Arwaker, Hugo's

_Pia Desideria_

and Protestant Poetics

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Résumé : En 1686, le protestant Edmund Arwaker réalisa une adaptation anglaise de Pia Desideria du jésuite belge Herman Hugo sous le titre de Divine Addresses. Contrairement à la croyance générale des historiens de la littérature, cette adaptation fut basée sur une des plusieurs éditions de 1636 dénommées la « quatrième » contenant des particularités structurelles originales, plutôt que sur l'édition première de 1624. Utilisant ainsi cette quatrième édition pour sa traduction, Arwaker a imité sa structure et n'a donc pas fait les modifications à la première édition qu'on lui a reconnues. Cependant, il a apporté des changements esthétiques à ses images poétiques pour les rendre conformes aux normes artistiques de son protestantisme. Ces normes protestantes étaient courantes depuis un siècle dans la théorie et la pratique littéraire en Grande Bretagne, notamment dans les œuvres de Puttenham et Donne.

Edmund Arwaker's English adaptation of Herman Hugo's _Pia Desideria_ was published in London in 1686, with the title of _Divine Addresses_, when to all intents and purposes the influence of Jesuit emblem books in Protestant England was drawing to its end. The moment of its appearance might be said to mark the twilight of two traditions. The first was the great creative wave of emblem books by Jesuits that followed in the wake of Alciatus' introduction of the genre onto the European scene in 1531; the second was the adaptation of such Jesuit works to books of piety by English Protestants.1 Paradoxically, it is in the twilight of these two movements in England that Arwaker, an Anglican priest in the then-British Armagh in Ireland, renders a great eulogy to his Jesuit master, the Belgian Herman Hugo, for _Pia Desideria_ was one of the most striking and influential emblem books of the Renaissance. However, literary historians of Arwaker and Hugo in the last century generally failed to contextualize Arwaker's eulogy because
of the obscurity that has surrounded the chronology and the nature of Pia's editions. Two distinct versions of Hugo's work exist, a fact that literary history has failed to recognize — the first dated 1624,² some 60 years before Arwaker's Divine Addresses³ appeared, and the second dated 1636, both bearing Hugo's name on the title page and both published by Henry Aertssens in Antwerp. The difference between these versions has not been noted before; nor has the fact that Arwaker did not adapt Version I (as it is called in this article) of 1624 but that of twelve years later (Version II).

The earliest bibliographical notations of Pia are themselves confusing on the chronology and type of the editions, and they make no reference to the existence of different versions of the work. The monumental nineteenth-century de Backer bibliography of all the then-published works by Jesuits since the inception of the Society of Jesus in 1541 — even in its revised publication by Sommervogel in Paris and Brussels between 1890 and 1900 — notes the publication of the two versions but draws no distinction between them, as though they were only different editions of the same work.⁴ Moreover, the fact that the bibliography records a new printing in 1636 (Version II) and calls it Editio 4, when both the fourth and fifth editions of Version I had already been published by Aertssens in Antwerp in 1629 and 1631, hints at the obscurity that has surrounded the work's reappearances. The identification of an editio in the mid-seventeenth century did not necessarily signify the republication of a fixed text, as it does today, and the number of minor adaptations of text and emblem plates that were often responsible for the chronological numbering of the numerous "editions" and reprints of works would baffle a modern publisher. Aertssens' reason for numbering the first publication of Version II in 1636 as Editio 4 may have been that it reprinted the emblem pictures from the copper plates of the fourth edition of Version I.⁵ But the text of the emblems had also changed significantly. The de Backer-Sommervogel bibliography fails to indicate this, beyond giving Version II a separate entry and also noting that it went through a reprinting as Editio 4 once more in 1645. (A copy of this reprinting in the Laval University Library was used in preparing this article.⁶)

