

Remembering and dismembering Henry Howard: Blazon and beheading in Sir John Cheke's  
elegy on the Earl of Surrey

Abstract

*Sir John Cheke's poem 'What natures worke is this' constitutes the earliest extant elegy to the early Tudor poet and courtier Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey. If the renaissance elegy typically sought to praise or blame its subject, Surrey posed a peculiar problem: executed as a traitor and enemy to the Edwardian succession, Surrey was fast becoming revered as the greatest English poet since Chaucer. Unable to reconcile these two positions in the single figure of Surrey, Cheke's poem produces a fragmented image of its subject, an image foregrounded by the figurative dismemberment of Surrey through anatomical blazons. Yet, Cheke's poem itself becomes fragmented in this process. From the grammar and versification, to the elegist's self-representation, the poem succumbs to the loss of structural integrity attributed to its subject.*

*This essay understands this fragmentation as a reflection of Cheke's own fractured relationship to his subject. Cheke's divided loyalties of literary admiration and political animosity necessitated the construction of a divided and incomprehensible elegiac subject. Ultimately, the process of remembering Surrey becomes one of re-remembering him: creating a version of Surrey from his fragmented remains.*

How does one write an elegy for a traitor? In the slippery world of Tudor politics to do so might seem a curiously dangerous decision, but the practice did happen. Thomas Wyatt lamented the execution of his patron Thomas Cromwell in the poem 'The pillar perished is'.<sup>1</sup> He did so by obscuring his subject and shifting focus onto his own poetic speaker. Only knowledge that the poem translates Petrarch's *Rime* 269, a lament for the death of Petrarch's own patron, gives the slightest hint that Wyatt may be mourning a traitor. Another poem (often attributed to Wyatt) attempts to mourn the men executed for treasonous relations with

Anne Boleyn.<sup>2</sup> Here, the poet cannot ignore the better qualities of the dead and must ‘set [their] offence apart’ (15) in order to ‘bewail’ (16) the loss of these once great men.

Yet, the case of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, was a more difficult one. Traitor or not, the years following his death saw Surrey become known as the greatest English poet since Chaucer; elegists were forced to confront a character who was simultaneously revered and reviled, and whose poetic achievements sat in stark opposition to his political demise. The result was that many elegies to Surrey attempted to reconcile these two different aspects of his character. For Surrey’s supporters like Thomas Churchyard and George Turberville the answer was simply to deny that Surrey had been a traitor at all.<sup>3</sup> Turberville’s effusive elegy was published in 1567, notably after the Howard family had returned to favour, and before Surrey’s son, the fourth Duke of Norfolk, was himself executed for treason under Elizabeth I. Churchyard’s lines, occurring within his semi-autobiographical ‘Storie translated out of Frenche’.reflect on his military service under Surrey, framing the Earl as the ideal master who shaped a young soldier and writer. Moreover, the book in which this poem appears, *Churchyardes Charge* (1580), is dedicated to Philip Howard, the son of the executed fourth Duke, demonstrating Churchyard’s continued ties to the family.<sup>4</sup> Writing in support of the Howards, both elegists overcame the problem of the traitor-poet by attacking the injustice of the poet’s execution.

On the other hand, George Cavendish’s ‘Metrical Visions’ presents Surrey’s death as a *de casibus* narrative of pride leading to a fall.<sup>5</sup> In doing so, Surrey’s gifts, which might in another situation ‘deser[ve] commendacion’ (1168), become ‘ffolyshe wytte’ (1178), only serving to emphasize his unfulfilled potential. Hence, Surrey’s poetic achievements, although admirable in principal, are made to exemplify his political demise. In the earliest elegy to Surrey, however, John Cheke struggles to reconcile the contradictions inherent in a man simultaneously worthy of great praise and great blame. What Cheke’s elegy finds is that the

dismembered body of the beheaded Surrey offers a powerful symbol not only for the divided and divisive poet but also of the elegist's own conflicted relationship to his subject.

John Cheke's elegy

what natures worke is this in one wightes corps to hyde	
so gaye giftes & so bad ill myxt without a meane	<i>mean or balance</i>
The happye hedd of witt, the tong well set to speake	
the skillfull pen in hand to paint the wittes device	
uncerteyne is the rest which shame will not discrye	<i>reveal or describe</i>
nor rage with stroke of tonge that byttrest ege to byte,	<i>edge</i>
Ageyne the dead who hath discharged unto earth	<i>against</i>
Dame natures love of lyf that hevy dett to paye	<i>debt</i>
what saye we then by ye whose wittye workes we see	
Excell in kind of verce as woorthy chawcers mate	<i>verse</i>
even as the paynter good, with pensell natures match	
Apelles ons did leave ye lusting goddes hedd	
portered with shape of lyf faire blomes of beawtis shyne	<i>painted or portrayed</i>
so fayre & lively drawne with collers to behold	<i>colours</i>
that onely yt lakt in dede both lyf & heat therin	<i>indeed</i>
the boddy left unmade no connyng hand in worke	
the craft of skill well tryed dourst facion to ye rest	<i>fashion</i>

and drawe with trained hand a sightlye boddyes frame

to that so noble pece the prayse of paintures scoole

*piece; school*

such was natures device so fine in sewte to mold

& plentyfull to make one kind with shifted sort

thy hedd she made of witt, a paragon of tonge

a sottell tole to fyle ye roughe hewne to the best

*subtle*

of style a streame to flowe with connyng to Indite

which envye wyll deny most perfytest grace to have

such seldom thewes of kynd is seld in one hed fownd

*qualities or parts*

what should I saye the rest much better ment then spoke

not hyd with envies flame Just prayes for to deny

*praise*

but staid by purposd stile thy great lacke to forgett

the had well praysd in the not had is stayd to wishe <sup>6</sup>

*thee; thee*

Sir John Cheke (1514-57) was a humanist scholar and tutor. He came to prominence for his teaching of classical languages at St John's College, Cambridge, as attested by his most famous student Roger Ascham. It was here that Cheke became associated with a circle of Protestant humanists. In 1540 Cheke was made Cambridge's first regius professor of Greek. His work with Thomas Smith on the pronunciation of Greek led to a long scholarly dispute with Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester. This dispute was political and theological as much as academic, and pitted Cheke's Protestant humanism against the scholasticism and religious conservatism of Gardiner.<sup>7</sup> In 1544 Cheke became tutor to prince

Edward and formed a bond which would continue throughout Edward's later reign. In the final years of Henry VIII's reign Cheke formed associations with the Reformist faction around prince Edward's uncle Edward Seymour (later Duke of Somerset). This tie was strengthened by his marriage to Mary Hill in 1547, and by Cheke's position as tutor to the children of Somerset and John Dudley.<sup>8</sup> Cheke's political and administrative importance continued throughout Edward's reign, despite his becoming embroiled in the downfall of Thomas Seymour. With the death of Edward, Cheke's fortunes fell. He supported Lady Jane Grey over the accession of Mary, ultimately fleeing to the continent in exile. Cheke was caught and brought to England in 1556 where he was made to publicly recant his Protestantism and apologize for misleading the young Prince Edward through his teaching. Cheke died in September 1557.

Cheke, then, was a supporter of the Seymour faction who, in a bid to ensure the protectorship of Edward VI, had Surrey executed and his father arrested for treason. Surrey had attempted to position his own father, the Duke of Norfolk, as Lord Protector, providing more than enough material for his political enemies to accuse him of treason. Given this situation, it may be a surprise that sometime in the years following, Cheke penned the earliest extant elegy to Surrey, transcribed above, an untitled poem with the first line: 'What natures worke is this in one wightes corps to hyde'. The poem occurs in two manuscripts associated with John Harington of Stepney and his son, Sir John Harington the younger: British Library MS Additional 36529 and the so-called 'Arundel Harington MS'. In both cases it is followed by three poems, all attributed to Cheke in the Arundel MS, and a further poem almost certainly by the same author.<sup>9</sup> A further solitary copy of the elegy exists in the 'Blage' manuscript in Trinity College Dublin, also linked to Sir John Harington and possibly in his hand.<sup>10</sup> Surrey's name is nowhere mentioned in the poem or its *mis-en-page*. However, Hughey concludes that Surrey and Wyatt were the only contemporaries of Cheke whom he

might depict as ‘worthie Chawcers mate’ (10), and the oblique references to treason make Surrey the only real choice.<sup>11</sup> With so many courtiers writing verse, and almost as many suffering execution at the hands of Henry VIII, there will always be others fitting this dual description of the poet-traitor – Sir Thomas More or George Boleyn, for example – but Surrey, viewed as the age’s foremost poet well into the sixteenth century, is the most obvious candidate. More than this, as this essay will show, the poem utilizes a pastiche of Surrey’s own language, themes, and forms to hint at its elegiac subject.

