

Title:

A Newly Manifested Cosmos Designates to Strengthen the Voice of Divinity of the 17th Century England: An Estimation of Traherne's Hymnal Voice of Devotion.

Dr. Shantanu Siuli
Assistant Professor
Kalinga University, Naya Raipur
CG, India
Email: shantanusiuli@gmail.com

Abstract:

The aim of the paper is to express a new voice of devotion and the divinity of the seventeenth century England over its dilapidated controversies between two major houses- the Catholicism and the Protestantism. The paper also aims to fulfill the acknowledgement of Traherne's new philosophical optimism that is felicitation for all the creations of God, aiming to ascertain a safe passage for the soul's salvation through a new found idea. Traherne's sense of establishing the idea of felicitation of every creation of God aroused a rich voice of devotion and the divinity in the arena of the religiosity of the entire England, rekindling the ideas of sacrament and ecclesiastical domain for the better understanding of soul's self and its very relevance towards the objectivism of the feeling of God. This paper will fulfill the demands of the devout person of the present era and will bring forth the relevance and strong significance of felicitation, love and care for everyone established by Thomas Traherne (1637-1674) through his rich feeling and understanding of both the divinity and the devotional milieu of his time where he belonged.

Key notes:

Traherne's philosophical optimism, Traherne's oeuvre, significance of felicitation, sacramental identity of the seventeenth century England, Traherne's devotion.

Introduction:

Traherne's biographers have largely based their accounts upon readings of his poetry and prose that seem ecstatic and childish. Placing Traherne's spiritual autobiography into biographical lacunae is one method of organizing the scant information that we have about him; he was born in Herefordshire in 1637, a shoemaker's son; attended Brasenose College, Oxford, at the age of 15, earning his B.A. at 18; was ordained in 1657 as a Puritan minister to the rectorship of the parish of Credenhill, near Hereford; earned his Oxford M.A. in 1661; and became one of the conforming clergy in 1660; served as the Anglican chaplain to Charles II's Lord Keeper of the Seal, Orlando Bridgeman by 1667; died in 1672 at Bridgeman's house in Teddington. Traherne (1637/38-1674) was deeply foregrounding the field of divinity and sacramental ardor by procreating the simplest concept of felicitation among the people of his age through his rigorous and sincere practice of constant prayer to God, and thereby germinating a concrete labyrinth of devotion and the concept of the divinity towards the entire humankind (Aubrey 143). He, without assimilating the mystical ideas of Herbert, Crashaw and Vaughan, recommended the power of prayer to God, and made us acknowledged with the fact of what a true and calm felicitation would be to arrest the highest pleasure of spirituality during his times of controversies. Malcolm Day argued that "Trahere by his very adulthood age forgot, though unlike not other

adults, to have the love of lust, passion and desires to be attributed with physical pleasures, rather centralized and concentrated his entire desire, lust and pleasure to find out the absolute path of the divinity for the salvation of entire humankind, and tried his level best to harmonize and reinvigorate human souls towards its final destination. Unlike Herbert and Vaughan, Traherne (1637/38-1674) had marveled a unique path and way of devotion to God by advocating the real and supreme power and zeal of felicitation, which will lead, as he believed so firmly, the universe a much better and safer place of devotion” (199).

His biographer and editor Gladys Wade confides this identification of cause and effect when she concludes in 1942 that Traherne is “one of the most radiantly, most infectiously happy mortals this earth has known” (Johnson 379). Recent articles have attempted to rescue Traherne from the legacy of his early biographers, placing him in a political context. Both N. I. Matur and Julia J. Smith connect Traherne to political events during his life time, and the recent discovery of Traherne’s long political poem sanctions such a reading. Traherne’s radical experimentation, in fact, with language, coupled with our lack of information about his life, presents a reading problem of greater complexities than almost any other in seventeenth century studies. To consider language and the linguistic culture it forms requires taking the kind of middle ground between fields of study common for a student such as Traherne in the mid-seventeenth century. Traherne received the standard Oxford education, studying Medicine, Grammar, Physics, Logic, Ethics, Geometry, Astronomy, Poesy, Music, Rhetoric....Arts, Trades and Mechanisms. As a fluent in these subject as poets such as Donne and Herbert, Traherne’s the use of language from these subjects nonetheless has seemed to many readers at best subdued or event absent. Rather than writing a non-poetic verse in which he elaborates a personal ecstatic vision, Traherne attempts to write poetry that synthesizes poetic theory and painting theory. This synthesis accounts for his abstract and non metaphorical language, language that has seemed more like prose than poetry to his readers. His overall quest to strike a new kind of language from issues resonant in poetics and painting forms the extraordinary theoretical substructure of his work. Traherne’s obsession with vision is that of an intellectual visionary who attempts to recall poetry from its central role in a cultural narrative that mistakes subjectivity for objectivity. Despite his strong efforts, Traherne’s poetry represents a failed engagement with cultural hegemony and mastery.

