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Abstract

In his lone melancholy, John Donne begs for an eternal ever- flowering crown in return for his offered one born out of white sincerity, growing into prayer and praise and woven by his words depicting Christ's life with its major stations ending with coronation. Standing on the other end of the skein is Phoebe Power, seeing the clouded Christian vision of one man dying because of the rest, condensed, twisted and flooding the temporal situation of the present in which we stand as eye witnesses to the death of the group because of an invisible virus. How does she interpret such a reversal of positions?! Optimistic as her words sound, Power sees a utopian bond shining out of the calamity that bears an enigmatic similarity to Donne's and whose tongue is the emblematic crown. Her optimism is guarded by a duty she sets on humanity's shoulders towards the eco-system. This paper sets the two poems of Donne's and Power's in comparison, not for unveiling similarities and differences, though these are essential stations which interpretation uses as landmarks, but for a new-historicist and Post-Marxist reading of coronation as an archetypal nodal idea and as a process reflected in the two literary works: "La Corona" for John Donne and "A Corona" for Phoebe Power.

Keywords: New Historicism- Post Marxism- corona-utopia-dystopia

ملخص البحث

وحيدا في حزنه، يقف جون دون ممسكا بطرف دائرة الخلود، يلتمس تاجا خالدا مثل ثمار الجنة جزاء لتاجه من الصلاة والحمد والذي نسجه بكلماته، راسما حياه المسيح، متوقفا عند محطاتها الرئيسية. على الطرف الاخر من كره الغزل التي تلف الوجود تقف فوبى باور وترى هذه السيرة الذاتية والتي تعبر عن رؤية مسيحية تعكس مفهوم تضحية الفرد وموته من اجل الجميع وقد اختزلت فصولها، وتحولت رياحها، وتكاثفت امطارا تغمر الحاضر الذي نقف فيه شهودا على موت الجميع بسبب فيروس لا يرى. كيف لباور ان تقرا هذا الموقف المعكوس و الذي يشهد تبادل للاماكن بين الواحد والجماعة؟! تبدو باور متفائلة، تحمل كلماتها رابطة بيوتوبيه يسطع نورها وسط هذه الماساة التي تحمل تشابها غامضا ترك اثره على عنوان قصيدتها الذي تشاركته مع دون . ياتي هذا التفاؤل مصحوبا بواجب تلقيه على عاتق الانسانية تجاه النظام البيئي. يضع البحث هاتين القصيدتين في مقارنة تسعى ليس لمجرد الكشف عن اوجه الشبه والاختلاف، على الرغم من كون الاخيرة محطات يقف عندها التأويل كمعالم هامة على الطريق، ولكن بهدف تقديم قراءة تاريخية جديدة و ما بعد ماركسية للترويج كفكرة اصيلة و كعملية تركت ظلالها على كلتا القصيدتين. الكلمات المفتاحية: التاريخية الحديثة- ما بعد الماركسية- كورونا- البيوتوبيا- عالم الواقع المرير .

Coronation as an idea as well as a process ending with an enigmatic nominal product of an emblematic crown has entwined significantly and in a very convoluted and far-fetched and conceited manner that could be best critically described as new historicist and post Marxist perspectives two different poems for two encyclopedic poets: "La Corona" for the enthroned metaphysical poet of the seventeenth century John Donne and "A Corona" by the contemporary British shortlisted- for Eliot's prize Phoebe Power. In spite of her young age for she is only twenty eight, and her very limited production in comparison to Donne's, her

poetic talent with its unique kaleidoscopic quality, as Hasler states, has garnered the young British poetess attention and critical acclaim (1). In addition to the shared title of their two poems, the polyphonic authorial voice, the fluctuating style between a storytelling and the dialogue, Phoebe's multi-layered text qualifies her "A Corona" to stand as an apt contemporary image engaged in Donne's subsequent and after-life halo "La Corona". In commentary of her poem, Power writes:

The origin of the word 'corona', meaning crown, was evocative for me from the

beginning of the crisis. It brought to mind the way that, despite mass isolation, the whole world has been encircled and linked together. I also couldn't get the title of John Donne's sonnet sequence out of my mind, 'La Corona', which refers to the wreath of thorns worn by Jesus on Good Friday. Apart from this, the spring lockdown gives some of us the opportunity to take more notice of plant life or to garden. I wanted the crown in my poem to be made of real – not just symbolic – thorns, which take their place in the world's ecosystem, and to emphasize the vitality which arises out of communities amidst anxiety or grief. (@ledburyfest · Performance & Event Venue, no. p.)