The poem itself consists of thirty lines of unrhymed iambic hexameter, with no stanza divisions, little punctuation, and ambiguous syntax, making it very dense and difficult to interpret. Given this difficulty, a brief summary may be helpful. The elegy begins by asking its central question: ‘what natures worke is this’ which can place ‘so gaye giftes & so bad’ (2) within the single body of Surrey. The speaker starts listing Surrey’s positive traits in the form of an anatomical blazon, but quickly breaks off after the head, tongue, and hand as ‘uncerteyne is the rest’ (5): some aspects of Surrey seem too dubious to praise. Not wanting to speak ill of the dead, the speaker instead asks what he can say of this problematic figure who was, nevertheless, ‘woorthy chawcers mate’ (10), and whose poetry matched the artistic skill of the classical painter Apelles. At this comparison, a lengthy digression begins as the speaker’s attention abruptly shifts away from Surrey to describing Apelles’s painting of Venus’s head (12). This head, Cheke tells us, was so perfect as to be thought a living representation of the goddess: ‘portered with shape of lyf’ (13). However, the body of Venus was ‘left unmade’ by Apelles (16) and no skilled craftsman ‘dourst facion ... the rest’ of the painting (17). ‘Such’, the speaker continues, ‘was natures device’ (20) in making ‘one kind with shifted sort’ (21). Here, as at several key moments in the poem, the point of reference is obscured. Seeming to indicate that Apelles’s painting was ‘shifted’ (that is, divided) due to its missing body, this division is suddenly reapplied to the recently beheaded Surrey himself:

‘thy hedd’ (22). In turning back to the poem’s original subject, a second anatomical blazon begins, praising Surrey’s head and tongue with their ‘perfytest grace’ (25). However, the speaker breaks off once again, asking ‘what should I saye [about] the rest’ (27) of Surrey’s body? Finally, the speaker decides to ‘sta[y]’ his hand, not because he wants to deny ‘just prayes’ (28) of Surrey but in order to forget the ‘great lacke’ (29) of his subject.

Unlike the later elegies noted above, Cheke’s poem struggles to unify the figure of Surrey. He is not the virtuous poet unfairly executed, but nor does his treachery diminish the value of his poetry. Instead, the poem asks how a figure like Surrey can occupy two different positions at once: revered poet and reviled traitor. Central to Cheke’s poem is this opening question of how nature can place such extremes of ‘gaye’ and ‘bad’ qualities within the single body of Surrey. If, as the poem makes clear, these qualities come to exemplify Surrey’s poetic genius and his political treason respectively, why is this dual condition so problematic that Cheke eventually breaks off from speaking altogether? Cheke’s difficulty is that the good and bad aspects are not as easily distinguishable as he might like. Surrey’s qualities, as Cheke immediately notes, are ‘ill myxt without a meane’ (2); so, too, are his poetry and politics.

The impact of the speaker’s inability to reconcile the varying aspects of Surrey into a unified whole, is to create a fragmented image of the poet-subject. In quite extraordinary fashion, Cheke’s poem dismembers Surrey, combining the poetic fragmentation of the anatomical blazon with the literal fragmentation of Surrey’s beheading. Throughout the poem, Surrey can only be glimpsed in parts, never as a unified whole. This essay will outline the ways in which the figure of the dismembered body cannot neatly divide the opposing visions of Surrey, as it struggles to resolve the poem’s central paradox of two Surreys – poet and traitor – coexisting ‘in one wightes corps’ (1). Instead these issues turn upon Cheke’s own position as both a political and poetic voice: how can he write an elegy, praising his

poetic forbear, without excusing Surrey's treason? Cheke's dilemma opens up important questions about the poet's role in portraying Surrey, questions which prove too difficult for the poetic speaker to answer, leaving his poem as fragmented as its subject. Yet, in this process, the relationship between Surrey's art and his life has been profoundly reshaped, as Surrey's is reconstructed from the fragments of his poetry.

### Dismembering Surrey: Cheke's adaptation of 'Wyatt resteth here'

Cheke's poem begins with a question: how can one man encapsulate such worthy and contemptible qualities? In its attempt to answer this question and to divide the good Surrey from the bad, 'What natures worke' offers a poetic dismemberment, figuratively re-enacting Surrey's execution. This dismemberment, although most immediately apparent in the anatomical blazons, is built into the very fabric of the poem, from its versification and structure to its intertextual practices. In fact, it is in the poem's intertextual relationship to Surrey's own poem, 'Wyatt resteth here', that Cheke's textual strategies become most clear.<sup>12</sup> Surrey's innovative use of the anatomical blazon in 'Wyatt resteth here' works to show that Wyatt is greater than the sum of his parts, transcending both poetry and politics in his heavenly journey. Cheke's alterations to that poem's blazon, to its structure, and to its image of the tongue all work to construct an irretrievably fragmented Surrey, unrecoverable from his dislocated pieces. Surrey's politics and poetry can neither be reconciled nor transcended, and the elegy serves to reproduce the image of Surrey's beheaded, treasonous body which is too problematic to be made whole again.

Surrey did not invent the anatomical blazon, but his elegy to Wyatt revolutionized the device. The idea of describing a person through a catalogue of their physical attributes was common in medieval literature.<sup>13</sup> Petrarch transformed the use of this technique in his



*Canzoniere*. Not only does Petrarch frequently list Laura's physical attributes to emphasize his desire or mourning for every part of her, many critics have found in the *Canzoniere* a poetics of fragmentation, where the speaker's attempt at a self-unity necessitates the fragmentation and dispersal of Laura.<sup>14</sup> In mid-sixteenth-century France a strikingly different approach to the blazon emerged when Clément Marot reintroduced an abandoned classical form, the poem in praise or blame of a single piece of anatomy.<sup>15</sup> Taking synecdoche to the extreme the French *blasonneurs* addressed their chosen body part – be it foot, breast, nose, or even eyebrow – as their poetic subject, in place of the lover herself.

Surrey's elegy to Wyatt took elements of both the medieval-Petrarchan catalogues and the *blasonneur* synecdoche to create a 'new poetic structure [which] provided the original groundwork for that Renaissance staple, the literary anatomy'.<sup>16</sup> In the first place, Surrey applied the blazon to a funerary elegy with a male subject. In both the Petrarchan and French traditions, the blazon was predominantly a means of expressing heterosexual male desire, a way for male poetic speakers to dissect their beloved. And dissection is key to the poetics of the blazon. Petrarch turns Laura into a series of 'exquisitely beautiful disassociated objects' so that her 'corporeally scattered' body reflects his own 'emotionally scattered' state.<sup>17</sup> The French blazon, even more than the Petrarchan, worked towards 'radical fragmentation', with no attempt to recover the unity of the body; in this process, the physical body part did not just stand in for the individual subject but displaced it.<sup>18</sup> If Petrarch's Laura can often be read as a projection of his speaker, there is rarely any sense in the French poems that a complete woman – real or imagined – stands behind the 'dismantled female body'.<sup>19</sup>

Surrey's 'Wyatt resteth here' does anatomize Wyatt, splitting him into his constituent parts, but only to reinforce the whole that these parts represent. If, like Petrarch and the

*blasonneurs*, Surrey still displaces Wyatt (forging a space for himself to take up his contemporary's mantle) he does not do so through radical fragmentation. Instead Wyatt is fragmented only to create a more complete picture of a man who transcends all of his individual qualities. Wyatt's 'simple soule is fled' (33); his anatomized body becomes the means for his escape beyond the bodily world. Indeed, Wyatt ultimately becomes a figure of Christ, 'sent for our health but not received so' (36). Through this comparison the fragmentation of Wyatt's body becomes (much like the crucifixion) a necessity, left behind as a sign for others to follow him beyond the bodily world into heaven: 'Thus for our gilte this jewel have we lost / The earth his bones, the heavens possesse his gost' (37-8).