Traherne (1637/38-1674) wanted and approved human souls to be entitled with and through the beauty of all the creations of God to gather enormous pleasure and love for the self as well as for the creations just to bring back the lost glory and actuality of human souls, and with this very concept Traherne proposed that only a sincere and constant felicitation to God and His creations will surely lead the human beings to the path of salvation and rejuvenation, corresponding a deep faith and belief upon God beyond all the foolish sentiments of human souls (Day 65). Traherne did not, as it seems so, lead us to the conventional theology of the divine practice, but guided us to be the true follower by heart to have the mercy and love of God, proposing a rallying cry to God by enormous felicitation (Seelig 45). Traherne’s strong sense of felicitation to God and His every creation, through his utmost prayer, is surely establishing a fact that the necessity of the sacramental and divine outlook and attitude of the seventeenth century England was reformed and rearranged by the thorough and slow understanding of what felicitation would be to awaken the souls’ self (Sherrington 41).

Thomas Traherne (1637/38-1674), a well known student of B.A. (1656) and B.D. (1669) of Brasenose College, Oxford and Oxford University respectively, was universally granted as one of the most well known practitioners of the divinity and ecclesiastical identity of the seventeenth century England of which the establishment of right or wrong canon of divinity and devotional spirit was an axiom. To be frank, Traherne, being good enough unfortunate than that of his contemporary mystics, enjoyed less his divine and sacramental journey, which if he were long live, what Seelig noted down “would eradicate and tranquil the controversies of the divinity and devotion of the universe in much better way” (112).

Discussion in detail:

The way Traherne described his relentless power and earnestness of his soul to have and prove himself to be one of the best felicitators of God is significantly depicted in “My Spirit”, where he made us encountered with his pre and post sentiments and tempers of the transformation of his soul. He admitted the fact at the very beginning of this poem that:

My naked simple life was I
That act so strongly shined
Upon the earth, the sea, the sky,
That was the substance of my mind.
The sense it self was I.
I felt no dross nor matter in my soul,
No brims nor borders, such as in a bowl. (line 1-7)

Traherne was, before his transformation to the sacramental spirit during the period of interregnum, unaccustomed and uncontrolled with the spirit of the divinity and the sacramental identity of his time where he belonged to have the right path of salvation. During Traherne’s transformation from obscurity to tranquility he observed the very presence of God slowly but sincerely into his every perspective of life, with which he gradually encountered and experienced the rich ideas of felicitation and love and care for the other being to stimulate the self identity of soul and its righteous path to salvation- the rich and ultimate ‘immediate and internal pleasures’ (line 41) which would lead the entire human beings ‘a substantial joy’ (line 42):

This made me present evermore
With whatso e’er I saw,
An object, if it were before
My eye, was by Dame Nature’s law,
.....
....., all her treasures
Were my immediate and internal pleasures,
Substantial joys, which did inform my mind. (line 35-42)

By advocating ‘Nature’s law’ he means the fundamental law of the universe governed between the Creator and the created things that should and must be abided by the Creator’s changing courses of law time to time that had seriously aroused the mind of Traherne’s during his transformation towards the divinity and sacramental identity of the soul where he belonged, which is utterly vouchsafed through his philosophical understanding of objective correlation:

My soul could best express its strength.
It was so quick and pure
That all my mind was wholly ev’ry where
What e’er it saw, ‘twas ever wholly there; (line 55-58)

Traherne believes that he has been transformed and able to propagate the idea of the very divinity and religiosity must be required for the people’s salvation through some delectable techniques with which the seventeenth century people started thinking about the righteous way of devotion and the divinity with which one can be glorified and substantiate the sense of the divinity and sacramental identity inside the recesses of soul (Seelig 136):

The utmost Star
The seen from far,

Was present in the apple of my eye.
There was my sight, my life, my sense,
My substance and my mind

My spirit shined. (line 60-65)

Robert Ellorodt, in this regard argued that “the true importance of Traherne (1637/38-1674), however, is not in the history of poetry, but in the history of thought and religious sensibility. Along among the ‘metaphysicals’ he expounds a philosophy and delivers a message” (Cesare 364). The religious and ecclesiastical revolution of the seventeenth century England had been owed, perhaps somehow to a great extent, to Traherne (1637/38-1674)’s religious and devotional sensibilities that made the common people aware and acknowledged to where they should go and to whom they should care for to solace their dejection and stoical circumstances due to the ongoing controversies in between the two apparent concepts of theology-Protestantism and Catholicism (Seelig 98). The moment Traherne realized the very nature of the divinity and sacramental identity through his prayer in his soul, the moment he notified the matter to soothe his soul’s righteous way of devotion by summoning his deep and true feeling to God:

O joy! O wonder, and delight!

