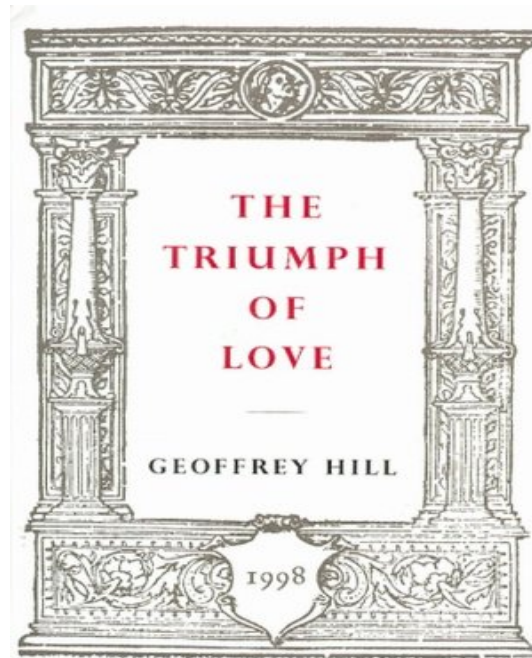**Like a Mason Addressing a Block: Architecture and Design Politics in Geoffrey Hill**

Natalie Pollard

> [W]hat we should have had around us now, if, instead of quarrelling and fighting over their work […] they had guarded the spoils of their victories. Fancy what Europe would be now, if the delicate statues and temples of the Greeks, - if the broad roads and massy walls of the Romans, - the noble and pathetic architecture of the middle ages, had not been ground to dust
> Ruskin, *Political Economy of Art*

From its investigations of the courtly basilica to the war memorial, portraiture to church design, consort music to pattern poetry, the work of Geoffrey Hill offers a compelling example of the way contemporary British poetry has probed – for its own advantage – the intersecting links between ancient and modern European art and architecture, patronage and the politics of design. Taking an interdisciplinary approach to material culture, this essay explores how contemporary poetic works make strategic use of the built environment – constructed artefacts to be moved through, inhabited and looked up at – in order to negotiate their cultural inheritance and personal artistic legacy. Reinvesting in built structure on the page, Hill's eye for detail is historically and politically attuned to the uses to which stones, tablets and building blocks are used and re-used across the arts. He is highly alert to their ability to attract new audience gazes, and to both found and bolster reputations. Money, history, economic nous, and the contribution of Italian, French and German design models to social, rhetorical and moral thought interlace, both in the works Hill redeploys, and in his own English lyric appropriations of the politics of structure.

On the front jacket of Hill's 1998 edition of *The Triumph of Love* is his adaptation of a woodcut from the title page of Lord Morley's *Tryumphes of Fraunces Petrarcke*, the first English translation of Petrarch's *Trionfi*:

We gaze on a re-worked copy of a copy, a carrying-over from the already existing translation of Italian to English, and from stone to page. The reader's eye moves from a design reminiscent of an ancient Roman triumphal arch, to its reconceptualisation as the early modern frontispiece of Morley's English translation from Petrarch's Italian, and again to the promotional tactics of Hill's late twentieth-century jacket, designed for his Anglo-American audience.

What do we see? An architectural frame surrounds the contemporary poet's name and title with highly decorated structural motifs, listening back on imperial authority, and its spectacles of might. A row of pilasters spans two levels, and acanthus scroll capitals support the ornate entablature. Elaborate foliate decoration covers the aedicule, and on the stylobate a cartouche announces the date of publication: '1998'. This busy frame draws the eye toward the central uncluttered space of the lettering. The viewer's gaze traverses exterior space as it

moves within, crossing a boundary between orders of space as one reads inside the opening, and then again as one turns over into the volume's contents. These boundaries are emphasised by the decision to redeploy a version of a woodcut from the (inner) title page of the first English translation of Petrarch's *Trionfi* as the (outer) jacket of Hill's *Triumph of Love*. Different levels of interiority and exteriority, design style and temporality are traversed as the viewer negotiates both architectural and literary frontispiece: the physical frame that adorns the main entrance to a building is allied with the decorated aperture that appears opposite the title page in many sixteenth-century books, and which itself often employs columns and pediments.

The reader is confronted both by a built structure – which must be passed through in order to enter – and by the physicality of the bookmaker's, printer's, etcher's, publisher's labours with matter and space. The sixteenth-century woodcut blocks that ornamented Petrarch's *Triumphs* emphasised the book as *thing*: an inked and pressed object to be displayed, viewed, handled, and admired as well-made. Anticipating the eyes and the bodies of readers moving through carefully arranged textual and physical space, the frontispiece drew analogies between architecture and text, bookmaking and engraving. In using a reproduction of his forebear's own reproduction of historico-architectural material for his cover, Hill is freshly alert to the audience-negotiations of early modern bookmaking, and their use-value in the present. Morley's frontispiece not only invited viewers to *enter,* as well as read, his English version of Petrarch's text, it also impressed upon them a sense of restraint and order through its design model: the reader passes through a physical aperture modelled on the stately heroism and formal control of the Greco-Roman triumphal arch.

As such, Hill's pillared frame wields a design authority derived from earlier derivations from the neoclassical organisation of space and matter. Hill's *Triumph* lures in readers, and impresses on them the antique authority of its structure. If the printed page

invites admiration for its decorative manifestation of the craft of print and textual arrangement, it also marks out for its own ends the historical authority of the built environment. In Hill's use of the sixteenth-century frontispiece as his cover, the orders of classical and early modern architecture – as well as inked material – go in search of public recognition as honed, finished products. They do so through recourse to historical precedent, redeploying the authority of the strictly proportioned materiality of the triumphal arch. Hill's page also draws attention to its borrowing of an already bastardised, copied form; it uses a replication of an already-existing replication; the early modern re-translation, across media, from the Italian. As Pierre de Nolhac observes: 'Petrarch has no credit for the illustrations of his *Trionfi*, which were repeated, again and again in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in paintings, bas-reliefs and tapestries.'[2]

Critics have often noted Hill's lyric focus on labour, materiality and historical reworking; traits that can be seen across his oeuvre, from his early interest in the trade of names and the power of English medieval patronage in *Mercian Hymns* (1971) to his later circumspection about the modern artist's 'genuflections to an audience' and 'benedictions' in *Orchards of Syon* (2002). More rarely has attention focused on Hill's use of the history of argumentation carried in the built environment, and the appropriation of its authority in commissioned work across the arts, as well as in the publishing industry.[3] In order to do so, this chapter will attend in particular to *A Treatise of Civil Power* and the *Daybooks Clavics*

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[2] Pierre de Nolhac, *Petrarch & the Ancient World*, Vol 1 (Boston: Merrymount, 1907): 31
[3] For allusions to printing processes see *CL* 14-34: 'printers' founts', 'smudge-typed' textualities, 'battered' books. For the monetary contexts informing production across the arts see *CL* 42: 'Cost- | Estimates fall | Short of cost', and *WT* 41-43: 'all-funding eloquence', 'admission charge is the true price of fame'. For architecture see *An Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture in England* (*CP* 152-64) and *Mercian Hymns* (*CP* 105, I), *Odi Barbare* (9; 37; 59), Hill's reproduction of an architectural plan (*CL* 5); and the publicity for Hill's readings at Boston USA, which make use of Doric columns (Brotherton collection: BC MS 20c Hill 6/Bos – 6/Bur Boston Univ-Burch). See also Rosemary Hill, 'Ruskin and Pugin', in *Ruskin and Architecture*, ed. Rebecca Daniels and Geoff Brandwood (Reading: Spire, 2003): 223-248.

and *Odi Barbare*. It will also dwell briefly on 'An Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture in England' and *Mercian Hymns*.[5]

