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Bracket and Voice: Drummond of Hawthornden's Lunular Poetics

Abstract

Taking the proliferation of brackets in his Petrarchan verse as its starting point, this essay argues for a reevaluation of William Drummond of Hawthornden's poetic voice. While even his admirers have tended to characterise his sonnets as operating at a single high rhetorical pitch, Drummond's deployment of lunulae and crotchets serves to complicate the voice that emerges both from individual poems and from the collection as a whole, establishing a 'lunar' counterpart to the sequence's Apollonian magniloquence, a *sottovoce* that functions as a distinctive correlative of the Petrarchan *locus amoenus*. Moreover, in setting ear against eye and text against tongue, Drummond's brackets also pose difficult questions regarding what it might mean to talk of the text's 'voice' at all. Attending to how Drummond's punctuation establishes a radical incommensurability of melic and opsic, while setting the readings that emerge within the context of recent scholarship on the role of the voice in early modern reading practices, also means reframing Drummond's relationship to the Baroque. Rather than focusing on the extremes to which he takes the Petrarchan conceit, we start to see Drummond as belonging to the early seventeenth-century transnational Baroque associated by historians such as Peter Burke with a crisis of representation. This recontextualisation might ultimately point (this essay concludes) towards Petrarch's own proto-Baroque tendencies.

History has left its residue in punctuation marks, and it is history [...] that looks out at us, rigidified and trembling slightly, from every mark. (Adorno)¹

Brackets proliferate in William Drummond's Petrarchan verse. Of the eighty-nine poems that make up his untitled two-part sonnet sequence of 1616, three

quarters contain at least one pair of brackets, and almost a third of these contain two pairs or more. No early modern sonnet sequence in English or in Scots comes close to rivalling this frequency.² If this sheer proliferation of brackets were not remarkable enough, the virtuoso display of their literary potential in Drummond's proem seems designed to signal their importance throughout the sequence:

I first beganne to reade, then Love to write,
And so to praise a perfect Red and White,
But (God wot) wist not what was in my Braine:
Loue smylde to see in what an awfull Guise
I turn'd those *Antiques* of the Age of Gold,
And that I might moe *Mysteries* behold,
Hee set so faire a *Volumne* to mine Eyes,
That I [quires clos'd which (dead) dead Sighs but breath]
Ioye on this *liuing Booke* to reade my Death. (6–14)³

Hitherto Drummond's brackets have gone unremarked, both in studies dedicated to his poetry and in the literature devoted to the parenthesis as a rhetorical and a literary device. John Lennard makes no mention of Drummond in his monograph on brackets in English printed verse, the only book-length study on the subject to date; nor have those scholars who have examined the remarkable deployment of parentheses in Drummond's favourite work, Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, yet turned their attentions to Sidney's most assiduous student in this regard.⁴ This neglect is hardly surprising, given Drummond's enduring status as a 'grossly undervalued writer'⁵ and the enduring if flawed assumption that the bracket marks out only what is parenthetical, superfluous and dispensable.⁶ Yet as Lennard notes elsewhere, when poets use brackets, they 'never mean "Skip this bit if you like", rarely mean "Oops", and often mean "Pay special attention"'.⁷ This paper looks to do just that.

Drummond has often been characterised – and this by his admirers – as operating at a single high rhetorical pitch. R. D. S. Jack, for example, argued that Drummond in his love sonnets 'maintains a superb level of diction, *genus grande* at its best'.⁸ Echoing Jack, William Calin has claimed more recently that 'Drummond's achievement in the high Petrarchen [*sic*] mode is to have

maintained throughout these texts a consistent, high rhetorical stance and a voice of magnificent power'.⁹ The voice that emerges from Drummond's sonnets, however, is rarely as unremittingly loud or singular as such accounts imply. Brackets can certainly allow an author to exaggerate a text's rhetorical patterns in order to 'turn a dramatic statement into an exquisitely formal piece of art',¹⁰ and Drummond's do sometimes serve this purpose, just as his Petrarchism demands to be situated more precisely in relation to the transnational Baroque's rhetorics of excess.¹¹ Yet as we shall see, Drummond's parentheses just as often multiply and complicate both the source and the timbre of the voice that emerges both from individual poems and from the sequence as a whole.

Drummond's brackets are also emblematic of his Baroque Petrarchism. This is more original than is commonly acknowledged – both more distinctive, and more profoundly Petrarchan, more fundamentally bound up with the central concerns of the *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta* and the literary modes it inaugurates. Erasmus christened the curved brackets developed by the humanists *lunulae* or 'little moons', and one way to think of Drummond's brackets is as setting up within his sequence a 'lunar' counterpart to the solar rhetoric described by Jack and Calin.¹² Offering a shade analogous to that the laurel afforded Petrarch, Drummond's *lunulae* establish an ontologically and epistemologically distinct space, a textual *locus amoenus* or 'enclave', where 'traces of a counter-impulse – towards complication, or equivocation' can survive the glare of the sequence's more Apollonian magniloquence.¹³ The cumulative effect of Drummond's parenthetical interventions, difficult to exemplify, is to fashion a sort of *sottovoce* running underneath the high rhetoric. Constantly if minimally setting off part of the sequence's own discourse from itself, this heterodox *genus tenue* (thin, slight, and seemingly insignificant rather than simply plain) offers a distinctive modulation of both the reticence and the splintering of selfhood so intrinsic to the Petrarchan mode.¹⁴

