Richard Lovelace's Selected Animal Fables and the Transformation of the Emblem Tradition

Araz Ismail

University of Raparin, Iraq.
E-mail: araz.ismail@uor.edu.krd

Abstracts: It is difficult, if not impossible to give a comprehensive, cogent definition of the 'emblem' to accommodate its diversity as a genre, a definition that covers all the works produced under the name emblem during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is, therefore, neither necessary nor possible here to discuss definitions for such a large and eclectic field like the emblem tradition. Soon after its emergence, the emblem became an accepted form and exercised a vast influence over literature, art, and decoration of the period. Many writers were fascinated by it, including English poet Richard Lovelace (1616-1657), who used strategies of emblem books in his representation of creatures by integrating pictures and texts in a genre. This paper is an attempt to read Lovelace's poems The Grasshopper, A Fly Caught in a Cobweb, The Ant, The Snayl 'The Snail', and The Falcon in the light of the emblem tradition, showing how Lovelace uses the tradition. Focusing on his animal fables, the paper illustrates the different ways in which Lovelace employs or transforms the strategies of emblem books. Various references will be made to the poems to explain how the poet capitalises on the emblem heritage, while at the same time adapting it by rewriting the original story behind the emblem to channel his staunch political views in favour of the Royalists. The paper contends that, without referring to the emblem legacy accessible to Lovelace, certain aspects of his poetry would remain ambiguous.

Keywords: Lovelace, Emblem, Poetry.

1. INTRODUCTION

In Lovelace's time, the political, social and religious instability, doubled with the printing and publication circumstances, required some evasive maneuverings and artistic strategies from a work to find its way to the print and get published. Robertson (2006) contends that the 1641 collapse of the royal censorship was immediately followed by the introduction and implementation of a new regime of censorship by the Parliament, in 1642. It is to be remembered that both versions of Lovelace's *Lucasta* were written and published in a period of political crisis and printing polemics. Robertson (2006) also notes that the "young republic's Council of State implemented a sever censorship" in 1649 (466), the year of the publication of the first version of *Lucasta,* a decade before the posthumous second version was released. Cautious of the sensitive atmosphere, many writers chose to be published anonymous, whereas others like Lovelace preferred to be deliberately obscure and indirect (467). In the case of Lovelace, experience had taught him to employ any strategy required to get his writings passed by the hostile censors, for, as Robertson (2006) states, "in the early 1640s, his play *The Soldier* could not be staged owing to the suppression of the theatre" (470). How, then, could Lovelace have camouflaged his staunch, Royalist beliefs and concerns? He would probably have found no better source than emblem books to provide him with a widely accepted means of indirectness and obfuscation, for in the emblem tradition obscurity is always possible, if not a stipulation. As discussed above, in emblem books all objects have multiple allegorical meanings, and, possibly because of this multi-suggestiveness, Lovelace's emblematic creatures are made to represent, among other things, his beloved, but defeated Royalist cause, in a way that is not too apparent to get him in trouble.

According to Manning, the question "*What is an emblem?* is not even a good question" (2002, p.21). Daly (1979, and 1998), Bath (1994), and Freeman (1948) concur that emblem books integrated pictures and illustrative words. That was what made the emblem a different genre, a genre that "was neither Literature nor Art, although it was spawned and secretly nourished by both" (Manning 2002,p. 17). Daly (1998) writes: "emblems are composed of symbolic pictures and words; a meaningful relationship between the two is intended; the manner of communication is connotative rather than denotative" (8). He further notes that this description of the emblem does not offer suppositions either about the priority of *pictura* (picture) or *scriptura* (text), or the nature of the relation between them (8). Similarly, A. Visser (2005) states that "the emblem should communicate by means of two media: the visual and the verbal" (215). This signifies the importance of a pictorial element in making an emblem. The picture (the visual aspect) was always a constituent part of the combination. Manning (2002) states that the emblem was variable in terms of the number of its composing parts, and not always emblematists felt obliged to make

emblems of three parts-this being the standard form. However, the picture, no matter how many parts the emblem had, remained an essential element in the combination, except in few cases where the picture was missing where the emblem "is said to be naked" (18). It is to be mentioned that the exclusion of the picture was neither because of lack of interest in it or because of its being considered superfluous. It was, Freeman (1948) highlights, a way to reduce costs of making emblems, for many emblematists found themselves in difficulty when the production and printing costs were raising in an unaffordable manner. Furthermore, Hill (1970) observes that even those authors, whose voluminous works of emblems lack pictures stated in their prefaces, that the visual element is a necessary one. Which is why the picture is historically and etymologically "an integral part of the emblem" (263).