The poem's structure reinforces this effect of a body which transcends the sum of its parts. The poem opens and closes with assurances of Wyatt's transcendence of the mortal world, beginning with an introductory quatrain praising Wyatt's 'heavenly giftes' (2), and ending with six lines reiterating that Wyatt's soul is in heaven leaving only his empty physical remains behind. In between is a blazon taking the form of seven quatrains, each devoted to a specific body part and its associated qualities such as the head and wisdom, or the eye and judgement. Structurally, Wyatt's bodily attributes – the blazon – are held in equal balance, and all are contained by the two depictions of his heavenly transcendence. As such, the individual body part stands not as a synecdoche for Wyatt, but each represents a singular aspect of his broader character: they are the bodily manifestations of those more important 'heavenly giftes' (2) which ensure Wyatt's ascent 'to the heavens' (33). The threat of fragmentation inherent in the blazon form is checked by a poetic structure which ensures the ultimate dismissal of the body in favour of the transcendent spirit.

Cheke's poem, unable to comprehend praising every aspect of the recently executed Surrey in this manner, cannot utilize the same textual strategy as its model. Instead Surrey is shown to be fragmentary and incomplete through an inversion of the formal poetics of 'Wyatt resteth here'. This inversion is made manifest by the initial blazon attempt. In the first place, rather than cataloguing the entirety of his subject's body, Cheke limits himself to certain body parts.

The happye head of witt, the tongue well set to speake

The skillfull pen in hand to paint the wittes device

Uncerteyne is the rest ...

(3-5)

At first reading, Cheke appears to follow his model's association of each body part with a distinct attribute: head with wit, tongue with speech, hand with writing. But what the hand writes is specifically the 'wittes device', so that the hand is an instrument of the head. The tongue may similarly be read as a means of externalising the 'witt' of the head, especially if 'to speake' is transitive, so that the tongue speaks, and the hand paints, the wit's device. Given Surrey's reputation for rash decisions and ill-advised words, his writing and speech are quickly reduced to a very precise usage: the creation of witty devices or artistic renderings.<sup>20</sup> This possibility is clarified as Cheke immediately moves on to compare Surrey to Chaucer and Apelles. In other words, Surrey's art is praiseworthy, the rest of him is 'uncerteyne'.

These three body parts of head, tongue, and hand are all praised in Surrey's tribute to Wyatt, but there only the hand signifies poetic skill. Whilst Wyatt's hand 'reft Chaucer the glory of his wit' (14), his head and tongue are associated not with poetry but respectively with his 'wisdom' used for 'Britaines gayn' (7) and his 'courteous talke' serving 'in forein

realms his king' (17). So in Surrey's poem the three body parts of head, tongue, and hand, are associated with Wyatt serving his country, improving Britain's reputation through his wisdom, diplomacy, and poetry. The combination of these body parts subordinates the poetic to the political, always emphasising Wyatt's service to the nation. In Cheke's poem the 'wisdom' and 'courteous talk' are relegated to consideration of Surrey's artistic wit and language. This is hardly surprising: for Cheke to subordinate the poetic to the political, as 'Wyatt resteth here' had done, he would be forced either to condemn Surrey's poetry because of his politics or to praise the political service of a traitor. Instead the initial blazon attempts to create a clear distinction between the poetic and political. As an answer to the poem's central question – how can such 'gaye' and 'bad' qualities exist within one body – the blazon figuratively dismembers this body, in order to isolate the praiseworthy poetic qualities from the more 'uncerten' traits and their associated body parts.

Yet, despite this attempt to shift attention to the purely artistic achievements of Surrey, the poetic and political – the 'gaye giftes and ... bad' – are not easily separated. The allusions to 'Wyatt resteth here' serve as a reminder that head, tongue, and hand can be political as well as artistic tools. The reforms of the 1530s had made this intermingling of the political and the artistic more fraught, moving the emphasis of treason from deeds to words, and ultimately to 'the thoughts that lay behind them'.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, it was a form of artistic representation which lay behind the charges of treason against Surrey. He was accused of commissioning and displaying a heraldic shield that included the arms of Edward the Confessor. Whilst Surrey argued that this had always been his ancestral right, it provided ample fuel for charges that the Howards were flaunting their royal bloodline and threatening the succession of Edward VI.<sup>22</sup> If Cheke would have termed his poetic depiction of Surrey a blazon, he would certainly have been aware of the etymological basis of this term, which

refers to the visual description of a coat of arms by separating it into its constituent parts. Such a heraldic blazon formed the main piece of evidence against Surrey (the actual coat of arms was never produced at court). It is worth remembering, too, that a number of claims made against Surrey concerned his commissioning of potentially contentious artworks. Most notable is the portrait by William Scrots, now housed at Arundel Castle, which, to Susan Brigden, demonstrates the ‘vaulted evidence of Surrey’s treasonable ambition’.<sup>23</sup> Far from being apolitical, artistic ‘device[s]’ were potential evidence of Surrey’s greatest faults. Not only, then, is it possible that a tongue can speak, or a hand write, both poetry and treason, but the line between the two was particularly muddled in the case of Surrey.

The effect on Cheke’s poem is to produce a very uncertain fragmentation in which Cheke cannot praise – or even reference – the entirety of Surrey, but nor can he successfully separate out the constituent parts: he cannot isolate the poet from the traitor. This uncertain fragmentation is exemplified by the partial blazon which dismembers Surrey – dissecting head, hand and tongue – without completing the process of neatly compartmentalising his individual parts. Thus, unlike the *blasoneurs*, where the part acts as synecdoche for the larger body, here the individual parts only serve to obscure the whole. As in ‘Wyatt resteth here’, poetic structure becomes a means of producing the physical body. The careful structure of Surrey’s poem holds all of the body parts (and hence all of Wyatt’s characteristics) in balance, so that each contributes to a complete figure who is more than the sum of his parts. Cheke’s poem lacks the structural balance and precision of its model. There are no stanza divisions of any sort, let alone the quatrain-by-quatrain catalogue that Surrey offers. There is no rhyme to frame the relationship between individual lines. Even on the level of syntax there is very little to aid the reader structurally, so that the relationship between individual words and phrases is often far from clear. Unlike Surrey’s carefully balanced and structured

recreation of Wyatt's body, Cheke's poem proceeds not by logic and balance but by train of thought. The effect is akin to stream of consciousness, consistently deferring the completion of ideas – the completion of structure – in favour of a compounding of possibilities. The poem's dismemberment of Surrey works through this deferral of completion, which never allows for Surrey to be glimpsed in his entirety.