Power's words, when distilled, refer to an eschatological utopia of coronation rooted in a secular present thorny desert experienced momentarily and inspired eternally by Donne's "La Corona"; a creative spiritual labor befitting the coronation of the earth's attendant. The present paper attempts a comparison of the two poems as examples of coronation as an eternal form and as a temporal state associated with pain and dystopian conditions but heading for a utopian coronation of man as God's word symbolized by Christ. The planned comparison is not intended for a revelation of similarities and discrepancies between the mentioned poets or their respective poems, as much as it is a new historicist juxtaposition of the eternal archetypal form of coronation and one of its temporal manifestations, unveiling both to be one spiral narrative whose hero is man as an engaged word in God's temple: a grid,

girdled and crowned hermeneutic witness to his second birth in the ecosystem he has spoilt with his ever-expanding and never ending capitalist desires.

Post -Marxism comes late at the end of a long series of theorists who have tried to punctuate Marxism through rereading of the basic tenets of Marxism-modes of production, class struggle, economic determinism, materialist conception of history, etc. Post –Marxism takes these tenets as reference points for its new interpretations, marking a qualitative shift from the basic traditional Marxist trend. Post –Marxists have many differences with regard to the concerned topics of discussion or to the perspective of interpretations. Nevertheless points of commonality are evident to gather them all. Among post Marxists, there is a belief that Marxism cannot be patched up or saved from economic determinism, but what could be maintained is the discursive plurality of the texts themselves which constitute their inner structure and wealth and guarantee their survival as reference points for analysis (qtd. in Prior, *From Pillar to Post?* 40). Hence, the Marxist canon is treated as language games always open for analysis and reinterpretation. For example, and as Prior mentions in his M.A. thesis, the Marxist unicentric approach of economic determinism has little purchase on the understanding of the plurality of power relations in the second half of the twentieth century. Consequently, an alternative polycentric perspective is advocated (40).

A second tenet of post Marxism is the non-objective concept of society. For traditional Marxism, society is an objective fact, subject to analysis through class relations and means of production. Contrary to this generally accepted maxim, post Marxists reject this concept of a pre-established closed totality called society which offers itself for scientific analysis. Laclau proceeds further to call this attitude "imperialism of

reason” (Laclau, “God Only Knows” 56). Instead, the social is analogous to language and meaning is derived from differential relations. Any order a society has is the result of hegemonic articulation of discursive elements seen always in flux. Nothing is fixed, and what remains are nothing but scars or traces of incomplete attempts of articulation to fix things. Reality is open, plural and contingent. However, these attempts to pin things down are moments in an ever going discourse. These moments are called nodal points by Laclau and Mouffe (*New Reflections on the Revolutions of our Time* 90). What stops a society from establishing itself as a positive essence is what Mouffe calls “constitutive outside”, an indeterminate discursive field dominated by antagonism and negation (Lippin 272). Laclau proceeds and shows that the conditions of possibility are also those of impossibility, and if society cannot be present in its full positivity, it can be represented indirectly in an oblique, twisted and figurative manner. This is what he calls “constitutive distortion” in his *The Rhetorical Foundations of Society* which donates rhetorical figures an ontological value that cannot be substituted by literal ones (123). Ellen Wood tackles the third common point among post Marxists: the autonomy of the state and of ideology (“Capitalism and Human Emancipation” 47-75). Once more, Post Marxists are after freedom from classes and ideological class consciousness. As a concept, ideology is not related to class-interests or to economic-levels. Similarly, the state is democratized in the process of allowing a pluralistic society to flourish (Pierson, “New Theories of the State and Civil Society” 563). Finally, Post Marxism posits the centrality of culture which is seen as material as life itself. In Hall’s words, “it has ceased to be, if ever it was, a decorative addendum to the hard world of production and things, the icing on the cake of the material world. The word is now as material as the world” (62).

As a term, New Historicism is coined by Stephen Greenblatt since 1980. It comes as a result of a number of practices at the hands of many theorists, mostly Marxists like Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson, Raymond Williams and others. Basically, it involves a parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts with regard to the same historical period. Here, it should be noted that the paper attempts such a double reading in relation to the idea of coronation but with regard to two different historical periods. So, in a sense, the paper applies the strategy in a chronological rather than a synchronic manner, so as to read the process along plural manifestations characteristic of the ‘historical text’ using the post Marxist term or “narrative” in the traditional classical Marxism. Post Marxism and New Historicism share the view that no age or culture has a single homogeneous world view, but internally diverse and heterogeneous one (Colebrook 36). Adopting this perspective, the paper is considered an attempt at reading history itself in one of its manifestations: coronation, revealing how different circumstances collaborate and constellate to provide a different appearance to one and the same deeply hidden process. John Brannigan sees that New Historicism has managed to “project a vision of the history as an endless skein of cloth smoked in a complex overall pattern by the needle of power. You need only pull the thread at one place and find it connected to another” (46). Evidently, it should be added that this thread is the ecosystem extended between man and his cultural history in a process of coronation.