In the introduction to her *English Emblem Books* Freeman (1948) writes "The first English emblem book was published in 1586; the first emblem book intended specifically for children in 1686, a date which can be taken as marking the end of the life of the convention" (6). True, short its life was; however, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the emblem tradition caught many European countries including Britain in a craze, and numerous emblems were made by emblematists who, in the words of Clements (1957), "viewed their activities as a campaign against ignorance; themselves as teachers, and their books as manuals" (92). Their purpose was "to commit to the mind by placing before the eye" (93). Therefore, as Daly (1979) avers, "The attempt to interpret literature in the light of the emblem has a history in English studies that dates back at least to Henry Green in the 1870s" (9).

Studying Andrew Marvell's poetry, Colie (1970) gives an account of how Marvel utilized the pictorial tradition, which could also help illuminate Lovelace's use of the tradition in his animal fables. She notes that many of Marvell's poems "fall into standard forms accommodating ecphrasis, or poetic rendering of a work of art, and follow the Horatian maxim that poetry and painting are alike, *ut pictura poesis*" (106). The emphasis here is on bringing poetry (words) and painting (pictures) together, very much what emblem books did. If Marvels is "up to something quite complex, attempting a meditation between verbal and visual arts" (Colie 110), then a similar thing could be said of Lovelace, in his bestiary poems. Lovelace's *The Ant, The Grasshopper, The Snayl,* and *The Falcon*, to name some of them, are written in a thoroughly visual manner. In other words, while reading them, the reader is invited to create a mental picture of the object described. Just as an emblem book would give itself as a work of visual art to its viewers, these poems also , among other things, unite visual elements with words in a way that can both be *read* and *viewed* mentally. The reader can feel that Lovelace's small creatures are turned into a work of art and that his poems are in a sense about pictures. An emblematist engraves or paints objects, among them animals, and illustrates them with accompanying lines of poetry. As Freeman states, "one of the means by which this close interrelation was achieved" was to use the picture in detail (18).

In short, Lovelace's animal fables employ the technique of emblem books whereby words join emblematic pictures to construct meaning. Lovelace carefully describes his creatures in a way that his descriptions, beside creating a visual image in the mind of the reader, add something to the overall meaning of the poem; and the meditation that Colie observes in Marvel's poetry is also an integral part in Lovelace's. Readers cannot fail, and perhaps they are meant to picture the grasshopper when described as "OH thou that swing"st upon the waving hair/ Of some well-filled Oaten Beard"(Wilkinson 1963, p.38). Similarly, when the grasshopper becomes a "Poore verdant fool" and, in an aesthetically appealing moment, turns into "green Ice" and dies, it can be assumed that the picture of the grasshopper, though not tangible, is an important part of Lovelace's development of his ideas in the poem. His *A Fly Caught in a Cobweb* also invites the reader to see it when "caught in an airy net" with its wings fettering its feet, and to imagine it when "become Slave to the Spawn of Mud and Lome", so as to realise and to remember that the fly *is*, indeed, a "Small type of great ones". His other poems like *The Ant* and *The Snayl* offer similar visual, or rather visualisable experiences. The images of a 'miserable', 'little Ant' who has got a 'spacious tent' and a 'sage', 'compendious' *Snayl* (Snail) also get into the readers' minds easily, and it is possible to contemplate these pictures and, as an emblematist, transform them into a plate. If emblem books use pictures that lay themselves to a verbal representation, that is, if the pictures can be turned from pictures into poetry, then Lovelace's verbal descriptions of creatures can be transformed into a visual art form. In both of them the technique is the same: to create pictures not solely for their visual attraction but to combine them with words and thus construct an idea. In this sense, Lovelace's poems become something like, to use Daly's term, a "word-emblem", by

which he means "a verbal image that has qualities associated with emblems" (1998, 74). For his verbal images can be said to be translatable into emblems. Why would an emblematist, and by association a poet like Lovelace, want to amalgamate text and picture in a form, and what would the effect of that merging be?

2. RESULTS

This paper has looked at some ways in which Richard Lovelace's animal fables use the strategies of emblem books. Lovelace could have had various reasons to borrow techniques and ideas from the emblem tradition and incorporate them into his poetry, but given the printing and publication circumstances of the time, the emblem would give Lovelace a means to channel his political views in a subtle way. Yet, it is hard to assume that he was too dependent on the emblem legacy to make it his source of inspiration. Instead, it is more sensible to reach out to the emblem books to illuminate some of the otherwise intriguing aspects of Lovelace's poetry. As such, it might not be preposterous to suggest that Lovelace's poetry on animals lends itself to be studied in light of the emblem tradition, just as it can be read along other lines. It is not easy, however, to look for an always-maintained resemblance between Lovelace's strategies and those used in emblem books. It is true that the incorporation between the verbal and visual aspects in poems studied here has a parallel in the emblem fashion, yet when it comes to the use of allegories, Lovelace's emblematic poetry still tends toward the allegorical, but it is also political, and it is intentionally so. He transcends the emblem tradition to incorporate political overtones.