If Drummond's poetic voice has too often been characterised as maintaining an unremittingly high diction – and subsequently, by implication, as too public, too, grand, too self-consciously literary – Drummond's champions have also long felt called upon to counter insinuations that he has no real voice of his own at all. That Drummond's verse is 'exceptionally derivative' remains the predominant critical axiom concerning his work.¹⁵ Critical shifts have led to an atmosphere that (in theory at least) ought to be more sympathetic to Drummond's role as a

high priest of the early modern culture of textual recycling.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the suspicion lingers that reframing Drummond as ‘one of the most intertextual of our poets’ might involve little more than a ‘tactful neologism.’¹⁷ Drummond is so completely indebted to his Petrarchan precursors, this argument runs, that no distinctive voice ever emerges from the cut-up of quotations, translations and adaptations. The standard defence has been that Drummond consistently succeeds in transforming his borrowings from Marino, Sidney, Ronsard and the rest into not ‘a mere mélange of other men’s lines, tropes, thoughts or whole passages’ but a ‘consistent literary idiolect.’¹⁸ This is in keeping with the account of a univocal Drummond outlined above. Yet Drummond’s brackets complicate things here too. Within the Petrarchan schema the Apollonian sun is associated most immediately with the searing threat of the precursor or rival poet. In Drummond’s sequence this Petrarchan thematic is sublimated into form, into the very punctuation. Establishing a space for a nominal counter-voice, suggestive of and analogous to the Petrarchan poet’s struggle to find a voice of his own, Drummond’s brackets on occasion become a means to both signal and contain his literary indebtedness, as in that very first parenthesis of the sequence (‘(God wot)’), with its wink towards sonnet 74 of Sidney’s *Astrophil and Stella*.

Perhaps the most significant manner in which Drummond’s brackets complicate his sequence’s poetic voice, however, lies in how they draw out and play upon the opposition between what we might (borrowing from Northrop Frye) term ‘doodle’ and ‘babble’ – or, more solemnly (and again following Frye), ‘melos’ and ‘opsis.’¹⁹ Robert MacDonald noted some time ago how Drummond’s poetry both ‘delights the ear and pleases the eye.’²⁰ From that opening sonnet, however, Drummond’s brackets exemplify the way in which his verse pitches each of these sources of pleasure against the other, in what is often presented as a deathly struggle. It is in this war between eye and ear, above all, that we find history looking out at us from Drummond’s punctuation. In her recent wide-ranging attempt to ‘recover the vocality of reading in Renaissance England’, Jennifer Richards describes how the orthodoxies established by twentieth-century scholarship regarding print’s impact on Western culture have all come under sustained pressure, with the exception of one: the notion that print ‘finalized a shift from the ear to the eye.’²¹ Richards looks to dismantle this final orthodoxy, telling an alternative story of ‘how the eye and tongue were brought into alignment in printed books of the sixteenth century.’²² This essay answers Richards’

call for a criticism that recognises that 'script and print *depend* on the physical voice for their meaning, including when they are not sounded'.²³ What we find when we 'think about the sound of print' in Drummond's sonnets, however, is not the harmonious convergence that Richards outlines, but a radical misalignment of ear and eye, text and tongue.²⁴

This conflict between opsic and melic, I shall argue, offers further evidence that Drummond was indeed a 'more complex and pressured writer than has been realized', albeit in ways quite different to those delineated by John Kerrigan.²⁵ When set against Richards' account of the sixteenth-century convergence of ear and eye, Drummond's Petrarchism starts to look as though it belongs at the beginning of what John Wilkinson has described as the 'post-Renaissance history of lyric poetry's tension between an ambition for formal completion resulting in textual objectification and a contrary desire for utterance to persist in speech or song'.²⁶ By embedding Drummond more firmly within this context of an early seventeenth-century Baroque associated with a crisis of representation,²⁷ while setting his use of punctuation within the *longue durée* of shifts in writing's relation to voice, this paper aims to contribute to the reevaluation of Drummond that Kerrigan has called for, while offering a counterbalance to Kerrigan's understandable emphasis on Drummond's previously lesser-known works at the expense of his Petrarchan verse.²⁸

In English the word 'parenthesis' has two senses, often conflated, being used to refer on the one hand to the rhetorical figure, and on the other to the punctuation marks often called brackets (and sometimes to their contents). While the rhetorical figure was vital to classical rhetoric, the punctuation marks originate in the Renaissance humanist desire to disambiguate script. Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406) was one of the first to use a new form of mark to indicate a parenthesis, and over the following century the *virgulae convexae* (or curved brackets) recommended by Gasparino Barzizza (1359–1431) in his *Doctrina punctandi* (1418) and in the *Rudimenta grammatices* (1471) of Niccolò Perotti (1430–1480) became standardised.²⁹ From its very beginnings, however, the bracket's history has been marked by a disjunction between the sophisticated and multifaceted uses made of it, and the often clumsy, monolithic attempts to give a theoretical account of it. In practice, humanist deployments of the new punctuation mark achieved 'a balance between delineating the rhetorical

structure of a period, and drawing attention to the logical relationships expressed by its syntactical structures.’³⁰ Yet punctuation in general, and brackets in particular, were persistently conceived of as aids to the reading voice, reflecting a long history of understanding the written text as mere coded speech.

Following continental practice, early modern English grammarians conceptualised punctuation marks as instructions for oral performance.³¹ Assimilating lunulae to a physiological, speech-based model of punctuation, Richard Mulcaster described them as ‘helps to our breathing, & the distinct vtterance of our speche [...] & distinctions to pronou[n]ce by.’³² Parentheses, ‘expressed by two half circles [...] warneth vs, that the words inclosed by them, ar to be pronounced with a lower & quikker voice, then the words either before or after them.’³³ For his contemporary George Puttenham, parentheses (‘or by an English name the [*Insertour*]’) indicated ‘an vnecessary parcell of speach, which neuerthelesse may be thence without any detriment to the rest’, a notion clearly ‘predicated upon the idea that the text is to be orally communicated.’³⁴ This conception of parentheses prevailed in the theoretical literature well into the seventeenth century. Although many brackets in this period ‘appear to be doing little else than display syntax, this was still not how the grammarians explained them’, and a properly syntactical understanding of punctuation ‘does not appear in England until the later seventeenth century.’³⁵ In his *English Grammar* (1623/1640), in an account which ‘his own work demonstrates to be false, and in the face of evidence which he himself cites,’³⁶ Drummond’s one-time visitor Ben Jonson describes the lunula as a marker to aid speech, given ‘our breath is by nature so short.’³⁷