PRINTED MEMORIALS

Let's take as example Hill's 2007 poem, 'In Memoriam: Ernst Barlach'. In this text, both poet's and sculptor's tools - inked and built materials - visibly bend in service of the economics of construction and re-construction (*TCP* 45). Hill is looking at an image of the 1921 oak tablet, which had been commissioned in memory of the dead of the Great War. The original structure, which had been displayed at the Nikolai church in Kiel, was destroyed in bombing during the Second World War. Hill's use of the earlier artefact and his consciousness of his contemporary work's modeling on, and recollection of, the missing object prompt – in us and him – awkward questions about the re-appropriation of his twentieth-century German source. Hill's lyric construction of a print memorial circles uneasily around its production of new commemorative matter:

> *My heart bleeds with grief but you give me strength*
> you carved in Low German for an *Ehrenmal*
> or *Mahnmal* on which the Mother of God
> is rayed around by seven swords that have the appearance
> of stabbing her in the back. The vertical one
> we call *crucifix* without too much straining
> of faith or credulity. But the Low German
> snapped at an angle is a right bugger
> *Min Hart* I think I can read, but the squinching
> obscures things. Anyhow, the War did for it: Kiel
> was ill-used. […]   (*TCP* 45)

The lines are attentive to numerous forms of 'ill-use' – artistic, as well as political and national. They allude to the deployment of Kiel's maritime resources for the Nazi agenda (the

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[5] I have in mind especially the forces that shape the production of the twenty-first century phototypeset pages of Hill's small press volumes brought out with Enitharmon and Clutag, and the demands of publishers and editors in the proofing and printing, marketing and disseminating processes of larger houses Hill has collaborated with, such as Penguin.

city became a key naval base and a production site for submarines in the Second World War), and to the destruction that resulted from Allied bombing, which 'did for' over eighty percent of the historic old town.

At the same time, Hill probes a quite different form of ill-use; that of artistic re-appropriation of material, which arises in the attempt to commemorate, revisit, and refashion earlier artefacts. The lines do not discourage such use, but they do imply that even the most apparently honourable of commemorative agendas across time and culture risks betrayal and sabotage. That can be seen in Barlach's recollection of the *mater dolorosa* (though Hill does not suggest naïvety on Barlach's part). The engraver's arrangement of the swords that are luminously 'rayed around', and which imply devotion and longing for heavenly ascent, simultaneously gives the appearance of 'stabbing her in the back'. Barlach is reworking the traditional figure of the mother of sorrows in terms of anti-war intent, pleading for an end to bloodshed, yet the language he uses to emblematise pitiably fallen, pained and penetrable human flesh makes recourse to the violent iconography of rayed swords. It is not entirely clear whether such redeployment of the mother of sorrows to fit a pacifist post-First World War agenda, strains 'faith and credulity' in quite a different respect by twisting the religious iconography into the service of peaceable ends.

A more profound sense of ill-ease, however, hangs about the contemporary appropriation of Barlach's memorial. Below the carved image, in the region's Low German dialect, the oak panel bears an inscription: 'Min Hart blött vör Gram awers Du giest mi Kraft 1914 – 1918'. As Hill keeps reminding us, he can't read Low German, which may be why only snatched fragments of this phrase make their way into the poem. Hill is willing to translate for us, or to reiterate a previous translation: 'My heart bleeds with grief. But you give me strength'. Yet even with the English gloss, Hill's lines emphasise distance, and the perils of his own and others' misreading. The oak tablet is estranged from poet and readers at

least thrice over. First, Barlach's artefact is lost. Second, the poet is abashed that he doesn't have Low German, and he worries over the limits this imposes on his wider knowledge of, and reading of, Barlach: 'I should have known Low German Third, there are physical difficulties in looking at the reproduced image rather than the physically present *Ehrenmal*: the poet can scarcely see the detail: 'I *think* I can read…'.

One shares his visual difficulty in regarding an image of the object:

'[T]he Low German | snapped at an angle is a right bugger', writes Hill: '*Min Hart* I think I can read, but the squinching | obscures things'. The reproduction of Barlach's piece draws the poet into an unhappy physical relationship with the memorial's absent materiality. 'Snapped', 'straining' and 'squinching' gestures characterize Hill's attempts to view it. Though he has at his disposal images of the sculptor's work, and translations of the text, Hill cannot come face to face with the original. This lost object puts the poet in an uncomfortable predicament. It prompts and structures Hill's new act of lyric composition, and disorients his creative-

conceptual responses. Both in viewing Barlach's literary memorial, and in attending to his literary interpretation of the original, the audience becomes conscious of obscurities, errors, misreadings, and potential misuses.

Part of what Hill's ink memorial worries over, perhaps disproportionately, is that lost or destroyed commemorative objects will generate distortingly nostalgic forms of recollection. Refusing to move in service of the Yeatsian apothegm, 'Man is in love and loves what vanishes', Hill's poem looks leanly at the way legacy is established over time.[6] It focuses on the uneasiness of the relationships between literary memory, commissioned artefacts and historical interpretation, and attends to the way particular socio-economic conditions of commemorative production result in preservations and perversions of legacy. Amongst Hill's targets are those who have recalled Barlach's pieces in a misleading language:

> And independent peasantry
> is a myth, and *Artist Against the Third Reich*
> something of a misnomer. You tried to buy time
> and to stave off calamity as I would have done
> you were not Haeften nor could I have been.

Hill's lines keep in mind the artist's determined resistance to a dictatorship's silencing of expression. At the same time, his own poetic tribute is conducted in the rhetoric of struggle, compromise and barter: You tried to buy time', Hill writes, 'and to stave off calamity'.[7] Far from triumphant, the negotiative phrasal verb forms end in collapse and non-fulfilment: 'You tried […]', 'you were not […]'. If Hill's lines are offered in tribute to the deceased artist, their disappointed verbal constructions work against the temptation to gloss Barlach's continued

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[6] Yeats, 'Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen', *Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats*, ed. Richard J. Finneran (NY: Macmillan): 207.

[7] Barlach's memorials were banned under National Socialism as 'degenerate art', removed from public sites and threatened with destruction. Many of these pieces were acquired by Hermann F. Reemtsma, who restored them after the war. He also commissioned new work, enabling Barlach to continue producing in his idiosyncratically spare, introspective style.

legacy as a victory over, or freedom from, brute political and economic forces. Reiterating that art cannot be 'independent' from worldly power, Hill also wants to apply this recognition to his own situation: 'as I would have done', 'you were not […] nor could I have been'. This recognition informs Hill's objection to Peter Paret's book, *An Artist Against the Third Reich*, as 'something of a misnomer': its wording implies a romanticised form of recollection. Art is not to be pressed into service as '*against*' the Third Reich ('you were not Haeften'), but to be recognized as a humbler form of defiance, which is compromised and non-self-reliant. Rather than depicting Barlach as a victor over repressive forces, Hill casts him as an ordinary all-too-human 'you' to be spoken to, doing merely what 'I would have done' under oppressive economic and political conditions – both an admirable and circumscribed achievement.

It is a contemporary poem in which absent matter tells of modern art's compromises in the face of historical calamity and economic necessity. One wonders what is at stake for Hill in the comparison. The poet's first-personal 'I' suggests identification with his German forebear's personal and politico-aesthetic struggles. Even as Hill's memorial makes Barlach's lost material sing of the survival and circulation of artworks and origins, its acoustic transmits the noise of patronage, reputation, linguistic affiliation, and social ideals about art and objecthood. In the act of writing about artistic humility and economic circumscription, the contemporary 'I' also takes on a contradictory kind of grandeur. Hill not only draws himself into direct relations with the imperilled artist ('you'), he aligns with the sculpted *Ehrenmal* the wartime dead and his own textual monument for the sculptor. A presumptuous aura hangs over Hill's intimate alignment of 'I' and 'you', and his enactment of a 'dialogue' between very different kinds of work and culture. Both objects raise questions about political struggle, aesthetic modesty and appropriate public recollection. But engraving and poem act in materially different economic situations and under different ethical conditions. What the

perceived parity affords is an opportunity for Hill to exhibit himself in fluent conversation with an imagined artistic ally across time and nation.