O sacred mystery!

My soul a spirit infinite!

An image of the Deity! (line 69-72)

Traherne believed that since his awakening the soul demonstrates the right path to God whose image is seen by the reflection of soul, ‘a pure substantial light’ is being incarnated by the axiom of his prayer and consolation ‘to its Creator’ (line 80) who seems to him very near ‘in love and excellence’ (line 81) throughout his life in ‘greatness worth and nature’ (line 83). Traherne is a man of simple living with a high and philosophical thinking of the divinity of his time where he belonged, and tried his best to upgrade the situation, which was very crucial and critical too to apprehend by common people, with his ‘full matrix of believing and establishing the idea of God’ providence and love’ for His creations (Torrey 105). This idea brings forth Traherne’s universally acknowledgment idea of felicitation and care for other human and non human beings to proceed them to the ideal path of salvation. He feels the best for the emancipation of human souls, thinks best for the glorification of souls’ nature through sacramental idealism, and nurtures and advocates the best way, perhaps in keeping the notions of the different ideas of his different contemporary mystics of his time, to proceed to the path of salvation and redemption of soul’s journey to be united to the Ultimate, being observed from every perspectives:

Like an individual centre standard
At once surrounding all eternity.

“Twas not a sphere
Yet dis appear One infinite.

“Twas somewhat ev’ry where. (line 92-96)

A steady but thorough observation of Traherne’s mingling to the consequence of the sacramental identity of soul is signaling himself to bent more profusely to God . He is talking more about the relationship to God to elevate the burden of soul, remembering us his best moment of life when he felt the first relationship to God through his relentless felicitation, love and care for His others created things, which would nominate the lives of the seventeenth century people to their elevated lives of devotion and lead them to find the right path of the divinity and the spiritual domain. Traherne is richly manifested with the idea of love and felicitation that

foreshadowed his optimistic philosophy of the religiosity and sacramental temper of the time where he belonged. A great new appealing of his soul, since his realistic observation and feeling of the devotion and the divinity through utmost and sincere felicitation to God, is richly praised through his hymn like verse:

O wonder self! O sphere of light,
 O sphere of joy most fair;
 O act, O power infinite;
 O subtle, and unbounded air!
 O living orb of sight!

Thou which within me art, yet me!
 Thou eye, And temple of his whole infinity!
 O what a world art thou! A world within!
 All things appear,
 All objects are
 Alive in thee! (line 103-113)

The use of these words by Traherne is the result of his strong forte of artistic and productive impulse with which he perhaps would like to encounter us with the unconventional and unsystematic theology of his time mostly known as problematic in the British English history of England. A great and special emphasis is given to summon to connect a bridge to God through the route of felicitation, and with this very impulsive new found route, as Alison Sherrington briefly noted “humankind would bring the new identity and passion for rekindling the thought of the divinity and the spirituality through a new concept of devotion, safeguarding them at the Day of Judgment” (200). One should follow the route of devotion through Traherne’s optimistic philosophy of devotion to arouse the true self of the soul to have its salvation in time, lest one will not fall in eternal damnation. Traherne’s simple way of devotion through felicitation to all creations to God will so long be valid and relevant to the entire human beings of ages to ages as this world exists, keeping him and his view of devotion and the divinity alive by the cost of the devoutness.

Conclusion:

Eliot dismisses Traherne from the category of the worthiest poets. Ironically while modernist requirements for inclusion into the canon eschew historical and cultural circumstance, the cultural circumstance of Traherne’s discovery is the very medium that placed him in Modernist sight lines. His language and *ars poetica* remain among the most maligned among anthologized seventeenth century poets (Johnson 378). a furthermore irony encompasses the critical judgments expended upon Traherne’s oeuvre. Comparatively little is known about the situation in which Traherne wrote his poems and prose meditations. He was obsessed and preoccupied with the vision of the whole transformation of the world into the citadel of the true divine milieu where felicitation, love and care for the entire creation would bear an equal importance, significance and relevance for the betterment of the spiritual and sacramental outlook of the coming future. Additionally, Traherne also propagated us with the importance of love to God, for it constitutes the basic and fundamental aim of human beings- the greatest creation ever made by God for the better understanding of Him by men (Seelig 295). Traherne have a strong resemblance to our age, and it is acknowledged that we tremendously should follow the same to be free from our gradual damnation owing to the changing concepts of religious, social, political atmosphere.

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