As bibliographical knowledge stood in the middle of the twentieth century, the various numbers attributed to the editions of Pia Desideria by its seventeenth-century publishers must have appeared as no more than a tribute to the work's phenomenal success, as marked by its numerous re-publications, translations and adaptations throughout Europe. In her ground-breaking work on English emblem books in 1948, this belief led Freeman to describe Divine Addresses as a translation of the first edition of Pia in 1624.⁷ Critical thinking subsequently persisted in this belief. Lewalski, Dimler, Holtgen and McQueen dealt in an illuminating fashion with Ignatian and
Protestant meditation, but assumed that *Divine Addresses* was an adaptation of the 1624 edition; more recently, Bath, in his semiotic analysis of English literature in the emblematic mode, and Daly and Silcox, in their survey of emblem criticism, have shared their assumption. 8

The structural differences — and similarities — between Versions I and II of *Pia*, as well as the affinities and dissimilarities of Arwaker's text with Version II, are as follows. Version I (like Version II) is divided into three books. As Lewalski first pointed out, and as Dimler wrote later, “The *Pia Desideria* combines the traditional three stages of the soul’s progress towards God, as first developed by Saint Bernard, with the Cupid-Psyche tradition,” and each of its three books corresponds to one of the soul’s three stages, namely, “the via purgativa, the via illuminativa, and the via unitiva” in the soul’s progress. 9 In Version I, each book has fifteen emblems, and each emblem has a picture and a quotation from the Bible beneath it, which serves as its motto; next, the same quotation from the Bible is repeated, but this time as the motto of a long poem that follows; and, finally, the same biblical quotation appears yet again, but now as the motto of a long prose passage replete with references to the Church Fathers and the mystics. (McQueen has noted that this prose passage was particularly meditative in design. 10) Version II reshapes this third part by dropping the repetition of the biblical motto and the extended prose passage completely. It replaces them with a sentence-long quotation by an authority cited in the original eliminated text, and the name and work of the authority are prefixed to the quotation as its motto; exceptionally, at the end of the ninth emblem of Book I, there are two quotations.

Arwaker was working with this latter text of Version II, and the only structural changes he wrought in his adaptation of *Pia* are that, under the influence of the beginnings of neo-classicism, he re-worked the opening poem at the beginning of each emblem into rhyming couplets, and that the poems are sometimes shorter. The removal of the biblical quotation and the long prose passage at the end of each emblem, a feature sometimes described as highly Ignatian in character, was not a Protestantization of the structure of Hugo’s text, as has been regularly supposed. It had already been effected in the original Latin version of the work in Catholic Antwerp a good forty years before Arwaker composed *Divine Addresses*, 11 and at a moment when the Counter-Reformation flourished. The replacement quotations are usually drawn from the writings of the Church Fathers, particularly Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine and John Chrysostom, of mystical saints, such as Bernard of Clairvaux, Hugh of Saint Victor and Saint Bonaventure, or of lesser known saints, such as Rupert and Ghislain. All that Arwaker has done is to translate them. The Catholic sources of these quotations suggest that Ar-
Arwaker's adaptation was much less extensive than has been supposed. Closer examination confirms that he concentrated it on poetic diction and that, apart from translating into English, he restricted it to the poems in each of Hugo's forty-five emblems. Indeed, what Arwaker's adaptation was in addition to translation, he tells us himself.

In his prefatory evaluation of *Pia Desideria* as a pious literary composition, Arwaker explains what he believes the work to be aesthetically, describing how he will use it as a source book for what literary historians like Lewalski in our day have come to describe as Protestant meditation. As Arwaker eulogizes Hugo for being a great Christian and artist, his comments constitute the only open, unabashed admission by an English Protestant emblematist that he is adapting a wholly continental, and moreover Latin Jesuit work, more or less literally into English. His eulogy is also the only avowal, again by an English Protestant emblem writer, that a Jesuit — in this case Hugo — can be and is a truly great Christian. But if the sanctity that Arwaker attributed to Hugo had been common in Christian tradition since its beginning, the immediate sources of his references to literary values were more recent. They involved concepts of typology, biblical exegesis, and Renaissance traditions of schemes and tropes.