SHARDS AND SLIVERS

At once negotiating particular artistic legacies, and invested in its own literary self-fashioning, Hill's work focuses on the relationship between the politics of design style and the materiality of making, in wood, stone and poetic print. It is a concern for artistic labour and matter that takes shape through the contemporary poet's painstaking care with his own handwritten, ink-and-paper manuscript drafts, and their manifestation in printed, published form. Across his career, Hill has insisted on precise typographical effects. Complex systems of lineation, hyphenation, pagination, typographical marks, and the use of upper and lower cases and small caps are in evidence in *Speech! Speech!*, *The Triumph of Love*, *A Treatise of Civil Power*, and *Clavics*. These are adjustments that are difficult for the typesetter to get right, or rather, they require that highly specific instructions are communicated by the poet to the publisher – from the correspondence between point size and leading (the size of space between lines) to the alignment of individual letters within words and between lines; from the carefully calculated distance of the text from gutter, to the spaces of indented half-lines.[8] Letters in Hill's archive at the Brotherton show a history of intense collaboration over textual variants at proof stage through his career.[9] Even in the more regular looking typologies of

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[8] 'The typography of the whole is his,' says Andrew McNeillie, of his correspondence with Hill over the Clutag *Treatise*: 'except for the blue rules above and below his name', 'We followed Geoffrey's wishes pretty much to the letter and were of course happy to. The mix of fonts on the cover/title meant we had to acquire a font we didn't have'. McNeillie also notes the invaluable involvement of Kenneth Haynes, who produced a clear typescript of *Clavics*, including specific details as to layout and type design. Personal correspondence with Andrew McNeillie, 29 Nov. 2012.

[9] See letters between Andre Deutsch and Hill, 1981-83. Here, a discussion of the kerning – the typesetter's adjustment of the spacing between the letters – of the 'M' and the 'y' of the 'Mystery' of 'The Mystery of the Charity of Charles Peguy', so as to achieve the impression of an equal distance between all the letters, takes place. See also the correspondence between

King Log and *Mercian Hymns*, the setting of 'The Songbook of Sebastian Arrurruz' and the *Hymns* – which contain a number of lyrics laid out in justified, rectangular blocks, with regular margins and unobtrusive hyphenation – is the product of editorial discussion and re-alignment (*CP* 99 and 102; and 105-34). The mixture of typographic rules in the layout of these poems – reverse indentation in *Mercian Hymns*; an alternation between centred and flush left organisation in 'Songbook' – are subtle modulations of print. They act on the eye very differently from the noisy marks of Hill's later volumes, but their gentler refashionings of the printed page are just as much the result of close editorial collaboration and conversation.[10]

In choosing to publish with Penguin and Yale, Hill's meticulousness about jacket and page design was more restricted than it had been with his smaller press ventures. These houses' imperative to produce pages that regulate design features, so that books fit into a distinctive house style (the consumer's eye should not be distracted by anomalous-looking covers or arrangements of printed matter within) has tended to preclude close authorial collaboration over the fine-tuning of typographical details. In Hill's post-1990 volumes, this has led to a more homogenized design, which is perhaps most evident in the rather grubby production of the 2007 *Treatise* (the paper quality is poor; the cover design weak, particularly in relation to Hill's later volumes). Another troublesome issue arose with that book: Penguin failed to print the '*power*' of Hill's title entirely in lower case, as he had requested, and as it

Hill and William Cookson in 1972, where Hill worries over how to keep costs down whilst making late changes to proofs, and articulates his anxieties over errors and infelicities in the 'irrevocable' medium of print. See also correspondence with Cookson in 1993, over the proofs of 'Psalms of Assize', where concerns about the alignment of the final words of lines, and stipulations about the alignment of single letters (the letter 'd') between words on different lines, are made. Page breaks, line breaks, indentation and the space between the title and epigraph are all considered and amended. See BC MS 20c Hill/6/AGE/William Cookson 1/2.

[10] See also the typesetting of 'Four Poems Regarding the Endurance of Poets' especially 'A Prayer to the sun' (*CP* 79). See Hill's earlier adventures in small press publishing: *Preghiere* (University of Leeds: Northern House Pamphlet, 1964) and Hill's Fantasy Press pamphlets (Oxford, 1950s)

had appeared in the Miltonic original.[11] It is tempting to think this influenced Hill's decision

not to issue *Clavics*, *Oraclau|Oracles* and *Odi Barbare* with Penguin, and to bring them out

with the smaller presses Enitharmon and Clutag instead. (Hill knows the editors at these

houses personally, has been able to collaborate with them closely, and their production

methods and economies of scale allow the author much greater freedom over the look of the

finished product.) But there is another more practical reason for the three volumes having

come out with these presses. Hill's *Collected Poems*, *Broken Hierarchies*, had already been

signed up at OUP, and the commercial Penguin are reluctant to publish volumes that would

be swiftly superseded by a *Collected*. So too, from Hill's, and OUP's, perspective, the issue

of acquiring permissions for *Broken Hierarchies* would not arise for the three volumes if they

were brought out with Clutag and Enitharmon, as neither Andrew McNeillie nor Stephen

Stuart-Smith would lay claim to any.[12]

Hill's late work in particular interlaces these economic and material preoccupations

with his sensitivity to the role of trans-continental linguistic trade and artistic imitation, which

powerfully structures contemporary English poetic form. In *Odi Barbare*, for instance, Hill

carefully balances his Italian inheritance – the title is lifted from the nineteenth-century *Odi*

Barbare of Giosuè Carducci; a three volume work that had transposed the quantitative

metrics of Ancient Greek and Latin poets into accentual Italian – against his redeployment of

the English Sapphic stanza that he derives from Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*. The complex cross-

cultural shards of this contemporary work keep our gaze trained on the intersections between

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[11] And as it appeared in an earlier publication by Hill: *A Treatise of Civil power* (Clutag, 2005).

[12] He is also highly aware of commercial pressure in public performances. In Hill's 'Lines of Force' lecture as Oxford Professor of Poetry, 27 Nov. 2012, Oxford, he begins by speaking of 'this weird and demanding event', the marketing and events management for which began months in advance: 'there are faculty demands to be met. A time has to be supplied, so that advertising, commissioning may begin. […] The presumption is that one has something to *sell*.'

art, literature and the politics of their (re)production. Through the politics of this borrowing, Hill also trains attention on the thingliness of aesthetic creation. Hill's 2012 collection self-consciously attends to the parity between artistic and literary raw material, as the ink of his poetry is refracted through the glass, wax, paper and leather of the Irish artist, William Orpen's, early twentieth-century self-portraiture:

> But imagine, shall I, the mirror broken,
> Treading slivers. Pray not to be a sophist.
> Nor would you find dramatization fitting
>   Such a persona
>
> So to be whipped up out of wax and stylus,
> [...]
> Conjured shards dancing on the leather desktop, [14]

At one moment paper thin, and the next conjurings of light and glass, Orpen's historical apparitions are made to 'danc[e]' on the writerly desktop, paraded for Hill's readership. The poet's verbal conjuring with slivers of light and enigmatic fracturing, reflects and refracts the prominent use of mirrors in Orpen's paintings throughout his career:

> Orpen's self portrait in the French hotel room
>   Quizzing his helmet
>
> (He was no combatant), the brandy bottle
> Concentrated sluttish within reflection;
> Peril implicate but not here intrusive.
>   There will be shadows.