Apparently New Historicism has gained a wide appeal for a number of reasons, the most important of which are what could be termed post Marxist ones. It unveils different layers of meaning, a never ending process of constructing and reconstructing the text (Dean 13), a return to history and culture (Veaser 4) a configuration of society, culture, power and ideology in the text (Barry 137) and most important what

Clifford Greetz calls "thick description"; that careful deliberation of a particular event that has meaning for the people through discovering the conventions, codes and modes of thought (75). Finally, Greenblatt explains how New Historicism evokes history through anecdote (29).

Donne's and Power's poems are intricately woven not only by the form, title and dramatic narrative of their content; but also by the one human anecdote they contrive to recount. It is the changed unchanging story of man as God's word, as partly material and mostly spiritual in ever-going process of coronation that takes the dystopian imaginary history a stage, anticipating a real utopian grace and glory encapsulating god's word and taking place with the second birth. In a semi-classical, Platonic and Eliotean gesture, Power has selected two lines from Donne's fourth sonnet "The Temple" in "La Corona" to start her poem with. They function as a chorus' prologue, as an objective correlative and as a mediatory Platonic world of mathematics relating not only Donne's spiritual atmosphere and Power's apparently materialistic world but far more revealing are the inhabitants as well as the readers of the two dwellings

As for one which hath a long
task,"tis good,
With the Sunne to begin
(Donne, "La Corona", "Temple",
lines:11-12)

Donne's "La Corona" is viewed as a supplication on the part of the poet in the form of prayer and praise to gain glory, real glory and not "frail bays" as he admonishes his addressee. As the sonnets unfold, this prayer and praise takes the form of snapshots of the basic stages in Christ's life. Together with the introductory sonnet, they are numbered seven sonnets: the first is untitled, then we have Annunciation, Nativity, Temple, Crucifying, Resurrection and Ascension and each sonnet extends over its multiply, thus covering fourteen lines in which the last two lines are repeated at the beginning of the next sonnet, thus forming a

circle. Klemp sees in this interrelated sequence of sonnets an imitation of the entwined branches of Christ's thorny crown (49). Moreover, the circularity born out of this concatenation is, as he informs the reader, an emblem for eternity and a monogram of God's perfection in Renaissance literature and art. The circle or the crown, from Klemp's point of view, is also related and relevant to the poet or the speaker in "La Corona" as he seeks salvation by reflecting on the paradoxes of Christianity and the pattern of Christ's life (50). Regarding number seven and its multiple which controls the structural pattern of the sequence, he explains that in the numerological tradition it is the number of grace, charity, completion, perfection and The Holy Spirit. Biblical writings relate it to creation and the days of the week. In this context, it could be seen that Donne with this design is creating a parallel poetic world to the mundane one, in which he traces and weaves Christ's life in a sort of prayer and praise, hopefully to receive grace and glory.

Deign at my hands this crown of
prayer and praise,
Weaved in my lone devout
melancholy,
Thou which of good hast, yea, art
treasury,
All changing unchanged Ancient of
days
But do not with a vile crown of
frail bays
Reward my muse's white sincerity;
But what thy thorny crown gain'd,
that give me,
A crown of glory, which dot flower
always
(Donne, "La Corona", lines:1-8)

Donne's petition presented in the form of prayer and praise is aspiring to a specific eternal glory, "which dot flower always", not the temporal spatial one "frail bays", an almost identical one to Christ's glory expanding over time "All changing unchanged Ancient of days". In a nutshell, Donne is after proving as well as fulfilling