Even at the level of grammatical construction Cheke's poem demonstrates this blurring of the logical relationship between component parts:

what natures worke is this in one wightes corps to hyde	
so gaye giftes & so bad ill myxt without a meane	<i>mean / balance</i>
The happye hedd of witt, the tong well set to speake	
the skillfull pen in hand to paint the witts device	
uncerteyne is the rest which shame will not discrye	<i>reveal or describe</i>
nor rage with stroke of tonge that byttrest ege to byte,	<i>edge</i>
Ageyne the dead who hath discharged unto earth	<i>against</i>
Dame natures love of lyf that hevy dett to paye	(1-8)

Grammatically, the lines are difficult to decipher, as key words are elided and the relationship between subject and object is obscured. The opening question conceals the elegy's subject, preferring the enigmatic 'one wighte[]' to naming Surrey openly. Syntactically, each part of the blazon acts as a grammatical object, with the elided subject and verb – 'Surrey had' – only implied. Literally and grammatically Surrey is obscured throughout the poem, glimpsed only in parts or through implication. This elision, which obscures the relationship between component parts, continues throughout these lines. Take, for example, the word 'rage' (6). As a noun, we may assume that it belongs with the verb 'discrye' ('to make known') so that

‘shame will not [permit me to] discrye [his negative qualities] nor [will] rage [discry them] with stroke of tonge’ which is too sharp a weapon to use against the dead. Rather than the more explicit ‘neither shame nor rage will discrye’, this construction elides the second use of the verb and inverts the syntax so that the verb occurs before the subject, and the object of that verb, the ‘uncerteyne’ qualities of Surrey, appears before that. This leaves the lines open to alternative readings, such as the possibility that ‘rage’ acts as a verb taking ‘shame’ as its subject: ‘shame will not make his faults known, nor will shame rage ... against the dead’. Similar difficulties occur in the lines that follow where the most likely reading assumes elisions and shifted syntax: ‘the dead who hath [been] discharged unto earth’ in order to ‘paye’ the ‘hevy dett’ (death) to ‘Dame nature’ whose ‘love of lyf’ we owe for our creation.

Whilst these lines can be paraphrased, the syntax and the structure of the poem actively work against clear and definite readings. The poem is too mobile for this as clauses build upon each other before completion and continually shift direction. Grammatically this poem proceeds in parts, requiring the reader to look backwards and forwards to make sense of its syntactic shifts and series of elisions. In ‘Wyatt resteth here’ the structure creates a carefully compartmentalized body, divided only to be made whole again. In Cheke’s poem, the structure manifests not simply dismemberment but the inability to make sense of the pieces which remain. In the disruption of structural order and the partial blazon, dismemberment becomes a manifestation of the inability to negotiate the conflicting aspects of Surrey’s character: the poetic and the political. Faced with a seemingly impossible proposition, the poem produces a disruption of logic and structure.

It is important to note that whilst elision, syntactical inversions and other rhetorical devices that produce ambiguity were used in early Tudor poetry, the effect in this poem is

extreme, and typical neither of Cheke's sources, nor of his limited corpus of English verse. In Cheke's source text, 'Wyatt resteth here', the introduction of each element of the blazon does elide the subject: 'A hed, where wisdom misteries did frame' (5) or 'A visage stern and mild' (9). However, there is no ambiguity about the subject here. Both the opening quatrain, and the catalogue structure of the blazon make it clear that this is an inventory of Wyatt's 'heavenly giftes' (2). Surrey's rhymeless poetry – possibly the only precedent for Cheke's unrhymed hexameters – makes careful use of compensating features to provide structural clarity that might otherwise come from the versification. Surrey's paraphrase of Psalm 55, for example, relies on the structural unit of the line, limiting enjambement and lengthy sentences; the blank verse of his *Aeneid* makes use of 'phrasal shapes and patterns' to produce 'a continual striving after balance' and a 'carefully ordered medium'.<sup>24</sup> The same cannot be said of Cheke's elegy.

It is difficult to make any definite assertions about Cheke's vernacular poetry. The extant corpus of Cheke's English verse is limited to the group of four poems occurring alongside 'What natures worke' in the two Harington family manuscripts.<sup>25</sup> The only other vernacular poem ascribed to Cheke is an elegy to Edward VI, printed in 1610; but in reality, this 'neuer before published' work was a pirated and erroneously ascribed reprint of William Baldwin's 1560 'Funeralles of King Edward'.<sup>26</sup> Within the small selection of verse that does remain, however, 'What natures worke' stands out as particularly ambiguous in its structure and syntax. Of the six poems, only the elegy to William Grindal, 'Uncertaine certaine deathe', is rhymed. This poem's tight organisation into three quatrains, rhymed *abab*, demonstrates that Cheke was certainly capable of using more rigid and unambiguous structural constraints. Here the first quatrain states that Grindal's death was 'no losse' (3) but a shift from 'strife' to 'rest' (4). The second quatrain outlines Grindal's character as 'sober',



despising ‘lust’ (6) and ‘chaunce’ (7) and accepting his ‘apointed end’ (8). The final quatrain ties these two elements together suggesting that as a man who avoided the ‘chaunce’ of life Grindal will be ‘hapy’ (12) to leave the world of ‘strife’ behind. The structure works similarly to a sonnet as the final quatrain resolves the first two, pithily summing up this resolution in the final line: [your death] makes thee hapy man, more hapy then before’ (12). Here the repeated word suggests a pun in which the ‘hapy’ or pleasant rest of heaven is contrasted with the restless ‘hap’ and ‘chaunce despisd’ (7) of life. In this way the line reinforces the poem’s structure, whereby death is a move ‘to rest from strife’ (4), a move for which Grindal has been prepared by his own ‘quiet’ life, free from hap (7).

Cheke’s unrhymed poems do lack the definitive structures provided by stanza and rhyme, and are occasionally grammatically complex. However, even at their most ambiguous, these poems don’t manifest the breaking down of the relationship between constituent parts seen in ‘What natures worke’. The opening lines of ‘I praye to god’, a poem celebrating a marriage, demonstrate the extent of this ambiguity:

I pray to god whoe weldeth ai, the starri heavens  
 in cours so due, to serve him & his chosen all  
*that* this desyred knot, that all the free do knit  
 and seek to wrap them selves within, & hoap to last ... (1-4)

The meaning of the lines is not particularly complex: ‘I pray to God – who governs [wields] the heavens in their due course, in order to serve himself and his chosen people – that this marriage [desired knot], which all free people seek to wrap themselves in, and hope will last ...’ The difficulty is that completion of the main sentiment ‘I pray to God that this marriage

...’ is deferred by several subordinate clauses. Indeed, the object of this prayer is delayed at least until line nine’s ‘yow may go through with easi mynde’ (9-10). However, rather than the fragmentation effect of the elegy to Surrey, this build-up of clauses creates a grammatical expansiveness and abundance which helps to produce the poem’s central claim: that marriage can transcend death through the ‘frute’ (14) of childbearing. Specifically, the poem ties the generation of marriage to the continuation of Reformist communities of God’s ‘chosen’ (2, 21). If the grammatical complexity might suggest the uncertain ‘hap[.]’ (18) of life, its abundance ultimately offers the way to overcome such uncertainty as generation makes the individual ‘undeathful’ (14, 15). Any initial confusion is clarified both by extensive punctuation (not present in the Surrey elegy) and through the poem’s final lines which, like ‘Uncertaine certaine deathe’ reinforce and clarify the central message and reiterate the prayer:

... & so to short

my wishe, desyre, that happie happ you boath befall  
 which you do wishe your selves to have, & god doth heap  
 on hys beloved chosen, & none have moar. (18-21)

In structure and sentiment Cheke’s other English poems are markedly different from ‘What natures worke’. In ‘I pray to god’, in the Grindal elegy, and in the final poem in this section ‘So luckie be your twistid holde’, complexity is met with resolution, just as the messy ‘hap’ of life is made ‘happie’ by the hope of heaven. The pun on ‘hap’ / ‘happie’ present in some form in all three poems serves to emphasize a religious assurance that transcends the arbitrariness of life, as each poem builds towards structural, epistemic, and theological certainty. In contrast, ‘What natures worke’ lacks the certainty of faith and its

ultimate assurance of heavenly reward. The poem's fragmentation of its subject and structure ends with a refusal to speak or to give closure. The repeated image of the tongue becomes an apt figure for this loss of structure and certainty. In the opening blazon the tongue comes to represent a duality: as a means of communicating Surrey's 'wit' in the form of poetry it is praiseworthy, but as the tool of his voice it represents the treasonous speech which is most worthy of blame. Indeed, the speaker will even go on to suggest that Surrey was 'much better ment then spoke' (27) undermining the earlier description of his 'well set' tongue (3). It makes sense that the tongue becomes a locus for the paradox at the heart of this poem since '[r]epresentations of the tongue in the early modern period often encode crises of logic, of language and of sense'.<sup>27</sup> As Carla Mazzio has shown, the tongue particularly takes up these anxieties by working as a synecdoche for language, with its potential for multiplicity and duplicity. Moreover, '[f]antasies of the tongue's mobility were often explicitly linked to disturbances of social and political order', disturbances which lay at the heart of Surrey's indictment.<sup>28</sup> However, if, in the threatened 'stroke of tongue' we are reminded that the tongue of Surrey comes to represent the fraught relationship between poetry and politics, then Cheke's own tongue is also enmeshed in an attempt to distinguish poetic praise and political condemnation. In the final collapse of Cheke's voice it appears that the 'ill' mixture of poetry and politics has led to the fragmentation and breakdown not only of Surrey, but of the elegy itself.