Hill's lines have within their purview Orpen's self-scrutiny in his 'Self portrait' of 1942, in which the artist's reflected face infinitely recedes through interior space and out into the Parisian skyline. Hill also recalls the mirrors that appear, publicly, in Orpen's large-scale

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[14] *OB* 56. See *Standpoint* (July/Aug 2010) for a version of the poem punctuated very differently. Online version also at: http://standpointmag.co.uk/text-july-10-geoffrey-hill-new poems?page=0%2C0%2C0%2C0%2C0%2C0%2C0%2C0%2C0%2C5. Accessed 29 Nov. 2012 at 21:36. See also Clutag archive at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, which contains the earlier drafts of *OB* punctuated with m-dashes and colons rather than commas and stops. '[S]luttish' has also been changed from the earlier 'uppish'.

commissioned work: 'The Signing of Peace in the Hall of Mirrors, Versailles, 28 June 1919'.

Although that canvas depicts a moment of apparent historical resolution, when Allied politicians demonstrate unity through signing, the scene is distorted and broken by the enormous reflections behind and above their heads, which throw the light and the clean classical dimensions of the hall out of proportion. Orpen's brush makes the architectural structure teeter, challenging the harmony of staged political intent. Critics have read the piece as typical of the commissions Orpen fulfilled at this period in his career: in this 'remarkable series of canvases he quietly belittled the "frocks", as he called them, by devoting the major part of his compositions to the splendour of the conference venues whilst relegating the participants to the bottom quarter of his canvases.'[15] Once more, Hill's verbal textures are closely attentive to the politics of the war commission, and the circumstances in which commemorative artefacts are crafted. 'He was no combatant', we are informed of Orpen, the simple past tense of this negative clause reflecting the brevity of Hill's earlier reminder: 'you were not Haeften'. It is as if Hill imagines some sentimentalising, aesthetically idealising listener must keep being prompted to recall that the 'peril[s] implicate' in soldiery and artistry involve very different recoils and hazards.

One also keeps in mind the grandeur of the artist's own commissions. Orpen was the highest paid portraitist of his day. The *Hall of Mirrors* secured him the (then) princely sum of £3000. But money also kept him, as Elizabeth Cayzer sees it, 'chained to the treadmill of commissioned portraiture'.[16] His earlier paintings of labourers and intimate models are frequently lauded as his best work; and his later formal portraiture have often been dismissed as routinized 'mechanical marvels'.[17] Yet Hill's vocabulary directs attention to the insistent workmanship of making, imagining the din and mess of equipment reverberating around

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[15] Elizabeth Cayzer, 'Sir William Orpen', *Changing Perceptions: Milestones in Twentieth-Century British Portraiture* (Alpha Press, 1998): 21-25, at 22.
[16] Cayzer, 24.
[17] Sir John Rothenstein, *Modern English Painters* 1 (Macdonald and James, 1976): 226.

printer's and artist's studios: 'slate', 'wax', 'stylus', 'paper […] paper', 'shards'. It is a refraction of Orpen's attention to the materiality of creation. Integral to the historicity Hill recalls – and the new work he makes – is its crafted objecthood. Seeking the company of a painter who attended to the pragmatics of making in the early to mid twentieth century, Hill self-consciously attends to their shared fashionings from glass, wax, paper, leather, ink.

The 'conjuring' acts, even those at the leather desktop, are Orpen's as much as Hill's. A keen letter-writer, the painter frequently dispatched pen-and-ink drawings of his portraits to correspondents. In *Leading Life in the West*, sheets of paper, painting and writing material, as well as a liquor bottle, are clustered beneath the frame of the mirror in which Orpen studies his reflection in the self-portrait. Such materials seem to compel both artists to place them in the foreground. Hence the succession of self-portraits, in which the canvases capture Orpen in the act of painting himself in, eyeing the scene (i.e. himself) warily. The effect is one of live performance of personae. His succession of self-portraits make him seem to appear – before our eyes and his own – in camouflage. Posing stagily before his own brush, the artist evades direct identification with the selves he paints. At once handling his face as a prop, to be looked at through the many the mirrors he uses to capture his visage, and as intangible, posed reflection, the painter comes to seem a succession of refractions of the mirrored images of a disguised 'William Orpen', which has slid out of contact with any single, identifiable source. Both Orpen and Hill place themselves face to face with the materials of art – and with themselves – as their subjects. A self-consciousness about compromised originals structures these men's relations with audiences; the body of commissioning viewers who made Orpen among the richest, most famous artists of his day, or the readership courted by the contemporary poet, who may be ambitious for canonicity, but can be under no illusions about eking financial reward, or even a living from his work.

However, if the contemporary poet's eye is on legacy and not economic reward, it

remains unclear why he redeploys the lexicon of artistic trade and exchange, recalling works produced as part of luxurious courtly display and for lucrative commission. What do Hill's collaborations over correctly phototypeset pages have to do with the political realities he recalls Orpen being paid to depict at Versailles, or with those literary figures, performers and designers Hill keeps returning to at the early modern court? I want to explore more closely, first, the link Hill perceives between the politics and economics of patronage systems and his audience-publisher relations in the twenty-first-century; and second, the relationship between Hill's use of earlier, historically allusive styles of artistic structure that have been judged appropriate to commission for public or personal consumption, and his exploration of the negotiations and labour of styling the published pages of his own poetry books for contemporary audiences (negotiations that manifest differently with large and small presses).[18]

DOUBLE-DEALING: COMMISSIONED QUARTERS

For Hill, the 'thrusting | Forward of rhyme', and the sense that, at a patron's hands, 'aesthetics are an inclined plane', draw commissioned performance and the production and re-interpretation of certain forms of *aesthetic* matter into relation (*CL* 42; 12). When, in *Clavics*, Charles I is cast as 'that king-martyr. | He was a double-dealer, betrayed friends | Without quarter […]', Hill performs his own double-dealing with the term 'without quarter' (14). If the poet has in mind the politics of suspicion and dissent at the Caroline court, his lines also refer to Charles's manipulation of physical quarters, in line with Classical stipulations about

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[18] See 'Why Publish Poetry?', Discussion between Rupert Hart-Davis, Charles Monteith, Diana Athill, Colin Franklin and Erica Marx, *Poetry Review* 53:2 (1962), in *A Century of Poetry Review*, ed. Fiona Sampson (Carcanet, 2009): 84-99. See review of the event 'Making Books for Love and Money: On the Value of Small Presses', Discussion between Charles Boyle, David Lea, Nicholas Lezard, and Nicholas Murray at *The London Review of Book*s, Thursday 15 Nov. 2012 at: http://fiveleavespublications.blogspot.co.uk/2012/11/mammals-versus-dinosaurs.html, by Ross Bradshaw, accessed 28 Nov. 2012, 16:13.

the correct ways for approaching and moving through built space. In earshot are the king's hierarchical demarcations of roles, persons, movements, and positions at Whitehall, as well as his enthusiasm for the rule-bound proportions of neoclassical buildings, such as the Banqueting House, that accommodated commissioned entertainments to indulge Charles's fine taste: masques, music, and dances were performed for assembled dignitaries and audiences. Also relevant is the construction of Henrietta Maria's Catholic 'quarters', which caused widespread public unease. In such lyric work, the built environment of the early modern court – and the economic, theological and aesthetic negotiations staged there – are a means of scrutinsing the politics of design authority and of economic power, as well as the manipulation of numerous audience bodies, patronised artists, political figures, theologians and the people. *Clavics* is a volume in which the power play of contemporary inclination and its aesthetic dealings are mapped onto the claustrophobic atmosphere of the Caroline court – where both illustrate investments in the power of form – but, as we will see, the analogy involves Hill's own not entirely unproblematic appropriation of historical sources.

Clavics is a tribute to William Lawes, the court musician to Charles I. On display are the broken bodies of the English Civil War, the violence of commissioned pens and strings, the memorialized musician – 'Will Lawes is slain | Permit me, sire, is slain by such whose wills | Be laws' – and the politics of Hill's own awkwardly re-vamped style: 'grinding the textures | of harmony' (*Clavics* 3: 13). Hill's punning on Lawes's name captures both the spirit of his notes' licenced play, and the constraints of the King's rule-bound commission, emphasizing the negotiations between aesthetic 'will' and royal 'laws'. We watch the composer's '[s]wift and neat hand':

> Notate the viols
> Flexures of styles
> Extravagant command
> Purposeful frills
> What comes of the upthrust and downthrust pen

Like Pound's Canto 81, which also angularly alludes to Lawes, Hill's poem flexes a self-conscious, grim artfulness of jolts, skirmishes and typographical disruption that contrasts with the intimate lyricism of his subject; the well-modulated consort and chamber music written for the king and his close circle.