3. DISCUSSION

In Lovelace's time, the political, social and religious instability, doubled with the printing and publication circumstances, required some evasive manoeuvrings and artistic strategies from a work to find its way to the print and get published. Robertson (2006) contends that the 1641 collapse of the royal censorship was immediately followed by the introduction and implementation of a new regime of censorship by the Parliament, in 1642. It is to be remembered that both versions of Lovelace's *Lucasta* were written and published in a period of political crisis and printing polemics. Robertson (2006) also notes that the "young republic's Council of State implemented a sever censorship" in 1649 (466), the year of the publication of the first version of *Lucasta,* a decade before the posthumous second version was released. Cautious of the sensitive atmosphere, many writers chose to be published anonymous, whereas others like Lovelace preferred to be deliberately obscure and indirect (467). In the case of Lovelace, experience had taught him to employ any strategy required to get his writings passed by the hostile censors, for, as Robertson (2006) states, "in the early 1640s, his play *The Soldier* could not be staged owing to the suppression of the theatre" (470). How, then, could Lovelace have camouflaged his staunch, Royalist beliefs and concerns? He would probably have found no better source than emblem books to provide him with a widely accepted means of indirectness and obfuscation, for in the emblem tradition obscurity is always possible, if not a stipulation. As discussed above, in emblem books all objects have multiple allegorical meanings, and, possibly because of this multi-suggestiveness, Lovelace's emblematic creatures are made to represent, among other things, his beloved, but defeated Royalist cause, in a way that is not too apparent to get him in trouble.

According to Manning, the question "*What is an emblem?* is not even a good question" (2002, p.21). Daly (1979, and 1998), Bath (1994), and Freeman (1948) concur that emblem books integrated pictures and illustrative words. That was what made the emblem a different genre, a genre that "was neither Literature nor Art, although it was spawned and secretly nourished by both" (Manning 2002,p. 17). Daly (1998) writes: "emblems are composed of symbolic pictures and words; a meaningful relationship between the two is intended; the manner of communication is connotative rather than denotative" (8). He further notes that this description of the emblem does not offer suppositions either about the priority of *pictura* (picture) or *scriptura* (text), or the nature of the relation between them (8). Similarly, A. Visser (2005) states that "the emblem should communicate by means of two media: the visual and the verbal" (215). This signifies the importance of a pictorial element in making an emblem. The picture (the visual aspect) was always a constituent part of the combination. Manning (2002) states that the emblem was variable in terms of the number of its composing parts, and not always emblematists felt obliged to make emblems of three parts-this being the standard form. However, the picture, no matter how many parts the emblem had, remained an essential element in the combination, except in few cases where the picture was missing where

the emblem "is said to be naked" (18). It is to be mentioned that the exclusion of the picture was neither because of lack of interest in it or because of its being considered superfluous. It was, Freeman (1948) highlights, a way to reduce costs of making emblems, for many emblematists found themselves in difficulty when the production and printing costs were raising in an unaffordable manner. Furthermore, Hill (1970) observes that even those authors, whose voluminous works of emblems lack pictures stated in their prefaces, that the visual element is a necessary one. Which is why the picture is historically and etymologically "an integral part of the emblem" (263).

In the introduction to her *English Emblem Books* Freeman (1948) writes "The first English emblem book was published in 1586; the first emblem book intended specifically for children in 1686, a date which can be taken as marking the end of the life of the convention" (6). True, short its life was; however, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the emblem tradition caught many European countries including Britain in a craze, and numerous emblems were made by emblematists who, in the words of Clements (1957), "viewed their activities as a campaign against ignorance; themselves as teachers, and their books as manuals" (92). Their purpose was "to commit to the mind by placing before the eye" (93). Therefore, as Daly (1979) avers, "The attempt to interpret literature in the light of the emblem has a history in English studies that dates back at least to Henry Green in the 1870s" (9).

Studying Andrew Marvell's poetry, Colie (1970) gives an account of how Marvel utilized the pictorial tradition, which could also help illuminate Lovelace's use of the tradition in his animal fables. She notes that many of Marvell's poems "fall into standard forms accommodating ecphrasis, or poetic rendering of a work of art, and follow the Horatian maxim that poetry and painting are alike, *ut pictura poesis*" (106). The emphasis here is on bringing poetry (words) and painting (pictures) together, very much what emblem books did. If Marvels is "up to something quite complex, attempting a meditation between verbal and visual arts" (Colie 110), then a similar thing could be said of Lovelace, in his bestiary poems. Lovelace's *The Ant, The Grasshopper, The Snayl,* and *The Falcon*, to name some of them, are written in a thoroughly visual manner. In other words, while reading them, the reader is invited to create a mental picture of the object described. Just as an emblem book would give itself as a work of visual art to its viewers, these poems also , among other things, unite visual elements with words in a way that can both be *read* and *viewed* mentally. The reader can feel that Lovelace's small creatures are turned into a work of art and that his poems are in a sense about pictures. An emblematist engraves or paints objects, among them animals, and illustrates them with accompanying lines of poetry. As Freeman states, "one of the means by which this close interrelation was achieved" was to use the picture in detail (18).