himself as a second Adam, a Christ, a living word, a sort of being whose borders are far beyond our existential time, our temporal individual experiences. It is evident that Donne conceives this living word in both collective and individual terms, otherwise he would not have chosen Christ as an emblem of it. The problem that faces him now is not only how to resolve the paradox of the temporal linear movement of the individual and the eternal circular movement characteristic of divinity, but more important to stress is the essential necessity of the individual will and movement in this identification process of salvation in a non-conflicting manner with the divine eternal circular one of time. Margret Maurer explains how in pre-Newtonian physics, earthly bodies can move in circles only under constraints. The idea of fetters is translated in Donne's vision into devout melancholy. In Newton's words, this constrained circularity involves what he calls centrifugal and centripetal movements. Now this happens when the straight line describes a circle, that's its extremity: it is carried along the circumference, constituting its natural and lateral translation along the tangent and its unnatural constrained motion is towards the center (Maurer 56-57). Maurer proceeds providing evidence from Donne's sermons that he thinks of constrained virtual circularity as featuring life and after life experienced by the Martyrs, "Their [the Martyrs'] death was a birth to them into another life, into the glory of God; it ends one circle, and created another; for immortality and eternity is a circle too; not a circle where two points meet, but a circle made at once" (qtd. in Maurer 57).

This is Donne's concept of Coronation and glory: a process extending not one's life as a completed obtained state but a process whose horizon stretches to embrace the collective life of humanity past, present and future in a New historicist manner in which man's consciousness is dialectically

moving between events pictured as a collage woven by his circular and straight lines, practicing and stimulating the divine eternity. The crux of this coronation process is the resulting form; that of a Sun or concentric circles, the same image Phoebe Power selects from Donne's poem to start hers with. It is worth mentioning that Donne plays with word in a sort of pun uniting Christ with the sun; "son", "sunne", thus transforming the condition into a source of a living word and a source of life for others in which the individual consciousness is oblivious of its own while being attentive and alert to collective identity: a witness dressed in a martyr. Klemp reminds the reader that the word corona in Latin has a second meaning: an assembly of men (52). In this respect, "La Corona" as a process manifested by Donne considers the relation between his individual attempt, recalling Christ's, to save his soul and his own will to perform acts of devotion.

Asking for salvation, redemption, grace or glory requires dialectic movements translated into a number of opposites occupying different levels or spaces. This last sentence comprises the three basic components of time in Aristotle's view. The intersection of the three allows the living word of humanity to triangulate the reality of time and to go beyond the temporality of any finite representation (Jamson, *Valences of the Dialectic* 497) In other words, these three together with devotion to humanity allows man to dive into the deep structure of humanity, dying or absent from our surface mundane world only to feed its roots with its new micro hidden identity dwelling a borderless eternal world. This is the image Power sets before the reader's eye.

Made of dust,
Life enters us from water,
Earth and microbe too
Because we're borderless.
(Power, "A Corona", lines:4-7)

The above mentioned intersection, allegorical of Christ's crucifixion is the

archetypal space of man's earthly journey or narrative which Power with a magnificent post Marxist and new historicist imagination and in very subtle and concise lines has managed not only to portray, but also to reveal its double utopian/dystopian faces. Paradoxically, it also marks his birth as Donne depicts it

Lo! Faithful, virgin yields himself to lie

In prison, in thy womb

(Donne, "La Corona", "Annunciation", lines: 5-6)

Turning to Power's "A Corona", the reader's eyes meet only three stanzas, in which meaning is carried smoothly from one stanza to the other through enjambment. This quick analysis of the form reveals the idea of eternity and birth to be the controlling and dominating mold Power has willingly and intentionally chosen for her subject matter. A close analysis of Donne's formal structure in "La Corona" in relation to Power's "A corona" reveals a significant difference regarding the use of numbers; one component of Aristotelean time: while Donne makes of seven the external form of the whole sequence, including seven sonnets spotting basic stages in the process of coronation; Christ's life, multiplying the number within each sonnet, Power creates of number three the dominant encircling form for her poem, and weaving Donne's external forming number seven into the internal body of each stanza. Moreover, apart from the introductory sonnet asking for the crown of glory, "Temple" which Power chooses to quote occupies the third position in the sequence. In this respect, it could be logically concluded that Power is intentionally switching Donne's external structure in her poem. This will affect the second component of time in turn: movement will not take the circular form, but it will change into a spiral one, thus denoting continuity and repetition but on a different level or sphere. This leads us to the third of the Aristotelian components of time: space. Power leads the reader gradually to envision one narrative taking place on

different levels of the same historical spiral movement.

This last point directs the reader to consider the two different spaces or stages used by Donne and Power: the temple and the desert, where the first is an emblem of a utopian spiritual fertility and the latter is a symbol of dystopian natural aridity, Power's spiral movement and former switching of the external structure of Donne's with the threefold one of her poem is traversing the space chronologically between the two spaces, then reversing their reading. Following Virno, she is applying a prodigious effort to change the valences of the two spaces with their action and events, to declare positive things which are clearly negative ones and to affirm that dystopia is in reality a utopia if examined carefully (Jameson 434).