#### Self-dismemberment: Cheke's poetry and politics

Attempting to answer the poem's opening question, and to distinguish between the 'good' poet and the 'bad' traitor, creates a 'crisis of logic' (to take Mazzio's phrase) in which the two aspects of Surrey can be neither separated nor reconciled: they remain 'ill myxt'.<sup>29</sup>

This issue permeates the poem, even at the levels of grammar, versification, and structure. Questions about Surrey's 'ill myxt' nature turn back upon Cheke, caught between his own poetic and political duties of praise and blame. So, whilst the tongue becomes a useful figure to depict the elegy's fragmentary subject, it is not particularly surprising that the speaker's own tongue enters into the poem: 'Nor rage with stroke of tonge that byttrest ege [edge] to byte / Agayne the dead' (6-7). The tongue threatens to become a sword, with the eulogist being Surrey's figurative executioner. That this is a concern for Cheke himself becomes clear in the poem's final lines. Unwilling to rage against Surrey and deny 'just prayes', but unable to praise his 'great lacke', the speaker can only hold his tongue and cut the poem short. The failed attempt to differentiate between Surrey's poetry and politics is reflected back upon Cheke's speaker, who takes up the irresolvable tension that had been attributed to Surrey in the poem's opening question.

We may speculate that this conflict was particularly pertinent to Cheke. The relationship between the two men is unknown, but Emrys Jones sees Cheke's poem as a fitting gesture from the 'pioneering classical scholar' to the pioneering classical poet.<sup>30</sup> Surrey's work, Jones suggests, is best understood as part of the same milieu as Cheke and Ascham. Whilst there is little evidence to suggest what personal relationship, if any, may have existed between the pair, 'What natures worke' demonstrates the depth of Surrey's literary influence on Cheke. The poem not only takes 'Wyatt resteth here' as a model for its blazon, Cheke refashions Surrey's epigram on Apelles, 'If he that erst', and alludes to several other of Surrey's texts.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, he relies on Surrey's metrical innovations for his unrhymed hexameters, almost certainly responding to the unrhymed hexameters of Surrey's paraphrase of psalm 55, 'the first lyric use in English of a consciously imitated classical line

like the alexandrine'.<sup>32</sup> There can be no doubt, Hughey argues, that 'Cheke was deliberately attempting an adaptation of the classical to the native measure, after the manner of Surrey.'<sup>33</sup>

As a dedicated humanist and a Reformist Christian, Cheke would likely have approved of Surrey's paraphrase with its neo-classical metrical innovations and evangelical religious attitude. Surrey's psalm 55 certainly suits the Protestant humanism of Cheke's Cambridge circle which 'sought not only restoration of classical Latin but elevation of English'; and Cheke's own practice utilized humanist learning as 'a natural tool in religious study and discourse'.<sup>34</sup> However, in Surrey's hands this psalm also becomes an attack on that 'conjured league' (13) who brought the charges of treason against him. And, whether or not he was in Surrey's thoughts, Cheke was most definitely associated with that league. He was tutor to Prince Edward and to the children of both Edward Seymour and John Dudley, and a political supporter of those same men who masterminded Surrey's execution. So the task of differentiating between the poet and the traitor was likely to have been especially difficult for Cheke who had conflicting interests when it came to Surrey, his poetic forbear and political enemy.

In this way, the poem's shift of the tongue from Surrey to the speaker complicates the relationship between the two. The speaker who can use his tongue in two ways – to praise or blame – comes to reflect Surrey's 'ill myxt' qualities, his poetic and political voices. As a eulogist the speaker seems to assume that his role is to praise Surrey. However, as the voice of Cheke – who at the very least would have found censure of Surrey politically expedient, and probably desirable – the poem's condemnation of Surrey's becomes inevitable. Cheke's divided duties are brought to the fore by the poetics of his elegy. On a mimetic level, we might view the breakdown of logic that this essay has outlined as a representation of the

poem's 'ill myxt' subject. But in the production of this elegy, Surrey's incompleteness and fragmentation becomes Cheke's, as his speaker is unable to finish or bring order to his poem. The fragmentary effect of the elisions and the sudden changes of subject come to seem more like acts of self-censorship. The poem reflects not just a fragmented figure in Surrey, but Cheke's own fragmented relationship to his subject which prevents a coherent or ordered viewpoint. Surrey's 'ill myxt' poetry and politics is taken up by a speaker divided between his poetic and political tasks.

### Distinguishing between art and nature: Apelles's dismembered painting

We have established so far that Cheke's poem, unlike its elegiac predecessor 'Wyatt resteth here', is a poem of fragmentation and incompleteness. On every level – grammar, versification, structure, content – it demonstrates a failure of comprehension, a difficulty in manifesting the totality of its subject. Ostensibly this breakdown relates to a division in Surrey himself, apparent from the poem's opening question: how can one man be so admirable and so contemptible at the same time? This essay has attempted to suggest why this question becomes such a paradox for Cheke. In the first place, it necessitates a distinction between the worlds of art and politics which the 'ill myxt' Surrey makes impossible. In the second, Cheke is not a passive observer in this process as his own divided loyalties shape his representation of a divided Surrey. The question of whether it is possible to distinguish Surrey's politics from his art becomes the question of whether Cheke's own politics is indivisible from his artistic rendering of Surrey. In this way, the division of poetry and politics also poses broader questions about artistic representation, and the relationship of an artwork to the thing it claims to portray. Whilst this poem's self-censorship means that these concerns are often suppressed, they come to the fore in the poem's odd digression: the

discussion of Apelles's 'Aphrodite Anadyomene'.<sup>35</sup> Comparing Surrey's poetic skill to that of a painter, Cheke digressively introduces an examination of the renowned artwork, leaving Surrey aside for one third of the poem. With its near-lifelike representation of Aphrodite's head contrasted to an 'unmade' (16) lower body, Apelles's painting offers an example of how one 'corps' (1) can contain opposing qualities. However, the historical reception of the painting, and its associations with debates about the relationship of art to nature, mean that it has particular significance for Cheke's difficult relationship to Surrey, subtly reiterating that Cheke, as artist, is implicated in the fragmentation of his subject.

Cheke's digression reiterates the early critical reception of Apelles's Aphrodite and the painting's importance for figuring the mimetic relationship between art and the world it represents. The central sources for our knowledge of the painting are Pliny's *Naturalis Historia*, Book 35.91-2, and Strabo's *Geographica*, Book 14.2.19 (as well as some Greek epigrams).<sup>36</sup> Several anecdotes by Cicero centre upon the painting and its reception.<sup>37</sup> The consistent detail for which the painting was noted, and the reason for its subsequent fame despite being lost, is that Aphrodite's head was said to be so lifelike that it was taken not as a representation of the goddess but her living flesh. Some responses to the poem suggest that Apelles must have witnessed Aphrodite's birth, or even that the painting itself gave birth to her.<sup>38</sup> In other words, it seemed to transcend art and become the thing it depicted. The body of Aphrodite, however, did not match the brilliance of the head, possibly because the painting was damaged or unfinished.<sup>39</sup> The apparent ability of the head to transcend artistic representation, and the failure of the body to match this supposed perfection were both central to the painting's interest.