In short, Lovelace's animal fables employ the technique of emblem books whereby words join emblematic pictures to construct meaning. Lovelace carefully describes his creatures in a way that his descriptions, beside creating a visual image in the mind of the reader, add something to the overall meaning of the poem; and the meditation that Colie observes in Marvel's poetry is also an integral part in Lovelace's. Readers cannot fail, and perhaps they are meant to picture the grasshopper when described as "OH thou that swing"st upon the waving hair/ Of some well-filled Oaten Beard"(Wilkinson 1963, p.38). Similarly, when the grasshopper becomes a "Poore verdant fool" and, in an aesthetically appealing moment, turns into "green Ice" and dies, it can be assumed that the picture of the grasshopper, though not tangible, is an important part of Lovelace's development of his ideas in the poem. His *A Fly Caught in a Cobweb* also invites the reader to see it when "caught in an airy net" with its wings fettering its feet, and to imagine it when "become Slave to the Spawn of Mud and Lome", so as to realise and to remember that the fly *is*, indeed, a "Small type of great ones". His other poems like *The Ant* and *The Snayl* offer similar visual, or rather visualisable experiences. The images of a 'miserable', 'little Ant' who has got a 'spacious tent' and a 'sage', 'compendious' *Snayl* (Snail) also get into the readers' minds easily, and it is possible to contemplate these pictures and, as an emblematist, transform them into a plate. If emblem books use pictures that lay themselves to a verbal representation, that is, if the pictures can be turned from pictures into poetry, then Lovelace's verbal descriptions of creatures can be transformed into a visual art form. In both of them the technique is the same: to create pictures not solely for their visual attraction but to combine them with words and thus construct an idea. In this sense, Lovelace's poems become something like, to use Daly's term, a "word-emblem", by which he means "a verbal image that has qualities associated with emblems" (1998, 74). For his verbal images can

be said to be translatable into emblems. Why would an emblematist, and by association a poet like Lovelace, want to amalgamate text and picture in a form, and what would the effect of that merging be?

3.1. Didactic Meditation

It is not easy to provide a sufficiently satisfactory answer to the question posed above, for the emblematist and the poet did not always seek the same goal in incorporating pictures with words, and the incorporation did not work for them alike. Yet, the integration of these two elements would offer something appealing to either the emblem maker or the emblematic-poem writer. In this sense, it is possible to trace and discern in Lovelace's fables some strategies that find their parallel in emblem books. As Hill (1970) asserts, the main aim of the emblem as a genre was a didactic one, trying to disclose religious and moral truths to a learned audience, if not to the crowd. In every emblem there was, at least, a lesson to be learnt. Unsurprisingly, it was not always easy to interpret an emblem, for, as Bath states (1994) , "the process of interpreting an emblem involves the recognition of the significant relationship between text and image" (31). It requires some sort of 'sub-reading' from a learned reader (31). Daly (1979) points out that emblem making was a complex process, a process that involved "writer, publisher, and artist" (20). He goes on to explain that the emblem had a distinctive, three-part form. A short motto, called *inscriptio*, introduces the emblem, "beneath which stands a *pictura*, and beneath this again is printed an explanation of *subscriptio* (21). It is, however, of little significance which of the three was the dominant or the first element. "It is the emblem as a whole, a synthesis of text and picture that must be interpreted" (20).

Lovelace's fables, too, all have a moral or a didactic lesson to the reader, and the way Lovelace invites his readers, to see the point that is made, is not only by assimilating a visualisable picture with a text, but he also requires a learned reader who can contemplate the image in his mind and learn the lesson of the poem. In *The Falcon*, for example, Lovelace not only provides an opportunity to enjoy the battle between a 'Bright Heir t' th' Bird Imperial', the falcon, and the Heron, that ends in the mutual destruction of the fighters, but beyond this image he has something to tell his readers. Anselment (1971) notes that the falcon in the poem becomes an "emblematic illustration of unconquerable will" (416), and that can be the moral, or didactic purpose of the poem. Nonetheless, we need to remember that Lovelace is not satisfied with a mere pedagogical purpose, and he goes beyond the didactic purpose to a political one, as will be shown in the paragraphs below. Clarke's observation (2005) is right that Lovelace's message in *The Falcon* is "calling on true believers to continue to support the Royalist cause, while recognizing the difficulties that they face" (275). Similarly, despite the visual, pictorial descriptions, *The Snayl*, as scholar kitty W. Scoular (1965) writes, was, among other things, "the emblem of self-containedness" (78). *The Grasshopper* shows the necessity to retreat "from public life in times of military defeat and the moral and spiritual consolations offered by the joys of friendship" (Palmer 1977,p.300). Also, *The Ant* concludes: "The *Grain* in th' *Ants,* the *Ants* in the *Pies* womb/ The *Pie* in th' *Hawks* ith' *Eagles* maw" (Wilkinson 1963,p.135). As in emblem books, these are messages that are not set straightforward, and it often requires an attentive reader to go beyond the visual imagery in each poem in order to get the author's intended meaning. This is what is meant by didactic meditation here, a process in which readers and viewers are required to see what is beyond the visual art, in order to comprehend the pedagogical purpose. This is a process of meditation; just as an emblem viewer has a tangible picture that he can look at and contemplate, a reader of Lovelace creates a similar, but intangible, picture while reading the words on paper.

