows herself to enjoy her youth with the poet. The poet-speaker is operating within the gender system in which Celia is trapped. The poet-speaker is exempt from such female-gendered expectations as chastity, virtue, and virginity. He positions himself in competition with Time as someone who will enjoy Celia's body before she is too old.

Celia is reminded by the poet-speaker that all of her choices will lead her to something that she does not necessarily want. The poet-speaker's weaponization of Celia's agency and the language of the poem dissolve Celia's boundaries of privacy and safety. Time is the first of the two ways that Carew converts the carpe diem tradition into a dissolution of the female subject's reality. The second way he commits this conversion is through the rhetoric, rhyme scheme, and structure of the sonnet form itself. Carew pressures the reader to enjoy the seemingly pleasant

aesthetics of his poem as he relies on rhetorical strategies of euphony and lyrical melody. The song-like meter of iambic tetrameter and the couplet rhyme scheme contribute to the contrast between the sound and content of the poem. Both the reader and Celia are misled by the euphony and lyrical melody into trusting the poet-speaker. The first sestet features three sets of couplets in which the first and third couplet rhyme with ending words that dissolve each other:

> If the quick spirits in your eye
> Now languish, and anon must die …
> Then, Celia, let us reap our joys
> Ere Time such goodly fruit destroys. (1-2,5-6)

The poet-speaker warns Celia that her youth will expire and her physical appearance will fade away. "Eye" is rhymed with "die" pleasantly to remind her that she will not always have control over the way she appears to others. "Joys" rhymes with "destroys" which represents the paradox that Celia is destroyed between her two options. The poet-speaker desires to trap Celia into thinking that having sex with the speaker is better than prioritizing her own choices.

Similar to Donne's "The Apparition," there is a desire for revenge in Carew's "Ingrateful Beauty Threatened" which focuses on the rejected poet-speaker's desire to seek revenge on Celia for having refused him. Celia reoccurs as Carew's victim in several of his poems. Carew's speaker takes his revenge out on her in a violent display that seeks to uncreate Celia, as if she had never existed. "Ingrateful Beauty Threatened" is a strong example of the ways that Carew rewires language to work as a torture device to dissolve Celia's inside and outside world. This poem does not use graphic imagery of haunting the mistress in her bedroom. The violence of this poem is in the speaker's desire to reduce the mistress to nothing, signaled by a forgotten face. Carew does not rely on carpe diem conventions to represent the speaker's desire to inflict pain on the woman. Instead, this poem may act as a response to Celia's refusal to have sex with the

speaker of his carpe diem poems. The poem begins with the speaker reminding Celia that without his poetry no one would think of her:

> Know Celia, since thou art so proud,
> ‘Twas I that gave thee thy renown;
> Thou hadst, in the forgotten crowd
> Of common beauties, lived unknown,
> Had not thy verse exhaled thy name,
> And with it imped the wings of fame. (1-6)

The speaker figures himself as having a God-like creative power that has been betrayed by his creation. Further into the poem, the speaker becomes much more forward in claiming Celia as his property: “That killing power is none of thine, / Thy sweets, thy graces, all are mine” (5-7). Celia’s rejection of the speaker causes the speaker to suffer from having lost his creative authority. He, therefore, needs to remind not only Celia, but also his readership, that what he writes is his property, including her constructed identity, in totality. If he is not able to own Celia sexually, then he is able to own the poetry and lyrics that first created her, and now undo or unmake her. And if she is ever to give herself freely to another, then she is to be permanently reminded to whom she belongs by the very same thing that breathes life into her – Carew’s poetry. Bruce King observes:

> “To My Inconstant Mistress,” “A Deposition from Love,” “Ingrateful Beauty Threatened,” and “To a Lady that Desired I Would Love Her” are sophisticated poems of courtship, but they also threaten retaliation if the poet is injured by his mistress. I have, of course, singled out one theme from Carew’s works, but it is a basic theme, and it is common to his best poems. Take, for example, “Ingrateful Beauty Threatened,” in which the wit functions to keep someone at disadvantage while protecting the speaker against injury. Behind the gallantry of the poem lies a struggle for dominance. Carew warns his mistress that she is merely an average

> woman whom he has picked from the crowd, and that the qualities attributed to her do not exist excerpt in his verse. Having given her social prestige through his poetry, he can also 'uncreate' her if she causes him to doubt her fidelity. (King 541)