While the prevailing conceptualisation of punctuation assimilated it to the breath and the voice, however, early modern grammarians frequently betrayed in their theorising an as yet not fully conceptualised or articulated awareness of other possibilities. Indeed, early modern writing in English on the function of brackets is often at its most insightful when simultaneously most confused, as when Mulcaster ‘conflates at least three competing theories’ in the single passage he dedicates to parentheses.³⁸ There these ‘helps to our breathing’ are also recognised as ‘creatur to the pen’, or distinctively written marks, while there lurks too in his account a gesture towards the notion of the bracket as a marker of syntactic distinction: ‘Parenthesis [...] in writing enclose som perfitt branch, as not mere impertinent, so not fullie coincident to the sentence, which

it breaketh.³⁹ The tangles early modern accounts of brackets get themselves into indicate something of the inherent complexity of the subject itself, but they also reveal the traces of a historical transition. As Malcolm Parkes notes, the ‘development of the perception of the written medium as a different manifestation of language, with its own “substance”, and with a status equivalent to, but independent of, its spoken opposite number’ was a long and complex process.⁴⁰ Part of this complexity is rooted in the demands and requirements of different types of reading, in particular that historical antagonism between silent reading and reading aloud described by Chartier.⁴¹ Although sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century commentators still conceptualised brackets as signposts for speech or recital, the humanist parenthesis, like its cousin the semi-colon, more fundamentally reflected ‘the needs of those who were accustomed to the habit of silent reading.’⁴² Chartier has noted that in order to ‘counter the projection of universality into reading’ it is necessary to stress that it is ‘a practice with multiple differentiations varying with time and milieu, and that the signification of a text also depends on the way it is read: aloud or silently, in solitude or in company.’⁴³ In Drummond’s brackets, I want to argue, we see the dislocating effect upon poetic voice of particular emergent historical tensions between these multiple differentiations, most notably between reading with the breath and reading with the eye. His sonnets are both symptomatic of and distinctively responsive to the very specific time and milieu in which these different modes of reading were in competition.

Let us return at last to that opening sonnet. A helpful contrast can be drawn with the closing couplet of Shakespeare’s sonnet 18, where ‘breath’ and ‘eyes’ are implicit allies, together guaranteeing the verse’s life-giving potency:

So long as men can breath or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee (ll. 13–14)

As Joseph Pequigney noted, here what will give life is ‘not simply the verse on the page but the verse as a score to be played whenever mentally or verbally sounded by future readers.’⁴⁴ In Drummond’s sonnet we find a much more antagonistic relationship between ‘Eyes’ and ‘breath’. Melic and opsic no longer function straightforwardly as allies, and the distinction between them is no

longer one that can be easily resolved into the difference between being ‘mentally or verbally sounded’. Aligned with Love (‘Loue smylde to see’), life, and the homophonic poetic persona (‘mine Eyes’), the visual appears to trump the aural, the doubly ‘dead Sighs’ that ‘but breath’, though this triumph is so caught up in Petrarchan paradox that it is hard to be sure initially what it amounts to, other than a joyous, orgasmic ‘Death’.

The stress between opsic and melic becomes most evident when one attempts to read the poem aloud. The demand for a sedulous care on the part of the reader made by the brackets’ insistence on a more complicated syntax is as much a part of their message as is the semantic content they enclose – as, of course, is their signalling of the poet’s own scrupulous precision. Yet the breath is likely to struggle to communicate this complexity.⁴⁵ In voicing the poem it is hard not to let ‘clos’d’ attach itself as an active verb to the subject, ‘I’ (i.e. ‘That I quires clos’d’), nor to allow that first ‘dead’ to attach itself to ‘Sighs’ (rather than ‘quires’) and thus function as a mere intensifier duplicating the second ‘dead’ (which *does* qualify ‘Sighs’). The temptation is heightened by the distance between the subject and its proper verb, ‘Ioye’, a distance liable to be increased by the pauses and shifts in vocal performance required by any effort to respect the far more syntactically complex parsing that the lunulae and crotchets demand. Moreover, if ‘I’ becomes attached to ‘clos’d’, then ‘Ioye’, cut free of its pronoun, has the potential to become an imperative, an injunction to enjoy directed outwards towards the listener. The exhortation to a thanatotic transgressive jouissance that can be heard in the final line (if the parentheses are suppressed, or inadequately communicated, as is almost inevitable when reading aloud) is also an injunction to ‘reade’, a word whose significance becomes sharply forked between voicing on the one hand, restoring life and breath to the dead speech on the page before us, and careful syntactic processing and scrupulous attention to the text as printed, visual, material object on the other. Of course, what the latter mode of reading reveals is that, read ‘properly’ (that is, in its own terms), with due respect for the punctuation, there is no such outwardly addressed injunction at all, but rather a self-descriptive statement (‘I [...] Ioye’). This gives new form to Petrarchan pedagogy, which seeks to educate (both self and other) not through didactic injunction but through the cautionary exhibition of an *écorché* of a subject, a ‘*living Booke*’ (also here, of course, the beloved) that is only *in parte altr’*

uom, in part another man. The *primo giovenile errore* here is not only loving wrongly but reading wrongly ('I first began to read'). Unlike the ears which hear the sighed *sospiri*, the 'Eyes' are free to leap about the printed page, and easily connect their homophonic pronoun ('I') with its proper verb ('Ioye') in a way the speaking voice struggles to do unambiguously without recourse to gesture (itself an appeal to sight). This is thanks both to the bracketing off of the intervening syntactical complexities, and to the minimal saccade required by pronoun's and verb's positionings at the beginning of consecutive lines. Yet if the brackets seem firmly on the side of the opsic, the discriminating lunulae embracing 'dead' not only serve an emphatic function, heightening the word's salience, but, disambiguating syntax, also determine that it is the 'quires' that are dead – as dead as the sighs they contain. (It is worth noting here how the brackets again enforce a reading back for a proper referent, a *re*-reading, if we are to parse correctly.) In its very insistence upon its own writtleness, in the triumph of the opsic over the melic, the opsic reads its own (potentially life-giving) death and ambivalently joys in it.