3.2. Allegorical Emblems

In the Introduction of his book *The Emblem,* Manning (2002) states that: "To think is to speculate with images" and notes that Coleridge's statement "to think is to thingify", which comes centuries later, reinforces Aristotle's principle (13). Both these statements confirm the importance of allegorical thinking. The emblem gained momentum between the late sixteenth and late seventeenth century, which coincided with the popularity of allegory. As observed by Freeman (1948) , the existence of allegory in medieval life and literature is undeniable, and it is also unquestionable that the end of the seventeenth century marks the dearth of serious allegory. In between them is the epoch of allegories. "Emblem books depended for their existence upon allegorical ways of thinking" (Freeman 1948,p.4). The love for emblem and allegory was part of a greater love and acceptance of 'mere fashion', and

writing emblems was in itself a chivalrous accomplishment just as playing a musical instrument or dancing were. The emblem was, in the second place, defended and liked for its 'wit'; the man who could uncover the relationship between a symbol and its importance could pleasantly feel assured that he had not left his reason unused in him.

It is plain that for the emblematist "all objects have an allegorical significance" (Freeman 1948,p.13), or as Daly (1998) avers both the allegorist and the emblematist "held that everything that exists points to meanings beyond things themselves" (38). Henceforth, a single object could be charged with different meanings. Daly (1998) takes the example of the sun that allowed itself to be seen from twenty points of view, "connoting twenty different meanings", and the positivity or negativity of the meanings was determined by the qualities included (39). "The lion could mean Christ, because it sleeps with its eyes open; or the devil, because of its blood-lust; or the blasphemous heretic, because of its evil-smelling mouth; or the upright Christian, because of its courage" (39). When discussing the relation between allegories in emblem books and literature, especially poetry, we can successfully "interpret literature against the general background of emblem-books, using them not as sources but as parallels, or keys, to the understanding of literature" (Daly 1998, 80). As far as Lovelace's animal poetry is concerned, there is still the need to interpret it allegorically. Lovelace's treatment of the tradition sometimes differs from the traditional mode, that is why when reading his poetry in the light of emblem books, one might need to make references to the conditions of his life and to his political views and political allegiance. This means that Lovelace's fables, besides being allegorical, have also political overtones. This comes as no shock when one considers the fact that the seventeenth century, especially the decades of the Civil War, was a time of political, social, and religious instability and changes; and because of this, things including animals could easily get politicized, or understood so.

According to Leslie and Raylor (1992), the early modern England witnessed the "importance of prevalence of analogical reasoning" (108). The political discourses of Lovelace's time entailed making analogies between animals and human beings. They also note that when Samuel Hartlib published a book on bee keeping, he was well aware that the book could be used in political debates, so he worked painstakingly not. This tells us that animals were susceptible to be deployed in political discussions during the civil war period. Edwards (2005) observes that "in the decades of the mid-century, every aspect of life was viewed through political spectacles, and natural analogy was a major field for polemical clashes" (220). She further notes that "the hive, with its "monarch" bee, was thoroughly implicated in royalist propaganda, while the ant was the republicans' creature" (220). For this reason, we need to be attentive while approaching Lovelace's poetry of creatures, so as not to miss the intended political overtones.

It is important to bear in mind that, although Lovelace's poetry can be read along the lines of allegory as used in emblem books, he invites his readers to go beyond the innocuous subject matter of his poems, and it is only by doing so that we readers come to the realization that Lovelace, indeed, modifies the emblem tradition in that his emblematic animal poems carry political significance. In *The Falcon,* for example, Lovelace shows a falcon and a heron entangled in a battle that ultimately leads to the destruction of both of them. It immediately becomes obvious that the poem is about something more than the mere fight of two birds. As both Anselment (1971) and Clarke (2005) have noted, in *The Falcon*, among other sources, Lovelace borrows from a popular emblem of his time. In a 1590 collection, Joachim Camerarius portrays, as Lovelace later does, a deadly encounter between a falcon and a heron. The motto of the emblem is :"*Exitus in dubio est* (The end is in doubt)", which suggests that not until the war is over can one judge its result (Clarke 2005). The motto is then extended to imply that: "Doubtful is the outcome and uncertain the battles of Mars: Not unusually he who just now appears the victor is conquered" (*qtd in* Clarke 2005,p.264). This is far from being the sole message of Lovelace's politically saturated *The Falcon*.