In an antagonistic manner of Aristotelian recognition, Power is reawakening the reader's imagination to possible and alternative reading of Covid 19 crisis. The "Temple" sonnet refers to Christ's cleansing of the temple in the fourth Gospel. In his interpretation of the incident, Brodie places focus on Christ's critique of the commercial world as manifest in his removal of the traders and merchants from the temple because their presence is defiling it (180). Following this line of thought and recalling the fact that Power selects the two lines from the Temple sonnet and uses them as a transitional link between the two poems, the modern reader of the capitalist world can easily detect himself among the multitude roaming in the desert after being banished from the temple; a sort of a sentence or punishment for misbehaving; an archetypal image, to be sure, of the first banishment of Adam from paradise. Power says:

We are in an open desert

Now, homeless

And carrying just the things

We need: Made of dust,

Life enters us from water,

Earth and microbe too

Because we're borderless.

(Power, "A Corona", lines: 1-7)

In a Post-Marxist attitude, Power sees the problem in terms of the solution, discovers utopia under the smoky veil of dystopia. If the banishment is one man's fault; Adam's, so why should the multitude suffer?! If it is a matter of a momentary error, why then is the punishment now and forever?! The problem lies in our short-sightedness, we have been oblivious to Aristotle's definition of tragedy and how it should depict one complete whole action, and to correct this myopia we should wear the eye glasses of New Historicism, seeing different events as entwined circles in one bead, a sort of one long vertical connecting prayer and horizontal praise. In sermons 5: 270-72, Donne says

If we compare these two incomparable duties, prayer and praise, it will stand thus, our prayer besiege God ...but our praises prescribe in God, we urge him, and press him with his ancient mercies, his mercies of old. By prayer, we incline him, we bend him, but by praise we bind him (qtd. in Maurer 61).

In Aristotle's antagonist stage, the reader is involved into a new mental recognition of antagonists: they are to be read through each other and more important they can be translated in different forms and acquire different names. Prayer and praise are different names for lateral and circular movements, for eternal theology with its characteristic seven number and its multiples as "La Corona" shows and temporal humanity with its threefold multiples: space, number and movement. Unfortunately, man cannot see this as long as he dwells motionless while the space around him is extending. This is the condition of man in late capitalism; a world in which modern technology and excessive, systematic production in Taylorization or Fordist manner has contracted man's physical and mental abilities and inflated his consumerist abilities. It has made him

dull and heavy, pinned to a dwelling, a society whose basic ideology is the sovereignty of imperial reason of man over nature, a cognitive misunderstanding of his role resulting in a sort of imbalance, a depletion of sources and an ecological desertification.

Repeating Christ's dismissal of the traders in the Temple but in a modern form and in a post Marxist manner, Power recognizes in the present crisis a radical nodal point for an alternative utopia of a Deleuzian nomadism, an immigration and movement from consumerism and dwellings into production and movement. Following a whole line of tradition including Aristotle, Kant, Sartre, Ricoeur, Benjamin and others, she sees these extreme situations (Jameson 592), or unique historical events as both revealing the identity of history as an absent tragic cause and as a very rich and rewarding experience of anxiety and terror flowering into a sort of crowned collectivity. In such tragic events, man is evidently defeated, an incident translated in Aristotelian terms as a separation from power. However, such doomed separation is momentary for a re-cognitive unity to take place. Humanity is predestined to face such temporal separation from power, money or selves whose power is, in contrast to happiness, permanent (555). This explains why Aristotle stresses the superiority of tragedy in which defeat leads to cognitive illumination the victorious is deprived of. Such disasters are paradigmatic, twisting the daily routine life into a total different direction, thus figuring history as an endless flux, always changing and never conceived as a totality.

This tragic defeat is the pressure Newton mentions that forces the straight line into circular and lateral movements, exploring untrodden lands like the mentioned desert. In this respect, the desert is not a punishment for the dismissed traders. As reflected in Power's "Now", it is a refuge from the sweeping consumerism, not only material consumerism, but intellectual one

that devours man's rich and multiple abilities and sets limits to his utopian alternatives. As Jameson stresses, consumerism is the lynchpin of late capitalism (444). In what Ricoeur calls narrative intelligence (529), Power has managed to set before the reader one historical appearance of Donne's temple; the desert; a place where you should be satisfied with only what you need. Ricoeur's narrative intelligence is based on juxtaposing different temporalities in a sort of what emerges before the reader's eyes in "La Corona"'s context and background as a crucifixion.