Rather than detracting from the painting's ability to transcend representation, the imperfection produced by the lost or damaged body seemed to further its appeal. In a popular anecdote about Apelles (elsewhere applied to other artists) the painter found himself unable to paint a natural looking foam. In his frustration he threw his sponge at the painting, only to find that it had produced the desired effect by chance.<sup>40</sup> Artistic perfection, this anecdote suggests, relied on some natural, chance occurrence. Although Cicero used this anecdote to dismiss the role of chance in natural law, the very need to refute this point 'indicates that the unplanned flinging of pigment ... was a well-known part of the cultural history of the painting'.<sup>41</sup> In this cultural history, the precision of art was unable to fully represent nature. As with the foam, the imperfection or incompleteness of Aphrodite's body suggested a naturalness which transcended artistic endeavour because it was *less perfect* a representation. So the head of Aphrodite blurred the boundary between art and reality as the artwork became, or gave birth to, the figure it represented. The incomplete body turned this blurring into something of a paradox whereby the most perfect artistic representation could never appear entirely natural because nature lacks the precision of art. The perfect representation of Aphrodite's head is paradoxically perfected by the addition of an imperfect body, making the artwork somehow more natural than the lifelike head alone. This painting thus disrupts the apparently linear mimetic relationship between nature and art: an artistic rendering of Aphrodite can become the real thing, whilst the most perfect art can only be produced by natural imperfections.

The speaker's use of the painting emphasises these associations, focusing on those aspects of the painting's reception which emphasize its paradoxical status. The head is 'portered with shape of lyf' (13) as if more than just an artistic rendering, but the body is 'unmade' (16): no 'conning hand' through 'crafte of skill ... durst facion to the rest', and none



could ‘drawe with trained hand’ a body to complete the painting (16-8). Cheke’s focus here is on the technical – ‘craffe’, ‘skill’, ‘facion’, ‘trained’ – and its limitations, bringing to mind the pigment-flinging anecdote in which art, as a technical process, contains a necessary limitation which can never match nature. For the poetic speaker, this appears to offer a solution to the elegy’s opening question as Surrey’s ‘ill myxt’ nature now appears quite natural:

such was natures device so fine in sewte to mold  
& plentyfull to make one kind with shifted sort[.] (20-1)

Nature here is simultaneously singular and multiple, a paradox brought out by the opposition between ‘kind’, and ‘sort’, both used as synonyms for nature: nature’s plenty produces one nature with shifted (divided) natures.<sup>42</sup> This seems to answer the poem’s opening question: ‘what natures work is this’ (that holds such opposing qualities in one body)? Yet, far from allowing the poem to progress, this thought prompts further irresolution, and the eventual breakdown of the elegy. The speaker once again attempts a blazon, and once again cuts himself off, unable to depict ‘the rest’ of Surrey (27). Immediately after this, the poem is deliberately cut short, ‘staid by purposd stile’, in the hope that Surrey might not be remembered for his ‘great lacke’ (29).

Attempting to use the Apelles anecdote to answer the elegy’s opening question only seems to exacerbate the poem’s fragmentation. If the ‘shifted’ painting can offer clues about Surrey’s paradoxical nature, its associations also serve as a reminder that questions about the ‘nature’ which created Surrey are also questions about the artist portraying him. Like Apelles and Aphrodite, Cheke may be producing Surrey as much as he is portraying a pre-existing figure.

The digression expresses anxieties that there is no clear cause and effect relationship between art and nature. If art is a representation of nature it also seems to construct nature (quite literally in the sense of Apelles's portrait becoming the living goddess). Thus, the poem's central question of how nature can produce such a divided figure turns back upon Cheke as artist. Indeed, the highest praise Surrey receives in this poem is his ability as poet to become 'natures match' (11). If, initially, this phrase might seem to suggest that Surrey was able to depict reality accurately in his poetry, the Apelles digression that follows this retrospectively suggests that in matching nature art becomes indistinguishable from it, blurring the boundary between art and reality. As artist, then, Cheke is not simply reflecting the divided character of Surrey, he is producing that division. Faced with this threat, the speaker descends into irresolution, digressive avoidance, and finally the failure to speak altogether.

#### Re-membering Surrey's corpus

We can read the Apelles digression, and its subsequent breakdown of the mimetic relationship between life and art as a reflection of Cheke's difficulty in reconciling Surrey's apparently divided nature with his own divided loyalties: the fragmentation within this poem is partly a result of Cheke's own construction of his subject. However, breaking down the mimetic relationship between life and art might also blur the boundary between Surrey and his own poetry. Returning to the elegy's intertextual practice we see that if Surrey's nature is constructed from poetry – if his life imitates art – it is the fragments of Surrey's own poetic texts which are used to produce his fragmentary nature. In spite of the digressive introduction of Apelles into Cheke's poem, the choice of example is far from incidental. Not only does Aphrodite's head-body division mirror the image of Surrey's own dismembered corpse, the example of Apelles is itself suggested by Surrey's own poetic works. That is, Cheke's

representation of his subject stems from Surrey's art as much as his life. If the critical history of Apelles's painting means that the example is necessarily attended by a problematisation of the mimetic relationship between life and art, in this instance it also fuses and confuses the historical figure of Surrey with his poetic works.

The reference to Apelles is one of many fragments of Surrey's work scattered throughout Cheke's elegy. We have already seen the extent to which 'What natures worke' utilizes Surrey's 'Wyatt resteth here' as a model for its blazons, and that Surrey's paraphrase of psalm 55 offered a model for the poem's use of unrhymed hexameters. In smaller ways, too, Cheke's poem seems to take imagery and vocabulary from Surrey. The word 'wight' (2) was a particular favourite of Surrey's, despite being rather archaic by the time he was writing.<sup>43</sup> The use of the terms 'envye' (25) and 'envies flame' (28) to describe critics of the dead echoes Surrey's sonnets on the death of Wyatt, 'Dyvers thy death' (3) and 'In the rude age'. In the latter, Wyatt's detractors are fuelled by his 'cynders', which may have supplied Cheke with the image of 'envies flame'. The repetition of 'staid' in the final lines of Cheke's poem (29, 30) seems to mirror Surrey's poem on the golden mean, 'Of thy life Thomas', by taking up Surrey's image of the 'hart well stayd' (12). There is something of an irony here. Cheke suggests that he is attempting to balance his 'prayse' of Surrey's virtues against the negative attributes which must be 'staid by purposd stile' (i.e. intentionally left out), seeming to tread the golden mean advocated in Surrey's poem. Yet, far from achieving this balance, Cheke's poem has instead demonstrated its opening position: Surrey is 'ill myxt without a meane'.

However, what Cheke's poem takes most explicitly from Surrey's texts is his framing of the relationship between nature and art. Surrey frequently utilized the image of Lady

Nature as an artist, fashioning individuals. In 'The golden gifte', the speaker argues that his beloved was made by Nature 'to shew her greatest skill' (4). 'Geve place ye lovers', and 'Wyatt resteth here', present nature breaking her mould (compare to Cheke's 'Such was natures device, so fine in sewte to mold' (20)). In the latter, 'she the molde did lose' (32) when Wyatt was lost; in the former Nature is even presented as a painter: 'she had lost the perfit mold / The like to whom she could not paint' (15-6). In other words, framing the problematic relationship between Surrey's art and politics in terms of a broader dichotomy between art and nature seems to have been prompted by Surrey's own interests. And turning quite specifically to Apelles and his painting of Aphrodite to understand this relationship, must be seen as a direct response to Surrey's epigram on Apelles, 'If he that erst': a poem which draws upon 'a network of personal and formal relations between poets, painters, and their creations'.<sup>44</sup>

Yet, whilst Cheke takes his subject and theme from Surrey's own poetry, he alters the sense significantly. Surrey's epigram on Apelles does ask questions about the relationship between art and life, but it does so facetiously and through innuendo. To summarize Surrey's poem: the speaker tells his female subject that if Apelles's painting was a triumph of art, in that its representation of Venus was great enough to kindle desire, then your father is an even greater artist having made you with his 'pencell' (4). For, although Apelles's painting can 'enflame', it lacked what you have: the ability to 'quenche the kindled fyre' (8). In other words, if Apelles's painting of Aphrodite's head lacked a visual body, this is made less significant than its lack of a physical, and therefore sexually useful, body. Natural creation *is* a form of artistic creation, but it turns out to be so mainly through the innuendo of the male 'pencell'.