It hardly needs to be emphasized that Lovelace's turning of the birds into human-like figures, evidenced by his use of military terminology to describe the falcon as a 'bold General' and the heron as 'Lanceer', allows the reader to see them as more than normal birds. Although he states that neither the characterization of the birds as such nor the military imagery of the fight can be viewed as clear-cut allusions to the English civil war, Anselment (1971) admits that we cannot disregard them "because the battle has an important emblematic dimension" (411). The poem then becomes a political allegory, and the falcon, as Anselment avers, "embodies the intangible ideals that comprise the Cavalier spirit" (407). The poem joins Lovelace's other poems like *The Grasshopper, The Sanyl, The Ant,* and *A Fly Caught in a Cobweb* in that it tells something of Lovelace's state of mind, as well as his political

views at the time of the defeat of the Royalist cause. Like his other poems, this poem has to be read in light of the fact that Lovelace was "an important member of the Royalist writers who used the allegorical discourses of Anacreontic beast poem, political fable and the pursuit of simple country pleasures to develop a shared response to the experience of defeat in the early years of the Interregnum" (Clarke 2005,p. 265). Clarke suggests that Lovelace's learned readers would have been able to figure out that the 'Bird Imperial' in the poem was a reference to Charles I and 'Bright Heir' was an allegory on Charles II, the hope of the Royalists (271).

What reveals about Lovelace's handling of the emblem fashion is that he modifies it, re-forms it, and complicates its allegorical technique. The traditional emblem of the falcon-heron encounter has the message that, as already discussed, *the end is in doubt*. The war is not over, and Royalists could still see hope; Charles II had been able to abscond to the Continent, despite Cromwell's decisive victory at Worcester, implying that "Royalists should continue to hope and work for the return of the monarchy and of the traditional values and practices which, as a group, they considered important" (Clarke 2005, 274). Indeed, Lovelace even changes the emblem in a way to allow him to depict the Royalists as victorious. In his characterization, the heron develops from 'hedg'd-in *Heron*' to 'wary *Heron*', and finally to a 'desp'rate *Heron*', whereas the falcon is shown as 'expert *Falcon*' and 'bold Gen'ral'. Anselment's statement (1971) is right when he states that "the poet does not maintain a detached objectivity" (412). The emblem does not show the falcon as victorious, but "Lovelace reverses the emblem tradition and gives the falcon the grater victory", for he refuses to see death as defeat and sees the falcon, and by association Charles I, triumphant even in death. Pessimistic and nostalgic but not a defeatist, Lovelace implies that Royalists must, like the falcon, experience an inescapable fall; yet "in meeting this destined fate they too manifest and ultimately vindicate the essence of the Cavalier spirit" (415). Glorifying the falcon's death, Lovelace concludes that: "But thy eternal name shall live/ Whlist quills from qshes fame reprieve" (Wilkinson 1963,p.145).

3.3. Enigmatic Emblems

As it has been discussed before, the three-part form was the standard form of the emblem, *inscriptio*(lemma, or motto)*, pictura,* and *subscriptio.* The procedure is that: the motto, which is normally a verse or a proverbial statement, introduces what is represented in the picture; the pictura which can be drawn from multiple sources shows an object like an animal, an action, human events, or a tree; the subscriptio interprets what is portrayed in the picture and interprets "frequently extracts a general piece of practical wisdom or a rule of conduct" (Daly 1979, p.26-31). Critics have discussed the tension or the enigma that the combination of those elements might, or indeed *have to* produce. Although realizing that the 'darkness' of emblem books is often overstated, Manning (2002) admits that "the emblem was never meant to be obvious" (20). He further agrees that "there may have been some deliberate obfuscation" (20). As such, enigma becomes part of the emblem. Daly (1979) observes that scholars who have studied the emblem fashion in detail have realized that the combination of *inscription* and *pictura* was meant to produce enigma, the resolution of which was the function of *subscriptio*: "in the emblem one is dealing with the combination of the word of the lemma with the picture of the icon which produces an enigma , the resolution of which is made possible by the epigram" (22). Nonetheless, it is an overstatement to suggest that every emblem writer subscribed to enigmatic veiling as a rule.