This crucifixion is termed in Marxist and Post-Marxist terms historiography; an intersection of time and space, a tragic encounter between the two resulting in crushing the latter under the feet of the former to leave its footprints, a geography bearing the traces of the genealogy of time.

Bodies bare and woven by this

Across nations, grids

And laws, like leaves,

A girdle, strong

Vines, maybe even

A crown, since Easter Comes

Yet – a band of thorns

(Power, "A Corona", lines 8-14)

Power's words weave the present now of the desert with archaic past not only of Christ; the second Adam, but with Adam himself as the first word and the original sin. In Post-Marxism, societies are images of language, With words like "Bodies bare" and "leaves", Power is not only reading the present community of the desert in and through the archetypal one of Paradise, but also using the latter to spot, in a microscopic analysis, the details connecting both: relation to the ecosystem and plant life; how the original sin is related to consuming the fruits of the plant life "the apple" as much as facing the consequences is again related to the plant life "leaves". It should be noticed that again number three is the limit to Power's series of similes (leaves, girdle, strong) followed by the

addition of a crown simile conditioned by (maybe). The first three similes depict an imagination limited by the consuming philosophy of a community of appearance, a world constrained by the textual present, but her world of the ever present now, of martyrs, of those witnesses of Donne's type with his characteristic aspiration to the changing, unchanged archaic of times, the utopian crowning is seen in the present as the spot where the past and the future meet.

With this limitless imagination, Power sees the textual history as a process, subject to occasional breaks, tragic events, nodal points or what Ricoeur terms "aporias": events combining opposites that cannot be once -and -for- all resolved, can't be for sure be determined as positive or negative, but the important point is what to do about them. In her concluding stanza, power plans her utopian positive crowning strategy to face our doomed- with- crisis world; a strategy she herself has worked out brilliantly and subtly in her poem. Most important is that her solution flashes back, reproduces and elaborates Donne's *La Corona*

Yet- a band of thorns

Hard pressed in, though

Protective of the shrub's

Soft colors, its labors.

May your love be like

a prickle, adding to

Itself, unadorned

and joined in multiples.

(Power, "A Corona", lines: 14-21)

In the face of what Leslie calls inauthentic "culture of consumption", a culture Marxism depicts as nightmare in which the bourgeois enjoy the security of dwelling (428) and consumption, while the laborer suffers alienation of his product, Post Marxism postulates a nomadic mode of existence in which man should endure the pain of handicraft, should care more for the virtuosity of the productive process, rather than for the final product. Like Virno, Power is asking for the denunciation of the contemporary world in terms of the

spectacle (429), the same one Donne rejects and sets in geographical terms "frail bays". She stresses the necessity of labor as a painful, staged process "Hard pressed in" because such processing perspective is protective of its constitutive atoms, in the sense that going through the process is the only guarantee for reserving the details, the traces which are paradoxically the new seeds for the coming shrubs. Donne refers to the same idea in relation to Christ in the last sonnet of the sequence:

But first He, and He first enters the way.

O strong ram, which hast batter'd heaven for me!

Mild Lamb, which with thy Blood hast mark'd the path!

(Donne, "La Corona", "Ascension", lines: 8-10)

Commenting upon virtuosity of work, Virno sees it as the only outlet from sweeping mechanization with its logic of standardization and abolishing of differences. Linguistically speaking, the mechanic world is one of parrots not of human language as it is meant to be in which identity is built upon individual differences and collective similarity. It is the only way to avoid alienation since what matters isn't the product but the process. Most important it is the means to authentic being in which man is protective, through both material and mental labor of "the other" constitutive of his collective identity, through the consummation of his individual life" prickle". Such virtuoso labor Power is stressing is genetic, generative and multi layered process and going through it is similar to playing on the harp image Power portrays in "Harp Duet"; an image of utopian harmony to be gained and enjoyed with the rest, only after traversing the apparently painful dialectic dystopian land of two; of contradictions; of split humanity.

A harp picture, one harp

And two harpists, two halves
of a heart. Conceiving and
expanding
Wings, great arms embracing
Art, or children, or pilgrims
Or mothers, a boy and a girl
Holding space by strings
But never touching
Each other

(Power, Harp Duet, lines:)

Enveloped in a prayer form, Power ends her poem with what maybe figured as a response to Donne's appeal for salvation in *La Corona*, thus stressing once more the circularity, she intends, enveloping the two poems.