In fact, underlying this flippant approach to the portrait is a genuine engagement with the philosophical questions posed by ‘Aphrodite Anadyomene’ and its cultural history. One implication of these engagements is that the painting’s ability to transcend artistic representation, and become Aphrodite incarnate, lay not in some perfect realism but in the effect of the painting on the viewer. Apelles’s Aphrodite is so beautiful as to incite desire in the observer, thus literally carrying out the goddess of love’s function. Cicero used the painting to examine whether the gods have physical bodies, asking if they, like the painting, have ‘the very likeness of flesh and blood’ but ‘no solidity’ taking only ‘the semblance of reality’.<sup>45</sup> Surrey plays with these debates, presenting the possibility of a painting of Aphrodite literally embodying the goddess (by evoking desire), whilst still, in a re-working of Cicero’s claim, lacking the sexual body which is the end of such desire. Who cares, Surrey’s poem asks, if the painting is Venus incarnate, since it provides no sexual outlet for the desire Venus provokes? It is worth noting that whilst Surrey takes this eroticism from his source poem, Nicolas de Bourbon’s Latin epigram, his poem challenges Bourbon’s ‘emphatic assertion of the superiority of nature over art’, making this relationship more ambiguous.<sup>46</sup> Surrey addresses the philosophical debates attached to Apelles’s painting but predominantly through his transformation of the erotic joke. This playful and iconoclastic side of Surrey is entirely absent from Cheke’s poem. ‘If he that erst’ is altered from a poem by Surrey into a revelation *about* him. Specifically, in Cheke’s emphasis on the bodiless head, it becomes a manifestation of Surrey’s divided ‘ill myxt’ quality, a quality which implicitly necessitated the real-life beheading of the poet. Surrey’s art is transformed so that it pre-figures his life.

It is in this way that Surrey’s texts are dismembered just as the blazon dismembers Surrey’s body. They are broken into fragments which fail to depict the original from which

they stem. And so, despite Cheke's inability to reconcile Surrey's poetry and his politics, both are aligned through their similarly fragmented state, and through the intermingling of Surrey's life and art. Cheke's Surrey is constructed from the fragmented remains of both his corpse and corpus, his physical body and body of works. If the purpose of the elegy is to remember the deceased Surrey, Cheke can only do this by attempting to re-member him, constructing both the man and his poetry from a series of dislocated fragments. However, in the process both poet and poetry have been transformed into something new, something reflective of Cheke's own divided relationship to his subject. The elegists touched upon in the introduction to this essay reconciled Surrey's poetry and his politics by turning all to a single, coherent narrative. For Churchyard and Turberville Surrey's poetry became a positive manifestation of the nobility and patriotic virtue he demonstrated in his life; for Cavendish it became a negative manifestation of Surrey's great promise brought down by vain pride. Similarly, edited collections of Surrey's poetry beginning with Tottel's 1557 *Songes and sonettes*, and even fictional accounts such as Thomas Nashe's *Unfortunate Traveller*, fashioned both Surrey's life and poetry into a singular narrative of his love for the Fair Geraldine. Surrey's life and art become mirrors of each other. Cheke's poem initiates a similar process by making Surrey's poetry and his life come to reflect each other through their fragmentary, 'ill myxt' state. Yet, unlike these later approaches, Cheke's poem is painfully aware of the problematic implications of reconciling art and life in this manner. What Cheke's poem retrospectively exposes is that producing such a coherent narrative of the poet and his poetry is possible precisely because of the very dislocation and fragmentation which renders Surrey so problematic here: these images of Surrey are produced by the selective recombination of Surrey's 'ill myxt fragments'. The process of remembering Surrey is also, always, one of re-membering him.

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Thomas Wyatt, *The Complete Poems*, ed. R. A. Rebholz, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London, 1978), 86.

<sup>2</sup> ‘In mourning wise’, printed in Rebholz, *Complete Poems*, 255. The poem occurs in Dublin, Trinity College, MS 160, f.114<sup>r-v</sup>. Although anonymous, some editors have attributed the poem to Wyatt due to its similar subject matter to his work ‘Who list his wealth and ease retain’ (f. 183 in the same manuscript).

<sup>3</sup> See George Turberville, ‘Verse in Prayse of Lorde Henrye Howarde Earle of Surrey’, in *Epitaphes, epigrams, songs and sonets* (London, 1567), 9<sup>v</sup>-10<sup>r</sup>; and Thomas Churchyard, ‘A Storie translated out of Frenche’, lines 63-86, in *A light bondell of livly discourses called Churchyardes charge* (London, 1580), A2<sup>r</sup>. The lines are printed, as a distinct poem, in *The Works of Henry Howard*, ed. G. F. Nott (London, 1815), xlvi. However, Nott erroneously cites his source for this poem as ‘*Churchyard’s Chips*, Part I, fo. ii. London, 1575’. The poem’s autobiographical claims are discussed in Matthew Woodcock, *Thomas Churchyard: Pen, Sword, and Ego* (Oxford, 2016), 19-20.

<sup>4</sup> *Churchyardes charge*, ii.

<sup>5</sup> George Cavendish, ‘The Earle of Surrey’ in *Metrical Visions*, ed. A. S. G. Edwards (Columbia, 1980), 78-82.

<sup>6</sup> Transcribed from London, British Library, MS Additional 36529, f. 80<sup>r-v</sup>. Original spelling and punctuation is retained, but u/v, i/j, and long s have been silently modernized, and contractions expanded. All further quotations from this, and from Cheke’s other English poems, are transcribed from this manuscript. The poem also occurs in Arundel Castle, Harrington MS. Temp. Eliz. (the ‘Arundel Harrington MS’), f. 206<sup>v</sup>, a transcription of which

can be found in Ruth Hughey (ed.), *The Arundel Harington Manuscript of Tudor Poetry*, vol. 1 (Columbus, 1960), 332-3. Only minor orthographical differences exist between the two, with the exception of 'shyne' in line thirteen, which reads as 'sheen' in the Arundel Harington manuscript.

<sup>7</sup> See John F. McDiarmid, 'Recovering Republican Eloquence: John Cheke versus Stephen Gardiner on the Pronunciation of Greek', *History of European Ideas*, 38.3 (2012), 338-351.

<sup>8</sup> For further details see *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 'Cheke, Sir John (1514-1557)'.

<sup>9</sup> Hughey, *Arundel Harington Manuscript*, posits Cheke's authorship of 'So luckye be your twisted holde' (vol. 2, 432). This is supported by the fact that the poem uses the same unrhymed hexameters as three of the four preceding poems, and that its Reformist themes, and pun on the word 'happie' are found in Cheke's elegy to Grindal and his 'I praye to God', which also shares this poem's theme of marriage.

<sup>10</sup> Dublin, Trinity College, MS 160, f.186<sup>r</sup>. The hand is ascribed to Harington by Susan O'Keefe, *TCD MS 160: A Tudor Miscellany* (Unpublished PhD thesis, 1986).

<sup>11</sup> Hughey, *Arundel Harington Manuscript*, vol. 2, 430.

<sup>12</sup> Printed in Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, *Poems*, ed. Emrys Jones (Oxford, 1964), 27.

<sup>13</sup> One of the more famous examples occurs in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, lines 939-60.

<sup>14</sup> For anatomical blazons of Laura in the *Canzoniere* see, for example, Rime 253, 'O dulce sguardi'; Rime 267 'Oimè il bel viso'; and Rime 292, 'Gli occhi di ch'io parlai sí caldamente'. In Rime 275, 'Occhi mei', Petrarch's speaker applies the blazon form to himself. For discussions of Petrarch's poetics of fragmentation, see Robert Durling, 'Petrarch's "Giovene donna sotto un verde lauro"', *Modern Language Notes*, 86 (1971), 1-20; John Freccero, 'The Fig Tree and the Laurel: Petrarch's Poetics', *Diacritics*, 5 (1975), 34-40;



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and Nancy J. Vickers, 'Diana Described: Scattered Women and Scattered Rhyme', *Critical Inquiry*, 8 (1981), 265-279.