Arwaker concentrated his discussion of his changes to Version II of Hugo's *Pia* on poetic imagery, and he can be shown to follow a long and often revivifying tradition of verse theory in England dating back to George Puttenham's *The Arte of English Poesie* in 1589. As John King has pointed out, although "particular works of Reformation literature were forgotten, literary traditions that they had popularized lived on into the Restoration." The originality of Arwaker's alterations of Hugo's classical imagery was made possible by the survival of such literary traditions. In his approach to poetic language he can be considered as fusing Puttenham's verse theory with a practice of Protestant meditative poetry based on biblical typology that developed gradually throughout the seventeenth century. Using figurative language, Arwaker attempted to create a kind of Protestant verse meditation preserving the spirit of what he found good in Hugo's original emblematic spiritual exercise.

To consider Arwaker's literary sources as they interest us here, which were more or less a century old by his time, casts light on his comments and the changes that he wrought on Hugo's work in the context of late seventeenth-century England. These literary sources, fusing concepts of poetry with Jesuit and Protestant meditation, clarify the kind of adaptation Arwaker thought he was creating, and they reveal that these changes were aesthetic rather than structural. In effect, the Ignatian meditation associated with *Pia*, and based on the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius Loyola, has been considered...
in literary criticism to achieve its ends through either its structure or its aesthetics,\textsuperscript{14} and it is with the latter that Arwaker was concerned. As for the structure of the Ignatian meditation, it was based on a series of three chronological steps: the prelude, consisting of the exercitant's creation of a picture of the object to be contemplated in his imagination; next, the "evacuation" of his senses of feelings for the outside world; and, finally, the "application" or awakening of his dormant senses to his inner imaginative picture of his contemplated object. The actual meditation was the third part of the exercise and was ascetic; its aesthetic counterpart for Jesuits was their poetry and emblem literature in words and pictures.\textsuperscript{15} It was to Hugo's method of achieving this imaginative third step of the Jesuit meditation aesthetically in emblem literature that Arwaker objected, rather than to anything related to structure. Poetic language and emblem pictures were the instruments by which the original ascetic exercise, conducted entirely in the mind of the exercitant, became aesthetic and meditative on paper, and it is the aesthetics of Version II that Arwaker aspired to correct.

As piety, the Jesuit devotion of \textit{Pia Desideria}, generally speaking, was acceptable to Arwaker. He describes the work as "an excellent piece of Devotion," which merits "a Translation" to stop it from being lost to the English tongue, and its "Subject . . . as suitable to my Calling, as a Clergyman" (sig. A5f), but he parts company with Hugo in the field of literary values. At stake for him is the Renaissance literary premise that poetry was meant "to teach and to delight," a premise that had underlain English criticism of verse since Sir Philip Sidney adapted it from his continental sources in his \textit{Defence of Poetry} in 1595 almost a century earlier.\textsuperscript{16} For Arwaker, \textit{Pia Desideria} was a work conceived and executed in the full wave of the Renaissance, and, as such, it fulfilled its end of teaching. But it failed to delight him completely, and, because of this, it compromised its own didactic quality. The "Sense" of \textit{Pia Desideria} was, in his words, appealing "to my Fancy, as an humble admirer of Poetry, especially such as is Divine," since its subject was didactic and suitable to his priestly vocation, but its appeal to the imagination was deficient because, as he writes, its "Author was a little too much a Poet." That is, Hugo sinned against piety on the side of literature — a fault that Arwaker explains in terms that Puttenham's words illuminate.