> These fantasies constrained by their own strings
>   [...]
> Jolt into the epilogue by your leave
> As into a mixed skirmish, a rout,
>   Punched semibreve
> Like fatal bullet through the fine slashed coat.

The sense of gravity that one might expect from Hill's tribute is further punctured by ungracious punning and metapoetical interjection: 'Permit me, sire', 'by your leave', 'Lawes/laws'. It is an effect that echoes Pound's own askance rhetorical approach to musical-lyric harmony: 'Pull down thy vanity. […] what can be thy place | In scaled invention or true artistry', 'Has he tempered the viol's wood | To enforce   both the grace   and the acute?' The Canto ends with an irked pronouncement, and a lone line: 'And for 180 years almost nothing'.[19] Pound's ruptured typographies go out of their way to draw attention to lyric artifice. Ellipses emphasise the artist's imprecisions of memory and the gaps that appear in trans-historical recollections. Hill's formal textures are quite different: his short lines bend the page into an over-produced cadence. Yet they too use the formal architecture of interruption to draw the eye, distancingly, away from lyrical smoothness, and toward a jumpy, fractious reading experience that is further punctured by meta-commentary on the creative process and strained full rhyme: 'Notate the viols | Flexures of styles'. Both poets use typography to 'temper[…]' their instruments, and to show how such grace is 'enforce[d]'. Both employ the clipped critical registers of disappointed connoisseurs and fractious

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[19] Pound, *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (Faber, 1975): 81: 520.

commands: 'Pull down thy vanity', consider 'thy place'. These are techniques that prevent close identification with recalled or memorialised composer.

What Hill's page makes clear is that the strings that set down music and lyric are highly dependent on command and reputation. Both the formal properties of *Clavics* and its invocations show Lawes's 'swift and neat hand' bound up with negotiations of the acoustic and artistic commands of court, and with Charles's investments in music, poetry, masquing, art and architecture. 'Permit me, sire' artfully speaks the language of obedience, even as it stirs up 'a rout'. The address is at once that of Lawes, respectfully, to his patron ('sire'), and Hill's, disrespectfully, to a cod-critical reader in a tone of faux-obsequy. '[P]ermit me' echoes the addresses of earlier volumes genuflections before a vast public body, the poet ostensibly as commissioned singer, to please and antagonise gentle listeners and critic-reviewers.[20] Such language emphasises the links between composition, reception, and the artist's economic situation. '[T]he swift and neat hand' is that of the writing musician whose fingers move fast across the page, composing the score, and the textures of handwriting, the black marks of Lawes's pen on the parchment. It is a strangely textual way to speak of sound.

What arrives on the contemporary poetic page is a 'mixed skirmish' between the 'frills' of the musician, his sticky end from the 'fatal bullet', and the embattled 'upthrust and downthrust pen' that belongs simultaneously to musician, poet, swordsman and recording literary historian. Hill's fingering of the legacy of sounds is mindful of the scholarly interest Lawes has generated: Lawes' work has been read not only in terms of English music theory and the historical context of courtly production, but has also – especially around the time of Hill's own longhand drafting of his poem – prompted critical debate about the instabilities of the music's manuscript history.[21] Hill's lines likewise gesture toward the authority of that

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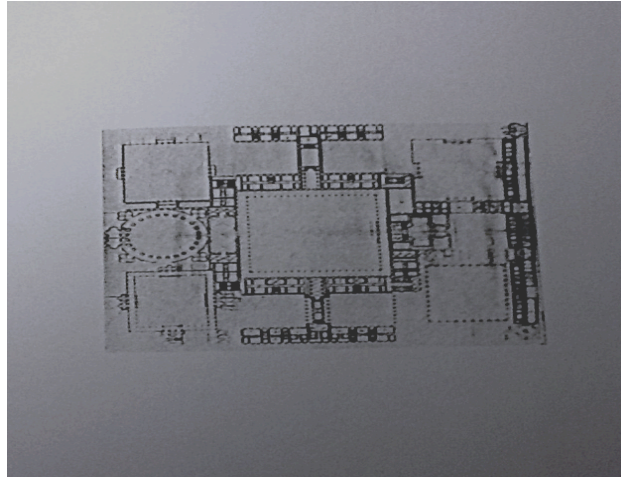[20] See *Speech! Speech!, Orchards of Syon.*
[21] Published the same year as *Clavics* is John Cunningham's book on Lawes's consort music; a detailed study of the composer's handwriting, advancing new interpretations of chronology

royal hand. The king's agency may only appear at the margin, sonically speaking, but in another sense it is his command (and commission) that set to work all these pens and strings and hands. Accompanying the monarchical tune, Lawes's musical constraint arrives materially, through the strings of the instrument to be played, and the lines of the stave on which the notes are being written in, as well in the strictures and purse-strings of seventeenth-century patronage. Purposeful frills are part of the king's design, which requires an elite group of lutanists, violists and singers to play privately to him, as well as to perform music in public, at masques, and for privileged guests, when the occasion demands. (Lawes's crafted sounds are not just an entertaining exhibition of his ingenuity and will as composer.) What arrives on the page interweaves musical, poetical and political lexicon – a synaesthesia of artistic practices and agencies.

Drawn into, and re-focusing, this entanglement of forms, agendas, monies, and conjoined artistic hands is Hill's epigraph to *Clavics*: an image of an architectural structure. We look on a plan for a new palace at Whitehall. Before the first word, the stage is set by a drawing derived from a classical design by the Renaissance court architect and designer, Inigo Jones. The Banqueting House (at the top right), which housed and shaped the reception of music penned by Lawes, as well as masques by Carew and Jonson, dances and banquets, shows the stirrings of a developing English taste for the strictly proportioned structures of classical design. The politics of taste underlying the preference for rule-bound, cool elegance in design – rather than the Tudor/Gothic organicist development of structures visible across the early seventeenth-century skyline – are legible in Jones's early modern plan:

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and of patronage systems at Charles's Whitehall. Cunningham has a subchapter on 'Lawes's Hand' that attends to its consistency, to dates of composition, and the main problems with attempting to work out chronological changes. From this, he attempts to construct a modern understanding of the mechanisms of court patronage, the social practices around musical composition, dissemination and performance. See *The Consort Music of William Lawes 1602-1645* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010): 25-27.

The image details an immense rectangular palace modelled on classical Palladian lines. Erected around a series of quadrangles extending from the Thames are four fine matching frontages, each with an entrance between two towers. Seven courts and seven courtyards are visible within. Most notably, at the North side, is a circular court that faces the Park (at the left of the image), and a rectangular great court dominates the centre. The existing Banqueting House – which Jones had derived from a simplified Roman Basilica – appears on a small flanking wing of one bay of a monumental façade that can be seen at the top right of the image between the South East court and the great court.

Unlike the existing Tudor palace, which resembled a small village rather than a unified building, Jones's Whitehall was modelled on strict proportions of Roman design, in accordance with Classical rules about columnar heights and spacing, the use of pediment, cornice and giant order. In showing favour for this continental style, Charles privileged an architecture that took stately uniformity as its chief virtue, over the accepted haphazardness of the existing assorted Tudor buildings, courtyards and thoroughfares. [22] He wanted to refashion court structures in line with the strict emphasis on proportion, rather than to

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[22] See Susan Foreman, *From Palace to Power: An Illustrated History of Whitehall*, 11; Colin Brown, *Whitehall: The Street that Shaped a Nation* (London: Simon & Shuster, 2009):100-101.

continue in the organicist line of 'English' architectural development.[23] Charles did not raise the necessary funds, and the structure was not built. By the time of his execution, the only part of the planned Whitehall that had been brought to fruition was Jones's Banqueting House, which had been commissioned and constructed by James I, and which already stood as a forerunner of classical design (then unpopular) in early seventeenth-century England.