<sup>15</sup> A brief history of the French *blasonneur* tradition and its unusual inception can be found in Nancy J. Vickers, 'Members Only: Marot's Anatomical Blazons', in David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (eds), *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe* (New York, 1997), 3-21.

<sup>16</sup> William Sessions, *Henry Howard the Poet Earl of Surrey: A Life*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Oxford, 2006), 254.

<sup>17</sup> Vickers, 'Diana Described', 266.

<sup>18</sup> Vickers, 'Members Only', 7.

<sup>19</sup> Bérénice Le Marchand, 'Spectacular Dissections in French Literary Blazons', *Dalhousie French Studies*, 92 (2010), 21-31 (23).

<sup>20</sup> Device has specific connotations of artistic production in the sixteenth century, and can mean whole works, specific rhetorical figures, or flare within an artwork. Hence, Puttenham's recent editors gloss it as 'Something devised, such as a saying, a figure of speech, or a work of art; an emblem or motto, stratagem, trick; design, conceit', George Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesy: A Critical Edition*, ed. Frank Whigham and Wayne A. Rebhorn (Ithaca, 2007), 444. George Gascoigne uses the term in his 1575 *Notes of Instruction* as a synonym for 'fine invention' glossed as 'plan, design, conceit', in Gavin Alexander (ed.), *Sidney's 'The Defence of Poesy' and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism* (London, 2004), 237. The term is similarly used for both works and conceits in the title of the 1576 miscellany 'The Paradyse of dainty devises: aptly furnished, with sundrie pithie and learned inventions' (London, 1576), STC 7516.

<sup>21</sup> Greg Walker, *Writing Under Tyranny* (Oxford, 2007), 348.

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<sup>22</sup> See *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 'Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey' (1516/7-1547).

<sup>23</sup> Susan Brigden, 'Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, and the "Conjured League"', in *Historical Journal*, 37.3 (1994), 507-537 (530). An alternative interpretation of this portrait can be found in Sessions, *The Poet Earl*, 333-351; an opposing provenance is given in Sir Roy Strong, 'Some early portraits at Arundel Castle', in *The Connoisseur*, 197 (1978), 198-200.

<sup>24</sup> Jones, *Poems*, xvi-xvii.

<sup>25</sup> These poems in MS Additional 36529 are 'I pray to god who weldithe aye', f. 80<sup>v</sup>; 'The fainted shade', f. 80<sup>v</sup>; 'Uncertaine certaine deathe', f. 81<sup>r</sup>; and 'So lucky be your twisted holde', f. 81<sup>v</sup>. They occur in the same order in Arundel Harington, ff. 206<sup>r</sup>-207<sup>v</sup>.

Transcriptions can be found in Hughey, *Arundel Harington Manuscript*, vol. 1, 359-61.

<sup>26</sup> 'A royall elegie' (London, 1610), STC 2<sup>nd</sup> ed 5112 is described on its frontispiece as 'Written by Sir John Cheke, Knight, Anno 1553'. This reprint of William Baldwin's, *The Funeralles of King Edward the Sixt* (London, 1560), STC 2<sup>nd</sup> ed 1243, is listed in John Strype's list of Cheke's works in *The life of the learned Sir John Cheke Knight: first instructor, afterwards Secretary of State to King Edward VI* (London, 1705), 218.

<sup>27</sup> Carla Mazzio, 'Sins of the Tongue', in *The Body in Parts*, 53-79 (53).

<sup>28</sup> Mazzio, 'Sins of the Tongue', 57.

<sup>29</sup> Mazzio, 'Sins of the Tongue', 53.

<sup>30</sup> Jones, *Poems*, xxv.

<sup>31</sup> See 'Dismembering Surrey's corpus', below. For the sources of Surrey's 'If he that erst', (Jones, *Poems*, 10) see Andrew W. Taylor, 'Between Surrey and Marot: Nicolas Bourbon and the Artful Translation of the Epigram', *Translation and Literature*, 15.1 (2006), 1-20.

<sup>32</sup> Sessions, *The Poet Earl*, 376.

<sup>33</sup> Hughey, *Arundel Harington Manuscript*, vol. 2, 429.

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<sup>34</sup> John F. McDiarmid, ‘Classical Epitaphs for Heroes of Faith: Mid-Tudor Neo-Latin Memorial Volumes and Their Protestant Humanist Context’, *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 3.1 (1996), 23-47 (24); and John F. McDiarmid, ‘John Cheke’s Preface to *De Superstitione*’, *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 48.1 (1997), 100–120 (107).

<sup>35</sup> Cheke and Surrey use the name Venus over Aphrodite in discussing this painting. I use the original Aphrodite except where directly referring to Cheke’s and Surrey’s descriptions.

<sup>36</sup> See Kathryn Gutzwiller, ‘Apelles and the painting of Language’, *Revue de Philologie*, 83 (2009), 39-63 (*passim*) for a discussion of the various written depictions of Apelles’s painting, and what they reveal about ancient attitudes towards the representation of truth and reality in art. The contents of the Greek sources are summarized on pages 55-6.

<sup>37</sup> Cicero’s description of the painting in *Epistulae ad familiars*, 1.9 may be a direct source for Cheke: ‘just as Apelles completed with the most refined art the head and shoulders of his Venus, while he left the rest of her body begun but not finished, so certain people have confined their good offices to my head alone, and have left the rest of me incomplete’. Cicero, *The Letters to his Friends*, trans. W. Glynn Williams, vol. 1 (London, 1927), 67. Further, Cicero’s *De Natura Deorum*, 1.75 discusses the painting’s reputation as beyond artistic representation to consider whether the gods have bodily form; *De Divinatione*, 1.23 uses the painting to refute Skeptic claims that the universe is dependent on chance occurrence rather than divine will.

<sup>38</sup> An epigram attributed to Leonidas of Tarentum depicts Apelles at Aphrodite’s birth, ‘fresh from the bosom’. For the poem and translation see ‘XVIII: The picture of Aphrodite’ in *Poems of Leonidas of Tarentum*, trans. Edwyn Bevan (Oxford, 1931), 20-1. Ovid *Ars Amatoria*, 3.401-2, suggests that without Apelles’s painting Venus would ‘still be lying hid in the sea’s depths’, *The Art of Love*, trans. J. H. Mozley (London, 1962), 147.

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<sup>39</sup> Pliny, *Naturalis Historia*, 35.91-2, suggests that both are true: the original ‘suffered from age and rot’ and a second painting was ‘only partly finished, nor could anybody be found to carry on the task’. Pliny, *Natural History*, trans. H. Rackham, vol. 9 (London, 1952), 329.

<sup>40</sup> The main version of this story, from Dio Chrysostom’s *Orationes*, 63.4, concerns a painting of a charioteer. However, Gutzwiller suggests that Cicero’s anecdote in *De Divinatione*, 1.23 implies that the same story had been applied to Aphrodite Anadyomene, see ‘Painting of Language’, 63.

<sup>41</sup> Gutzwiller, ‘Painting of Language’, 63.

<sup>42</sup> See *OED*, ‘kind, n.’ and ‘sort, n.2’. ‘Kind’ or ‘kynde’ was a common term for nature and its associated connotations.

<sup>43</sup> Surrey uses ‘wight’ twenty-two times, ranking it amongst the highest frequency uses in his poetry: see William McGaw, *A Concordance to the Complete Poems of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey* (Lewiston NY, 2015), ‘wight’, 558. By contrast in Rebholz’s edition of Wyatt, containing approximately five times the number of poems, the word occurs just twice. See Rebholz, *Complete Poems*: ‘Why should a wight’ in ‘CCLXII’, line 22; and ‘judge no wight’ in ‘CLXXXIV’, line 26.

<sup>44</sup> Taylor, ‘Between Surrey and Marot’, 11.

<sup>45</sup> Cicero, *The Nature of the Gods*, trans. Horace McGregor (London, 1972), Book 1.75, 99.

<sup>46</sup> Taylor, ‘Between Surrey and Marot’, 11.