The forking between breath and eye is at its sharpest in the potential pun on 'quires', which among talk of volumes, books and reading we take to denote a gathering of sheets of paper, such as the one we may be reading from. However, when the poem is run through the body, as it were, by being read aloud (or even internally sounded, in the fashion described by Richards), we are as likely to hear its homophone, 'choir': the very epitome of voice. (The eye too, may have participated in this 'misreading': 'quire' remained a common spelling of 'choir' well into the seventeenth century and beyond.) These closed choirs would have been heard with an even keener ear by a post-Reformation audience, at a time when questions of what (if anything) should be sung in the kirk, and by whom, remained fraught.⁴⁶ The very act of reprocessing which we perform at the brackets' behest as we substitute the 'correct', opsic, textual interpretation ('quire') for that which appeals to and evokes the ear ('choir') re-enacts the Calvinist Reformation's destruction of the latter, text over-writing the voice and the ear. That this elevation of writing and the eye may be deathly is hinted at by the manner in which the crotchets with their square edges graphically mimic both the book boards within which the quires are enclosed, and the edges of a coffin or grave (within which '(dead)' is itself further shrouded between lunulae). Ultimately, the coupling of the brackets'

graphic effect with their insistence upon assiduous syntactic parsing, together with the irresolvably oxymoronic entanglements they contain (of life and breath, of loving and reading, of body and book, of active and passive, of text and performance) results in the kind of dizzying vertigo associated with both the shock of the Reformation, and the Baroque.

The identification of the split between melic and opsic with a dialectic of life and death plays out most obviously in ‘So grieuous is my Paine’ (I Son. lx), constructed around just two rhyme-words, ‘Life’ and ‘Death.’⁴⁷ Here again brackets are placed in intimate, graphic, ambivalent relation to the breath:

So grieuous is my Paine, so painefull *Life*,
That oft I find mee in the Armes of *Death*,
But (Breath halfe gone) that Tyrant called *Death*
Who others killes, restoreth mee to *Life*: (ll. 1–4)⁴⁸

The visual correlative of the ‘Armes of Death’, the lunulae here both protectively embrace and contain, lung-like, what remains of the ‘Breath halfe gone’, and threaten to asphyxiate it. (The use of internal rhyme here, binding breath and death still more closely together, perhaps also shows Drummond bringing a distinctively Scottish inflection to this particular variation on the sonnet form.)⁴⁹ The hopeless lover’s state of life-in-death correlates with the work’s liminal existence between voice and text, ear and eye, as ‘halfe-gone’ breath embraced by dead print.

Again and again throughout the sequence breath itself is bracketed off protectively, often as sigh, exhalation, or exclamation: ‘(ah)’ – I. Son. 46.13; ‘(ah)’ – II. Song 1.39; ‘(ah alas !)’ – II. Mad. 2.11; ‘(O mee!)’ – I. Son. 53.10, and again at II. Song 1.16, and at several other places with minor variations; ‘(O Teares! ô Griefe!)’ – II. Mad. 3.3. The poet-persona’s thought, too, is repeatedly bracketed, as though thinking and breathing the verses were inextricably bound up together. ‘So grieuous is my Paine’ is not the only sonnet in which Drummond riffs wittily on brackets’ graphic resemblance to embracing arms. Superficially, ‘O Night, cleare Night’ (I. Son. xlvi) reads as a hyperbolic play on orthodox Petrarchan contraries. What most stands out in the opening quatrain is the wild exclamatory vacillation of apostrophe, the rapid switch from addressee to addressee:

O Night, cleare Night, O darke and gloomie Day!
 O wofull Waking! O Soule-pleasing Sleepe!
 O sweet Conceits which in my Braines did creepe! (1-3)

As the poem modulates away from this initial exclamatory fervour into more measured phrasing we anticipate a resolution of address, but in its place we get a subtler but no less problematic multiplicity:

A Sleepe I had more than poore Words can say,
 For clos'd in Armes (mee thought) I did thee keepe,
 A sorie Wretch plung'd in Mis-fortunes deepe
 Am I not wak'd? when Light doth Lies bewray. (5-8)

By bracketing off the qualification '(mee thought)' the lunulae allow the fantasised embrace of the beloved to retain a syntactical integrity suggestive of a corresponding ontological integrity. The dream, thanks to the brackets, is 'real'. At the same time as serving this syntactic function, however, they work visually to draw attention to the purely interior quality of this reality. By making the line 'true' in a literal sense, the parenthesis acknowledges that what lies outside it is no more than a deceptive vision. The disjunction between inner and outer ontologies is embodied in the punctuation, where it points towards more specifically writerly ramifications. What is 'clos'd in Armes' here (the poem's, not the poet's) is precisely not the beloved, but the poet's own thought. Themselves communicating 'more than poore Words can say', the brackets intimate a protective gesture towards this thought that the 'Light', the optic, would deprive of ontological status, bewraying it as 'Lies'. The poem's explicit argument cannot resist this finding, leading to the poem's paradigmatically Baroque conclusion that 'what is good of Life is but a Dreame' (l. 13). But the bracketing gesture is perhaps just enough to complicate how we hear this conclusion, to tinge it with a hint of the affirmative: if life (and the poet) is miserable, it is on the ontologically distinct level of the dream, of inward thought, and of the written poem that the good is to be found, in the shaded lunular parenthetical space protected from the bright light of Apollo's sun.