Criticism of Hill has focused extensively on relationships between identity, place, and history. What can account for its reluctance to attend to the authority inscribed architecturally? When Charles Bennett writes that 'interlineation of Latin and Anglo-Saxon suggests for Hill the rhetorical division from which the community of English language, literature and culture will arise […]' he aligns Hill's historical sensibility with verbal roots, the soil, and archaeology, but not the built environment.[24] David Gervais, Vincent B. Sherry and Jeffrey Wainwright have all dwelt at length upon the significance of *Mercian Hymns*'s 'crypt of roots', and its fecund natural imagery, but not on its use of bridges, a citadel, a motorway, modern estates, a mansion-house, as well as its 'tympanum and chancel- | arch', 'master-mason', or 'West Midlands sculpture of the twelfth century'.[25] Nor have any extended studies been penned on the many built structures of the first Hymn, or on Offa's status as architect and commissioner of 'the M5', 'the citadel at Tamworth', 'the Welsh Bridge and the Iron Bridge' and 'the desirable new estates'.

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[23] Foreman writes: 'Evident in many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century commentaries are anxieties about new tastes for buildings that are '*all antica*'. These accounts inveigle against exotic, foreign-led corruption. Classical buildings are 'idle foreign toyes'; a danger to the traditional social order and its Tudor and Gothic codes of visualization. Not all English writers of the period held this opinion. Britain had its own Roman past, its own classical age, and British classicism was, for them [and Charles I] an attempt to revive the national past. But the archaeological work on Roman Britain had not yet provided substance to these declarations. Early seventeenth-century British classicism, positioned at the nexus of the indigenous and the foreign, was tied with the contestatory discourse of national identity […]' (102).

[24] Charles Bennett, 'The Use of Memory', *Politics and the Rhetoric of Poetry*, ed. by C.C. Barfoot Tjebbe, Jane Mallinson (Amsterdam/Atlanta, GA, 1995): 95-106, at 101.

[25] IV *CP* 108; XXIV; notes XXIV; I, *CP* 105.

It seems that the critical eye has been drawn more toward *subterranean* structures, and to verbal ruins and remains in the poems, than to standing buildings and monuments. It is a habit of looking that has, I think, contributed to the sense that Hill's historicity is motivated chiefly by representations of lost or degenerating English heritage, and nostalgic recollections of landscape and the soil.[26] There are other structures in place. Such accounts render invisible Hill's long-running investment in architecture, and his fraught attention to the politics of re-deploying existing built forms (both literally, as erected structures take on successive inhabitants, viewers and functions, and are added to and reformed, and in the work enacted though literary and historical re-descriptions and reinvestments in their forms). When Seamus Heaney, in 'Englands of the Mind', describes Hill's work as implementing 'a kind of verbal architecture, a grace and sturdy English Romanesque', he draws us closer to an appreciation of Hill's investment in the complex politico-cultural inheritance of built structure.[27] Heaney's remarks were at once specific about the history inscribed in 'English Romanesque', and alert to the particular political ramifications of styling space and stone. (One might read the architecture of *Mercian Hymns*, as Heaney's account underlines, as an argument against barbarised Roman design, or against an 'English' cultural renaissance brought about by Christian structures: the built forms are argumentative, not innocently laying bare their raw

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[26] Jeffrey Wainwright writes that *MH* nostalgically recalls an 'endlessly fecund', 'nose-level sense of vegetation', where '"great creating Nature"' is linked with lost childhood and 'fancied martyrdoms', in *Acceptable Words: Essays on the Poetry of Geoffrey Hill* (Manchester: MUP) 35-36. Henry Hart thinks 'his enchanting polysemous patterns of entwined Latin and Anglo-Saxon roots' and his 'English Romanesque' interlace with 'vegetative undergrowth', in *Seamus Heaney: Poetry of Contrary Progressions* (Syracuse UP, 1993): 104. E.M. Knottenbelt writes that 'the literary (poetic) legacy of Mercia is small and must be reconstructed from fragmentary remains […] unearthing the fragmentary remains of memory and history which are effective in language', in *Passionate Intelligence: The Poetry of Geoffrey Hill* (Rodopi): 171-72.
[27] Heaney, *Finders Keepers: Selected Prose 1971-2001* (Faber, 2002): 86. The architectural terminology used to describe the Romanesque is comparable to those that describe lyric structure. See Marian Moffett, Michael W. Fazio, et al, *World History of Architecture*: 'the supporting nave arcade has a subtle A-B-B-A rhythm established by pier alternating with two columns'. See Allison Lee Palmer, *The A to Z of Architecture* (Scarecrow Press, 2009): the Norman Romanesque cathedral at Durham has an 'A-B-A-B' rhythm down the nave' (95).

materials, or their local characteristics).[28] In writing that 'Hill addresses the language […] like a mason addressing a block', Heaney is attentive to the politics of the Puginesque workmanship and labour of such construction, as well as its site – and type – specificity (85-86).

Heaney's discussion of the built environment, however, treats its power figuratively. In his account, the 'sturdy English Romanesque' is an analogy for linguistic concerns; a metaphorical device that helps him probe the struggles between 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Latinate' *tongues*. Hill's focus on citadels, bridges and palace plans, by contrast, takes design authority *literally*. For him, architecture is an operative political and epistemological force; its forms have reached into and been shaped by historical, theological and national account-making, as well as providing sites on which aesthetic relations are negotiated.[29] Palaces and churches, memorials and banqueting houses – as well as bridges, houses, vaults and crypts – are not analogies for what is 'really' an etymological battle between English and continental tongues. They *are* the sites of socio-cultural struggle, and actively construct, preserve and restructure shared understandings. They have been as fiercely contested as language.[30] Like

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[28] Hill takes the title of his 1978 volume from Pugin's 1843 *An Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture*, in which the architect altered his earlier advocacy of obedience to the authority of English Gothic, insisting that tradition should be 'modified to suit actual necessities', in *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture and An Apology for The Revival Of Christian Architecture* (London: Gracewing, 2003): 38. Hill is drawing on a text that urged architects to look not on grand structures but on barns, gates and the 'essentials of good masonry' as design models (15). Ruskin recommends the virtues of masonry which is given 'a certain nobility by building it of massy stones', and modelled on organic structures 'governed always by a certain rude symmetry', in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (New York: John Wiley, 1866): 67, 115). Both men were scornful of the 'pointless' elaborations of neoclassical structures, and 'the burnt sugar ornaments of elaborate confectionary' (*Lamp* 32).
[29] 'The discourse of national identity clearly underpins Jones's critical position at the 'British Vitruvius'. He was Britain's response the heroic individualities of Vasarian narratives, a faithful imitator of the ancients (even superseding them) and as a master challenging the supremacy of the French and the Italians in architecture.' See Barbara Arciszewska, *Articulating British Classicism: New Approaches to Eighteenth-Century Architecture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004): 14-16.
[30] 'It is difficult to appreciate through modern eyes the shock – and to many Londoners, the outrage – that the Italianate Banqueting House had on the London public, which loved and

Hill, when Heaney reads 'that barbaric scrollwork of fern and ivy, [….] set against the tympanum and chancel-arch, against the weighty elegance of imperial Latin', he wields specific architectural idiom. But unlike Hill, he employs that architectural specificity weakly. The 'tympanum and chancel-arch' are stony illustrations of what Heaney views as Hill's handling of a *linguistic* power struggle between the organic 'English' historicity of Anglo-Saxon, and powerful imperial Latin.