Like emblem books, Lovelace's animal fables use obscurity. To take *The Snayl* as an example, Wadsworth (1970) maintains that the poem "is obscure in both image and theme" (751). If emblem books are deliberately obfuscated, the same thing can be said of, at least some of, Lovelace's poems, for he too refuses to straightforwardly set his meaning, and his poems remain susceptible to multiple interpretations. The opening lines of *The Snayl* read as: "Wise Emblem of our Politic World/ Sage Snayl, within thine own self curl'd" (Wilkinson 1963, p.136). These lines seem to be uncomplicatedly about the sagacity of a creature, the snail*,* but this is far from being all the poem is about. Wadsworth (1970) observes that individual words in these lines can, and were intended to have different meanings, which could alter the overall interpretation of the poem. In the first place, if 'Politick' is taken as another form of 'political', the phrase 'Our Politick World' would mean "the world of human (or even English) politics" (753). In this case, the message would be that more solace can be found in retirement than in involvement, a proposition accepted by several Royalist partisans who left England following the execution of their beloved Charles I. However, as Wadsworth further notes, in Lovelace's days 'Politick' was also another way of

spelling 'politic' in which case the meaning would be ''prudent', 'expedient', 'artful', or even 'devious'. The expression 'Our Politick World', then, would signify the topsy-turvy world of England during the Interregnum, ''where guile and subterfuge rule the day; the moral in this case would be to shun the frontal assault and achieve one's aims by indirection'' (753). As the poem develops, its political overtones increase, and, in the sixth stanza, the snail becomes 'analys'ed King', an indication that we are not dealing with the snail proper, but a snail as both the product and the embodiment of a politically saturated world. According to Wadsworth it is possible that the 'analys'ed King' signifies that both, Start kings and snail, are vouchsafed direct guidance and counsel from heaven.

Most discussed of Lovelace's bestiary poems is the in-many-ways-ambiguous *The Grasshopper*,written at a time of personal despondency, wretchedness, and impoverishment, and following the Royalist defeat and the execution of King Charles I. *The Grasshopper* is a seemingly uncomplicated, simple, but in reality obscure, intriguing, and abstruse poem. At the first sight the ten-stanza poem seems to be simply about a summer-happy-insect, the grasshopper, that makes merry all day, plays around, sings and plays the violin, gathering no provisions for the winter. King (2014) has suggested that unless reading it along the lines of the seventeenth-century habit of use of allegories, the poem remains obscure, for the poem is reptile with biblical allusions which cover the whole poem. Although it seems to comment on and celebrate the solace and great pleasures found in friendship, it is obvious that the poem is about something more than conviviality and friendship. Edwards (2007), Randal (1989) and King (2014) have discussed different aspects of ambiguity of the poem, regarding the true name of the insect and its potential significance (by Edwards), the deliberate obscurity of certain lines (by King), and syntactic and figural reasons of obscurity (by Randal). It is not possible here to study all the levels of ambiguities in the poem. Just as the ambiguity in *The Snayl* is partly the result of the fact the creature could simultaneously imply both guile and perseverance, the grasshopper could be construed as a number of different things. Allen (1968) observes that ''the grasshopper was once ''a human artist and continued to accompany and instruct human artists; that it was a king, an aristocratic, a badge of royalty, a poet; and that it was identified with men in political disfavour''. Part of the ambiguity rises from this feature of multi-suggestiveness, and it is this that allows the poet to write a poem on *The Grasshopper* which, as Allen states, ''has nothing to do with grasshoppers'' (158). Having been considered as a symbol of optimism and cheerfulness, the grasshopper becomes annotated with melancholy by Lovelace (159), and the reason for this is apparently political.

It suffices for the discussion here to suggest that *The Grasshopper*, like emblems proper, lends itself to a number of interpretations, but its ambiguity differs from that in the traditional emblem fashion. While normal emblems usually guided the reader or the viewer toward the intended, correct interpretation (this was the function of supscriptio), Lovelace leaves it for the readers to demystify and decode the ambiguity. A thorough understanding of the poem is possible only by taking account of the politics of the day and the politicized nature of animals as employed in the political discourses of Lovelace's time. Edwards (2007) is right to see the grasshopper as a ''political animal'' and as ''a product of the political culture of the 1640s'' (234-5). That said, the poem is not about the grasshopper proper, but about the *political* grasshopper, most probably the antithesis of the Puritan ant. Allen (1968) writes that ''The cavaliers were grasshoppers, and when this poem was written they were learning the lesson of the insect''. He further maintains that the poem is often seen as a simply cavalier lyric, for it exposes ''a powerful overflow of alcoholic feelings recollected in adversity'' (152). Randal (1989) concurs that the poem is ''unquestionably 'Cavalier' in every conceivable way consonant with normal definitions of that term'' (185). In brief, while animals and other objects could be used in the emblem fashion allegorically, and for some didactic or moral purpose, they are used by Lovelace for yet another important purpose, politics, and it is this change that makes his poetry enigmatic.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This paper has looked at some ways in which Richard Lovelace's animal fables use the strategies of emblem books. Lovelace could have had various reasons to borrow techniques and ideas from the emblem tradition and incorporate them into his poetry, but given the printing and publication circumstances of the time, the emblem would give Lovelace a means to channel his political views in a subtle way. Yet, it is hard to assume that he was too dependent on the emblem legacy to make it his source of inspiration. Instead, it is more sensible to reach out to the