In Arwaker's view, this excess of poetry in Hugo's \textit{Pia} had adverse consequences both for his art and for the emotions of his readers. He writes that Hugo "had inserted several fictitious stories in his Poems, which did much to lessen their gravity," that these stories "very ill become their Devotion," and that they "wou'd take away from" the poems "the prevalency which they ought to have, as serious Addresses from the soul to God, over
the affections of all that read them.” By fictitious stories, Arwaker means both legends and poetic imagery, and Hugo’s use of them in Pia Desideria supposedly led him to write verse detrimental to the correctness of the emotions of the reader and to the imaginative experience that these emotions provoked. Arwaker’s criticism of Hugo’s verse, therefore, was that it lacked the quality of proportion of style to matter, according to the Protestant literary standards of the time, and his reasoning is significantly clarified for us by the Arte of English Poesie. Puttenham writes “that all things” in verse “stand by proportion, and that without it nothing could stand to be good or beautiful.” For this relationship between proportion and beauty, he praised the use of the “high conceites and curious imaginations” of what the “Greekes call . . . Emblema, the Italiens Impresa, and we [the English], a Device,” as well as of metrical measures.

For Puttenham, the standard of proportion in a poem was reached by the poet's creating an aesthetic balance between his subject and his image, and it was because of his failure to achieve this standard that Arwaker criticized Hugo. For lacking the equilibrium of proportion in verse writing, Hugo appeared to Arwaker to be guilty of excess. The Jesuit's images and stories are sometimes too far-fetched for the meaning of his subject, and it is his practice of his order's poetics that is responsible for the shortcomings of his work. Hugo used “too poetic” classical and pagan images, such as Phaeton, Cydippe and Ancontius (sig. A5v), and, as Freeman, Dimler and Lewalski have pointed out, Arwaker replaces them in Hugo's text with apposite examples of the Prodigal Son and of Eve and the Serpent from the Scriptures. In addition, he excises what he calls “several historical passages taken from the Legend of Saints and Martyrologies” because, he explains, his “Readers would be strangers to their Histories.” Moreover, he finds that “the truth of the relations” of these histories “is not so evident as to render them unquestionable” (sigs. A5v–A6r). It is noteworthy that Arwaker offers no criticism of Pia Desideria’s emblem pictures. All his reservations are about Hugo's poetry. None of them are about the mottoes under the pictures, either, or about the concluding quotations or citations that follow the poems at the end of the emblems.

The essential task that faced Arwaker as the adapter and translator of Hugo's Pia Desideria was to transform a Counter-Reformation baroque Ignatian meditative work in pictures, prose and poetry, into an English Protestant book of piety, essentially through the use of poetic diction. In the context of seventeenth-century approaches to verse, how he achieved this task by replacing the classical images and legends in Hugo's poems with his own poetic language is clarified once more by Puttenham's Arte of English Poesie. As Arwaker criticizes Hugo for his lack of proportion, he also faults
him for his weak choice — in Puttenham's vocabulary — of the “ornaments” of verse. The argument about the propriety of ornaments, as Alison Shell had noted, spread to all forms of art in the first century of Protestant England: “Ideas on the perniciousness of ornament would have influenced Protestant reaction to such Catholic subterfuges as rosaries disguised as rings, and the fusion of ornament with the hideous inside may have also been reinforced by the popish caches of vestments, rosaries and books. . . . ”19 For Puttenham, the “ornaments” of verse were the figurative language essential to poetry but governed by strict rules, many of which later became fused with Protestant doctrine. One of the functions of this figurative language was the correct transmission of its own “sense,” as well as the meaning of the subject of the poem. That is, an ornament in a poem had two significances to convey, its own and that of the poem, and by the concordance of the two senses the ornament came to be characterized by beauty. Inadequate figurative language resulted when the poet chose an image with the wrong “sense” to illustrate his subject, and it is this error that Arwaker finds in Hugo's classical imagery and fictions; besides representing his subject poorly, the poet's false image, marked by this error, offended the reader's feeling for beauty. On the other hand, in Puttenham's argument, when figurative language achieved beauty, it was “sensible,” or correctly sensory for the reader's experience. The perfection of the balance of meanings that the poet succeeded in creating in his poetic imagery provoked his reader's feelings, and by such sensory experience he assured the success of his lines.20 The poet's failure to abide by this rule of proportion, beauty and sensory experience appears to lie behind Arwaker's judgment of Pia Desideria's literary values. Having lost sight of the nature of successful ornament in poetry, Hugo, it seems to Arwaker, attached his poem to what he calls “inferior sense,” which failed to create beauty and to move the reader suitably to the desired meditative feelings.