'Nothing connects us affectively to the dead more than language […] there is a special kind of contemporaneous community which language alone suggests – above all in the form of poetry and songs' writes Benedict Anderson.[31] Both Anderson's and Heaney's remarks are highly influential in subsequent critical accounts of Englishness, inheritance, art and landscape in Hill – especially with regard to *Mercian Hymns* and 'An Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture in England'.[32] Yet in Hill, what 'connects us affectively to the dead' at least as eloquently as language is built form. Repeatedly, the historicity of configuring architecture, the complimentary and conflicting traditions of organising habitable structures, inform his theological, national and local understandings of a 'contemporaneous community' – in the Caroline era, the age of Offa Rex, and in the twenty-first century.[33] Architecture is not a version of language, or a reflection of linguistic battles translated into

revered the traditional Tudor buildings […] warm red brick, or black-and-white checks, haphazard and homely' writes Colin Brown (*Whitehall* 100). In contrast: 'the Banqueting House was cold stone and appeared wholly alien to English cultural heritage' (100).

[31] Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* 2nd edn (London: Verso, 1983): 145.

[32] Many have focused on the extent to which 'An Apology' should be considered 'apologetic'; few have made more than passing reference to the architecture and to Pugin's arguments about built form. See Calvin Bedient, 'The Pastures of the Wilderness: Geoffrey Hill's "An Apology for the revival of Christian Architecture in England', *The Yearbook of English Studies* 17 (1987) pp.143-165, at 143. See Tom Paulin's infamous attack in 'The Case for Geoffrey Hill', Review of
Geoffrey Hill: Essays on his Work, edited by Peter Robinson, in *London Review of Books* 7:6 (April 1985) 13-14.

[33] For modern architecture in Hill: 'Four days on floor six of the Radisson | Saga | and this had to happen: high density | high intensity spaces' (*C* 51); 'Find poetics' entrails exposed as at the | Pompidou Centre' (*OB* 37).

masonry. For Hill, constructions are contested matter, and are political. One might apply that recognition to the site of a commemorative work, the palatial rooms at Versailles and the events taking place within, the architectural politics of design, access, performance and patronage at the early modern court, and many other things besides.

STRETCHED WINGS: FALLEN FORMS

The vulnerable majesty of the built environment, specifically the Whitehall of Charles I, and his arrangements of movement through the Palace's physical space, is much on Hill's mind in *Clavics*. In section 10 he writes:

> He had
> Many mansions
> Each with many a room;
> Majesty's divine cadavers
> Poised as presiding deities sans tusks.   (*CL* 20)

The lines direct us to *John* 14:2: 'In my father's house there are many mansions. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you'. The words are Jesus's reassurance, upon parting from his disciples, that a space will be ready for them with God, in one of his many 'heavenly mansions'. They have been interpreted as an extension of God's hospitality to all virtuous peoples, no matter what their denomination. When refracted through the Caroline court, *John* 14:2 does not illustrate the Christ-like tolerance of Charles's accommodation. The lines are an injunction for an active relationship with the monarch, obliging his subjects to sign up to the doctrines of His church, and to sing by his hymn-book. Within earshot are Catholic interpretations of the passage, where 'many mansions' are churches one is compelled regularly to attend, and each churchgoer is a room in which the Host dwells in the taking of the Holy Eucharist. The lines 'He had | Many mansions | Each with many a room;' play out the authority of theological hospitality at Whitehall, which

hosted the magisterial Christ-like presiding of the king.[34] However fervently or faithfully practised, it was a paradoxically unstable poise. As the teetering architecture of *Clavics* hints, Charles's mansion houses many traitorously dissatisfied subjects; and its many rooms accommodate the treasonously heterogeneous minds of a kingdom on the brink of civil war. Hill's lines satirise the idea of dwelling safely within any court building, no matter how perfectly proportioned or grandiose its structure.

Building its own disproportionate sense of worldly and divine authority is *Clavics*'s contorted structural aesthetic. The sense of broken, historical bodies is brought into contact with forms pulled apart or stretched out on the rack. Hill puts before us the very different politics and aesthetics of Metaphysical lyric shapes, specifically the obedience of George Herbert's emblem poems, or *technopaegnia* – 'Easter Wings' and 'The Altar' – and Henry Vaughan's 'The Morning Watch':[35]

> You who have edited Ben Jonson's masques –
>
> A l l c r e d i t t o y o u r e n d e a v o u r s.
>
> (C o e l u m   B r i t a n n i c u m
>
> Is not Jonson's)
>
> That said
>
> H e   h a d
>
> Many mansions
>
> Each with many a room;
>
> M a j e s t y ' s   d i v i n e   c a d a v e r s

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[34] The identification of Charles with Christ was a lived reality at court. When the king dined with senior members of the Privy Council and Church, they would bow to him to say grace, uttering to Charles the sacred words: 'Give us thy daily bread'.

[35] Herbert, *The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations*, ed. Christopher Harvey, 2nd edn. (London: Pickering 1838): 35, 17. Vaughan, *The Poetical Works of Henry Vaughan: with a memoir*, ed. Henry Francis Lyte (Boston: James R. Osgood, 1871): 93-94.

<div align="center">Poised as presiding deities sans tusks.   (*Clavics* 10:20)[36]</div>

Hill's extraordinary, wincingly mannered structure struggles to pull itself into line with the literary form of its forebears. Each of its thirty-two sections bends and strains to perform in a manner complimentary to emblem poetry. Is this a failed attempt to shuffle into the key of tradition? Or a flamboyant restyling of the form? On the one hand, Hill's structure ungracefully restructures both things in the world – wings – and their published lyric shapes. On the other, it is an innovative, formally irreverent opening up of spaces between letters, which not only stretches pagination and typography to fit the conceit, but also runs together quite different early modern precedents in thinking through the politics and economics of worldly and divine obedience. It not only emulates Herbert, but Vaughan's own refashioning of Herbertian *technopaegnia*.

Clavics enacts a peculiar combination of ill temper, temperance and humility. Chafing against the bit, it offers supplication to the existing structure, stretching its phrases to fit the Metaphysical schema, even as it realigns Herbert's winged blocks. Like Herbert's, Hill's lines tug wilfully against their earthliness: they are desirous of ascent, even as their very longing to conform shows earth-bound pride. Hill makes spirited structural sport with Herbert's wings, showing how even the familiar emblem form can be creatively realigned. The shape of 'Easter Wings' also indicated earthly ambition to overcome sin and rise closer to heavenly virtue. Frustrating that aspiration are both men's stony natures, which check ascent, pulling them back to mortar and ground.

If Hill's work has been accused of passive acquiescence; of nostalgic conformity to

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[36] See Kenneth Haynes, "The Modern Reception of the Greek Epigram", in *Brill's Companion to Hellenistic Epigram* (Brill, 2007). 'Hill writes in *technopaegnia*, shape- or figure-poems. He took as models the distinctive visual layouts of two works. The first half of each poem is based on Vaughan's poem "The Morning Watch," as it was printed in the Gregynog Press edition (1924). The second part of each poem is based on Herbert's "Easter wings."'

timeworn poetic contours,[37] it has also been seen as faddish reinvention; an embarrassing display of technical skill.[38] Yet investments in the authority of form and their redeployment are hardly original to Hill. Herbert himself was borrowing from ancient Greek *technopaegnia*.[39] Vaughan's later reworkings of pattern poetry drew on both Metaphysical and Hellenistic sources. He also took Herbertian social and theological critique as a model.[40] For in organising its ecclesiastical architecture in antithesis to the theological structuring of the Caroline court, Herbert's *The Temple* critically considers the hierarchies of Caroline worldly and divine organisation (the emulative literary culture of praise and reward, the complex hierarchies of Charles's systems of monarchical and divine access, and the finery of religious display). The poet's temple takes shape against 'all this glory, all this pomp and state'. Herbert laments that 'now thy Architecture meets with sin;' and that the authority of classical structure has been debased: 'LORD, with what glory wast thou served of old | When

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[37] See Paulin, *LRB* 7:6 (1985) 13-14.