Taken in isolation, this reading might look like a stretch, and the complication is likely to initially barely be registered. The cumulative effect of such

parenthetical interventions throughout the sequence, however, is significant. The minimal intrusion, moreover, is itself part of the effect, a mark of Petrarchan reticence, underwriting hyperbole with a poetics of discreet retreat, a distinctive supplement to the Petrarchan domains of echo sounded by Heather Dubrow.⁵⁰ Many of Drummond's parentheses enclose only a single word or two, an aside, a mere sigh ('ah!'; 'alas!'), or an adjectival qualification, often in the form of simple qualifying adjectives like 'happie' and 'cruell', or conditional qualifiers such as 'perhaps'; very few enclose more than a single line of verse, while the longest extends over only three lines. Yet together, they constitute something resembling the genre of the commentary as understood by Daniel Heller-Roazen, who writes of 'the typographical spaces that divide a major text from the lesser ones that, beneath or beside it, aim to clarify its argument.'⁵¹ Like commentary, the domain of Drummond's brackets survives in the interstices and intervals of the primary discourse, in the narrow regions that wind not so much round about the work, as Heller-Roazen's commentary does, but through it, being of it, integral to it, and yet also set off, distinguished, apart. To an even greater extent than Heller-Roazen's *commentum*, a Drummond parenthesis 'stays at every point "with" that upon which it comments': perhaps unlike it, however, it often works to subtly counter or undermine the principal text.⁵²

The extent to which this aspect of Drummond's poetics is a result of conscious authorial practice as opposed to a specific geo-historical confluence ultimately remains moot: every one of his brackets can be accounted for in terms of standard early modern conventions. Lennard identifies attributions of speech, relative clauses, comparisons (including similes and metaphors), conditional clauses (less commonly) and *sententiae* as the forms of expression most frequently contained within early modern lunulae. With the exception of *sententiae*, cases of all of these recur frequently throughout Drummond's sequence. Taking a section more or less at random, we can see examples of several of these conventional uses in a short extract from the first of the sequence's extended songs. This song presents the poet-persona's vision of his lady's entry into the Fort of Chastity, dreamed as he dozes in a 'little Arden', a 'shut-up-place' on the banks of his native Ore, 'Where thickest Shades me from all Rayes did hide' (ll. 30, 51, 50 – a perfectly Petrarchan *locus amoenus*). Drummond describes the progress of the 'triumphing Chaire' (l. 177) bearing the beloved, which

swiftly driued

*Till (as me thought) it at a Towre arriued.
 Vpon a Roche of Christall shining cleare
 Of Diamonds this Castle did appeare,
 Whose rising Spires of Gold so high them reared
 That Atlas-like it seem'd the Heauen they beared.
 Amidst which Hights on Arches did arise
 (Arches which guilt Flames brandish to the Skies)
 Of sparking Topaces, Prowde, Gorgeous, Ample,
 (Like to a litle Heauen) a sacred Temple (ll. 195–204)*

All three of these parentheses would have struck Drummond's contemporaries as conventional, and are likely to strike us the same way. The second is an example of the use of lunulae to enclose a relative clause, the third contains a brief comparison in the form of a simile, while the first, almost identical to that in 'O Night, cleare Night', contains if not quite an attribution of speech, another attribution of thought – that is, speech interiorised.

Up to this point in the song the events the poet-narrator has been recounting have been limited to what (within the logic of the dream) he might very well have been able to see from his position drowsing on the river bank: the appearance of the nymphs and then of the beloved in her golden chariot by the water's edge. With these lines, however, the vision moves beyond those limits, as he dreams of the car as it leaves the river and approaches the Tower of Chastity. Again, the parenthesis thus not only draws attention to the fact that the narrator is dreaming, signalling a potential doubt as to the ontological status of what is being described (while also rendering that awareness unobtrusive and allowing us to set it aside, to dream along too); it also signals a shift within the dream (and the dreaming) to a more visionary, elevated state, one removed from the immediate environs of the sleeper, no longer corresponding to the poem's 'real' landscape of the Ore Valley (albeit already pastoralised and Petrarchised), but instead to the more rarefied and fantastical world of medieval romance. We again have a doubled movement, simultaneously outwards and inwards: as the dream vision moves away from the site on the river bank of the dreamer's prone body, so, the parenthesis hints, the dream moves deeper into (and becomes more profoundly the product of) his own mind's thoughts.

This happens just as the lunulae shift us inwards into an ontologically distinct space within the text. (The use of italics throughout the song has already marked it out as not only generically but also ontologically distinct within the sequence.) The implication that this may be the part of the dream of the higher ontological status and the greater epistemological or pedagogical value is set alongside the fleetingly heightened valency of the importance of the dreamer's thought.

It is worth noting too how the other two parentheses above contribute to the song's development of a complex of mirroring and conflation. The 'litle Heauen' contained within the dome of the Temple of Chastity (the dome suggested graphically by the engirdling lunulae) reflects in miniature the broader 'Heauen' that the castle's spires, 'Atlas-like', appear to support. This mirroring is part of a larger schema by which what is bright and open above finds its correlative in the enclosed shade below, and what is natural finds its equivalent in what is cultural, so that, for example, the beloved's golden chariot echoes Apollo's 'Coach', the sun (see lines 41–54). As this example demonstrates, however, the two terms in these correspondences are always inclined to inflect and infect and inform each other in an archetypally Petrarchan fashion, while the mirrorings constantly ripple outwards. Thus the lunulae enclose the temple's 'litle Heauen' in a manner analogous to how the 'Arches' of the 'new-bloom'd Sicamors' shade from Apollo's rays the 'Sylvans Chamber' where the poet lies dreaming (ll. 64, 53, 51). Those arched boughs are echoed in turn in the rearing architectural 'Arches' that here lift the temple into the 'Hights', while these arches are themselves graphically mimicked by the recurring lunulae, most notably those that hold up to our view the relative clause that qualifies them. The piling-up of architectural features, adjectives, precious materials and qualifying clauses is vertiginous, and the manner in which the object of the main verb of the final sentence quoted ('arise') is delayed and held off by the escalating syntactical interruptions of the parentheses sends us into a dizzying upward spiral, an intensification already anticipated by vertical alliteration and by the doubled rhyme on /iə/ in lines 197–200 (with an added closing consonant in the second couplet). In this intoxicating dream of altitude the two heavens, of the sky (and Apollo) and of the temple (and the chaste beloved), become confounded in an interpenetration of inside and outside, the one colouring and containing

the other. Here the Baroque notion that 'what is good of Life is but a Dreame' takes on a far more aspiring aspect.