Power's last stanza stands as an aporia before the reader, for following Donne's technique of being both in and out of the coronation narrative, thus perplexing the reader for sometimes he is directing his speech to Christ, others to Mary or Joseph and sometimes he is totally outside commenting upon the narrative. In a similar fashion, Power's use of pronouns leads the reader in the same direction; for after using a collective first person plural "we are in the desert now", she takes the reader to a seemingly dialogic situation between unknown speakers; where one of them, the poetess herself is praying for the other. Consequently, aporia is not confined to the textual history, but it is expanded to include the participants themselves. Donne speaks of Mary as:

Ere by the spheres time was
created thou
Wast in His mind, who is thy
Son, and Brother;
Whom thou conceives,
conceived; yea, thou art now
Thy Maker's maker, and thy
Father's mother
(Donne, La Corona,
Annunciation, lines: 9-12)

This is the conceptual utopian coronation which both Donne and Power are striving to deliver as a generative, polyphonic, multi-subjected, ecological and collective process.

Ricoeur suggests that the axial events, or what Post Marxists call nodal events, like Corona pandemic in our contemporary world or Christ's crucifixion, are intensive aporatic situations round which the calendar revolves that can't be resolved, but they multiply into smaller ghostly versions (521). Such multiplicity exerts fear, forcing man to denunciate sinful actions (426). Along this chronological multiplicity born out of the repetition of the archetypal event into archetypal images, thus giving birth to a conceptual utopia whose essential feature as Jameson testifies, is the collective bond(413), Power is suggesting in a metaphysical conceit, the offspring of a postmodern culture, a synchronic dialectical multiplicity involving man and nature. A conceit reflects a desire to draw correspondences between heterogeneous things, thereby revealing the unity of what appears as fragmentary (Ettenhuber,"Comparisons Are Odious"393).What characterizes the metaphysical conceit or imagery in general from the common metaphors is its concentration on the function of the manner in which the analogue are related. In Power's conceit, the object of love is gracefully "may your love" turned into a prickle, a natural element associated with pain which Power instead of eliminating is multiplying but without producing a beautiful form. The image portrays the final painful and pathetic scene in an Aristotelian drama, evocative for action after mental recognition in the antagonist's stage. It is the present postmodern stage in which man is paradoxically portrayed in love with corona pandemic, engaging and initiating a generative process, a Christian image of man embracing death. This dystopian condition is the pre conditional stage for a real utopia, a state in which man has willingly not only accepted his natural origin "life enters us from water, earth and microbes too", but also recognized the grace of eternity involved in loving its painful multiplied image in the other,

whether that other is natural or human. As a matter of fact, the natural or physical element is subject to the human mental one. With modern technology girdling man's world, pretending to abolish spaces, but turning in reality to be hiding a latent desire for self-sufficiency, man has willingly given nature the sign to do the same. Marxist reification registers how human relations are transformed with time into things (Jameson 329).Corona Virus is nothing but the embodiment of a human desire reflective of an individual attempt to ascend the rest of humanity in a technological world.

If the analysis of Donne's and of Power's poems stops here, it should be detected that the resultant image is a dystopian one of condemnation, but as Donne repeats in one of these linking joints

Salvation to all that will is nigh
(Donne, "La Corona", line14)

In the fore mentioned commentary of Power with which the paper has started, she reflects an optimistic view regarding the pandemic impact on reconnecting people, but in the form of nomads, as her poem testifies. Here, the reader should recall how pain, prayer and praise binds and bends man's movement to draw the circle of generative eternity, the sign, trace and crown of man's love to his human and collective role. As Blake says:

Thou art a man, God is no more
Thy own humanity learn to adore
(Blake, The Everlasting Gospel,
lines:144-145)

This is exactly and precisely what Donne or Power means to convey with their respective poems. Immediately before the quoted lines from "Temple", Donne comments on Christ saying:

Blowing, yea blowing out
those sparks of wit,
Which Himself on the doctors
did bestow
The Word but lately couldn't
speak, and lo!