In Arwaker's criticism of Hugo's poems, what really happened — certifiable history, if we will — is also deeply in question. The entire Renaissance concern with “ornaments” in verse has become fused with the Protestant idea that fictional images cannot adequately portray — indeed, can actually deform — the significance of the sacred subjects that they are mistakenly meant to represent. Arwaker reminds the reader of his preface constantly of the need of historical certitude, for in certainty about the past lies the basis of the truth that he tries to establish in his adaptation of Pia Desideria. He therefore circumscribes the English Renaissance theories of tropes and schemes21 within the limits of verifiable historical truth. If a trope, which is a comparison made with a metaphor or a simile, is used to portray a Christian subject, it must image its Christian subject historically. It must
perform this historical recreation using either a figure from the Bible or something that has verifiably happened in the real world since biblical times. The literary standard of proportion, according to English Renaissance theories of figurative language, in Arwaker’s handling therefore means respecting history as his Protestantism considers it to be known, that is, through its interpretation by biblical types. The development of the standard of proportion in poetic imagery in this historical direction in seventeenth-century Britain is noteworthy. Moreover, in his criticism of *Pia Desideria*, Arwaker applies the same standard of historical certainty not only to poetic ornaments formed by imagistic tropes, but also to those formed by the configuration of thought.

The theory and practice of poetry behind the argument by which Arwaker justified his alterations to Hugo’s lines was at least as old as John Donne’s religious poetry at the beginning of the century. A poem such as Donne’s “The Crosse,” probably dating from the late 1610s, is a case in point. The poem is an imaginative exercise in finding the form of Christ’s cross at his Crucifixion, first, in a number of things in the world of material nature, and secondly in an equally great variety of things in the world of the spirit.22 Behind this exercise lies, as a main element, biblical typology. Donne writes that the poet’s outstretched arms when he swims, or the mast and yard of a ship in a storm at sea, or birds with wings outstretched flying high in the sky, or the meridional frames of the spheres crossing one another — all of these make “Materiall Crosses” (l. 25). He then adds that in human history, there are also “spirituall” crosses. Examples are the pain of the soul that is better for the body than medicine, or the affliction that one accepts as a form of salvation, as Christ accepted his own crucifixion, or the difficult self-questioning that is an honest form of self-love; and to Donne these “spirituall” crosses are even truer to the shape of Christ’s cross than “materiall” crosses themselves (l. 26).

The art of typology that has worked itself into Donne’s lines is the art of finding parallels between the poet’s meaning in his poem and the world of nature and the Bible. The world of time and space is viewed as the Book of Creatures or of Nature, such as the late medieval Spanish monk, Raymond of Sebund, described it in his *Liber Creaturarum*.23 Sebund is one of Donne’s early authorities in his *Essayes in Divinity* of 1614.24 The material world has levels of meaning, as Aquinas described them in the *Summa Theologica*;25 however, in the development of this multi-levelled view of Creation in Sebund, and later in Donne, the world has come to resemble a book that is meant to be read. If typology was once specifically applied to reading the Bible, it is now the art of reading the history of the world that the Lord has ordered written down as his Revealed Word. The other art, that of divine
poetry, which Arwaker speaks of in his preface, uses the principles of typology in relation to both nature and the Bible to write new verse. Such new divine verse necessarily expurgates Hugo's distracting classical images and unprovable legends and replaces them with verifiable historical imagery from either the world of material nature or the Bible.