emblem books to illuminate some of the otherwise intriguing aspects of Lovelace's poetry. As such, it might not be preposterous to suggest that Lovelace's poetry on animals lends itself to be studied in light of the emblem tradition, just as it can be read along other lines. It is not easy, however, to look for an always-maintained resemblance between Lovelace's strategies and those used in emblem books. It is true that the incorporation between the verbal and visual aspects in poems studied here has a parallel in the emblem fashion, yet when it comes to the use of allegories, Lovelace's emblematic poetry still tends toward the allegorical, but it is also political, and it is intentionally so. He transcends the emblem tradition to incorporate political overtones.

REFERENCES

[1] Allen, Don Cameron. *Image and Meaning: Metaphoric Traditions in Renaissance Poetry*. Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968. Print.

[2] Anselment, A. Raymond. "Griefe Triumphant and Victorious Sorrow: A Reading of Richard Lovelace's The Falcon." *The Journal of English and Germanic Philosophy* Vol. 70, No. 3 (1971): 404-417. Web. *JSTOR*. 25 March 2014.

[3] Bath, Michael. *Speaking Pictures: English Emblem Books and Renaissance Culture*. New York: Longman Publishing, 1994. Print.

[4] Clarke, A. Susan. "Bright Heir t' th' Bird Imperial: Richard Lovelace's 'The Falcon' in Context." *The Review of English Studies* Vol. 56, No. 224 (2005): 263-275. Web. *JSTOR.* 05 April 2014.

[5] Clements, J. Robert. "Emblem Books on Literature's Role in the Reviving on Learning." *Studies in Philosophy* Vol. 54, No. 2 (1957): 85-100. Web. *JSTOR.* 05 April 2014.

[6] Colie, L. Rosalie. *"My Ecchoing song": Andrew Marvell's Poetry of Criticism.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970. Print.

[7] Daly, M. Peter. *Emblem Theory: Recent German Contributions to the Characterization of the Emblem Genre*. Liechtenstien: Kraus-Thomson Organization Ltd., 1979. Print.

[8] Daly, M. Peter. *Literature in the Light of the Emblem* (2nd ed.). London: University of Toronto Press, 1979. Print.

[9] Edwards, Karen. "Days of the Locust: Natural History, Politics, and the English Bible" 234-351 in Killen, Kevin, Peter J. Forshaw (ed). *The Word and the World: Biblical Exegesis and Early Modern Science.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. Print.

[10] Edwards, Karen. "Milton's Reformed Animals: An Early Modern Bestiary." *Milton Quarterly* Vol. 39, No. 3 (2005): 121-31. web. 01 April 2014.

[11] Freeman, Rosemary. *English Emblem Books*. London, Chatto & Windus, 1948. Print.

[12] Hill, K. Elizabeth. "What is an Emblem?" *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* Vol. 29, No. 2 (1970): 261-265). Web. *JSTOR.* 05 April 2014.

[13] King, Bruce. "The Grasshopper and Allegory." *Ariel* Vol. 1, No. 3 (pg): 71-82. Web. 01 April 2014.

[14] Leslie, Michale, Timothy Raylor. *Culture and CUltivation in Early Modern England: Writing and the Land*. London: Leicester University Press, 1992. Print.

[15] Manning, John. *The Emblem.* London: Reaktion Books, ltd, 2002. Print.

[16] Palmer, Paulina. "Lovelace's Treatment of Some Marinesque Motifs." *Comparative Literature* Vol. 29, No. 4 (1977): 300-312. Web. *JSTOR.* 25 March 2014.

[17] Randal, B. J. Dale. "Reading the Light in Lovelace's 'The Grasshopper'." *College Literature* Vol. 16, No. 2 (1989): 182-189. Web. *JSTOR.* 15 March 2014.

[18] Robertson, Randy. *Lovelace and the "barbed Censures": Lucasta and English Civil War.* The University of North California Press, 2006. Web. 12 April 2014.

[19] Scoular, W. Kitty. *Natural Magic: Studies in the Presentation of Nature in English Poetry from Spencer to Marvell*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1965. Print.

[20] Visser, A.S. Q. *Joannes Sambucus and the Learned Image: The Use of the Emblem in Late-Renaissance Humanism*. Boston: Brill, 2005. Print.

[21] Wadsworth Jr., L. Randolph. "On 'The Snayl' by Richard Lovelace." *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 65, No. 4 (1970): 750-760. Web. *JSTOR*. 15 March 2014.

[22] Wilkinson, C. H. (ed). *The Poems of Richard Lovelace.* Oxford: Claredon Press, 1963. Print.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.15379/ijmst.v10i2.1393