It suddenly speaks wonders;
 whence comes it,
 That all which was, and all
 which should be writ,
 A shallow seeming child
 should deeply know?
 His Godhead was not soul to
 His manhood,
 Nor had time mellow`d Him to
 his ripeness;
 But as for one which hath a
 long task, it`s good,
 With the sun to begin His
 business
 (Donne, "La Corona",
 "Temple", lines3-12)

Loving oneself properly entails an enduring and painful process of reading, of connecting tormenting dramatic details and traumatic lines both chronologically and synchronically; a generative process of both linguistic and material collective coronation of deity or Godhead surpassing and surmounting all "His Godhead was not soul to His manhood". The resultant generated image includes traces to be left for others to follow, elaborate or modify. It is worth mentioning that the process is not confined to Christ for the selected lines have been misunderstood to refer to him only, but Donne is alert to the point and in a sparking witty gesture uses the relative pronoun "which" to refer to the fact that it is a long Godhead process starting with the world`s sun and followed by Christ as a symbol of the second birth of man initiated with the reading process.

Following the satiric mood characteristic of Donne, Power has subtly chosen the painful shocking prickle to be the symbol of man`s object of love; the offspring of his desert, thus directing his attention to the double vision extending in two different roads of utopia and dystopia. In a light gesture, she has been able to open the secret duality inherent in all intensive situations. One can go further and say that if Donne has followed the Annual school in depicting his vision of coronation as exemplified in

Christ`s life, Power has chosen the corresponding microcosmic present world to celebrate the same idea, and the two visions have their own paradoxical moments of utopia and dystopia, their own oxymoron language enticing a post Marxist vision of independent power, authority or state and a corresponding autonomous ideology, a transcendental Godhead which has its own ideology irrespective of man`s individual action, and which is merciful in bending them painfully to donate them grace.

One last point worthy pinpointing is Power`s reference to the prickle and her image of the multitude. The world of late capitalism and globalization is intending to uniform humanity under the pseudo-unity of one world for all. Such pervading sameness is an inauthentic weak cobweb that does not mean real freedom or strength. On the contrary, it indicates imprisonment of the different in relation to the universal standard. Power`s image is suggestive that multiplicity is the more embracing solution for a real concept of unity including free variation. Variety or difference are merciful pores in the collective body of humanity, allowing it to breathe momentarily and more significantly extending space for autonomous authorial Deity with an independent ideology to interfere.

If early secularism of the seventeenth century that dispersed people in different directions, an archetypal image of Adam`s departure from paradise, repeated in the labyrinth of the Jews, echoed in the dismissed traders in the desert, such spiral ever repeated aporatic movement has led Donne to explore the other face of spiritual unity running as a process underneath, late capitalism with its hegemonic postmodern logic and globalization built upon a depletion of nature has driven Power to consider Donne`s plea for salvation in a dialectic relation between man and nature. In such dialectic, man is naturalized "prickle" and nature is humanized, adding to itself and joining the multiple. Such

entwining dialectic whose emblem is corona virus is the repeated image of the disentangled one narrated of the witness in the robe of a martyr. Out of her belief in the necessity for labor and pain; generative as they are of this dialogue, Power has not only expressed her solution, but also practiced it into a difficult conceit of the prickle, thus forcing the reader into a similar intellectual difficulty (Hunsaker, “Perspectives on the Poetics of Conceit” 108)

In conclusion, the paper has traced Donne’s and Power’s utopian visions of salvation rooted in dystopian traumatic condition. Through the New Historicist juxtaposition of the two coronas, it has been clear that only melancholic journey through desert-like landscape accompanied by virtuosity “white sincerity” and with the abandonment of restful dwelling that man can gracefully experience the essence of eternity in a spiral bending movement he leaves as a rhetorical trace of independent hegemonic ideology of a Deity. They have proved, each in his own way, what Fredric Jameson pinpoints as the distinctive characteristic of utopia: that utopia is what it is not because of its economic strategy of abundance, but for the collective bond. Moreover, the paper has proved the non-objective reality of a society which is sometimes identified as punished merchants and others as pre-destined to the nomadic state to discover both its plural essence and its essential need for labor and a sense of satisfaction in a balanced relation to the ecosystem. Post Marxists concepts of autonomous ideology and state have been represented in a Supreme Deity bending the human movements for a future spiritual utopia. A similar independent ideology has been ingrained in the reader who keeps moving with the polyphonic authorial voices

across different spheres, both material and intellectual, uncontrolled by economic gravity or social class struggle. On the contrary, he abandons personal or class ideologies for a collective changing one. This collective utopian movement is the one thing that provides an archetypal rhetorical image of a society held underneath by invisible figurative images or roots that have an ontological value that cannot be represented literally. Finally, it is this collective movement which, even though hard to discern, which supports the post Marxist belief that culture is material in essence

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