In the creation of this divine poetry, the role of the fancy and the imagination, which Arwaker writes of in the “Preface” of *Divine Addresses*, was primordial. For fancy and imagination in the working of the ornaments of poetry brought him close to the application of the senses to the imagined picture in accordance with the original meditative mechanism of Loyola's *Exercises*. The meanings of fancy and imagination in the seventeenth century were not entirely fixed, but normally the imagination, in the general currents of thought that involved Hugo and Arwaker, referred to the inner Aristotelian and Thomistic faculty of the mind onto which all sensations of the body were projected in the form of images in the course of human experience. The Aristotelian dictum at stake was that nothing is in the mind that is not first in the senses. The fancy, on the other hand, tended to refer to invented images having no real origin in the world outside the mind. The image in the fancy reflected nothing that had been perceived first by the senses, but rather something that had been manufactured in itself under the pressure of a number of distracting emotions. This distinction between imagination and fancy is the one drawn by Adam in Milton's *Paradise Lost* of 1665, when he interprets Eve's dream of her loss of paradise.26

With this general, even if not absolute, difference in mind between the fancy and the imagination, what Arwaker criticizes in Hugo in his preface to *Divine Addresses* appears more clearly: Hugo resorts to fancy to create fictions, rather than to the imagination to recreate history pictorially. The Protestant devotion in poetry that Arwaker describes must be one that respects the creation of faithful copies of the historical world and biblical types in order to bring Christians closer to God by correct aesthetic meditation. Shell has pointed out that the “difference between the ecstatic language of English Catholics and English Protestants may not be great” in the seventeenth century and that “Protestants could respond to almost all of this Catholic vision of heaven.” “But,” he continues, “one difference was the degree of their willingness to evoke a synaesthetic heaven as part of religious worship.”27 Even when it is controlled rigorously by the human reason, as in the Jesuit exercise, the role of the imagination to create a fictional picture for meditation is rejected by Arwaker, as by Donne before him. Like the Ignatian meditation, the Protestant devotion must remain “affective,” or emotive, as Arwaker describes it, and on the need of emotion in poetic experience Arwaker and Hugo agree with each other and with Puttenham.
But in Protestant meditation this emotion must always be controlled by historical or biblical elements outside the meditator. By contrast, in the Ignatian meditation — in its original ascetic version in Exercises and in its aesthetic version as in Pia Desideria as well — the meditator creates an inner world not necessarily controlled by the “real” appearances of things.

To such devotional poetry, either Protestant or Ignatian, Puttenham in The Arte of English Poesie would have applied his term “sensable.” For him, contrary to Arwaker, the emotion, not the religious orientation, determined the success of the ornaments of verse. But in the context of seventeenth-century poetry, his approach to the use of ornaments and their emotive appeal in poetry came to be adapted to an overtly Protestant view of verse, such as we find in Arwaker’s criticism of Hugo, and the openness of his theory to Catholic sensibility was lost. For Arwaker, devotional poetry was an affective address to God only if it reflected history, and emotions spent on the enjoyment of fictional images in poetry distracted from this address to the divine, whereas for Hugo, religious verse was a “desire” for a religious feeling directed towards God — hence the volume’s title of Pia Desideria — no matter whether history or fiction provoked it. The fact remains, however, that Arwaker never answers the question of why the emblems that he borrowed from Hugo did not also fail to meet his standards of poetic experience and imagination.

Notes
3. Edmund Arwaker, Pia Desideria: Or, Divine Addresses (London: Henry Bonwicke, 1686). Subsequent references will be to the microfilm copy, Reel 603, 2EEB, of the Early English Books 1641–1700 microfilm series published by the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
5. The de Backer Bibliothèque indicates that the copper plates were by Boetius à Bolsvert, and that the 1645 reprint adopted the plates by Paets (1: 407, col. 2), but the Sommervogel edition, without any reference to the plates, indicates that the 1636 and 1645 printings were the same (vol. 4, col. 514).
7. Freeman, p. 299.


10. McQueen, pp. iii–iv.

11. *Ibid.*, p. iv; Dimler, p. 361; Freeman, p. 140. The *Supplément* to the Sommervogel *Bibliothèque* also lists another edition in 1635 without the “affectus” or prose passages and without the pictures as well (vol. 9, cols. 500–1).


15. Raspa, p. 38.


27. Shell, p. 198.

28. Puttenham, Book III, Chapter 16 (“Of the figures we call Sensable, because they alter and affect the minde by alteration of sence, and first in single wordes”), pp. 188–89.