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As I hope these readings suggest, Drummond's brackets are a further example of his 'unprecedented experimentalism': there is something of the Renaissance spirit of *serio ludere* about them, of that playfulness for which Dermot Cavanagh has found so much evidence in Drummond's manuscripts.⁵³ Yet paying the special attention to his brackets that his proem demands (and that the rest of his sequence so rewards) suggests that we need to rethink Drummond's relationship to the Baroque in particular. Roland Greene has written of how the Baroque 'wields incommensurability as an aesthetic principle'.⁵⁴ The radical incommensurability of opsic and melic in Drummond's verse suggests a revision or supplement to previous accounts of Drummond as a Baroque poet, which have focused largely on the extravagant extremes to which he takes the Petrarchan conceit.⁵⁵ Such a revision gives us a Drummond situated close to the avant-garde of that early seventeenth-century transnational Baroque of crisis delineated by Peter Burke, a crisis with profound epistemological and ontological ramifications.⁵⁶ Highlighting the incommensurability between ear and eye in Drummond's work also aligns Drummond more closely with a poet such as the Baroque Donne of Hugh Grady (especially if we recall Samuel Johnson's criticism that the Metaphysicals' verse 'stood the trial of the finger better than that of the ear').⁵⁷

While the Baroque remains an unstable concept within Anglophone literary studies, like the concept of poetic voice it has gained currency and coherence in recent years, thanks to studies such as Burke's, Davidson's, Grady's and Greene's. This is not the place for a thorough-going reconsideration of Drummond's relation to the Baroque, but I hope that the kind of reframing implied here suggests the value of attending to Drummond's distinctively Baroque modulations of Petrarchism. Petrarch's role as a precursor of the Baroque remains radically underappreciated, despite being highlighted by Giuseppe Ungaretti almost eighty years ago.⁵⁸ Looking beyond conceptions of Petrarchism focused too narrowly on England, to the specifically local, the distinctively (lowland) Scottish, and the 'universal' contexts of Drummond's writing, might offer a good starting-point for an attempt to trace Petrarchism's Baroque trajectories.

Pushing Drummond's Baroque still further, we might even argue that his lunulae mark his verse as a distinctive example of the Baroque's anticipation of a critique of Enlightenment thinking. Taking up the notion of the Baroque as articulating a crisis of representation, Gregg Lambert has suggested that, if according to a Kantian understanding knowledge is

derived from the representation of concepts with the subject, concepts which are ordered by the categories of reason, then we might ask what occurs when these categories are taken up by the literary process? When, instead of being ordered by the principles that submit cases of experience to concepts, the representation of knowledge is suddenly transformed by literary operations such as citation, [...] allusion [...] and irony?⁵⁹

Again, there is not the space here to properly position Drummond's Petrarchism in relation to a premonitory Baroque critique of the Enlightenment rationality that was to flourish in Edinburgh after Drummond's death. What we have seen of how Drummond's brackets contribute to his sequence's elevation of dream, however, and to its ontological and epistemological disorientations and inversions, might just be enough to intimate that this is a peculiar manifestation of what Lambert calls 'baroque design', which he associates with the *mise-en-abyme* '(or "the text within the text")'.⁶⁰ Drummond's brackets present an idiosyncratic case of 'the text within the text', and citation, allusion and irony are all central to Drummond's work: his vertiginous disjunctions, we could argue, shape that particular 'Being of Language' that the Baroque's late modernist *renaissance* means we now (according to Lambert) 'identify with the name of "literature"'.⁶¹ In Drummond's brackets' turns toward the autogenous we might even see a glimmer, in this moderate Scottish Royalist Protestant, of the Baroque's premonition of modernism's attempt 'to salvage a meaningful world from the only place that still seems independent (the interiority of man)'.⁶²

Notes

- 1 Theodor W. Adorno, 'Punctuation Marks', trans. by Shierry Weber Nicholson, *The Antioch Review*, 48.3 (Summer, 1990), pp. 300–05 (p. 304). My thanks to Theo van Heijnsbergen and to Heather Yeung for helpful conversations about Drummond and his brackets, and to *SLR*'s editors and anonymous peer reviewer for their helpful suggestions, generosity and patience.
- 2 That Drummond's brackets are authorial, rather than the additions of his Edinburgh printer Andro Hart or his compositor, the evidence of the extensive drafts in Drummond's autograph manuscripts makes clear (see, most significantly, National Library of Scotland, MS 2062). In all, Drummond's sequence contains 230 brackets, distributed fairly evenly both throughout the sequence and across the various verse forms, with the longer 'First Part' containing 78 pairs, and the shorter 'Second Part', 37. By way of comparison, of three sequences printed around the same time and of roughly similar length, *Shakespeares Sonnets* (1609) contains 44 pairs (including those marking the 'missing' lines from sonnet 126); the *Aurora* (1604) of Drummond's fellow Scot, William Alexander, contains 40; and Lady Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia, to Amphilanthus* (1621) contains only 18.
- 3 William Drummond, *Poems* (Edinburgh: Andro Hart, 1616). When referring to Drummond's poems below, reference is given to the numbers assigned by L. E. Kastner in his edition of the *Poetical Works of William Drummond of Hawthornden, with a Cypress Grove*, Scottish Text Society (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1913), vol. I.
- 4 John Lennard, *But I Digress: The Exploitation of Parentheses in English Printed Verse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). I have in mind in particular here two long essays on Sidney's parentheses published within a year or so of each other: Jenny C. Mann, 'Sidney's Insertour: Arcadia, Parenthesis, and the Formation of English Eloquence', *English Literary Renaissance*, 39.3 (2009), 460–98; and Jonathan Lamb, 'Parentheses and Privacy in Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*', *Studies in Philology*, 107.3 (2010), 310–35. As Robert MacDonald observes, had Drummond 'to name one book above all in his library as his favourite, he would have chosen Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*' ('*The Manuscripts of Drummond of Hawthornden*', PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh (1969), p. 64).
- 5 John Kerrigan, *Archipelagic English: Literature, History, and Politics, 1603–1707* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 145.
- 6 Lennard notes how profoundly misleading is the historical insistence of grammarians and lexicographers that brackets mark parenthetical, subordinate clauses, and insists instead that they only distinguish: 'there is nothing in principle or practice to prevent them from being as inevitably emphatic as a box drawn around an item on a list' (*But I Digress*, p. 5).
- 7 John Lennard, *The Poetry Handbook* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 124.
- 8 R. D. S. Jack, *The Italian Influence on Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1972), p. 276. Chair of Scottish Literature at Edinburgh University, Jack was arguably the single most influential scholar working on early modern Scottish literature from the 1970s until his death in 2016.
- 9 William Calin, *The Lily and the Thistle: The French Tradition and the Older Literature of Scotland* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), p. 267.