King relies on violent terminology to frame the speaker's depiction of Celia as "some woman" (541) that has threatened the speaker's subjectivity. King's argument is that Carew's strength as a poet shines as wit in the depiction of Celia's erasure from language. My reading challenges King's assertion that the speaker is just protecting himself from being injured by Celia. If readers accept Carew's violent imagery as merely representative of his wit, then readers risk objectifying Celia's name and body as elements of the poet's talent. Carew's talent for using wit is problematic because it is bound up in the representation of the speaker's desire to punish and erase Celia. Carew's wit represents the most dramatic destruction of the mistress near the end of the poem: "Tempt me with such affrights no more, / Lest what I made, I uncreate;" (13-14). The poet-speaker "uncreates" Celia's inner and outer world through the uncreation of poetry itself. The torture with which Celia is faced is the reminder that he will remove her presence, even her identity and subjecthood, from language itself.

Andrew Marvell also uses carpe diem conventions in his poem "To His Coy Mistress" in his depiction of a mistress who must choose between her coyness and having sex with the poet-speaker. The narrative arc is similar to Carew's "Song: Persuasion to Enjoy" as it relies on the poet-speaker trying to convince the woman that, if she does not enjoy her youth, she will suffer from both old age and neglect. Marvell's poem employs a narrative arc that is based on the difference in power between the poet-speaker and the female turned into a love-object. Theodora

Janowski studies this narrative arc in early modern English love poetry, paying particular attention to the power dynamic therein:

> This power differential between men and women in the early modern sex/gender system is obvious in the laws regulating marriage and betrothal as well as in the various binaries constructed to explain the relationship between genders, especially in the oft cited 'Self/Other' binaries. These relationships are implicit in the circumstances of male-authored love poetry addressed to a female love-object in which the woman's body is the object/other of the male subject/self's descriptive and erotic fantasies, especially those that contain the poetic figure of the *blazon.* (Janowski 83)

The mistress of the poem resists the poet-speaker's objectification. Janowski reminds readers that male poets asserted their sense of self through objectification of the mistress as the "other." "To His Coy Mistress" represents the mistress's resistance to the speaker's attempt at treating her as a "love-object." Marvell's speaker protects himself from being injured by the mistress of the poem through threatening and horrifying her with images of her body rotting and decomposing in a tomb if she does not have sex with him. The speaker relies on carpe diem conventions to persuade the mistress to accept the dynamic of "Self/Other." The poet-speaker uses horrific imagery to threaten the mistress into succumbing to the typical gender system of carpe diem poetry. Just as Carew's "Song: Persuasion to Enjoy" painfully dissolves his female subject's body, so too does Marvell's poem.

Marvell opens the poem with an echo of carpe diem conventions: "Had we but world enough, and time, / This coyness, lady, were no crime" (1-2). These lines replay the typical plot of the carpe diem poem as the speaker laments that there is only so long that his coy mistress will

remain young and attractive. Jonathan Sawday observes, “Marvell’s poem can only hope to persuade the woman whom it addresses (or threatens)” (240). Additionally, the poem employs rhyming couplets and euphony to mask its threats. “Time” rhymes with “crime,” because the speaker is literally criminalizing the mistress’s coyness as a means to manipulate her into freeing herself of the crime of her agency. The Lady’s inner and outer world have been dissolved into a punishable offence which immediately sets her up to be a victim of Time should she reject the speaker.

The first and last stanza innocuously prepare the Lady for what she will enjoy, if she is to relent her coyness. The middle stanza, though, offers a reminder of what will happen, if she does not give herself to him:

> But at my back I always hear
> Time’s winged chariot hurrying near:
> And yonder all before us lie
> Deserts of vast eternity.
> Thy beauty shall no more be found;
> Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
> My echoing song: then worms shall try
> That long-preserved virginity:
> And your quaint honour turn to dust;
> And into ashes all my lust.
> The grave’s a fine and private place,
> But none, I think, do there embrace. (21-32)

Similar to Carew’s “Song: Persuasion to Enjoy,” the rhyme scheme of Marvell’s poem is tight with ending couplets. The word “try” is in slant rhyme with “virginity” as a means to make something difficult become possible (the mistress’s losing her virginity to the poet-speaker). So, too, there is a dramatic contrast between the euphony of the poem and its harsh and violent imagery. The violent imagery in the poem has inspired a large body of feminist criticism that studies the imagery as the speaker’s desire to maintain gender inequality through domination of women’s bodies. Jankowski writes:

> [T]he praising blazon which describes the woman's beauty – whether part of an epithalamion or a plea for indulgence (like Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress") – does have as its (perhaps not overtly acknowledged) end male penetration/domination of the female body. Thus the trumpeting forth of female beauty becomes a means for effecting male access to the female body, legitimately, or illegitimately. (Jankowski 84)

My reading of the poem pushes Jankowski's reading forward by classifying the speaker's need to enter the female body as not only indicative of the gendered dichotomy of male domination, but also the objectification of the mistress through the representation of her pain as a result of torture. The mistress's body is blazoned in the poem, a poetic form of dismemberment.[10] Marvell's blazon of the mistress is another instrument of pain that prevents the mistress from being represented as a complete subject. The speaker configures her body through the verses: "Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze. / Two hundred to adore each breast: / But thirty thousand to the rest" (13-15). Different parts of the mistress's body become subjected to the violence of the male gaze. Her coyness and agency are stripped from her as her body is broken into pieces that do not belong to her.

The speaker also makes it clear that the mistress's coyness is not merely performative, but rather an effort to preserve her virginity. The poet-speaker converts the Lady's senses into an ineffective apparatus. The poet-speaker pushes conventions and the imagery of time in a more violent direction than Carew. Marvell's poet-speaker torments the Lady by graphically

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[10] See Jankowski's footnote on critics who have studied Marvell's use of the blazon. She references Francis Barker's observation of Marvell's blazon in "To His Coy Mistress," writing, "the delight to be had from dismembering a woman's body….For the literal body is in fragments: it is inscribed in the letter of the text as an inventory of parts, each in turn selected, treated and set aside: 'Thine Eyes,' 'thy Forehead,' 'each Breast,' 'every part,' 'the rest.' Marvell's 'beloved' is disbursed across the text in discrete pieces…for [the body] has no integrity, but [is] merely a principle of disconnectedness of its parts which belongs wholly to the discourse that articulates it according to a serial or spatial dispersal. It is appropriated and uttered within a syntax more reminiscent of taxonomy than of the expectations of love poetry" (86, 88-89).

describing the conversion of her youthfulness into the decaying corpse that she will become. The image is grotesque: "My echoing song: then worms shall try / That long-preserved virginity:" (27-28). The image of the worms is phallocentric and is used to depict the mistress's body being sexually overcome by worms and insects. The worms do not simply run through her body, but specifically they invade her "virginity." The poet-speaker is trying to manipulate her into trusting his vision. The poet-speaker tries to convince the Lady that her coyness is an act of self-betrayal. His false logic is that she prevents herself from experiencing pleasure by remaining coy and not choosing him. The Lady's coyness arguably represents the speaker's own ontological anxiety of death and temporality. If he can access the pleasure of her youthfulness before time does, then he will have strengthened his own subjectivity as a man and as an author.

Conclusion

The depiction of women's bodies in states of pain as a result of torture functions as a narrative device in several examples of early modern Petrarchan love and carpe diem poetry written by male poets. Critics have focused attention on the objectification of women's bodies in Petrarchan love and carpe diem poems but have not applied Elaine Scarry's theoretical framework of torture to their study of these poems. My thesis offers readings of Sir Philip Sidney's and John Donne's Petrarchan poems that feature the use of torture and, in Donne's case, torture as revenge for sexual rejection depicted in the settings of the mistress's bedrooms. My thesis also offers readings of Thomas Carew's and Andrew's Marvell's carpe diem poems that use genre conventions as a way of representing the women in the poems as tortured and dissolving their female agency.

My thesis hopes to encourage more critical interest in scholarship of the representation of female pain and torture in early modern English lyric poetry written by male poets and expand scholarly consideration of the relationship between these poems and their poets and coterie audiences. It is my hope that other scholars may use my critical approach of drawing upon the theoretical lenses of Elaine Scarry and Eve Sedgwick to study other works that foreground the embodiment of female torture as a narrative function. My thesis also encourages examination of other lyric subgenres beyond those of Petrarchan and carpe diem for their exploitative and narrative use of female agony.

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