[38] See Vincent B. Sherry, *The Uncommon Tongue: The Poetry and Criticism of Geoffrey Hill* (U of Michigan P): *Tenebrae* is 'mannered and overworked; it resorts too often a mastery of techniques merely conventional' (157).

[39] See Simias of Rhodes, 'The Wings' (300 B.C.), a poem that appears to have been inscribed on the wings of a statue of Eros, and whose shape is a pair of wings, in *The Greek Bucolic Poets*, trans. Edmonds, J M. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1912): 488. See Margaret Church, 'The First English Pattern Poems', *PMLA* 61:3 (Sep 1946): 636-50, at 636.

[40] See Herbert, 'Jordan II', which distinguishes aspirational self-fashioning rhetoric 'copied' at court from the obedient language of personal devotion: 'As flames do work and winde, when they ascend, | So did I weave my self into the sense. | But while I bustled, I might heare a friend | Whisper, *How wide is all this long pretence! | There is in love a sweetness readie penn'd: | Copie out onely that, and save expense.*'

Solomon's temple stood and flourished! | […] | Wherefore thou quitt'st thy ancient claim:'.[41]

The architecture of Herbert's volume establishes a space in which intimate personal relations with God might be re-established: here, one enters directly and moves unfettered through sacred space. Passing in via 'The Church-Porch', the individual is conducted swiftly to 'The Altar'. It is a quite different object from that fraught site of public offering and sacrament: the early seventeenth-century altar.[42]

One the one hand, the divine architecture of *The Temple* aligns itself with simplicity and humility. On the other hand, Herbert's poems stretch themselves with greater ambition. Actively refashioning their models, they pull wings and altars into new shape. In the act of observing ancient precedents and material phenomena, Herbert reworks them. In this sense, Hill's further redeployments enact neither blind obedience to legacy nor an exhibitionist intervention, but rather an unwillingly surrendered protest against the weighted and imperfect nature of human tribute and recollection, which draws the soaring forms back, often through pride and egotism, toward fallen foundations.[43]

Stones, cement and building work were, of course, explicitly linked with the pride of human ambition in 'The Altar'. The poet's 'heart […] | Is […] a stone' that checks his built offering to God: 'each part | Of my hard heart | Meets in this frame, | To praise thy Name'. Yet broken forms move *especially* well in service of the divine, shaping their tribute from

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[41] Herbert, 'Sion', *Temple* 106.

[42] The altar was a contested site under Charles I. The Laudian relocation of communion-tables altar-wise to the east end of chancels was perceived as popish subversion of Calvinist doctrine, through its visual emphasis on the sacrament. Altar-rails, ostensibly used to prevent animals entering the sacred space, barred access to the congregation: only priests and acolytes could enter. The latter prompted public anger and debate through its association with Catholic demarcation of the space in which Christ becomes incarnate.

[43] See Pugin, *The Present State of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England* (London, 1843), which argues for the modern redeployment the soaring vertical forms of antique Gothic design; for design 'obedience' and 'authority over originality' (113). His structures link ascent with godliness and social goodliness; the authority of formal acclivity with good political-ecclesiastical order. These ascending structures – like lyric wings – are designed in accord with antique sources, and use them to critique contemporary models of political and social order.

earthly, fractured language. Herbert's longing for ascent produces a structure of quite different quality from those produced in the aspirational acclivity at court. His praise is built for different ends and means. It does not hold as its highest principle those structures that will showcase rule-bound proportion, or please invested audience ears, but rather those which accommodate imperfection and attest to the workmanlike humilities of labour:

> A broken ALTAR, Lord thy servant rears,
> Made of a heart, and cemented with teares:
> Whose parts are as thy hand did frame;
> No workmans tool hath touch'd the same

Like Herbert's, Hill's emblem poems cast persons as kinds of building work, tools and material construction. The 'heart, […] cemented with teares' and 'workman's tool' are echoed in *Clavics*'s struggle to 'From 'blood-clay build what ennobles', and its references to 'Inessential repairs' or 'Cracked squires' (*CL* 40; 12; 12). But unlike Herbert, Hill is shaping monuments for public consumption. The contemporary poet's work moves in service of the audience it will go out to meet: a book-buying readership in the present, the eyes of literary posterity, and (chastisingly) critical and editorial bodies: 'Long harbouring with grin | My enemy', 'Those so barely moved by such recital', 'Poor recompense' (*CL* 34-42). Hill writes as though published words had resiliently to bear the scrutiny of flesh-and-blood others, who brought to the page, the temple and the mansion, their tastes, foibles, aesthetic expectations, and the particular design preferences and prejudices of their era.[44]

'[I]s the work ever in itself accessible?' writes Heidegger: 'the Aegina sculptures in the Munich collection, Sophocles' *Antigone* in the best critics edition, are, as the works they are, torn out of their own native sphere'.[45] Hill's attention to the material form of the artwork

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[44] See Jonathan Post, 'Substance and Style in George Herbert', in *English Lyric Poetry*, 136.
[45] Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought,* trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971): 40.

is, like Heidegger's, mindful of its coming-to-being through acts of connoisseurship, criticism, classification. Yet Hill does not draw Heidegger's conclusion. For Hill, the work is incapable of existing 'in itself'. From its inception the artefact is shaped by its considerations of supply and demand; in its use of begged, borrowed or reappropriated aesthetic materials, and in its anticipation of reception. That is as much the case for the destroyed memorial sculpture, the painting of dignitaries at the Palace of Versailles, or the consort music played to Charles I; so too for a neoclassical frontispiece, an emblem poem stretched into the shape of wings, or the fine geometric proportionality of a seventeenth-century architectural plan. These artefacts come to being *through* the involvement of commissioners and audiences, labourers and curators, past masters and present agendas: they do not possess an originally inviolate integrity that is secondarily distorted by their removal from a 'native sphere'. What becomes visceral in Hill's literary redeployment of classical and early modern, nineteenth-century and modernist architectural, literary and visual works is that the mechanisms of trade and judgement have been integral to cultural production across continental artforms – just as they are essential, as we keep discovering, to the English lyric imagination.

Hill might have depicted a stand-off between contemporary poetry and redeployed 'originals', in which earlier artefacts are 'torn out of their own native sphere' by usurping literary pieces. But his *Treatise*, *Odi Barbare,* and *Clavics* derive their compromised verbal-visual form in dialogue with the hybridity of the earlier commissions, which themselves appropriated trans-cultural material across the literary, visual and plastic arts. Hill's verbal structures return us to the tastes that shaped the design models that they themselves negotiated. He scrutinises the politics and economics that shaped their earlier works' creative production. In so doing, his poetry also directs attention to the materiality of its own creation and reception. Hill attends not just to stone and canvas but to *print*, and what it is like: we

observe the look and feel of inked and bound pages. If his eye for masonry, engraved and printed work is fascinated by the hybrid physicality of matter – books's codices, printed pages, 'printers' founts' (*CL*14), 'smudge-typed […] communiqué' (*CL* 34), 'Conjured shards dancing' for attention (*OB* 56) – their imperfections and compromised borrowings remind us of thingly workmanship, competition, and struggles for recognition, demonstrating the range of inky human intervention and counterpoint. The diligent historicity of Hill's work – as well as his fascination with the processes by which it is brought into, and released for, a contemporary audience – demands new modes of interdisciplinary critical attention to the historico-political forces that have structured the production, display and canonicity of aesthetic form across the ages, and across nations, cultures, and genres. Drawing together modes of crafting, displaying and viewing, the marks on Hill's inked pages – from *technopaegnia* to frontispiece; memorial to architectural plan – scrutinise the roles of those who have wielded particular, invested tastes in the processes of commissioning, supporting, or receiving and judging the value of text, image, music and built structure.