- 10 Maurice Evans, 'Introduction', *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), pp. 9–50: p. 49.
- 11 Read alongside Peter Davidson's arguments regarding Scottish participation in what he characterises as a universal Baroque, the insights afforded by Christopher Johnson into the functionings of Baroque hyperbole call for a more thorough reevaluation of this aspect of Drummond's diction, but such a reevaluation lies beyond the scope of the present paper: see Christopher Johnson, *Hyperboles: The Rhetoric of Excess in Baroque Literature and Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), and Peter Davidson, *The Universal Baroque* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).
- 12 M. B. Parkes, *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* (Oxford: Routledge 2016), p. 49: see Erasmus, *De recta Latini Graecisque sermonis pronuntiatione* (Basel, Froben, 1530), sig. n5v.
- 13 Jennifer Brady, 'Dryden and Negotiations of Literary Succession and Precession', in *Literary Transmission and Authority: Dryden and Other Writers*, ed. by Earl Miner and Jennifer Brady (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 27–54: p. 48. Writing of prose, Adorno notes how brackets 'take the parenthesis completely out of the sentence, creating enclaves, as it were' (Adorno, p. 304). On the Petrarchan *locus amoenus*, see Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, *Petrarch's Genius: Pentimento and Prophecy* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 1991), p. 59, and pp. 178–9, n.62, and E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Princeton University Press, 2013), pp. 195–200.
- 14 On Petrarchan reticence, see Christopher Martin, *Policy in Love: Lyric and Public in Ovid, Petrarch, and Shakespeare*, Duquesne Studies: Language and Literature Series (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1995).
- 15 Robert H. MacDonald, *William Drummond of Hawthornden. Poems and Prose* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1976), p. xiii.
- 16 I here myself recycle Jason Scott-Warren's description of Francis Meres in 'Commonplacing and Originality: Reading Francis Meres', *Review of English Studies*, 68:287 (2017), pp. 902–23 (p. 902).
- 17 J. D. McClure, 'Drummond of Hawthornden and Poetic Translation', *The European Sun: Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Scottish Language and Literature*, ed. Graham Caie et al (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2001), pp. 494–506; p. 494.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 495.
- 19 Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 275.
- 20 MacDonald 1969, p. 10.
- 21 Jennifer Richards, *Voices and Books in the English Renaissance: A New History of Reading* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 30, p. 8.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 8, p. 43.
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. 285.
- 24 *Ibid.*, p. 31.
- 25 Kerrigan, p. 145. Kerrigan's focus is on the fraught political and cultural context between the Union of the Crowns and the civil wars of the 1630s and '40s.
- 26 J. Wilkinson, *Lyric in Its Times: Temporalities in Verse, Breath, and Stone* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), p. 15.

- 27 See Peter Burke, 'The Crisis in the Arts of the Seventeenth Century: A Crisis of Representation?', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 40:2 (2009), pp. 239–61.
- 28 As this framing hints, a study such as this ultimately demands a historicised rethinking of what we might mean by 'poetic voice' at all. After falling into disrepute in the twentieth century, thanks largely to the Anglophone reception of Derrida's *Grammatology*, interest in voice has made a remarkable comeback in the twenty-first. For a recent Derridean recuperation of the concept of poetic voice see David Nowell Smith, *On Voice in Poetry: The Work of Animation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). Working within a very different critical trajectory, Toril Moi has also called for renewed attention to the voice, most notably in *Revolution of the Ordinary: Literary Studies after Wittgenstein, Austin, and Cavell* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), while Mladen Dolar's *A Voice and Nothing More* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006) offers a Lacanian take on the subject. This paper brackets off this theoretical debate, but my own provisional position is that while Richards' emphasis on the role of the physical voice in even silent reading is invaluable, it cannot fully account for the profound strangeness of writing's relation to the voice. This might best be served by an (admittedly improbable) rapprochement between Richards' approach and Juliet Fleming's attempt to revive Derrida's 'ghost discipline' of cultural graphology, with its Derridean willingness to see writing 'in the wider sense' as always already including voice, and its grammatological insistence that '*we do not know what writing is*' (see Juliet Fleming, *Cultural Graphology: Writing After Derrida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), pp. 26–27).
- 29 See Parkes, pp. 48–49, for an account of the bracket's beginnings in late 14th-century Italy.
- 30 Parkes, p. 88.
- 31 So far as I have been able to ascertain, while some distinctive features of early modern Scottish punctuation have been the subject of study, no distinctively Scottish use of brackets has been identified.
- 32 Richard Mulcaster, *The First Part of the Elementarie Which Entreateth Chefelie of the Right Writing of Our English Tung* (London, 1582), p. 148.
- 33 Mulcaster, p. 148.
- 34 George Puttenham, *The arte of English poesie Contriued into three bookes: the first of poets and poesie, the second of proportion, the third of ornament* (London, 1589), pp. 140–41; Lennard, *But I Digress*, p. 77. Puttenham's (or his printer's) use of crotchets throughout his text to highlight key terms offers a useful example of the highly effective early modern use of 'emphatic brackets', albeit one that gives the lie to his own claims.
- 35 Ian Robinson, *The Establishment of Modern English Prose in the Reformation and the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 189; see too Lennard 1991, p. 77.
- 36 Lennard, *But I Digress*, p. 268.
- 37 Ben Jonson, *The English Grammar* (London, 1640), p. 83.
- 38 Lennard 1991, p. xxx.
- 39 Mulcaster, pp. 149, 148.
- 40 Parkes, p. 23.
- 41 Roger Chartier, 'Reading Matter and "Popular" Reading: From the Renaissance to the Seventeenth Century', in *A History of Reading in the West* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), pp. 269–83 (p. 276).

- 42 Parkes, p. 24.
- 43 Chartier, p. 276.
- 44 Joseph Pequigney, *Such is my Love: A Study of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 7.
- 45 Richards' insistence on how the physical voice informs the early modern reading of texts *even when they are not sounded* is worth recalling here: while reading aloud foregrounds the issues most clearly, they shape even the silent reading of the poem (Richards, p. 285).
- 46 The first definition of 'quire' given by the *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* is 'part of a church building, normally eastward of the nave, appropriated or formerly appropriated to the singers', while the second refers to 'the body of clergy of a pre-Reformation cathedral or collegiate church, the chapter', as well as 'the body of singers, clerical and lay, of a church'. The adoption by the Scottish Parliament of a Calvinist profession of faith in August 1560 made official the dismantling of the choirs that had begun long before, but debates around church music and song continued throughout Drummond's lifetime. Around the time of Drummond's birth, James VI was attempting to reinvigorate the song schools; the Union of the Crowns, raising the prospect of a union of the churches, stirred the question up again, but it never really died down until the victory of Presbyterianism in 1638, if then. On Scottish Calvinism and church song, see Jamie Reid-Baxter, 'Music, Ecclesiastical', in *Oxford Companion to Scottish History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 431–32; on the song schools, see Gordon Munro, "'Sang schwylls" and "music schools": music education in Scotland 1560–1650', in *Music Education in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. by Susan Forscher Weiss, Russell E. Murray Jr, and Cynthia J. Cyrus (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), pp. 66–83.
- 47 As Kastner notes, the ur-sonnet behind Drummond's choice of rhymes here is Petrarch's 'Quand'io son tutto volto' (*RVF* 18, wrongly identified by Kastner as Petrarch's fourteenth sonnet), though Drummond may have had poems by Sidney and Ludivico Paterno more immediately in mind. (Kastner, 1, p. 205).
- 48 Kastner, I, p. 45.
- 49 Drummond's use of internal rhyme may also have been shaped by its use in French sonnets: on internal rhyme and the Scottish and French precursors behind its use by Drummond's Castalian predecessors, see Deirdrie Serjeantson, 'English Bards and Scotch Poetics: Scotland's Literary Influence and Sixteenth-Century English Religious Verse', in *Literature and the Scottish Reformation*, ed. by D. G. Mullan and C. Gribben (London: Taylor & Francis, 2016), pp. 161–90 (pp. 185–86).
- 50 See 'The Domain of Echo' in Heather Dubrow, *The Challenges of Orpheus: Lyric Poetry and Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), pp. 54–105, esp. pp. 62–74.
- 51 Daniel Heller-Roazen, 'Company', *October*, vol. 117, Summer (2006), pp. 35–43 (p. 35).
- 52 Heller-Roazen, p. 35.
- 53 Allison Steenson, 'Writing Sonnets as a Scoto-Britane: Scottish Sonnets, the Union of the Crowns, and Negotiations of Identity', *Medievalia et Humanistica* 41 (2016), pp. 195–210 (p. 205); Dermot Cavanagh, 'William Drummond of Hawthornden As Reader of Renaissance Drama', *The Review of English Studies*, 66:276 (2015), pp. 676–97. On *serio ludere*, see Thomas Healy, 'Playing Seriously in Renaissance Writing', in *Renaissance Transformations:*

- The Making of English Writing 1500–1650*, ed. by Margaret and Thomas Healy (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp. 15–30.
- 54 Roland Greene, *Five Words: Critical Semantics in the Age of Shakespeare and Cervantes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), p. 161. As Greene continues, 'the sensation of the incommensurable is that the elements in a structure might escape from their structuring, might resist resolution into a logic, might prove impossible to measure against one another by a single scale.'
- 55 See, for example, David Atkinson, 'William Drummond as a Barque Poet', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 26:1 (1991), pp. 394–409, and M. R. Fleming, 'The Impact of the Union of the Crowns on Scottish Lyric Poetry 1584–1619' (PhD thesis: University of Glasgow, 1997).
- 56 As Greene puts it, the energies released by the Baroque's intuitions of incommensurability 'seem to foresee the breakdown of humanist order' (Greene, p. 161).
- 57 Hugh Grady, *John Donne and Baroque Allegory: The Aesthetics of Fragmentation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). Grady quotes Johnson on p. 9.
- 58 See especially Giuseppe Ungaretti, 'Il poeta dell'oblio', *Vita d'un uomo. Saggi e interventi*, ed. Mario Diacono and Luciano Rebay (Milan: Mondadori, 1974), pp. 188–97.
- 59 Gregg Lambert, *The Return of the Baroque in Modern Culture* (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 4.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Mimmo Cangiano, *The Wreckage of Philosophy: Carlo Michelstaedter and the Limits of Bourgeois Thought* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), p. 8.

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